

DURBAR Volume 23, No.4, Winter 2006

TRAVEL THROUGH THE ANGLO-SIKH WARS IN THE PUNJAB, 2006

Bill Whitburn

Made possible by a generous grant from the General Palit Indian Military History Studies Trust

TICKET TO THE ANGLO-SIKH WARS, 2006

In January 2004 I went to Pakistan on a reconnaissance trip of the battlefields of the 2nd Anglo-Sikh War, 1848/9, which are all in what is now Pakistan. The battles of the 1st Anglo-Sikh War 1845/6, all took place within the borders of what is now India. So to complete my research of both wars I had also to make a trip to India, especially as the 1st Anglo-Sikh War is more important in any write-up about these Wars.

These trips are a big expense, especially for a retiree. Thanks to my family I was able to make the first trip and the desired trip to India was fast fading. In addition I tackled a couple of other commitments, which lengthened the interval between trips. Meanwhile I read a lot more about my “hobby subject” and resolved to replace a trip to India with more in depth study by hundreds of visits to umpteen libraries. On one of these library visits, I read an advertisement about the General Palit Indian Military History Studies Trust. This Trust was set up to assist students in the pursuit of military history studies. I had no idea whether the terms of the Trust would apply to my particular interest in view of its British connotation and the fact that half the subject matter occurred in what is now Pakistan.

I applied, and was contacted by Mr John Miller who manages the Trust in England. I had a very pleasant discussion with him during which I explained my interest and my hope of eventually writing something about the Anglo-Sikh Wars. To my great surprise and greater pleasure, Mr. Miller called me back, sometime later, to say that the Trust would be granting me £700 to assist in my research. With this “stamp of approval” I now had, not only financial support, but also an obligation to make my trip to India. I thereupon started to make plans and arrangements in order to be at Sobraon on 10th February, the 160th anniversary of the last battle of the 1st Anglo- Sikh War.

Part of my preparation included a generous gift from Richard and Beatrice of a super multi-pocketed suede jacket. It would have been perfect but then it occurred to me that travelling into a predominately Hindu area it would not be too politic to walk around wrapped in a dead cow. My PC expert, Alexander, concurred, so instead I went into the local charity shop and bought a many pocketed denim jacket. On arrival in India I checked with my Indian expert, Arun, who said that the suede would have been no problem. He may have said this based on an instant dislike of my denim jacket.



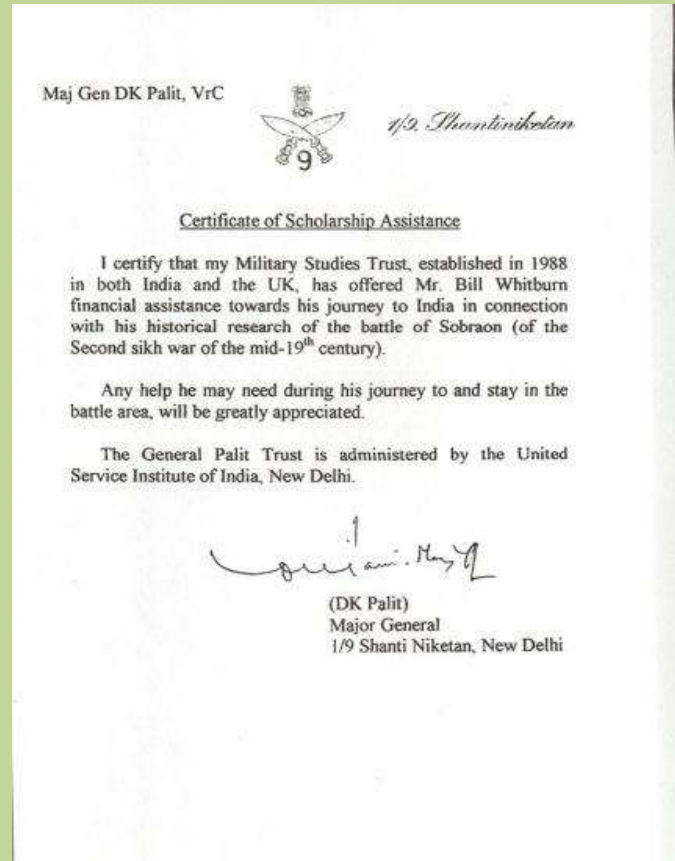
In my denim jacket, on Wednesday, 25 January, I departed Heathrow via KU102 for Kuwait and a connecting flight to Delhi. This meant a more than eight hour lay-over in Kuwait Airport, which to those who know it, is a very boring airport. Apparently a lay-over of over eight hours obligates the airline to accommodate the passengers, so seven of us were taken to the transit hotel at the airport where they removed my bottle of Scotch to make sure I did not drink any of it on Kuwaiti soil.



The General



The Denim Jacket



The Chitty

Early the next morning, reunited with my bottle of Scotch, we were herded onto Flight KU381 bound for Delhi. We arrived on time, at 0900 on 26 January, Republic Day, a holiday. I was very kindly met by Arun, in a great coat as it does get quite cold during the night at this time of year. He drove me to my hotel, the Grand New Delhi. Finding a suitable hotel in Delhi had been difficult and was to prove so again, so while a little out of my budget, I was very glad to be at the Grand for the next two nights. At this point I ought to explain that I had divided this trip into four sections; firstly three days in Delhi for visits to my book resource, the United Services Institute of India and a thank you call on General Palit; then four days for a trip to the centre of India to a place called Tikamgarh, followed by nine days covering the battle scenes of the 1st Anglo- Sikh War in the Punjab. The last section, a quick trip to Lahore (Pakistan) to check on a couple of aspects of the 2nd Anglo- Sikh, which I had not done during my first reconnaissance trip. Apart from an appointment with the book resource I had made no other appointments prior to my trip. However I did receive from General Palit a *chitty* of introduction

and request to assist me in my quest. This was to prove most useful. The excursion to Tikamgarh had nothing to do with the reconnaissance part of my trip. It was based on a nostalgic urge to go back sixty five years and check whether the house, built of beer bottles that my Uncle had drunk, still existed. Nobody believed it could still be there and Alexander felt it would turn out to be a wild goose-chase, but I had to use this opportunity and find out. This particular section of my trip will be written up in a separate report.

After checking in and a quick wash up, Arun drove me miles through Delhi to an area called Pitampura to my book resource called Vedams eBooks. I don't know how postmen deliver letters in Delhi because although we had the address nobody knew where it was and being a holiday most of the other shops, where one might get a lead, were closed. At last we bumped into a *chowkidar* who told us where the place was but that it was closed. So much for my one appointment! As we had time on our hands, I asked Arun to take me on a reconnaissance of the area where General Palit lived, I had his address but not his telephone number. We returned to the hotel, had dinner and I called Alexander to report my safe arrival. I also called Bilal, my Lahore contact, to remind him that I would be arriving in Lahore on Monday 13 February. He informed me that he was also having problems with hotels for my first night in Lahore, as they were all booked because of the India-Pakistan Cricket Match. He invited me to stay at his place for the one night. The Avari Hotel was OK for my return trip back to Lahore. I thanked Bilal for his generous offer.

Next morning, after a brilliant savoury omelette and the best toast I have had for a long time, Arun picked me up and we went back to Pitampura and met Mr Achal Rajagopal of Vedams eBooks. I had the idea that this place was going to turn out to be a "Depository" of books. Not so. There were no books for me to browse. What Mr Rajagopal has is a massive web site on which are listed all the catalogues of all the Indian printers. He has about twenty girls, possibly all relatives, who sit in front of computers reacting to book orders such as mine. A great little business, and most reliable. I highly recommend it. I put in my book order and we left. The next port of call was the United Services Institute. This is in a very fine building with most courteous and helpful staff. I had applied to stay there but could now see that the place was totally booked by an international course they were running. A pity as it would have been ideal for me. In the library I met Squadron Leader Rana T S Chhina, (retd) the Librarian. A charming gentleman who gave me a few useful leads plus some information on a character referred to as the "Sobraon Boy", who had helped General Gough and his staff with information at the battles of Sobraon, 10 February 1846, Gujerat 22 February 1849, and at the Siege of Multan. I have a theory that this boy is the half-caste orphan son of a British soldier, and could well be the model on which Kipling based his character Kim. On leaving the library we returned to the hotel. I found out General Palit's telephone number and called him for an appointment the next day.

Not only did Arun have problems finding me hotel space but also a reasonable rate for car hire for my various journeys around the country, especially the nine-day section. The journey into nostalgia he covered by hiring a driver for his own car and accompanying me on this section, which was very good of him as it also provided me with a witness to what transpired, besides a good companion. So, just as a double check, I asked the Grand Hotel travel people (Routes) for a quote for the nine-day section. What they gave me was half of Arun's best quote. In the full realisation that this could turn out to be a "pig in a poke", I made a booking, albeit Arun had offered his car with a driver, but I would have felt very mean depriving him of his car for nine whole days.

On the morning of Saturday 28 January I got up and put on my suit and Brigade of Gurkhas tie, especially brought out for my meeting with General Palit. The meeting was scheduled for 11.00am, so I left the hotel in a hired car, with a driver who knew exactly where to go, and then, in short order,

got lost! Thank goodness Arun had taken me on a reconnaissance the day before, so I made the driver get onto the airport road and from there I was able to direct him to General Palit's house.

General Palit, in his eighties, is the epitome of the *Pukka Sahib*. He was commissioned in 1938 into the Baluch Regiment and took part in the war in Burma. On Independence he was transferred to the 3/9th Gorkha Rifles, which he commanded and then he commanded the 7th Infantry Brigade. He clearly enjoyed his illustrious army career, at a very interesting time in history, as was evident by all the memorabilia on display in his house. The General is also the author of many books and definitely an authority on military history. His "Musings and Memories" is well worth a read as it gives a very good insight into the Indian Army pre and post Partition and the wars with Pakistan. During the forty minutes with General Palit, I naturally thanked him for the grant from his Trust and for the *chitty* he had written for me. I had also asked him for a large-scale map of the area I was to visit. The General was not able to help me with this as the area was considered too sensitive, it being along the India/Pakistan border. I also told him of my reconnaissance plans and an appointment was made for a debrief at 11.00am on Sunday 12 February. I then returned to my hotel in preparation for my "wild goose chase".

I had last been in Delhi in 1998 and it struck me then as being overcrowded, not too clean, chaotic and complacent. Now, as soon as one gets out of the Airport, which still has the vestige of the old Delhi, one can feel the vibrancy of the place. Buildings are going up all over. Shopping Malls are shooting up in the anticipation of thriving communities growing up alongside. They are building good roads and flyovers at all major junctions and they have a developing underground system, mostly overhead. It reminded me of Taipei in the early eighties when they went from paddy fields to ritzy high risers. Most of all they have space and they are using it, plus they are making a big effort in tackling pollution. All three-wheelers and buses now have to be powered by CNG (Compressed Natural Gas); many cars have the dual capacity for fuel or CNG. The Suzuki cars are the most common on the roads followed by the Tata Indica. The old Ambassador appears now to be limited to "officialdom", the white ones for Civil and the black ones for the Military. However all this tangible progress has added to the chaos, which in some respects is quintessentially Indian and I hope in aping bland western ideals they do not lose that magic of orderly chaos. So when a series of plaques along many of the streets announce, "From Walled City", "To World City", "Chalo Dilli", by 2010 I do believe they are going to make it, as long as politicians keep their personal agendas locked up.

After a fantastic journey down south, Arun and I returned to Delhi mid-afternoon on Wednesday 1 February. As hotels were still a problem, I landed up at the Radisson. After checking in and late lunch I went to the Grand hotel to double check my transport for the next section of my trip. This double check was to ensure that there was no misunderstanding about the rate, which was to cover unlimited mileage, all fuel costs, driver, his accommodation and meals. All this was agreed and I paid a third of the total up front. The car and driver were to report to me at 10.00am on Friday 3 February. The next day, Thursday, Arun and I went to lunch with Maharajah Madhukar Shah II, but this belongs to my separate report.

Sure enough, on Friday at 10.00am the driver and car, a Tata Indica, were at the Radisson ready for my reconnaissance of the Punjab (India). As the Indica is quite small, I elected to sit in front, a big mistake. My troubles started with the driver, by name of Deepak, telling me how good the Gods had been to him by selecting me as his passenger and how he was struggling in Delhi to obtain his MBA in Accountancy and how glad he was that the itinerary included Simla as he came from close-by. He then proceeded to tell me about his family and solicited information regarding my own. Consequently after no more than ten miles on the road to Ambala I was *dadaji* and there developed a degree of familiarity that became increasingly irritable. Anyway he seemed a pleasant enough guy and I would have to live with the situation for the next nine days.

In the 1845 parlance, Ambala is nine marches north of Delhi along the Grand Trunk Road. This is the track that invaders from Central Asia have used for centuries. Along it many battles for India have been fought, Paniput being the site of two of the biggest. Karnal, six marches short of Ambala had been equipped by the East India Company as the key garrison town for the deployment of their forces at a time of heightened interest north of Delhi. In 1835 it was announced that Karnal was a most unhealthy place for British troops, so the garrison was moved to Ambala. Whether Ambala was more healthy is debatable, but it was certainly closer to the border of the sole remaining independent kingdom, in India, of the Sikhs. In 1845 the Garrison in Ambala consisted of three European regiments, five Bengal Native regiments, the 3rd Light Dragoons and two Native cavalry regiments. If one included all the various “hangers-on”, this would make up a garrison of about 50,000 and 30,000 animals.

In December 1845, Ambala was the area where the Army of the Sutlej was assembled for their move to Ferozepur on the Sutlej. This assembly included HM 29th Foot from Kasauli and the 1st European Regiment from Subathu, from Meerut the 9th and 16th Lancers, HM 10th Foot, 3rd Native Light Cavalry (this is the Regiment that started the Mutiny in Meerut on 10 May 1857) and Artillery of 26 guns. The Governor General and the Commander in Chief and their personal staffs were included in this general assembly. At the very last minute, a portion of the Ludhiana Garrison, two infantry regiments and some guns, were also pulled into Ambala. This decision made by the Governor General, Henry Hardinge, was very critical to what transpired during the course of the War.

We were in Ambala by 4.00pm having travelled along the National Route 1. The road itself is very good while the countryside is totally featureless at an average elevation of 700feet. However, whenever one approaches a town the road condition deteriorates and hundreds of vehicles of all types vie with each other for space on what becomes a very dusty track, so dusty that it is very difficult to make out the colour of the lights at the cross roads. Where there are no lights, a wretched policeman tries to wave on the traffic and wave off the dust, which causes some confusing signals. Another most notable feature of this journey, and others in India, was the vast number of marriage halls or “Resorts”, hundreds of them, all very big and ornately decorated. Clearly marriage is a big business in India. Religion is also holding its own as there are a great number of temples and more being built, *sare bhugwahan*. So, as religion appears to be on the decline in England, it is alive and “rising” in India. A great deal of commerce is conducted along these main roads and the vehicle of choice is the Tata lorry that looks like a moving crate. I noticed that on the tailgate of many of these hung an old shoe. I was told that this was to ward-off the evil spirit which may jealously want to acquire the lorry. Nothing like giving the devil the boot!

On arrival in Ambala I sought out the Bhatra Palace Hotel, which I had selected off the web. We found it and I immediately wanted to lose it. It was awful. Incidentally “awful” in 1845 was considered an expletive, so would have been written as “a---- “. When in doubt go back onto the main road, which we did and soon found the Kingfisher Resort, more than adequate and located just outside the cantonment area close to the Indian Air Force Station. In checking in I heard my driver tell the Reception guy to ask me something; as a result I was asked to pay Rp150 “for the driver”. I paid and took no more notice.

My desired ports of call in Ambala were the Church and the Cemetery. On my way to these I passed the Military Farm. In 1925 my maternal grandfather, James Morley, ran the place and the house he lived in is still there. Next I came to St Paul’s Church. This was erected in 1862 and bombed by the Pakistanis in 1965 as it abuts the airfield. The ruined Church is now a sort of monument and as it is in a military area it is well kept. Next door is the Vicarage, but Presbyter Bhatta was not in. About a mile further down we came to the Cemetery first used in 1843. This is a big cemetery and it is in a bad state of upkeep, in fact rather shamefully so. From the tombstones of the inmates one can tell that

Ambala had obviously been a big cavalry and artillery garrison in the days of the *Raj*. Interestingly, one grave is dedicated to an individual who died in 1873 and was in the “Duke of Albany’s Own Highlanders”; I have never heard of this regiment. No doubt someone will let me know. I took lots of pictures and retired back to the Kingfisher where I had a delicious dinner of *Pakor*as, Chicken Curry and a bottle of Thunderbolt beer; very sleep making.



Military Farm



St Pauls



Ambala Cemetery

Next morning up and ready for breakfast and a start for Simla at 9.00am. For breakfast I ordered tea and cheese toast. Normally cheese toast, in India, is very good, but this one had not been within a mile of any cheese and tasted more like a chip butty. Not a good start to not a good day.

I had noticed that at this time of year, in the early mornings, there were signs of heavy dew and low lying clouds or mist right up to about eight in the morning after which the sun burnt if off. So, unless very important, there was no point in being on the road before nine as it would be very slow going and very unsafe due to sudden appearances of unmindful cows in the middle of the road. The other thing about Indian roads is that there are stacks of toll-gates and places where one has to pay when crossing from one Province to another. These are manned by three people, one to take the money, one to record it and another, sitting on a chair some five yards away, to pull the Stop sign across in the event one does not stop to pay. Also, travelling in hired transport, or a bus, one is often waved to a stop by “road officials” who ostensibly check documents and make some excuse for a “facilitation fee”. After the first of these “wave-downs”, I would, at once, show the man the General’s *chitty* and be waved on

with an apology for stopping us. I don't think it would harm India much if all these places and tolls were eliminated, except to those people who are "cheating". After we crossed into Himachal Pradesh, I had an argument with the driver about the amount of toll fee charged and threatened to call his office from the next available STD booth, after which we continued on a much more correct relationship. Incidentally, India is covered with little places that announce the services of STD (Standard Trunk Dialling), IDC (International Subscriber Dialling) PCO (Public Call Office). They are all places where one can make various forms of telephone calls. Obviously with the proliferation of the mobile phone these little businesses will be affected, but they are fighting back as they now offer facilities for charging up these very same mobiles.

In 1845 Simla was where Army Headquarters was located and where the Governor General would spend the hot summer months. It was where both had been, planning their strategy for the troublesome Punjab. In essence this strategy called for necessary preparations to counter any Sikh move across the Sutlej and these to be conducted in such a manner as not to provoke the Sikhs to cross the said river. In the meanwhile the dust clouds of marching hordes across the featureless topography were like Red Indian smoke signals for an imminent show-down. I had never been to Simla so wanted to get a feel of this eyrie of the *Raj* where both great and stupid plans had been hatched and where men of ambition perched themselves along the Mall in colourful plumage of position, attire or reputation.

On the way I wanted to branch off to Kasauli to discover the grave of Brigadier Alexander Pope. This was the gentleman who, simply on seniority, was put in command of a cavalry brigade at the battle of Chillianwalla (2nd Anglo-Sikh War) on 13 January, 1849. This brigade, through lack of command and control withdrew from the field of battle. A big loss of face! Brigadier Pope was wounded in the fracas and died some months later in Kasauli of his wounds, and possibly shame. I believe I did discover the grave although the inscriptions have worn-off most of these very old graves nestling under the pines down fairly steep hill-sides.



At Kalka, the road begins to climb. This is also the start of the narrow gauge railway that snakes through nearly two hundred tunnels to Simla. As one climbs up the next change is the appearance of the monkeys and then the trees change to pines until at the top one meets the deodars. Simla is covered in these trees, their branches stick out in layers like umbrellas. On the way and after the turn-off for Kasauli, one arrives at Solan at about 3500 feet high. This is where Jill was born in 1935 in sight of the Brewery/Distillery which was built in 1844. So I had to stop there and buy a souvenir bottle of Scotch. Solan is very spread out and second rate and no doubt it has always been second rate to its much exalted sister at 7500 feet, Simla.

In Simla I had earmarked a place called the Gables as a suitable place to stay. Unfortunately it was very disappointing as not only was it crummy but some 15 miles from the Mall at Simla and I wanted a place as close as possible to the Mall. It would appear that all the big hoteliers are building “resorts”, lovely sports, but way out from Simla where there is absolutely no room. Bearing in mind that no transport is allowed on the Mall this turned out to be quite a search. Eventually we came upon a tout who said he could take me to a hotel on the Mall and from where I was I could get up to it in a lift. So up I went to the Honeymoon Inn. My luggage was not allowed in the lift, it had to be carried up by a porter. I was in my room as the sun was going down. It was a fair sized room with a huge mirror over the bed and an inventory list, which included a cruet set! It was cold but no snow to be seen. I was the only resident for dinner in the Dining Room.

The next day was Sunday and I was told that most places would be shut. Anyway after quite a nice breakfast, again alone, I took myself off to the Mall. Although the Honeymoon claimed to be on the Mall, I still had to climb up the hill a bit. My first impression of Simla was that the Mall is like a giant washing line on which everything hangs and cascades down the steep slopes. It is crowded with little shops and some very old buildings, still used. Most of these are government offices or facilities such as the library. Christ Church, there and in good nick, and, unlike and to ensure it remains so the shops in plastic bags. One point that but I had not heard of before, is multitude of stories as to how this been placed in the middle of the simply a monument to all the renowned. At the high point of the Indira Gandhi with rather wide hips, would not have been best pleased. I which is a treasure trove of old visit, Maria Brothers Book Store, was shut. The shopkeeper next door said that if I phoned the owner he would come and open up the place and he gave me the number. So I phoned and made an appointment for the afternoon. I walked back to the Honeymoon Inn to rest my legs, have some lunch and await my walk back to Maria Brothers.



At the Inn I was handed an English language newspaper in which there were at least eight pages of marriage solicitations. These are not the western type of HYM looking for BYG with an interest to...These were by, sometimes desperate, parents seeking grooms or brides for their offspring. Marriage is clearly a big, serious and expensive business in India. One of the more amusing advertisements was “Wanted, professionally qualified boy for talented, caring, innocent divorcee; fraud marriage (not consummated) not lived single day with boy. Convent educated” And in another article a betrothed girl was cancelling her marriage as the intended groom was a “greedy dowry hunter”. At the last minute he had upped the ante from a Maruti Suzuki car to a Honda City! While reading the newspaper an almighty row broke out in the next room, so I went down stairs to Reception to report the matter. The staff were giggling with laughter and said this type of bust up occurred quite often and it usually ended up with the new husband walking out. They added, “That is why we get these honeymooners to pay in advance”. They regarded the row as fun and awaited the outcome. A progress check later disclosed that the couple had made up!

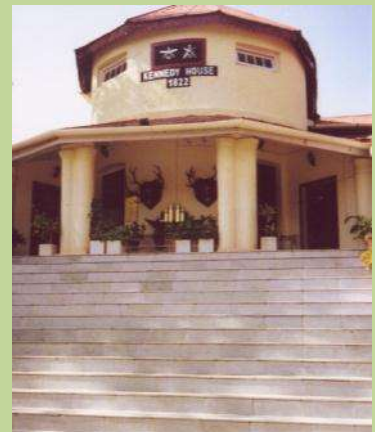
In the afternoon back to the Maria Brothers Bookshop where I was met by Monty, the owner. This is a tremendous place for rare books. He has hundreds including a great many first editions, but he charges accordingly. While I bought five books I explained to Monty that my interest was with what was in the book, not that it was rare. I could have bought many of Monty’s books but not at the “rare”

prices. Loaded down with books, I trudged back to the Inn via the Tourist Office to purchase a new book listing all the Christian graves in the area. This was a request from a member of the BACSA. Unfortunately it had “still not be made”. Back at the Inn, I reviewed my notes and prepared for my next destination which was Ambala via Subathu. What I found very surprising about Simla was that there appeared to be no birds.

I had a delicious savoury omelette for breakfast and was presented with my laundry between two sheets of newspaper. The porter took my luggage down and was waiting for me at the car long before I had descended in the lift. Not everything has changed. On the whole I go along with Lord Dalhousie who said “Simla is over rated”. After a fairly quick drive down to Solan we turned off right onto a more *kuchha* road for about fifteen miles into Subathu, the “Abode of the Gorkhas”. My mission in Subathu was to contact Lt Colonel Dakim and check on repairs to No 3 Cemetery for the BACSA. Well, the Colonel had left Subathu some two years earlier and the man now in charge was the Deacon, Alexander Abrahams, of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, located in the centre of the town. I made contact with him and did my inspection of No 3 Cemetery. This was the dull part, what I found exciting was that Subathu is the home of the 14th Gorkha Training Centre and there were hundreds of these smart soldiers marching about all over the place. I felt as if I was back on Blakang Mati with the 10th Gurkha Rifles in 1966. Their uniforms are very similar to what was worn by the British Army and the soldiers are just as smart, if not a little more so. I find that the new camouflage romper the Brits wear nowadays, although “macho” has a propensity for slouching.

I produced the General’s *chitty* and was soon on my way to the Officers’ Mess where I met a young orderly who welcomed me in and went off to fetch the Mess Sergeant; there were no Officers around. The Mess is called Kennedy House after Captain Kennedy who was a Political Officer in these parts back in the 1820s. There is a picture of him in the Mess Ante Room. It was built in 1822 and is the oldest Mess in North India. In 1830, Captain Kennedy was host to the famous French traveller, Victor Jacquemont, who reported that during his time as Captain Kennedy’s guest, they sat down “at half past seven to a magnificent dinner and rose at eleven o’clock. I drank Rhine wine or claret or nothing but champagne---I do not remember drinking any water for a week”. The Mess is decorated as it would have been pre Partition, tiger and panther skins on the wall and the Mess silver polished and on display. There was one presentation on the wall of a huge fish 57 inches long, 59 pounds in weight, caught in the River Bias in 1913 by a Lt Colonel Walker of the 1/2nd Gurkhas”. Later on General Palit told me that the fish had to be a Mahseer, and Jill wondered whether the Colonel could have been General Walter Walker’s father. Then, to my great excitement, I noticed the Dining Room table, which was at least 30 feet long. Could this possibly be the long sought after table on which the 24th Foot, after the Battle of Chillianwalla on Saturday 13 January, 1849, laid out the bodies of thirteen of their dead officers prior to burial? I have subsequently written to the Commandant requesting him to have the provenance of this table checked out. I will have to wait and see.

Elated by this visit to the Mess I then went to see the Garrison Cemetery, which was first used in 1823 and contains all the older graves. Incidentally, the grave of Sir Henry Lawrence’s nine month old daughter, Letitia Catherine is on a hill overlooking Subathu. I then went to the Wesleyan Methodist Church to look over some records of No 3 Cemetery that Mr Abrahams has. The furniture in the Church is



clearly very old including a Deacon's chair. I am sure it can tell many stories. I really did like Subathu, it's a wonderful little place; did my morale a lot of good to be saluted by smart Gorkhas. We moved out of the "Abode of the Gorkhas", onto Ambala via Dharampura and Kalka. A fantastic visit, I would love to go back.

The Kingfisher at Ambala was a night stop to ensure the driver could have sufficient rest before the long drive up to Ludhiana. He had already whined once about the long hours. I took the opportunity of the break to make contact with Mr Bhatti the Presbyterian of St Paul's Church and heard his story of the lack of funds to maintain the Cemetery. It's a sad situation.

The following morning we departed for Ludhiana in quite heavy mist. It's a very straight road through flat country with the usual number of Marriage Halls, *Gurdwaras* and Temples and the odd cow standing in the middle of the road. Incredibly the main roads in India do not appear to need much repair as, unlike in the UK, there are no ubiquitous bollards and restriction signs. Maybe our Transport Minister needs to visit India to find out how they build roads that do not need to be repaired so frequently. On the way we came across a McDonald's, so I had to stop. We had a Chicken Maharaja Mac, a Mac Curry Pan and a Mac Aloo Tikki. Not bad and not too expensive either.

Off the Web site I had picked a hotel in Ludhiana called the Majestic Park and, for a change, it exceeded my expectations. It is a good four-star rating. It's fairly new and the staff are equally new and try very hard to please. In Ludhiana I wanted to find any trace of the old fort, visit the Cemetery and also to visit the site, close by, of the Battle of Aliwal, 28 January, 1846. I failed on the first two counts and in the process got horribly snarled up in the old part of this rather big and old city. It was like trying to drive through Petty Coat Lane in a Humvee.

In 1803 the Governor General, Lord Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington's elder brother, had pushed the English frontier up to the River Jumna, which brought them into direct contact with the Cis-Sutlej Chiefs. At about the same time Maharaja Ranjit Singh, having extended his dominions north of the Sutlej, began to think of conquests south of it. The disputes between the states of Patiala, Nabha and Jind gave him a perfect excuse to cross over in July 1806. No opposition was offered to the Maharaja and he took possession of the town and fort of Ludhiana. In the following year the Maharaja was again across the river and by this time the English government had made up its mind to stifle further aggressions by the Maharaja south of the river and take all the Cis Sutlej Chiefs under their protection. So they deputed twenty three year old Charles Metcalfe to go and parlay with the Maharaja. During the run around that the Maharaja gave Metcalfe, he had crossed the river a third time! At last, in Amritsar, Metcalfe was able to convey the decision of the paramount government to the Maharaja, in that all conquests made on the first two raids could be retained and the rest of the country between the Rivers Jumna and Sutlej was to come under British protection. To support this decision a force under Colonel Ochterlony was moved towards the new frontier and on 18 February 1809 this force arrived at Ludhiana and took up a position there, which was destined to be permanent. On 25 April 1809 Maharaja Ranjit Singh signed a treaty with the British establishing the River Sutlej as the southern boundary of the Sikh Kingdom. General Ochterlony held political charge of Ludhiana until 1815. He was succeeded by Captain Murray, hero of the Gorkha War, who died in 1823 aged forty and is buried in the Garrison Cemetery in Subathu. Then Major Claude Wade was appointed to this post. In 1845 the politico was Major George Broadfoot; he had just taken over from Colonel Richmond. The Garrison Commander was General Wheeler of Cawnpore fame. In the interim, Ludhiana became a sort of asylum centre for all dissidents north of the River, the best known of whom was Shah Shuja, the deposed Afghan King, and his harem of six hundred. Not totally trusting the English, Ranjit Singh built a fort in Pillour on the north bank of the river, directly opposite Ludhiana.

After extricating ourselves from Ludhiana city we headed north up the main road to the River Sutlej. I was working off a 1:1,000,000 map of the Punjab, issued in 2005, on which not many of the old places are mentioned. Instead a host of new places are shown and a great number of new roads included. My other map, issued in 1868, has all the old places listed and old roads that no longer exist. My mission was to find the Aliwal battle site, which took place south of the river and on a bearing of 340 degrees from Ludhiana. However, I did have my GPS! We drove up to within a mile of the river looking for a turn-off to the left. While I knew in which direction I wanted to go I could not find a road or track to get me there. After about three attempts, down and back some pretty rough tracks and a sigh of relief from the driver, I gave up. So, just for interest, we crossed over the river. It was really sad to see the mighty Sutlej a mere trickle and a dumping ground for litter with people underneath the bridge rummaging through it. The reason for there being so little water is because the river has been dammed further up. We turned about and started back, dejected, for Ludhiana. On the way, something I had not noticed travelling up, was a sign to the Maharaja Ranjit Singh War Museum. This I had to see. We turned off and quickly arrived at a new and impressive building with a statue of the Maharaja on the drive up to the entrance. At the entrance I met Honourable Captain Gurder Singh Kainth and his Assistant Harjit Singh Sarof. Out came the General Sahib's *chitty* and very soon cups of water for the weary traveller. These gentlemen showed me around, but it was not of much interest to me as most of the exhibits were of modern wars. When I explained my particular interest, Harjit recommended that I visit their Library. There I saw the best picture I have ever seen of the great Maharaja and, to my utter surprise, a model of the Battle of Aliwal!! I wanted to take a photograph of both and I could see that by my request I had placed both my hosts in an embarrassing position, so I withdrew my request and instead asked them what they knew about the battle. Out came the tea, and I was given their version of Aliwal, but more importantly, they knew where the battle had taken place. So, armed with detailed instructions as to how to get there, we back-tracked up the road and were soon at the site.

After the gruesome Battle of Modki and the mutual mauling at Ferozeshah, in December 1845, the Army of the Sutlej lay in the area licking their wounds and waited for reinforcements. In January of the New Year, the Sikh General, Sardar Ranjur Singh, crossed the river at Pillour and threatened the reduced garrison of Ludhiana, and, most critically, the main supply route to the British Army at Bassian. General Gough despatched Major General Sir Harry Smith with a force to counter the manoeuvres of the Sikh General. In the march up the Sikh General inflicted a good deal of damage by capturing much of Sir Harry's baggage at a place called Badhowal. This Sikh success is not listed in accounts of the day as a defeat or a mauling, just an unfortunate incident. On 23 January, joined by troops from Ludhiana, Sir Harry Smith made plans to deal with the Sardar at Badhowal, but that gentleman immediately retired to the river. Sir Harry Smith, instead of following, waited for the Shekhawati Brigade and the second brigade of his Division to join him. The junction was effected on 26 January and after a day's rest Sir Harry Smith marched at day break for the purpose of attacking the Sikhs in their new position. However, the Sikhs had in the meantime received more reinforcements and were now threatening the British lines of communications with a move on Jagraon. On the appearance of Sir Harry, the Sardar took up a position with his right on the village of Bundri and his left at Aliwal. The British troops that took part in this battle were the 16th Light Dragoons, HM 31st Foot, HM 50th Foot, HM 53rd Foot, Governor General's Bodyguard, 4th Bengal Cavalry, 47th Bengal Infantry, 24th Bengal Infantry, 36th Bengal Infantry Shekhawati Brigade, 4th Nasiri Battalion and 6th Sirmoor Battalion (the last two named were Gorkhas). The Sikh forces included the disciplined battalions of General Avitabile, one of the better known foreign generals employed by Ranjit Singh and troops provided by the Raja of Ladwa, a Cis Sutlej Chief who, of course, was punished at the end of the war by the forfeiture of all his territories. The Battle resulted in a victory for the British and Sir Harry wrote his report with characteristic exuberance soliciting from the Duke his pronouncement, four months later, that the battle had been "a well-managed little affair."

There is a monument to this battle about a mile and half from the village of Aliwal. The top ten feet of it has been pulled down or fallen over and lies over the short wall that surrounds the monument, and some bricks have been removed from one of the corners. Of all the monuments this one is in the least good shape. When it was built, in 1868, it must have stood seventy feet high. There is nothing to indicate that it commemorates the battle, except the usual government notice, in four languages, to say it is an historical site. At the site I met a farmer, by the name of Jugjeet Singh, and asked him what he knew about the monument. According to him it commemorates the death of a Sikh woman called Dyan Kaur, who had killed her baby son and a British officer. The British officer, after a big battle, was searching the area for Sikh soldiers and came upon the woman who had just delivered a son and the officer wanted to kill him so that he would not grow up to be a Sikh warrior. So, as the officer stretched out his hands to take the baby, Dyan Kaur knifed him. Fearing that she would now be killed by the British troops, she killed her baby and then herself; and the monument commemorates this sad event. Jugjeet said he has a daughter in England but did not know where except that the town has big water in front of it. As we had by now a long conversation, I was invited home for a meal and I am sure it would have been great, but I wanted to get back to have another shot at finding the Cemetery before the sun disappeared. I found that once one gets into the countryside the people are very courteous and most hospitable, they talk to you as an equal and seem very happy in their own skins; real gentleman. I think that in the countryside of the Punjab I met more civil people than one could hope to meet in “civilised” London!



I had a feeling that at Fountain Chowk in Ludhiana, we had previously taken the wrong turning. So back we went and took the one I felt was the right one, and it was. The cemetery, in the middle of Ludhiana city, clearly occupies prime real estate. If the Indians ever grow to be less superstitious it will be gobbled up in greedy speculation. Of all the cemeteries I had visited, this was in the worst condition. Within five minutes of being there, I was joined by Daniel Das who introduced himself as the Caretaker. He apologised for the condition of the cemetery and said that he could do very little as he was not receiving any funds despite all efforts; could I help. He said that his father, Alexander Das, who was the previous Caretaker and had died two years earlier, had written many times to a Mr Ford at the British High Commission and had received no reply. He told me that the current Bishop was equally unhelpful and that the previous one had actually sold a church plus this very cemetery! The new owner had quickly handed it back as on its purchase he had lost three brothers under strange circumstances. Now the Bishop’s young widow, who is transsexual, is claiming ownership. I believe the waters are very murky and a good deal of speculation is already going on. The cemetery was first used in 1813, so it is probably one of the oldest in North India. For this reason alone it should be given some attention. It contains some very interesting inmates. One is, Anna Ventura, who died in July 1875, the relict of the late General Ventura, she was his Muslim wife whom he had left behind when he returned to France. The General had been one of Ranjit Singh’s chief generals. Another is the grave of Lt Colonel John King of the 14th Light Dragoons. He was their Commanding Officer at the Battle of Chillianwalla, 13 January 1849, when his Regiment, along with the rest of the Brigade, commanded by Brigadier Pope, left the battlefield. Later, when General Sir Charles Napier, who had replaced General Gough, was inspecting the 14th Light Dragoons, one of the troopers shouted out, “Our Colonel is a coward”. He was duly court martialled. In reviewing the Court’s findings Sir Charles exonerated the trooper. Lt Colonel King could not abide this implied



disgrace so he shot himself. The interesting thing is that his tombstone was dedicated specifically by the NCOs and Men of the Regiment; no officers! I am sure there is a story here. Then there is another one containing the remains of Ensign Daniel Augustus Sandford, aged 23 years, who with the 2nd European Regiment took part in all the operations of the 2nd Anglo-Sikh War and wrote a most informative journal about it. Then in Lahore, after all the fighting, he died of cholera. Finally, there is the mass grave for the NCOs and Men of HM 50th Foot (Queens Own) who, on the one hundredth day after the 1st Sikh War in which they had gallantly fought, and survived, were killed when their barrack collapsed in a dust storm. As the shadows were lengthening and a drink was beckoning in celebration of what had turned out to be a productive day, I returned to the Majestic Park, to a Black Dog-whisky.

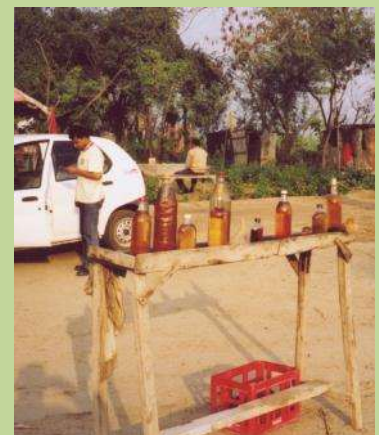
The next morning we moved west along a good road to Ferozepur the “City of Martyrs”. Including a couple of tea-stops, it took us two and half hours to get there. In 1845 it would have taken “five marches”. We passed through Jagraon and Moga; the latter did not exist in those days and now owes its prominence to the fact that there is a huge Nestle factory just outside. In accordance with the 1811 treaty with the Cis Sutlej chiefs the British exercised the right of escheat on there being no male heir. This was the case in 1835 with Ferozepur, founded by Emperor Feroz Shah in 1360. It became British property and a Political Agent, Mr M P Edgeworth, was posted there in May 1838. This gentleman was replaced by Captain H M Lawrence in January 1839 until March 1841 and he was back again in October 1841 until the end of the year. It was during these postings to Ferozepur that Henry Lawrence developed his knowledge of the Sikhs. Between his two stays in Ferozepur, the appointed Political Agent was Lieutenant J D Cunningham, the author of the famous authoritative book on the Sikhs, “The History of the Sikhs” This book, when it was published, was banned by the Governor General, Lord Dalhousie (“a work that commanded itself so little to his superiors”) and Cunningham’s promising political career came to a halt. The official grounds for the ban were that the author had used information of a confidential nature that he could only have obtained in his official capacity. Basically he had suggested that the British, by certain actions, had provoked the Sikhs into a war. Two of these acts were increasing the garrison at Ferozepur to a force of seven thousand men and to bringing eight barges up the Sutlej to Ferozepur. Looking back, there is no doubt that he was perfectly correct. Sadly, he now lies in a lonely grave in the Ambala Cemetery. The political Agent, at the time of the war, was Captain Peter Nicholson he was also the Assistant to Major George Broadfoot, the Governor General’s Agent for the Northwest Frontier. Nicholson was killed at the Battle of Ferozeshah and lies buried in the Ferozepur Cemetery, under the wrong name of Patrick! Finally, other political alumni of Ferozepur, Mr P A Vans Agnew, December 1845 to February 1846. In April of 1848 he was the gentleman who, accompanied by his friend Lieutenant Anderson, was sent to Multan to supervise the changeover of governorship and in the process got killed, thereby igniting the embers for the 2nd Anglo-Sikh War.

Ferozepur is a “sleepy” town with a vast number of colonial bungalows in big compounds along wide streets, still very much in use. Driving along these roads it was like going through a time warp back into the 1930s. My first priority was to find somewhere to stay and we were directed to the “best” hotel; an absolute dump! Eventually I went to the “Circuit House”. Very nice and modern and the Head whatever informed me that rooms were available but I would have to seek the permission of the Supervisor to be allocated one. So off I went to look for this person, who, it turned out, could not have been more unhelpful. I could not have a room as the Chief Minister of the Punjab was coming with a large party so there was no room. I pulled out my *chitty* but he did not want even to read it. This is the only occasion when the magic powers of the *chitty* failed. At this point I revised my list of priorities and made my way along the Mall to St Andrew’s Church. As far as I can make out, Circuit Houses appear in most towns and are for touring government officials who, originally, would have been Commissioners and Residents visiting to hear legal disputes. The first one of these was built in 1838 at Bassian by George Clerk, the Governor General’s Agent in Ambala.

St Andrew's Church was built in 1844. It lies in a fairly large compound which also incorporates a small Girl's School. The Church is well kept and is full of plaques to all the dead of the Sutlej Campaign. At the Church I met Mr E Phillips who is the Principal of the Girl's School, but he was also very knowledgeable about the Church and the Cemetery. He appointed a young man, Rahul, as our guide to the Cemetery, which was very good of him as I doubt whether we would otherwise have found it. Also it was a good thing that we had a small car as it was just narrow enough to pass through some of the streets of the old part of town. The first entries in the Ferozepur Cemetery are of the hundreds of souls that died during the battles of the 1st Anglo-Sikh War. The characters and dedications read like a history of this war. Sadly the place is over grown and many of the tombs are damaged. I simply cannot understand how all the Regiments of the British Army, which have Colours proudly emblazoned with names of these battles, have not and do not do anything to have this Cemetery kept in good order. For example, the 62nd Foot (Wiltshire) make a big thing of Sobraon Day when the Regimental Colour is handed over by the Commanding Officer to the Sergeants, for twenty four hours, in commemoration of Sergeant McCabe carrying the Colour up to the battlements of Sobraon as there were no more officers to do so. Remnants of this flag were enclosed in the lid of a salt cellar from which every newly joined officer was invited to "Take salt with the Regiment".

Besides accommodating the "Who's Who" of the Sutlej Campaign there are some other interesting inmates; the son of Colonel van Cortlandt who was an officer in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Army and Anne Sarah Napier, age twenty nine, who was the first wife of Lt Colonel Napier, a respected and able Bengal Engineer who ended up as Field Marshall Lord Napier of Magdala. He now sits on his horse at the top of Queens Gate, Kensington.

Some five miles short of our entry into Ferozepur, we had stopped for a tea break and some *russagullas* at one of the small towns. While enjoying the break I got into a conversation with an old man by the name of Gurhan. As he was eighty years old, I thought he might have some memories of folk tales about when the Sikhs fought the British. According to him, the Sikhs had come to fight the British who then paid-off some of the Sikh Sardars and they withdrew. He also knew where Modki and Ferozeshah were. Furthermore, he said there were "pictures" that we could see at Modki. I could not believe this stroke of luck and asked him to be our guide to these two battle sites. This would save me getting all snarled-up on the country lanes and tracks as I had been with Aliwal. I made an appointment with Gurhan to pick him up at the tea stop at 3.30pm after I had done Ferozepur. At this stop I noticed that there was a table on the side of the road, on which there were various sizes of bottles containing some sort of liquid. I thought they were bottles of local honey. However it turned out that the liquid was kerosene and was for sale. This was the local "fuel pump" as the nearest regular fuel station was many miles away.



At 3.30pm we were back at the tea stop and bundled our eighty year old guide into the car. He seemed to be as excited as I was and could not stop talking and the driver was yakking away showing off his Punjabi. We drove for miles and I started to worry about the old man's memory and whether we were being taken for a ride! When, low and behold, I saw the Monument. Gurhan insisted that we first paid a visit to the *Gurdwara* close-by as the "pictures" were there. So we drove into this place and got out of the car. On either side of the short drive way there are glassed-in, life sized tableaux depicting all forms of very cruel executions and punishments. These were old Gurhan's "pictures". As my guide, he explained that the paler skinned individuals in the tableaux who were being tortured, were Sikhs; the executioners were Muslims who had been paid by the British to do the dirty work! Now that I was in the *Gurdwara* I had to go through the *puja* ritual by taking off my shoes and socks,

covering my head, a walk through water, then bending down on my knees (very painful). At the end putting out my hands for *prashad*. This did not look too appetising but the people insisted that I eat it. It was absolutely delicious; I am told that it consists of three ingredients; I could have eaten a lot more. I was also told, by my guide, that this place was called the *Katalgarh (slaughterhouse)*. From here we walked to the Monument.

Shortly before he died on 27th June 1839, Maharaja Ranjit Singh had signed up to the “Simla Manifesto” an arrogant scheme, sanctioned by Lord Auckland the Governor General, to effect a regime change in Afghanistan, but the crafty Maharaja did not allow the British “Army of the Indus” to march north across the Punjab.



This masterful hand that had kept the Punjab under complete subjugation and his splendid fighting machine in complete check was now dead. This disaster was followed by the British disaster in Afghanistan of complete humiliation. By the time the British had recovered, the third, pro-British, Maharaja, Sher Singh, was on the *Guthi* and Lord Ellenborough, Auckland’s brother in law, was the new Governor General. The British “Army of Retribution” was allowed to cross the Punjab and assemble in Peshawar, recover their self-esteem in Afghanistan and return across the Punjab back to Ferozepur where, Lord Ellenborough assembled forty five thousand troops in a jingoistic morale raising *Barra Tamasha*. While Maharaja Sher Singh sent his son, Kunwar Pratap Singh, as his personal representative, the Sikh Army was not much impressed. Then on 15 September 1843 the Maharaja was assassinated and there followed a period of complete anarchy, the soldiery rising to practical supremacy in the State. War

with the British had become inevitable!

In preparation for this inevitability, the Governor General, Lord Ellenborough and his new Commander in Chief, General Hugh Gough, silenced the troublesome Marathas in Gwalior by leading an “Army of Exercise” against what they considered to be too large a force in the rear of their main focus up north. This Army consisted of a contingent of *Memsabihs* on elephants who had been invited to see the fun. At one point, in all the confusion, this contingent found itself leading the advance. After the victory, Ellenborough presented the four ladies with a special medal.

The next move by the Governor General certainly did nothing to allay the fears of the Sikhs as to the true aspiration of the British. This was in June of 1843 when the British forgot about treaties and annexed the Scinde, thus shutting off the western border of the Sikh kingdom. In the words of General Napier, who commanded the invading army, “We have no right to siege Scinde.....piece of rascality it will be”. Meanwhile the only authority in the Kingdom of Ranjit Singh was an increasingly belligerent Army ostensibly under the Regency of Maharani Jindan, the mother of the declared six year old son of Ranjit Singh, Maharaja Dulip Singh. While many of Ranjit Singh’s old Sardars did not want war with the British and certainly not without the assistance of “General Sardar Hot Season”, the Sikh Durbar “let slip the dogs of war”. On the British side of the Sutlej there was a new Governor General, Henry Hardinge and the whole Army excitingly awaited the call to battle, “The Sikhs have crossed the Sutlej”.

This interlude was necessary in order to set the stage for the mad rush by the British army up to the Sutlej to counter the crossing by the Sikh army at Ferozepur on 11 December 1845. Ferozepur is only forty miles from Lahore and 135 miles from Ambala where the British troops were being hurriedly formed into Divisions and Brigades. In those days there were no standing divisions and brigades. The troops were stationed in garrison and according to the need were grouped into brigades, under the senior Lt Colonel on the basis of two Native Regiments to one British or European regiment of the

East India Company. Divisions consisted of brigades under a Major General, normally of HM forces. At this time commissions by purchase was almost *de rigueur* in HM forces but not allowed in the Company forces, hence, sometimes there would be a great disparity in the age of HM and the Company's Commanders.

On 12 December 1845, the Governor General declared War and the troops moved as fast as they could across flat and dusty ground with little water. The marches now consisted of not the normal ten to twelve miles per day, but fifteen to twenty causing a longer column of stragglers and the reduction of artillery that could only move at elephant or bullock pace. The advance guard reached Mudki, a village some eight miles south of Ferozepur, on 18 December at about lunch time having covered eighteen miles that morning, now somewhat exhausted. Scarcely had they encamped when it was announced that a portion of the Sikh Army, which had moved forward to counter the further advance of the British, was close at hand. The Commander in Chief, impetuous as ever, immediately pushed forward with small force and met the Sikhs about two miles north of the village. The battle, which ensued, began with a heavy cannonade on both sides, during which the advancing British infantry suffered severely from the fire of the Sikh guns. To create a diversion a body of cavalry consisting of the 3rd Light Dragoons, the Governor General's Body Guard and the 5th Bengal Cavalry, made a movement on the enemy's left, and turning that flank, swept along the rear of the enemy's infantry and his guns. At the same time the 4th Bengal Cavalry and the 9th Irregular Cavalry made a corresponding movement on the right, while the British infantry drove the Sikhs from position to position, until increasing darkness put a stop to all further manoeuvre. The Sikhs withdrew with a loss of seventeen guns out of the forty they had brought into play. The British loss was two hundred and fifteen killed and six hundred and fifty seven wounded, plus loads of horses. Thus ended the Battle of Modki on 18 December 1845 and the seventy five foot Monument, erected in 1870, that I was looking at, commemorates this battle. The dead were actually buried in two great pits at the village of Modki, not far from the *Gurdwara*.



Now more confident in his guide abilities, we bundled Gurhan back into the car and allowed him to take us to the next battle site, Ferozeshah. After much driving along dusty tracks we came to the Ferozeshah Monument, which unlike the rest, has a trilateral base and is also seventy five feet high and was erected in 1869. It's a more handsome looking structure. At the Monument we met Dilbar Singh, a very fine looking Sikh of about fifty who promptly told Gurhan to shut up as he, Dilbar, had been responsible for all the monuments for the past twenty three years and so knew more about them. This monument is close to the village of Misriwalla. After some conversation as to what had occurred at this place we were offered water and soon thereafter, tea. Dilbar Singh also offered to be our guide to Sobraon the next day. A very generous offer, but I declined as it would have meant a lot of driving, picking him up and bringing him back. However he gave us very clear directions and made the point that we should make for the village of Rodewal!

After the Battle of Modki the Commander in Chief was two Major Generals short (Sale and McCaskill, both killed) and was awaiting the rest of his force to come up. At this juncture it was quite clear that the Sikhs were no ordinary force so the Governor General, who was on the spot watching all that was going wrong, offered his services as the Commander in Chief's second in command. Never had this been done before or since. Henry Hardinge was a soldier of some repute and was still on the active list as a Lt General, just one place below Gough. Furthermore he had been a member the Duke's staff at Waterloo and had lost an arm at Ligny. In those days no soldier could have asked for better credentials. To have been in any battle conducted by the Duke was like an accolade of military achievement. It is worth noting that two years earlier, Henry Hardinge had been offered the job of

Commander in Chief, India, and had turned it down so Hugh Gough got the job instead. The Commander in Chief thanked the Governor General for this most generous offer and for the imminent battle gave him command of the left wing of the Army while he commanded the right.

HM 29th Foot, the 1st European Regiment and some heavy guns joined the Army of the Sutlej a day after the Battle of Modki on 21 December. Early that morning, each man carrying sixty rounds of ammunition, a water bottle and two days cooked ration, the Army moved forward for the purpose of assailing the Sikhs in their entrenched position around the village of Ferozeshah. The night before orders had been sent to Major General Littler in Ferozepur to give the Sikhs there the slip and join the main force. The Commander in Chief wanted to attack immediately but his second in command advised a delay until such time as Littler's force had joined the main body. A "time out" was called, Hardinge put on his Governor General's hat ordered the Commander in Chief to wait, then reverted back to being second in command. Such was the start of a battle, which was to be described as "the most terrible battle of British Indian history", "When the fate of India hung in the balance". Littler arrived at Army HQ shortly before noon, in advance of his troops. It was nearing 2.00pm before his Division reached Misriwalla at which point the Governor General turned to Gough saying, "Now the army is at your disposal". The Battle of Ferozeshah commenced at 4.00pm on 21 December 1845. Many accounts add pointlessly, "on the shortest day of the year" which has little application to the Punjab where all days end about the same time!

*Two days of rest were given; but on the third
Our gallant chief advanced to meet the foe,
Along the ranks he rode, and gave the words
Britons remember Modki! Fire low.*

Sergeant Bingham

The battle started with an attack by Littler's Division, almost independently, on the left. His troops were exhausted and they had taken on the staunchest part of the Sikh entrenchments. This attack failed and the leading Brigade retired. In the meantime the Second and Third Divisions, under Major General Gilbert and Brigadier Wallace respectively, advanced under destructive fire and with "matchless gallantry" carried the batteries opposed to them at the point of the bayonet. However the Sikhs could not be driven any further than their camp at the rear of the batteries from which they maintained a heavy fire, and in spite of the most heroic efforts a portion only of the entrenchment was won. The First Division, under Major General Harry Smith, which had been kept in reserve, was now pushed forward on the right and carrying the opposing batteries penetrated into the entrenchment, capturing the village of Ferozeshah which it held until daylight failed. Meanwhile, the 3rd Light Dragoons made a heroic charge against some of the enemy batteries, sabred the gunners, driving the Sikhs further back into the entrenchment.

The day's confusion, caused by dust and gun smoke was replaced by darkness caused dislocation of any order. In the darkness the most dire confusion arose, regiments and brigades becoming mixed up in inextricable disorder, while the Sikhs recovered some guns and maintained a heavy destructive fire. The totally disorientated troops, tired, cold and hungry moved towards their regimental bugle calls, leaving behind the moaning and pleading wounded in this partial retirement to the south of the entrenchment. The Sikhs kept up the fire; the fire of one big gun was particularly annoying so much so that the Governor General ordered HM 80th Foot and 1st Europeans to capture and spike it. This action and the charge by 3rd Light Dragoons earlier are probably the most gallant episodes in this battle. The rest of it was pretty much a "muddle" causing the Governor General to reflect on the abilities of his Commander in Chief, concluding that the Army was not safe in his hands. The future of India hung like an ominous cloud over the cold and hungry combatants.

Next morning, as the sun rose so did the spirit of the troops. They brushed themselves down, formed into regimental ranks and renewed their advance with indomitable resolution and hardly any ammunition. They drove the Sikhs through the village and out of the entrenchment. But the contest was not yet at an end as, at this juncture, Sardar Tej Singh, the Sikh Commander in Chief brought up a fresh Army from the vicinity of Ferozepur. Now was to occur one of the most extraordinary events of this extraordinarily bloody battle. Laid up, in Ferozepur, was the Adjutant General of the Company's Army, Major General James Lumley. He had on his staff his son, Captain James Lumley of 9th Bengal Infantry and this gentleman took it upon himself to gallop into the fray ordering Littler's Division to move off the battlefield and onto Ferozepur. Staff work was so poor and confusion so great that this type of unauthorised troop direction was possible and not questioned. This movement by Littler was perceived by Sardar Tej Singh as a pincer movement to out flank his Army. So, to the troops embroiled in the fight with bayonets, it came as a surprise and a God given stroke of luck when suddenly the Sikhs broke off the engagement and withdrew from the battlefield and across the Sutlej. This was definitely a case of victory out of the jaws of defeat. The British losses in this desperate and sanguinary conflict were seven hundred and twenty killed, one thousand seven hundred and seventy eight wounded and three hundred and seventy nine missing, plus thousands of horses dead.

When they eventually caught up with Captain Lumley he was on his horse in his pyjama bottoms maintaining that his uniform had been shot off. He was described as a "deranged" officer and returned to his Regiment, silently retiring in April 1848. His father died in Ferozepur in March 1846 and is buried in the Ferozepur Cemetery. Others, of note, killed or died of wounds in this horrific battle were:

*Major A W F Somerset. Military Secretary to the Governor General and son of Lord Raglan of Crimea fame. He was in the Grenadier Guards. It was unusual for a Guardsman to serve anywhere outside Europe.

*Brigadier N Wallace. Divisional Commander

*Captain P Nicholson. Assistant Agent to the Governor General

*Captain D'Arcy Todd. Bengal Horse Artillery. This gentleman had arrived in Calcutta when he was sixteen. He branched into political employment and was for a number of years the Governor General's Agent in Heart but then he trod on the toe of Lord Auckland by vacating that place when it became untenable and was sent back to regimental duties. The day after he had buried his wife in Ambala, he rushed up to join his unit at Ferozeshah.

*Major G Broadfoot, Madras Army. He was the Governor General's Agent for Northwest Frontier and has been blamed for aggravating the situation with the Sikhs. He was very highly thought of by Lord Hardinge and was replaced by Henry Lawrence. He had two brothers who had been killed in the Afghanistan fiasco where he had also served, making a name for himself at Jellalabad. After the relief of this place he had a bit of a contretemps with Lt Col P Taylor of HM 9th Foot on the slopes of an Afghan hill and (continued in the newspapers and for a number of years) until both were killed in this battle and now lie, neighbours forever, in the Ferozepur Cemetery.

*Dr Holtz. He was the accompanying surgeon to Prince Fredrick Waldeman of Prussia, who had invited himself to witness the British at war. The Prince was travelling incognito as Count Regensburg. He took a lot of convincing to vacate the battlefield and thereby removing the potential embarrassment to the Governor General of a dead Prince. Dr Holtz died of his wounds.

The Army of the Sutlej was totally incapable of any pursuit; they had run out of ammunition, supplies, men and horses. They had regiments of wounded to take care of and exhausted soldiers who needed rest—and grog! Thus the Army remained in the area for Christmas and the next forty days being reinforced, re-supplied and re-invigorated.

As the sun was disappearing rapidly, as it does in this part of the world, we said good-bye to Dilbar Singh, bundled Gurhan back into the car and duly deposited him from where we had picked him up. By now it was totally dark and I had nowhere to stay. I knew that if push came to shove I could get a room at Ludhiana, so we headed east towards that place, stopping at every likely place to ask for a room. After about six stops and now at Moga, we found the Samrat Hotel. I paid for the room in advance and had quite a nice dinner in the men only dining room. The other one was the Family Dining Room. My room was very basic so I decided not to undress and tried to sleep in my clothes. I took my wallet out of my back pocket and placed it under the pillow, both for security and comfort.

Next morning after breakfast, in checking out the driver pointed out that we had been over charged. This was sorted out and the Management gave me a computerised receipt about which they were very proud. We then drove back down the road and after about thirty miles turned right towards Zira and the River Sutlej. It was now the 10th of February and the 160th anniversary of the Battle of Sobraon, the last battle of the 1st Anglo-Sikh War. After a most tortuous drive through villages and along canals we arrived at the Sobraon Monument. Had it not been for Dilbar Singh's explicit instruction to zero in on Rodewalla we would not have made it. As it was I had to balance the driver's superior knowledge of Punjabi a useless map and my GPS.

This Monument is also about seventy five feet high more solidly built with a wider base and erected in 1868. After our arrival we were soon joined by the lady who lived next door with her family. The water came and then the tea; very nice. The lady suggested that we should also visit the *Gurdwara* about a mile away and built on the spot where Sardar Sham Singh had been killed during this battle. Sardar Sham Singh was a veteran soldier from the days of the great Maharaja. He had not wanted this war but had been forced to fight by the insinuations of cowardice by Rani Jindan. After the battle Sardar Sham Singh's servants obtained permission to search for their master's body and carry it back to his home. There, in the last *suttee* in the Punjab, the Sardar's wife died, a bride forever, clasping the clothes he had worn at their wedding. When we eventually got to the *Gurdwara*, we found that there was a celebration going on and, on asking were told that the local population held a celebration each 10th of February in honour of Sardar Sham Singh's death. The people at this place were very friendly and welcoming. I would like to mention that alongside the Monument there was a game of cricket being played. I am sure all those English souls who died that day would like to know this!!

After the perfectly executed Battle of Aliwal, Major General Harry Smith marched his force back to the main body which was encamped in the area of Araf and Bootawala, being rested, reinforced and regulated. Meanwhile the Sikh Army were doing likewise around Sobraon, on the right bank of the Sutlej. In the British camp there was natural disappointment at the slow progress of the siege-train and by now it was sickening for want of a battle. In this static mode, apart from the odd skirmish, the Commander in Chief had time to collect better intelligence. His biographer makes a special mention of the "Sobraon Boy" in this intelligence role. Earlier on General Gough had learnt that the Sikhs were constructing substantial entrenchments on the left bank of the river but this did not disturb him as while it reduced the use of a flanking movement, it also reduced the Sikh Army's ability for any counter attack or tactical withdrawal. Harry Smith's force joined the main body on 8 February 1846. By now the Sikh Army was well fortified around the village of Chota Sobraon including a bridge of boats connecting the fortification to Sobraon on the opposite bank.

All necessary arrangements having been made, early on the morning of 10 February, the troops were placed in position for the storming of the entrenchments, which was to take place after a long salvo of artillery, lasting two and a half hours. The attack was begun by the Third Division, now under the command of Major General Dick (another veteran of the Peninsula and Waterloo). This Division consisted of Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Brigades under the commands of Brigadier Ashburnham, Wilkinson and Stacy. Moving rapidly forward through desolating fire the Division suffered heavy losses, and Major General Dick fell mortally wounded. However, Stacy's Brigade composed of HM 10th Foot, HM 53rd Foot and the 43rd and 59th Native Infantry forced its way into the enemy's entrenchments, without firing their muskets. They were closely followed by Wilkinson's Brigade, composed of HM 80th Foot and 33rd and 63rd Native Infantry, and Ashburnham's Brigade of HM 9th and 62nd Foot and 26th Native Infantry. It quickly became evident that, unless a diversion was made, the weight of the whole Sikh Army would be directed at these leading brigades. So, the First Division, Major General Harry Smith, and the Second Division, Major General Walter Gilbert, were pushed forward to assail the left and centre of the Sikh position. After a series of desperate conflicts, in which they were more than once repulsed by the murderous enemy fire, these Divisions also won their way into the entrenchments. The First Division consisted of HM 31st Foot, 50th Foot and 42nd and 47th Native Infantry plus the Nasiri battalion. The second Division consisted of HM 29th Foot, 1st European Regiment, 16th and 68th Native Infantry plus the Sirmoor Battalion. It is of interest to note that at this battle there were Gorkha troops on both sides. Little by little the Sikhs, fighting desperately to the last, were forced back and driven on to the river where the bridge of boats had collapsed and many hundreds drowned trying to swim across this wide fast flowing river. In this battle the Sikhs lost about seventy guns and thousands of soldiers. The British losses were three hundred and twenty killed, and two thousand and sixty four wounded; again, umpteen horses. After the battle General Gough commissioned five warrant officers. As he had not obtained prior permission, he was rapped over the knuckles by the Duke as "the pleasure of Her majesty had not been sought". General Gough in replying to the Duke did the honourable thing by offering to resign for this breach of military etiquette. As I drove away from the *Gurdwara* I thought how ironic it was that this last battle of the War, which the British had won, was being celebrated each 10 February in honour of a valiant Sikh Sardar who, *talwar* in hand and surrounded by bayonets died fighting for the honour of Maharaja Ranjit Singh!

The next day the Army of the Sutlej crossed the river, unopposed. On 15 February 1846, Maharaja Dulip Singh came to the Governor General's camp to formally surrender and by 18 February the Army was in Lahore. The War had ended, laudatory reports written; the celebration of honours, awards and champagne begun. The troops were awarded twelve months *batta* (£7-14-6) primarily to stop any looting in Lahore, and for the first time a Campaign Medal was sanctioned for all ranks. Now the question of the treatment of the Sikh Kingdom had to be settled.

All were in agreement that while the war had been won the Sikh spirit had not been destroyed. Furthermore, Lord Hardinge, as he now was, held as an axiom that the Punjab had to be held by either the British or the Sikhs; under no condition by a Muslim entity. There were three courses from which to choose: annexation, a subsidiary alliance, or the continuance of the kingdom, separate and independent, but reduced in military strength. Both the East India Company and their Governor were opposed to annexation, if only for cost reasons, the second choice would have meant the continuance of the State, as a separate kingdom, but with its army levied by the paramount government and paid for by the State. This arrangement could, under certain circumstances, have worked. However based on experience elsewhere, it was found not to be conducive to good administration by the State concerned. So this left option three, which was put into work.

My old guide Gurhan was not entirely off the mark by suggesting that the Sardars had been paid-off by the British. Before, during and even after the war many *Vakils* and letters were being received by

various British officials alluding to terms, conditions and information regarding the Durbar, the Army and dispositions. All these were designed to ensure the better treatment of the sender in the event of a British victory. The main communicator for self-preservation was Raja Gulab Singh of Jummoo. He was the eldest of three Dogra brothers who Ranjit Singh had favoured and promoted into high positions of the State. During the mayhem of the post Ranjit Singh era, the other two brothers had been killed. Raja Gulab Singh knew that if the British had lost or had come to terms with the Sikh Army, he was toast! By deceit and cunning he appeared supportive to the pro-war Durbar yet did not even send them a *chicria ke hasri* (sparrow's breakfast) during the war. To this day the Sikhs have no high opinion of this traitor.

The terms of the Treaty of Lahore, 11 March 1846, were that all guns that had been used in the war and not already captured were to be surrendered, the Jullundar Doab, a tract lying between the Rivers Sutlej and Beas was to be transferred to the British, the reduction of the Sikh Army to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry, plus an indemnity of one and a half crores of rupees. A Council of Regency under Rani Jindan was formed with Sardar Lal Singh, the Sikh Commander at Ferozeshah, as the Chief Minister under the watchful eye of the Governor's Agent, Henry Lawrence. Included in the Council were such characters as Diwan Dina Nath, a crafty Kashmiri Brahmin, Sardar Tej Singh the recent Sikh Commander in Chief, but unfortunately a very few of the Sikh Sardars. All Sardars who had not opposed the British were confirmed in their territories and *jagirs*. Now came into play, in my humble opinion, a piece of chicanery. It was quite evident that the cash strapped Council could not afford to pay the huge indemnity, so Kashmir, which the British did not want, was "accepted" in lieu; then promptly sold to the Raja of Jummoo for £75,000, with money he had looted from Ranjit Singh's Durbar under cover of darkness. Gulab Singh was now the Maharaja of Jummoo and Kashmir, according to Lord Hardinge "the greatest rascal in India".

We arrived back in Ludhiana at about 6.00 p.m., I released the driver and walked into the hotel to check in. At Reception I took out my passport and put my hand into my back pocket to get my credit card out of my wallet. My pocket was empty! Panic, as my adrenalin shot through the roof! At the first moment of rational thought, I realised that I had left my wallet under my pillow at the Samrat Hotel in Moga, fifty miles away. Leaving all my gear at Reception, I rushed out to hold the driver, then rushed in to find the computerised bill from the Samrat on which was their telephone number. The guy at Reception made the call and was asked to call back in ten minutes. They let me check in as I had stayed there recently and they had my particulars. Then I waited and prayed. The Reception guy made another call and was told *milghier* (found, as in connected), the most beautiful word in the Indian language. I rushed out again and instructed the driver to go back to the Samrat and phone me once he had the wallet in his hand. He was then to stay the night there and pick me up next morning at 10.00am for our drive to Delhi. About an hour and a half later the driver phoned me to say that the Samrat Manager refused to hand him my wallet and would only return it to me in person. They had my wallet, I did not have a leg to stand on, so I promised to be there a.s.a.p. I rushed out of my room back to Reception to book a car and one was produced in under ten minutes. The driver was excellent and got me to the Samrat within the hour. My driver was there, looking dejected and I walked up to the reception desk. There was quite a crowd of staff hanging around to see the fun. I was then invited into a room and the door was shut and curtains drawn. A guy, whom I assumed to be the Manager, was sitting at a desk and I was invited to sit opposite him. There were two other men in the room, one of them appeared to be a young Sikh guru. The other man then started to ask me all sorts of questions. "What was I doing in the area?" "Why was I carrying a compass and binoculars?" "Where else had I been in the Punjab?" I quickly realised that my whole personae must have appeared very odd to them especially as I was travelling in what is a sensitive area. So, out came the General's *chitty* and their attitude became more relaxed. The guru eventually asked the Manager if he had my wallet and the Manager produced it from his desk drawer. I asked if I could give a tip to the person who had found and handed in my wallet; this done and after a lot of thanks, I was on my way back to Ludhiana. Back

in my hotel room I double checked my wallet, which I assumed the Samrat guys had also done. I then realised that on my Driver's Licence, alongside my date of birth is the word "Pakistan". No wonder I was a suspicious character!

The next morning at 10.00am we were on our way back to Delhi. I first went to the Grand Hotel to pay for the car, there were no additions, and then to the Radisson to check in for the next two nights. Arun joined me for dinner and I regaled him with all my adventures. All told, it had been a wonderful and informative experience. On reflection I could have done with a few more days as I now felt that I had rushed things a bit. Also on reflection I have formulated some ideas about this First Anglo-Sikh War. The first one is that had the Sikhs taken time to devise a strategy, laid the ground work for dissention in the Cis Sutlej, waited for the start of the hot season and put the Army under the command of a single competent general, they may well have won. Instead, they had no strategy beyond rushing across the river, in the cold weather with the Army split, in two groups. One, the irregulars, under Sardar Lal Singh who owed his appointment more to his jiggery-pokery in the *zenana* than any military attributes. The other, regular, under Sardar Tej Singh who owed his position in the hierarchy to being the nephew of Jamadar Khushal Singh, an old favourite of Ranjit Singh's. He was just palatable to the Army, but they did not think much of him; however, as the Durbar were the paymasters, they accepted his appointment. Also, rather surprisingly, the Sikhs did not use their cavalry in effective harassment of the British lines of communication, a tactic they were particularly good at.

The next day I duly reported to the General for debriefing and afterwards went to lunch with the Maharaja and his family. The General was all suited up for a Gorkha association lunch and wanted me to attend but I could not due to my previous appointment. Anyway, I had a most pleasant chat with the General who told me a number of interesting facts about the Gorkhas pre Independence. This mystique of the Gurkhas being special, in the British Army, has, I believe, continued to this day. Lunch with the Maharaja and his family was delicious and rather a long one. The Maharaja, besides other qualifications, is definitely a food connoisseur and could, no doubt, write a guide-book listing the best restaurants for each particular dish. On my return to the hotel I phoned Bilal to reconfirm my arrival in Lahore the next day. He informed me that he would not be able to meet me as he had been transferred to Karachi, but not to worry, his wife was going to meet me and take me to their house. I thought this was very brave of Faezah, his young wife, to agree to pick up a man, and foreigner at that, in a most public of places, Lahore Airport.

The following morning and a late "last breakfast in India", I packed up and awaited Arun's arrival for our last meal together. In packing up I had devised a plan, which would enable me to arrive in Lahore with TWO bottles of scotch. The Solan Distillery souvenir bottle I packed in a small suit case with other things I would not need in Pakistan and my plan was to leave this case in left luggage prior to going through customs. I was going to buy another bottle, at Delhi Airport, and carry it in my carry-case in the hope that Pakistan Customs would generously allow me to take it in for personal use, or as fitting libation in anticipation of a Pakistan victory at the Cricket Match. Arun drove me to the Airport and I thanked him for all he had done in making this trip such a success. I checked in and then bought my bottle of scotch, which was not easy as everyone was crowded around TVs watching the cricket; Mahendra Dhoni was batting!

The half hour flight, Delhi to Lahore, takes one hour off the clock because of the half hour time difference. So, I was in Lahore Airport, a much better one than Delhi, at 7.00pm on 13 February. First problem, no immigration cards on arrival; they were on the desks of the Immigration Officers so there was an unruly scuffle around these desks between people collecting cards to fill in and those who were queuing to be processed. My next problem was even bigger, there was no left luggage! By this time one of the many "professional greeters (PR)" had latched on to me and therefore I needed

Pakistani money. Believe it or not there is no money changer in the International Arrival Hall of Lahore Airport. They are located on the Departure level. So, with a vested interest in taking me to a money exchange, my PR person escorted me through customs to the second floor, and soon afterwards I was outside the Arrival entrance, with both my bottles of scotch, waiting to be picked up by a young Pakistani wife!

I waited and waited. In time I was joined by a taxi driver who could take me to “a good hotel, not far and very cheap”. From the public phone box I called Bilal but his phone was not being picked up. The same result on the next two attempts. Meanwhile, the Lahore “greeting Parties” had met their guests and taken off. Apart from one other foreigner, I was the only one left, and still no young Pakistani wife. Meanwhile, my taxi driver’s hotel became nearer and cheaper. Then I heard the announcement of the arrival of the Karachi Flight and it struck me that Bilal was on that flight hence no pick up of his phone. So I moved the short distance to the Domestic Arrivals and waited for Bilal, who had obviously decided, at the last minute, to come to Lahore to meet me. I waited and waited until again all the “greeting parties” had left and now I was the only one at both areas of arrival, the other foreigner having gone. I felt totally homeless and very alone. I was making up my mind to spend the night, sitting on my suitcase, at the Airport. Then it struck me that a better place to do this would be in the lobby of the Avari Hotel. So I got my taxi driver to take me to the Avari. At Reception I asked them to double check my booking for the nights of 16/17 February. This was confirmed so having established my credibility, I asked them if I could sit in their lounge for that night. After some hurried discussion behind the counter, they said no but they could offer me a room that had just been cancelled. I was in my room within twenty minutes and absolutely “over the moon”.

Early next morning I called Bilal, who was totally surprised to hear that I was at the Avari and extremely sorry about the mix up at the Airport. His wife had been looking for a “suited gent”, not some yob in a scruffy denim jacket! He then rearranged the transport to meet me at the Avari at 10.00am for my drive north. After a good breakfast of *Aloo puri* and *keema* I was in the car and on my way to Rasalnuggar. In 1848 this place was called Ramnuggar. On the way through Lahore we came across many groups of Police and Rangers who had clearly been positioned in expectation of trouble. On the outskirts we came across the trouble, roads blocked off by crowds and burning tyres, however we were not stopped. The crowds consisted mostly of young kids. At the time I had no idea what the cause was and assumed it was because Pakistan had lost the Cricket Match. Later I discovered it was because of the five month old cartoons!

My car was a Lancer and this time I sat in the back. My driver was Shahid Kamal of Bell’s Car Rental. He was superb and Bell’s very competitive. Altogether, a better deal than Routes in Delhi.

The reason I was in Pakistan was to do a couple of things, in particular to visit the battle site of Rasalnuggar, which I had failed to visit during my first trip in January, 2004. Secondly, I wanted to revisit the HM 24th Foot grave site at Chillianwalla. My plan was to head straight for Rasalnuggar, spend that night at the Tulip Hotel, on the Jhelum River, and on the following day go back to Chillianwalla. So, at Gujranwalla we branched off for a very long drive to the town of Rasalnuggar. From there we proceeded along cow tracks to the battle site, which is marked by a small grave yard in which are buried four casualties of the battle.

The 2nd Anglo-Sikh War started in April 1848 with the murder of two British officers in Multan. Under the Diwan Mulraj this grew into a rebellion against the Sikh Durbar. It was rapidly contained by Lt Edwardes, the Agent in Dejarat, and a “rag-tail” force he had collected, including a Durbar force under Colonel Cortlandt and a Daudpatras force provided by the Nawab of Bahawalpur. In August the Resident in Lahore, Mr Frederick Currie, sent a Durbar force, under Major General Whish, to

capture Multan. This force included a contingent of Sikhs under Raja Shere Singh Attariwala, whose father, Chuttur Singh Attariwala, the Sikh Governor of Hazara, was getting very restive with the restrictions imposed by the British dominated Sikh Durbar as personified by the British Agent in Hazara, Captain Abbott. In September the Sikh contingent under Raja Shere Singh defected and moved up north towards the Jhelum River and Whish called off the siege of Multan, but remained in the area awaiting an effective siege train.

At the start of 1848 there were, a new Governor General, thirty five year old Lord Dalhousie, and a new Resident at Lahore, Frederick Currie, who was standing in for Henry Lawrence. However, the old war horse, General Gough, was still in the saddle as Commander in Chief, and now promoted to a Lordship. At the beginning of the troubles Dalhousie deferred to Gough's experience and knowledge in military matters and the General felt that a general mobilisation was not necessary and certainly not during the hot season. So he and the Governor General remained in the cool of Simla while the troops at Multan fried eggs on gun barrels. There are a further two explanations for this apparent delay in reacting to the rebellion. Firstly, the British Army was way under strength and re-equipping it would take time, and secondly, a more sinister reason, was that the Governor General wanted the disgruntled Sikh Sardars to completely show their hand so permitting the British Army to destroy the Sikh will and pave the way to annexation.

The Army of the Punjab (the title alone says something) took the field in November 1848. The enemy, under Raja Shere Singh, were assembled at Rasalnuggar (Ramnuggar in those days). Lord Gough ordered Brigadier Colin Campbell (later Lord Clyde of Mutiny fame) to advance on Rasalnuggar for the purpose of driving the Sikhs across the river Chenab. He did so on 22 November and found that the Sikh main body had already crossed over leaving behind small bodies of their force still making their way towards the fords of the Chenab. To hasten the movement of these bodies, Lord Gough ordered two troops of artillery to push forward and open fire on these Sikh elements. At the same time the 3rd Light Dragoons was ordered to charge and clear the left bank of the river of all bodies of Sikhs that might still be around. The Dragoons supported by the 8th Native Light Cavalry, made a brilliant and effective charge. However, the Artillery, in their eagerness to engage, became entangled in the sands of the river and was forced to abandon one gun. At this point, the Sikh Commander re-engaged his Cavalry back to the left bank of the river under heavy artillery fire. Lord Gough then, "gave permission" to Lt Colonel Havelock, Commanding 14th Light Dragoons, to charge the enemy with his Regiment supported by the 5th Native Light Cavalry. After driving back the enemy cavalry on the plain, Havelock started another charge along a dry sandy channel of the river. This exposed his force to galling artillery fire from the enemy and for his horses to get bogged down in the sand. The charge petered-out and the force returned minus Havelock, whose head was discovered some days later. When Brigadier Cureton, the Cavalry Brigade Commander, saw this rehearsal of the charge of the Light Brigade, he took off to put a stop to it; he had not gone far before an enemy bullet stopped him. These two gentlemen occupy two of the graves in the small cemetery. The third is occupied by Subadar Major Mir Sher Ali Sirdar Bahadur, aged seventy eight of the 8th Native Light Cavalry. Lastly, Captain Fitzgerald 14th Light Dragoons, who died four days later of his wounds. The total loss at this battle was ten killed, sixty four wounded and sixteen missing, presumed dead.



Very close to this small cemetery is, what is reputed to be, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Summer Residence. However, I very much doubt this designation. He may have visited it but it could not have been his "Summer" Residence. Firstly, it is far too small and why would Ranjit Singh build a "Summer" Residence on the plains of the Punjab. Secondly, there is a European square-ness about it and it has two European style fireplaces, including mantle pieces; hardly a feature for a "Summer" residence on the hot plains of the Punjab. I believe it

is more likely to have been the residence of one of the Maharaja's foreign officers, probably Colonel Harlan (American), who at one time was in charge of Gujranwala. If in fact it was a Sikh residence then, I believe, it belonged to Raja Suchet Singh who had been given Ramnuggar to govern. Before the pages of history get too dusty I feel the provenance of this house should be ascertained. As it stands, I think someone has given history a bum-steer.

Keeping on the left bank of the river, we drove to Wazirabad and then up to the south bank of the Jhelum and the Tulip Hotel. This is a delightful little hotel located on the south bank of the river between the north and south bound bridges. They allotted me the same room as last time and the view was fantastic. While taking a stroll around the grounds I noticed that as some of the visitors arriving in their cars they pulled up their wind-screen wipers. Apparently this is the signal to the local car-wash guy that the visitor would be stopping long enough to have the car washed. Also there are as many lorries on the road as in India, but they are all ornately decorated. In the hotel corridor they have pictures of buildings and tombs, one of which was the ancient Buddhist Stupa of Manikyala. I made up my mind to see this historical site on my last day before returning to Lahore. I am glad I did.

Next morning we drove south to Kharian and turned right onto the Dinga road. Dinga is where the Army of the Punjab was on Friday, 12 January 1849. The next day the Army advanced towards Chillianwalla. We spent ten minutes in Dinga then drove to Chillianwalla. I had previously written about this battle for another journal and the sole purpose of returning was to check on the HM 24th Foot grave sites.

On arrival at Chillianwalla I went to the, quite well kept, Monument to see if old Lal Khan was still there. Sadly he had died, not long after I had met him, aged a hundred and eight! In the area I came across a beautiful Arab stallion, the likes of which Maharaja Ranjit Singh would have sent an Army to acquire. I then moved onto the grave sites. Their condition is worse and it saddened me to see the condition of these graves compared to the Monument area eight hundred yards away. I did write to the Regimental Depot about them but there was really no interest or concern; so much for esprit de corps. I wonder what it cost to put up the obelisk in the Royal Hospital, Chelsea grounds, which a great number of visitors look at with a mixture of horror and admiration at the waste and valour of many British soldiers. Yet their actual graves, in which their bones lie today, are forgotten! They did not die cowards and I do not think we should be cowardly in our efforts to remember them.



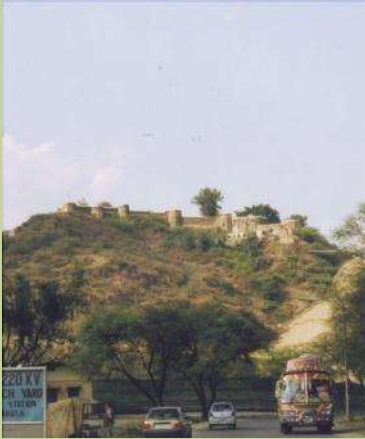
Ranjit Singh's House

HM 24th Foot Grave

Close by, at what I believe to have been the buffalo wallow, in which the HM 24th Foot got caught, I met a young Jamal Nasir who had been educated at St Lawrence's, Ramsgate. He told me that the land around this spot had belonged to his family for hundreds of years, but it could not have been for more than one hundred and sixty years as before that it belonged to Ranjit Singh, the ultimate Landlord of the Punjab. We went back to the hotel for lunch and then up north to the Mangla Fort.

This Fort is located above, what is now the Mangla Dam on the disputed border with India. It was named after Mangla Devi the daughter of King Porus. This is apparently where Alexander the Great crossed the River Jhelum in 326 BC, and about twelve miles away, close to Chillianwalla, is where he fought King Porus. It is also the place where the three Dogra brothers formally joined Ranjit Singh's Army at two rupees a month.

Once we were in the dam area I could see the Fort up on the steep hill. The road bends round the hill and then comes to a fork at which there were three policemen, one sitting on a plastic chair. They waved us to a stop. No, we could not go up to the Fort as it was out of bounds. I said I had come a long way specifically to see the Fort and automatically my hand went into my bag for the General's *chitty*. But then I realised where I was. So, I did not see the Fort. I am sure had I shown my *chitty* at this police post they would have waved me on, probably creating a diplomatic incident as to how it was possible that I was allowed access to a restricted Pakistani area on the authority of an Indian Army General! Maybe I would have ended up in Guantanamo.



Early next morning we headed north towards Rawalpindi. About four miles short of Rawat we branched off right and soon came to the Manikyala Stupa. This is a very old Buddhist monument, which is apparently one of the four places in India where the Buddha stopped to offer the sacrifice of his body to feed a starving tiger cub. It is about seventy feet high and has a radius of a hundred and fifty feet. When I got back and was checking my notes, I discovered that it was at this Stupa that Raja Shere Singh and his father surrendered to Major General Gilbert on 8 March 1849, bringing to an end the 2nd Anglo-Sikh War. This was the last war at which there was no war correspondent and for which no Victoria Crosses were awarded. It was the first war during which chloroform was used and the first photographs were taken. We then drove south, past the dear Tulip Hotel and into Lahore. The first thing of any merit that one sees entering Lahore is the Samadhi of Ranjit Singh with its four main minarets and seven smaller ones representing the four Ranis and seven slave girls that were consumed on the Maharaja's pyre. More than usual confusion on the road, as the "cartoon rioters" had smashed all the traffic lights.

Back at the Avari I phoned Bilal to report my return and was pleasantly surprised to hear that he was back in Lahore, and he invited me to dinner at his house. At dinner I learnt that the reason he was back was because on the night his wife was to meet me, their house was burgled. So he was back to sort that out and pack up the house for the move to Karachi. I had a very nice dinner and back to the hotel for a very nice sleep.

The next day I had a late breakfast and then awaited the arrival, from Karachi of Mr Amirali. He is a good friend from my Linmark days and owns one of the very best run factory complexes in Karachi. He insisted on coming all the way from Karachi, for ninety minutes, simply to have a chat with me. He really is a very nice gentleman and we had a good chat. I then went to the Museum, but it was closed with a good many Rangers hanging about. My last call was to the Feroze Book Store, which is as old as their invoicing and check out system, but that added to the ambiance of a really old Book Shop.

At two o'clock that night I checked out and made my way to the Airport to catch Flight KU204 to Kuwait. Now I had a problem with my Solan bottle of scotch. Pakistani Customs could not understand why I would be carrying out a bottle and why it was an Indian bottle. As this was obviously something they do not often come across, they let me go. After a stop-over of two hours at

Kuwait Airport, I was on my way to London via KU101. We arrived just after one in the afternoon. As I had, by now, two cases, I took a cab. This cab deposited me at Queens Gardens three hours later and £60 lighter. The reason, there was a “cartoon” demonstration at Hyde Park Corner so all roads, three miles radius from it, had been blocked!

This trip had been a super and wonderful experience. Both India and Pakistan have so much to offer the traveller they will both soon become the destinations of choice. As for myself I would love to go back, but first I must get down to some serious writing I cannot end this report without thanking, firstly Jill and then my family and friends and finally General Palit. Also, a reverent thanks to St Anthony, whose services were much appreciated. To you all, a big *Mehrbani*.

LETTERS AND QUERIES

Lieutenant Colonel Patric Emerson has responded to my query about The Grenadiers Regiment uniform shown on page 96, Durbar Vol. 23 Number 3. Having consulted Lieutenant General S Menezes, former Vice Chief of Staff and former Colonel of The Grenadiers, Patric has informed me that the uniform is that of the brass band and is still worn by them. Lieutenant General Menezes has also said that a number of other uniforms shown are band uniforms. He added that India could not afford scarlet uniforms for all ranks and full dress summer for all regiments is as shown on page 100 – green uniform with side piece on the turban in regimental colours plus scarf and cummerbund. In winter an Angola felt shirt is worn, as shown on pages 101 and 103.

BOOK NOTES

Once again pressures of business, and the late resumption of editorial duties, mean that I have been unable to prepare full reviews. The following books have been brought to my attention:

● *LILLA'S FEAST* by Frances Osborne. Published by Black Swan at £7.99 (paperback) and available through Transworld Publishers: www.booksattransworld.co.uk. This is the story of Lilla Eckford who had been interned in a Japanese concentration camp in China during the Second World War. Whilst almost starving, she had written an inspirational recipe book and housekeeping guide for new brides on her old typewriter. The book survived the war and is now at the Imperial War Museum, London. Frances Osborne was fascinated by the life of her great-grandmother and, having found a box of forgotten family letters in the British Library, wrote this inspiring book.

● *COLLECTOR'S GUIDE TO MEMBERSHIP BADGES OF TURF AND RACING CLUBS OF INDIA* by Praful K. Thakkar. Published by Thakkar Numismatic and Art Foundation, 102, Deanscroft Court, Cary, NC 27518, USA; info@thakkarfoundation.org at US\$18. Distributed in India by Praful Publications, 34 Janvishram Society, B/h Sahjanand College, Ambawadi, Ahmedabad 380 015, Gujarat; thakkar34@yahoo.co.in at Rs350. 112 pages, numerous illustrations in colour. Probably of marginal interest to the majority of our members, but it is quite remarkable how many such badges existed and how many Praful Thakkar has been able to photograph.

● *THE EAGLE STRIKES – The Royal Indian Air Force 1932-1950* by our Vice President, Squadron Leader Rana T.S. Chhina, published by the Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research, United Service Institution of India. ISBN 81 903591 0 X. 340 pages. Lavishly illustrated and produced. I have only just received my copy but it looks to be an outstanding contribution to the history of the air force in India. I will try to get a full review in the next edition of *Durbar*.

