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CPK



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 July, 1984

Prime Minister

CDP  
20/7

Thank you very much - I hope it will be kept nicely now. - MF

Dear Charles,

British Cemetery in Goa

Following her visit to Goa during the CHOGM last November, the Prime Minister received an appeal by the custodian of the British cemetery in Goa for official support for the cemetery's maintenance. When arrangements were made in 1949 for the upkeep of other British cemeteries in India, Goa was not covered because it was not then part of India.

The Prime Minister agreed that the Goa cemetery should now receive support. Legal difficulties connected with the terms of the original grant for the upkeep of our cemeteries in India have been resolved. The Prime Minister may wish to know that the High Commission has now made arrangements to send an annual cheque to the custodian of the cemetery through the Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor of Goa.

The Director of Archives, Archaeology and Museums in Goa has sent the High Commission the attached copy of an article about the cemetery, with a request from the author, Dr Shirodkar, that it should be passed to the Prime Minister. The High Commissioner has already written to Dr Shirodkar thanking him on behalf of the Prime Minister. No further acknowledgement is therefore necessary.

Yours ever,

Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street



FILE

RM  
cc: P.C.

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

23 July, 1984

BRITISH CEMETERY IN GOA

Thank you for your letter of 20 July.  
The Prime Minister was very grateful to know  
of the action taken to provide official support  
for the maintenance of the British Cemetery in  
Goa. She has commented that she hopes that it  
will be kept nicely from now on.

(C.D. Powell)

P.F. Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

## BRITISH CEMETERY IN GOA

— Dr. P. P. Shirodkar

At the fag end of the last decade of the 18th century when Napoleon Bonaparte was shooting himself into prominence like a meteor on the horizon of Europe securing victory after victory for France, the British had made a severe dent in the French footholds in India leading to their retreat.

Contrary to the expectations, in the post-French Revolution period Great Britain succeeded in occupying all the French settlements along with a few Dutch footholds in India. Colombo as well as all the other Dutch fortifications fell into the hands of Great Britain on February 16, 1796<sup>1</sup>. Only exceptions were the Portuguese settlements in Goa, Daman and Diu which probably remained safe on account of the long-standing Luso-British alliance which Great Britain felt always tilted towards it.

True, French had lost all their settlements in the Indian sub-continent. Nevertheless, they could still exercise their authority in certain areas. It may be pointed out here that Monsignor Raymond had been instrumental in organising a contingent of troops in Hyderabad at the instance of French Government and Perron had been engaged by Sindhias to discipline their troops<sup>2</sup>. The loss of their settlements had not perturbed the French much as they were drawing a lot of confidence from their occupation of the Isle of France (Mauritius) since 1721 and Bourbon since 1664 in Indian Ocean. The signing of Treaties of alliance with Tipu Sultan had emboldened them further to cherish the dream of reoccupying their lost territories in India. Only two main factors which were coming in their way were the blockade of Europe by the Emperor in Berlin and a free sway of Great Britain over the Indian Ocean.

Nevertheless, indomitable Napoleon tried to put into effect a formidable plan to conquer in 1798 Egypt first and from there to launch massive attack against India. And as per the French strategy, Goa was the most suitable territory on the western coast from where they could envisage a major thrust on British possessions with the help of Tipu Sultan. According to French plans, the port of Goa along with the entire territory would go to Tipu Sultan and Bombay subsequent to its capture would go to France<sup>3</sup>.

When the news reached Bombay from Bassora that a French fleet of 26 ships and 14 frigates were proceeding through Suez Canal to India,

Sir Jonathan Duncan, Governor of Bombay rushed to Goa a garrison of 1000 Europeans of rank and file in seven ships commanded by Col. William Clarke, which arrived in Goa on 6th September 1799 and disembarked on the following day. These troops drawn from H.M's 75th, 77th and 84th Regiments were allowed to enter Goa with all due cordiality and a most distinguished attention from the Governor and Captain-General of Goa, Sr. Francisco Antonio de Veiga Cabral'.

During their occupation of Goa for about 14 years i. e. from 1799 to 1813, the British had constructed several edifices and barracks in Aguada fortress area, at Gaspar Dias and Mormugao but no remains of those exist now as most of them were demolished in 1848 by the Portuguese. Of the two cemeteries, one near Cabo still exists and the other at Sinquerim, is almost extinct with no signs of any tombs whatsoever. As for the cemetery of Cabo, it is fairly in good condition and has withstood vagaries of nature and time.

Though the exact date of the construction of the Cabo cemetery is not known, it can be presumably deduced that it was constructed somewhere around 1802 and it served the purpose of British garrisons stationed at Fort Mormugao, Cabo and at times Fort Aguada. Mr. J. Gerson D'Cunha mentioned about one of the travellers, Mr. W. Walker, who described the cemetery in the year 1855 thus: "I visited the burial ground at Cabo, built and used by the British force of 10000 men when they held possession of the seaboard point of Goa, to prevent the French entering India by this route in 1805. The massive laterite stone wall which surrounds it is as perfect as the day it was built the laterite in this neighbourhood being the best I have anywhere seen, but the lofty arched entrance gates have long been despoiled of every particle of wood. The burial ground is used for rice cultivation and the very tomb stones are worn down from the sharpening of native tools on them; where not cultivated, it is overgrown with high rank grass said to be alive with deadly *cobra de capello*. If it be true, as I have heard, that the Collector of Belgaum allows an annual sum to keep in order, I can assure him that not a pice worth of care it bestowed on it ...".

There is a corroborative evidence to prove what Mr. W. Walker had stated. In a letter of the Ecclesiastical Department Bombay Castle dated 19th May 1869 a request was made to the Governor-General of the Portuguese India, Sr. J. F. Pestana to set the cemetery right. It will not be out of place here to quote this interesting letter extensively. It read thus: — "The Protestant Chaplain of the Concan has represented to the Venerable Archdeacon of Bombay, that he had been informed

from Goa of the desecration of graves of certain persons of our community buried in that place. Accordingly, the Archdeacon communicated with the gentleman who had reported the matter from Goa and received reply to the effect that the burial ground which lies between Fort Cabo and Panjim is enclosed by a good permanent wall, but has no gates; hence the Natives are making use of the ground for cultivating rice. The tombs of British Officers buried there are going to ruin, though from appearances they must have cost considerable to erect. To put the ground in decent condition and gates as well as a short road to it from the highway will cost Rs. 1000, certainly not more. It can be kept in order for say 10 to 15 Rs. per month".

"This communication leaves no room to doubt that the burial ground is in unprotected state. I therefore request that Your Excellency will have the goodness to cause such necessary repairs as may be required to be executed to future protection. Any expense which Your Government may be put to on this account will be duly repaid on Your Excellency indicating the amount and to whom it should be paid".<sup>6</sup>

It is apparent that the Portuguese Government conceded the request from the British. This can be discerned from what J. Gerson da Cunha said about it within a decade.

The said English cemetery as described by J. Gerson da Cunha in 1878 consisted of an oblong area about 180 yards long by 145 yards broad, walled all around. Its gate with some architectural attention had massive teak wood doors. The key of this door was in the hands of the chaplain in the neighbouring old Convent which was subsequently reduced to the summer residence with a chapel attached to it. There was a gate-keeper who looked after the cemetery and was paid by the English Government Rs. 6 a month. To the right of the gate let into the wall was a 2-feet square slab, all the letters being worn out except H. M.'s ... The whole area was studded with tombs 41 in number, 8 of which had a four-sided wall around. Interspersed among the tombs were 13 trees, ... 6 mango, 6 cashew-nut, and 1 jack-fruit tree.<sup>7</sup>

Today, the cemetery is in pretty good condition with all the four walls intact. Only the plaster of some parts of the gate has fallen down. The old wooden gate is no more there. But instead it has a strong metallic gate which is in fairly good condition. It was repaired by the British Consul in the year 1949. Out of six mango trees during the time of J. Gerson da Cunha only two have survived along with a few wild trees on the burial ground. The burial site with the serene

outlook has 47 tombs. Most of them are in good condition. Some of them are in a mutilated condition and a few others are in the state of crumbling. The remaining sepulchral relics numbering about 56 grave-stones are of laterite. There is a well-built dry well inside the cemetery. The cemetery gives a marvellous look from the road to Cabo.

The documentation of the existing epitaphs of the 15 tombs reminds one of the high esteem the living ones held their deceased kith and kin. The remaining tombs do not give the idea of the interred persons. However, all the tombs are clearly numbered. The earliest burial according to the tomb-plates was on 19th December 1808. But there is a possibility that many more must have been buried earlier leaving no eulogy plates. The latest burial was traced to be of 10th August 1912. The following are the inscriptions indicating the tributes, obituaries and provenance:—

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TOMB NO. 29

MARGARET REEL

Died: 19-12-1808

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

MARGERET REEL wife of

JOHN WILLIAM REEL

CONDUCTOR in the

Honble. Company's Service

Who departed this Life

The 19th of December 1808

She was a Virtuous Wife

An Affectionate Mother

and a Faithful and Sincere

FRIEND

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UNNUMBERED TOMB

Sacred to the memory of  
SUSANNA JAND POULTON

wife of Capt. POULTON

(illegible) M.N.I.

who departed this life

Sept. 5th 1826

Aged 23 years

TOMB NO. 40

Sacred to the Memory of  
Captain James Graham  
of the 7th Regt. Bombay N.I.  
who died on Board of the Lady East  
off Veegarlas on his passage to  
England on the 11th April A. O. 1829  
Aged 44 years

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TOMB NO. 39

THEODOSIA DORCAS  
Died 22-9-1838  
Sacred to the Memory of the Beloved  
DORCAS, beloved wife of Capt. E. MESSMER  
39. M.N.I. who departed this life on  
Twenty second Sept. 1832.  
Dedicated by all who knew her

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TOMB NO. 43

SOPHIE OSORIO D'ALBUQUERQUE  
Born April 20, 1872  
Died 6th August, 1874.

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TOMB NO. 44

ARTHUR PASCOELLIS  
Born December 13th 1866  
Died May 9th 1876

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TOMB NO. 41

Sacred to the Memory of  
HUGO BALDWIN, MAJOR  
Born June 12th 1819  
Died Feb. the 7th 1881  
Consecrated by his beloved wife  
MARY FRANCES MAJOR

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TOMB NO. 19 (with a cross)

In Memory of  
LOUISA ANN  
The Beloved wife of HENRY BARRON  
Assistant Foreman W.I.P. Railway  
Died at Mormugao on the  
21 Feb. 1884  
Aged 40 years  
Rev. III 21st Verse  
ISALAH XXVI 7 RP VERSE

TOMB NO. 10

Sacred to the Memory of  
EMMA HARRIET  
The Beloved wife of RICHARD  
O. BRAT WATTE who departed this  
life on the 6th March 1884.  
Aged 34 yrs. 2 months and 6 days.  
Her end was peace.  
Erected by her sorrowing husband  
In token of Affectionate Regret.

UNNUMBERED TOMB (Cross)

In Memory of ANN the  
beloved wife of THOMAS MANKIN  
Died April 20th 1885  
Aged 45 years.

TOMB NO. 36

In Most Fond and Loving  
Remembrance of  
JOHN GRANT  
Aged 30  
By His Sorrowing  
wife  
Remember me O MY GOD &  
Spare me according to the  
Greatness of Thy Mercy  
8-7-1886



TOMB NO. 56

Will you give rest  
My Times are in Thy hands  
GEORGE HOLLAND ERSKINE  
Born 19th Dec. 1858.  
Died 25th Sept. 1886

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TOMB NO. 54

In Fond Remembrance of  
ADA MARGARET. The Beloved wife of  
T. R. SOCKETT  
(Both of Tranmere Cheshire, England)  
who departed this life  
May 3rd 1893 at Mormugao, Goa, India  
Aged 33 yrs. and 11 months.  
She has gone the grave hath received her  
«It was Jesus that called her away,  
She has gone to the Lord who Redeemed her from  
Night to the Splendour of Day»

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UNNUMBERED TOMB

THOMAS J. B. KENNEDY  
Born in Pottsville Pa  
U. S. A. Nov. 28 1840  
Died in Mormugao,  
Goa on Nov. 10, 1905

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TOMB NO. 55

Sacred to the Memory of  
HENRY WILLIAM MAYNE  
who was an employee of the  
MADRAS SOUTHERN MARATHA RAILWAY  
for many years.  
Died on the 10th August 1912  
Gone but not forgotten  
Erected by his daughter

Besides this cemetery, which has attained an historic importance today, in its vicinity were the barracks and hospital of the British troops at the Cabo, the residencial area of the Lt. Governor of Goa. But they were demolished by the then Portuguese Governor, Sr. Jose Ferreira Pestana and preesntly no vestiges whatsoever are existing there.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. A letter dt. 16th Feb. 1796 by Geo Patrick Major, Officer Commanding the Bombay Detachment, Colombo to Rajah of Cochin Read Kerala Archives Newsletter, vol. III, April 1978, Directorate of Archives, Trivandrum, Kerala, p. 22.
2. Dodwell H. W. (Ed) *The Cambridge History of India — British India, 1847-1858* V, Cambridge University Press, 1929, p. 326.
3. Hammick Murray (Ed) "History of Mysoor" by Lt. Colonel Mark Wilkes, Government Branch Press, Mysore 1932, II, p. 640.
4. For details read the author's two articles *British Occupation of Goa in Colloquium*, Vol. I No. 1, 1978 and Vol. II No. 1, 1979, a journal of the Goa Institute for Historical and Cultural Research, Panaji. See also *Ingleses em Goa ou Ocupação de Goa pelas tropas Britanicas* by J. B. Amancio Graclas (Tipografia Rangel, Bastora, Goa, 1934).
5. See *The English and their Monuments at Goa* in *The Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Bombay 1878, Vol. XIII, pp. 127-128.
6. See *Estrangeiros*, No. 13, HAG, fl. 326.
7. See No. 5 above pp. 126-127.

\* I am indebted to Shri Bonifacio Dias, Asstt. Research Officer, Goa Gazetteer Department for helping me to copy the epitaphs.