

Introduction by Peter Collin

My work on the list of early members of the RAS started when Nancy Charley joined us as archivist. One of the first things she discovered when clearing out some cupboards of files was an old leather-bound account book. This seemed uninteresting at first, but was to lead to more than two years of detailed research into the first members of the Society

The preparatory meetings of the society were held from January 1823 onwards at H.T. Colebrooke's house in Argyll Street. These meetings were small, no more than twenty members ever being present, forming the Council of the Society. At the meeting held on January 16th 1823 it was resolved that a general meeting would be held at the Thatched House Tavern on the following 15th of March. It seems that the old account book is a list of payments made at that meeting, when would-be members paid their subscriptions and the copying clerk noted them in his book. At least 80 members were present at that meeting.

The account book goes on to list all financial transactions carried out by the Society over a period of several years.

Left-hand pages were for money paid out. The first left-hand page is dated March 17 1823 and has £50 paid from Herries & Co (a Scottish bank, presumably the Society's bank account) to Dr G H Noehden (the first secretary); after this most left-hand pages are blank. Later payments were generally purchases of consols as investments.

The payments received were almost exclusively subscriptions from members of the society, together with occasional dividends from investments. Members paid their subscriptions after being elected at the General Meeting, and when they paid they signed an Obligation Book (which we no longer have, but which presumably listed the duties and responsibilities involved in being a member). They also had to pay an Admission Fee.

The account book lists the money paid by individuals to the Society in small sums over a period of several years, starting with the meeting on 15 March 1823. These are on right-hand pages, and show lists of subscribers' names: these are not in alphabetical order, but presumably were written down by the copying clerk as members paid their subscriptions at the Thatched House general meeting:

Against each of these names is the sum of money paid, usually 2 guineas (the annual subscription), but sometimes 3, 5 or more guineas when the subscriber was paying a composition rate for several years in advance.

The first page (dated 15 March 1823) shows the following:

John Caley	Annual Subscription	2/2/-
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Captain James Murray Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 A.B. Lambert Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 Samuel Turner Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 Major W. M. G. Colebrooke (composition Non Resident) 10/10/-
 Lieut Genrl The Honble Sir Lowry Cole GCB (composition Non Resident) 10/10/-
 The Honble A. H. Cole (composition Non Resident) 10/10/-
 Samuel Skinner Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 Walter Young Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 L. H. Petit Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 Patrick Heath (spelling mistake for Heaty) Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 MGI. Wm Macleod Madras Army Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 S. R. Solly Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 Col. James Salmond Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 R. H. Solly Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 Captain James Michael Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 Henry Browne Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 Capt. W. S. Webb Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 Col. T.M Wegguelin Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 James R. Todd Annual Subscription 2/2/-
 Sir Edward Hyde East Bart. (composition Resident) 25/25/-
 W H Trant (composition Resident) 25/25/-

(these sums are significant: £1 in 1823 would roughly equal £1800 today)

The list continues for several pages of payments made to the society, beginning at the Thatched House meeting.

At the end of page three (left-hand page) there is another note of payments made out:

April 28 Cash paid G. Schulze for printing.

April 29 sundry purchases including £148.13 in 2% consols in the names of James Alexander, Devonshire Square, Henry Thomas Colebrooke, Argyll Street, and George Henry Noehden, George St Portman Square.

At the end of page seven there is another payment made by the society:

Aug 1 William Walker for $\frac{1}{4}$ wages to this day as copying clerk.

This is the only indication I have found of the name of the person who made all the entries. His clear copperplate writing is very easy to read, though he was not without giving little decorative features, especially on the capital letters. William Walker deserved his wages, and presumably was proud of his work. I have not been able to find any further references to him.

The whole book of entries is fascinating as it gives the list of members of the society as they paid their subscriptions at the general meeting on March 15; we can imagine them queuing up to pay, apparently in cash, as William Walker wrote their names in his book.

I do not know if the society kept a list of members, but when the first Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society was published in 1827 it printed lists of members for each year from 1823 onwards, and as an appendix a list of subscribers to the Oriental Translation Fund.

Having made notes of all the members present at the preliminary meetings and the general meeting, it seemed to me that these people could be listed and short biographies made of them, many, if not most of them, being relatively obscure. This work occupied me for almost three years, and finally having shown drafts of it to various members of the society and received their comments, I passed it to Alison Ohta in late 2019.

What was immediately apparent as the work progressed, was the extent to which the early members were known to each other: many of them had served in the India Company army together; others had met at school; others married daughters of East India Company men; checking their addresses, it was obvious that most of them lived within a square mile of each other in central London and must have seen each other regularly when out walking. Many were familiar names: William Wilberforce, Lord Aberdeen, Sir Robert Peel, etc., but others were not well-known, even quite unimportant. What intrigued me was to try and find out more about those who were relatively unknown, always wondering what made them join a society which had such particular interests as the RAS.

To begin with, it seemed an impossible task: a number had very ordinary names, Samuel Smith or Henry Alexander, but the addresses provided in the early issues of the transactions of the RAS were invaluable in identifying each member: many were also listed in various street directories, which showed that several members had exactly the same address, presumably a lodging house.

From the beginning, members' names were printed in the Transactions of the RAS, but this did not mean that they had paid their subscriptions: some took several years to pay. Also, and very helpfully for a researcher, the members' addresses were also given in the

Transactions (in 1823, these were handwritten into the copy currently in the library, and printed from 1824 onwards).

What I have done is to take the members' details for the first three years (1823 -25), put them into alphabetical order and then try to find biographical details to fit round the names. The total number of names is about 525; note that at the first meeting of the Society in 1823, the chairman had a list of 300 members (not all of them attended the meeting), which shows how strong the initial interest in the society was.

The thing to note is that I dealt firstly with those members whose names figure in the handwritten register and then are shown in the printed lists of members given in the Journal for each year. Some members figure in the printed lists without having paid their subscriptions, others paid their subscriptions but do not figure in the printed lists. I have made a list combining the two. The lists are alphabetical, though in the printed list they are in social order (i.e. the nobility come first) and in the handwritten register they are listed in order of their subscription dates; I have put them all into alphabetical order. Because the Athenaeum Club was founded at almost the same time and with a very similar membership, I have shown those members who belonged to both societies. I had hoped to do the same for the Oriental Club, which was founded as a club counterpart to the RAS, but unfortunately they do not have (or have been unable to find) any early list of general members, though they do have a list of their council members.

What is immediately apparent is there are several groups of RAS members:

Members of the East India Company, both military and administrative (this is the largest group).

Members of the establishment ("the Great and the Good"), without necessarily having had experience of living and working in the Far East; these include peers who were presumably attracted by their friends in the House of Lords (friends of Wellington and Aberdeen, for example).

Members of Parliament, in particular those connected to the reform movement: evangelicals linked to Wilberforce, social reformers connected to the Quakers; these would include anti-slavery reformers, though some members of the RAS appear to have belonged to families whose wealth derived from the slave trade.

A vaguer group of interested parties with no connection to the Far East or to the reformers as far as I can tell.

What would be interesting would be to try to follow the links between these groups and individuals and see why some of them joined the RAS when there doesn't appear to be any obvious reason why they should do so. The period between 1780 and 1820 was a time when many clubs and societies were being formed, and many people seemed to belong to several at the same time. They met each other on an almost daily basis for meals at their club, or for

lectures at their learned society. They also lived very close to each other. Because our printed lists give the RAS members' addresses, I have been able to show how many of them lived within a mile or so of the Society's base in Grafton Street. This was a time when the area north of the Prince Regent's residence at Carlton House was being opened up by Nash, and new streets and squares were being laid out parallel to or leading into Regent Street, even if that street had not yet been completely built up. These new houses were available to the rich EIC people returning from India, and they bought up property from Argyll Street where Colebrooke lived, to the new squares (Hanover Square, Portman Square, Mecklenburgh Square, etc.). Others rented: and many took rooms in Albany on a temporary basis. I have been able to check many of their addresses with *Boyle's Court Guide 1821*: this guide, published yearly since the 1790s, is an indispensable guide to the addresses of "the best people" in London. It is divided into (i) a list of all London Streets; (ii) a list of London Streets, with house numbers and names of people living there; (iii) an alphabetical list of fashionable people with their addresses. The 1821 edition is available online, as are several later editions.

What I have tried to do, is to give details for each member (date and place of birth and death, family background, education, career, personal interests where they can be ascertained). Some of these details (especially the dates of birth) were particularly difficult to find. Supposedly reliable sources can give quite different details. Names can be very similar (Samuel Smith, John Macdonald, etc.) and make even the simplest search on Google problematic. I have also listed their publications where they are given in biographies, and have checked some of these with our Library catalogue to show the holdings we have in the Society. Members also gave objects to the society: books, paintings, swords, urns, etc., and these are listed when we have details of them (listed in our separate Donations Book, made at about the same time as the account book). Because some members were very much in the public view, many of them have their portraits in the National Portrait Gallery and elsewhere, and quite often by important painters; not only in British collections, either, but many are also in galleries overseas, in the USA, Canada, Australia, etc. Where I have found them, I have attached the portrait to the member's entry, but more could be added (permission will need to be cleared with the gallery they belong to). So far portraits of over half of the 500-odd members have been found, and I am continuing to search for missing portraits. I have also a separate file of their London addresses, which I have jotted onto a map of Georgian London.

What my research has shown is that there are various leads which could be followed up as further research projects: members who had links to breweries; members who were bankrupt or insolvent; members who were Quakers; members who left for Indian service at the very early age (16 years old seems common); literary connections (Jane Austen knew and stayed in the houses of several members, Thackeray was born in India to parents who had EIC backgrounds, etc.); members who served in government (several were foreign secretaries, chancellors, five were prime ministers); members who were educated at Eton,

Oxford or Cambridge; other members who were not educated at universities, etc. I have separately written short pieces on “RAS members and the West Indies” and “RAS members and the slave trade” for example.

If you have any observations on these texts, they would be extremely welcome. In particular any errors you can spot, and comments on the general usefulness of this research, which sheds an interesting light on the very beginnings of the Society.

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Note on sources:

Information in the biographies is taken from the records of the Society supplemented by information from straightforward publications like contemporary encyclopaedias, gazetteers, Wikipedia, Google searches etc.

A

Abel, Clarke
Aberdeen, Earl of
Agnew, John Vans
Akin, Arthur
Ainslie, Whitelaw
Alexander, Du Pré
Alexander, Henry
Alexander, James
Alexander, James Edward
Alexander, Josias Dupré
Alston, James
Alves, Nathaniel
Amherst, Lord William
Anderson, Robert
Annesley, James
Antrobus, Edmund
Arbuthnot, George
Arnold, John Roger
Auber, Peter

B

Baber, Thomas Harvey
Babington, Benjamin Guy
Babington, William
Baillie, John
Baker, Frederick Francis
Balfour, Francis
Ball, Samuel
Barclay, Charles
Barclay, Robert

Baring, Henry
Baring, Thomas
Barnes, Edward
Barrington, Shute
Barrow, John
Bathurst, Henry
Bazett, Richard Campbell
Bebb, John
Becher, John
Benson, Robert
Bentinck, William Cavendish
Betham, William
Bethune, Henry Lindsay
Bexley, Nicholas Vansittart
Blackburne, John
Blackburne, William
Blane, Gilbert
Blanshard, John
Blanshard, Henry
Blanshard, Richard
Bonar, James
Bosanquet, Samuel
Bourke, Edmund F.
Bowring, John
Bowser, Thomas
Bracken, Thomas
Brenton, Jahleel
Brenton, John
Bridge, Bewick
Bridgman, William

Browne, Henry
Brownlow, Earl of
Bryant, Jeremiah
Bryce, James
Buckingham, Duke of
Burney, Charles Parr
Burr, Daniel
Burton, John
Butler, Charles
Butterworth, Joseph
Buxton, Thomas Fowell

C

Cabbell, Benjamin Bond
Calcutta, Bishop of
Caldwell, Hugh
Caledon, Earl of
Caley, John
Calthorpe, George
Calthorpe, Frederick
Camac, John
Camac, William
Campbell, Colin
Campbell, Robert
Canning, George
Cannon, Edward Bacon
Carnac, James Rivett
Carr, William Holwell
Carter, William Barwell
Caulfield, James
Chamier, John

Christie, Langham	Curteis, John	Edmonstone, Neil Benjamin
Clarke, Adam		Ellis, Henry
Clarke, Christopher	<u>D</u>	Elphinstone, John Fullerton
Clarke, Richard	Dangerfield, Fred	Elphinstone, Mountstuart
Clarke, William Stanley	Daniell, Thomas	Erskine, William
Clayton, Simeon	Daniell, William	Evans, James Thomas
Clive, Edward	D'Arcy, Joseph	Evans, William
Clive, Robert Henry	Davis, John Francis	Evelyn, George
Cockburn, Thomas	Davis, William Boddicott	Evelyn, Lyndon
Colborne, Nicholas William Ridley	Davison, Hugh Percy	Everest, George
Colby, Thomas	Dent, Robert	
Cole, Galbraith Lowry	Disney, John	<u>E</u>
Cole, Arthur Henry	Dott, James	Farquhar, John
Colebrooke, Henry Thomas	Douglas, Howard	Farquhar, Robert Townsend
Colebrooke, James Edward	Downes, Godfrey Greene	Farrer, James William
Colebrooke, William Macbean George	Downie, Robert	Fitzclarence, George
Colvin, David	Doyle, Charles Joseph	Fitzgerald, Charles
Conyngham, Marquis of	Doyle, Francis Hastings	Fleming, John
Coombs, John Monckton	Drane, Thomas	Fletcher, Edward
Cotton, John	Drummond, James	Forbes, Benjamin
Court, Henry	Drysdale, William Castellan	Forbes, Charles
Cox, Richard Waite	Duckett, George	Forbes, Francis
Coyne, Phineas	Duff, James Grant	Forbes, Gordon
Craigie, John Halkett	Duncan, Jonathan	Forbes, John
Crompton, Joshua Samuel	Dunn, William	Forbes, Michie
Cropper, James	Durham, Bishop of	Fortescue, Thomas
Cumming, Alexander	Dwyer, Henry	Francklin, William
Cumming, James		Franklin, James
Cunliffe, Robert Henry	<u>E</u>	Fraser, George
Currie, William	East, Edward Hyde	Fraser, James Baillie
	Ede, James	

Fraser, William

Frederick, Edward

Frost, John

Fulcher, Robert Page

Fullarton, John

G

Gahagan, Henry

Garrow, George

Gemmell, William T.

Gledstones, John Hampden

Glyn, Robert Thomas John

Goodenough, George
Trenchard

Goodhall, Henry Humphrey

Goodwin, Richard Thomas

Gordon, James Willoughby

Gordon, Theodore

Gowan, William

Grant, Charles

Grant, John Colquhoun

Grant, Ludovick

Grant, Robert

Grant, William Keir

Granville, Augustus Bozzi

Greenough, George Bellas

Gregory, John

Grindlay, Robert Melville

Guilford, Earl of

Guillemard, John Lewis

H

Haldane, Robert

Haliburton, David

Hall, Basil

Hall, Richard

Hamilton, Alexander

Hamilton, Alexander Kelso

Hamilton, Archibald

Hamilton, Francis
Buchanan

Hamilton, Walter

Hanmer, Walden Henry

Harding, James

Hardwicke, Thomas

Hare, James Macadam

Harington, John Herbert

Harvey, Henry

Haughton, Graves
Chamney

Haviland, Thomas Fiott de

Haviside, Anthony

Hay, Edward

Heatly, Patrick

Heber, Reginald

Heber, Richard

Heming, Dempster

Hicks, John

Hill, Marcus Lewis

Hobhouse, Benjamin

Hobhouse, Henry William

Hobhouse, John Cam

Hoblyn, Thomas

Hodgson, David

Hodgson, Frederick

Hodgson, John

Holland, Henry

Holmes, William

Hope, Thomas

Hopkinson, Charles

Horsfield, Thomas

Houston, Robert

Hull, William

Hume, Abraham

Hume, Joseph

Hunter, Robert

Huskisson, William

Huttman, William

I

Inglis, David Deas

Inglis, Robert Harry

Iveson, Henry

J

Jackson, Randle

Jemmett, William Thomas

Jenkins, Richard

Johnson, John Noble

Johnston, Alexander

Jones, Benjamin Scutt

K

Kater, Henry

Kemshead, Henry Morris

Kennaway, John

Kennedy, Alexander

Kerr, Charles

Kindersley, Nathaniel
Edward

Kindersley, Richard Torin

King, Phillip Parker

King, Richard

Kingsborough, Lord
Viscount of

Kinloch, James

Kyd, Alexander

L

Lake, Edward John

Lambert, Aylmer Bourke

Lambert, Charles

Lansdowne, Marquis of

Larken, Edmund

Larpent, George Gerard de
Hoche pied

Lawford, Edward

Leake, William Martin

Lee, Samuel

Leopold of Saxe Coburg, His
Royal Highness Prince

Lillie, John

Littler, John Hunter

Liverpool, The Right
Honourable the Earl of

Lloyd, William

Loch, James

Lock, John

Lonsdale, Earl of

Lubbock, John William

Lumsden, Matthew

Lushington, James Law

Lyall, Robert

M

Mac Dermott, Marshall

MacIntyre, John

Macdonald, Alexander

Macdonald, James

Macbride, John David

Macfarlane, James

MacKenzie, Charles
Alexander

Mackenzie, James

Mackillop, James

Mackinnon, Charles

Mackintosh, James

Macklew, Andrew

Mactaggart, John

Macwhirter, John

Malcolm, John

Malcolm, Pulteney

Marsden, William

Matson, Henry

Maughan, Philip

Mayne, Robert

McDonnell, James

McLeod, William

McNeill, John

Melville, John

Melville, Lord Viscount

Mendez, Francis

Metcalfe, Charles
Theophilus

Michael, James

Michell, Edward

Mill, James

Molony, James

Monckton, John

Monckton-Coombs, John

Money, William Taylor

Moor, Edward

Moore, Daniel

Moore, Robert
Montgomery

Moreau, César

Morice, John

Morier, James Justinian

Morland, Scrope Bernard

Morrice, John

Morris, John

Morrison, Robert

Mowbray, George

Munster, Earl of

Murdoch, Thomas

Murray, James

N

Nicoll, Alexander

Noble, John

Noehden, George Henry
North, Frederick
Northcote, Henry Stafford
Norwich, Bishop of
Nowell, Alexander

O

Ochterlony, David
Ogg, Samuel William
Ouseley, Gore
Ouseley, William

P

Palmer, George
Parker, Thomas Lister
Parkes, Samuel
Parkhouse, George
Parratt, Edward
Parson, J
Paterson, George

Patton, Robert
Peach, Samuel
Pearson, Alexander
Pearson, Hugh Nicholas
Peel, Robert
Penleaze, John Story
Pennington, Gervase
Pepys, William Hasledine
Perry, Philip
Perry, Thomas
Persse, Patrick

Petit, Louis Hayes
Pettiward, Roger
Philippart, John
Phillimore, Joseph
Phillips, Thomas
Pigou, Charles Edward
Pitman, Robert
Pitman, Robert Birks
Platt, Thomas Pell
Plowden, Richard Chichely
Plymouth, Earl of
Pollock, David
Ponsonby, Frederick
Porcher, Henry
Porter, Robert Ker
Powis, Earl of
Price, David
Pryor, William S.
Pusey, Philip

R

Raban, George Higgins
Raffles, Thomas Stamford
Raine, Crosier
Ranken, John
Ranken, William
Raper, Felix Vincent
Raper, Matthew
Ravenshaw, John
Goldsborough
Rawlinson, William Henry

Redhead, Thomas
Reeves, John
Reid, Alexander
Reid, Nevile
Reid, George
Remington, James George
Rennell, James
Renouard, George Cecil
Robertson, Alexander
Robertson, Andrew
Roche, Richard
Rogers, Frederick Leman
Ross, James
Rowland, W. H.
Roy, Ram Mohun
Ruddach, Robert Steuart
Ruddell, David
Rumbold, Charles Edmund
Rumbold, William
Russell, Robert Greenhill

S

Sabine, Joseph
Salmond, James
Shakespear, John
Shawe, Merrick
Shoolbred, John
Shore, Charles John
Skinner, John
Skinner, Samuel
Smith, George

Smith, Henry	Sullivan, John	Turner, Thomas
Smith, Samuel	Sumner, George Holme	
Smith, Thomas Charles	Sussex, Duke of	<u>U</u>
Snodgrass, Thomas	Sutherland, James	Upham, Edward
Solly, Richard Horseman	Sutherland, James Charles Colebrooke	Urmston, James Brabazon
Solly, Samuel Reynolds	Sydenham, George	
Somerset, Duke of	Symmons, John	<u>V</u>
Somerville, Henry Erskine		Valpy, Abraham John
Sotheby, Frederick Samuel		Vanderheyden, David
Sotheby, Hans	<u>T</u>	Verney, Harry
Sotheby, William	Taylor, Herbert	Vyvyan, Richard Rawlinson
Spencer, George John	Taylor, James	
Speirs, Alexander	Taylor, Richard	<u>W</u>
Stanhope, Lincoln	Thompson, Jeremiah Joseph	Wait, Daniel Guildford
Staunton, George Thomas	Thornhill, John Bensley	Walker, Alexander
Stewart, C. F.	Thornton, Thomas	Wallace, Thomas
Stewart, Charles	Tod, James	Ware, Samuel
Stewart, Josiah	Todd, James Ruddell	Watkin, W. W.
Stirling, Walter G.	Tolfrey, Samuel	Watson, Samuel
Stokes, Charles	Toone, Francis Hastings	Waugh, Patrick Young
Stone, Henry	Torin, Benjamin	Wayte, William
Stone, William	Torrens, Henry	Webb, Philip Barker
Strachey, Edward	Trail, Henry	Webb, William Spencer
Strachey, George	Traill, George William	Weeding, Thomas
Strachey, Henry	Trant, Nicholas	Weguelin, Thomas Matthias
Strachey, Richard	Trant, William Henry	Welland, Abraham
Strange, Thomas	Trotter, John	Wellesley, Richard
Stuart, Charles Francis	Tucker, Henry St. George	Wellington, Duke of
Stuart, Daniel	Tufnell, William	Welsh, Thomas
Stuart, James	Tulk, Charles Augustus	Weston, Stephen
Stuart, Thomas David	Turner, Samuel	

White, Anthony
White, Michael
Wilberforce, William
Wilbraham, Roger
Wilkins, Charles
Wilks, Mark
Williams, Morrice
Williams, William
Willock, Henry
Wilmot, Robert John

Wilson, David
Wilson, Horace Hayman
Wilson, Robert
Wilson, Thomas David
Wilton, John
Wood, Thomas
Woodmass, Charles
Worsley, Henry
Wynch, Paul Marriott

Wynn, Charles Watkin
Williams
Wynn, Watkin Williams

Y
Young, James
Young, John
Young, Walter
Young, William