

Eastern connections: merchants, traders and politicians...

Links between the Dales and the wider world, in particular Asia and the East, have existed for centuries. People from the Dales and North Yorkshire as a whole have travelled across the globe for a variety of reasons, as merchants or traders, in the cause of religion and in support of global politics. Most went in search of a fortune and those who managed to survive often returned immensely rich.

The East India Company (EIC) was established in 1600 and since that time, families such as the Jackson family of Richmond and the Wray family of Aysgarth have been connected with the company in various ways. Although information about people who occupied lower positions within the company is hard to find, records are available about higher ranking civil and military officials. George Clifford (third Earl of Cumberland), one of the founding members of the company spent his early years on his father's estates in Westmoreland and at Skipton Castle. Clifford's ship, the *Malice Scourge* (renamed the *Red Dragon*), was employed as a merchant vessel by the company and made three very profitable journeys to the East before 1610.

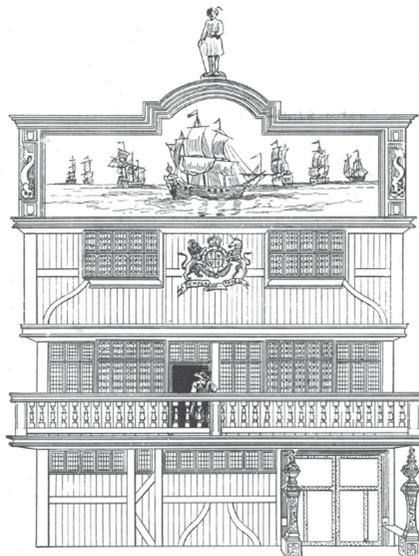
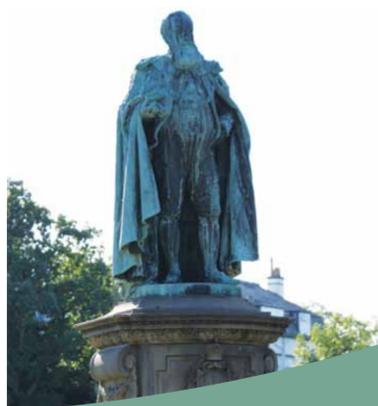
Randolph Marriott entered the East India Company civil service and later transferred to the military, eventually becoming Deputy Governor of the EIC. After thirteen years service in India, he retired and settled at Leases Hall at Aiskew near Bedale. Three of his sons followed him into service with the EIC's army.

Peter Moore, born in Sedbergh and educated at Sedbergh school, went to India as a writer and subsequently became a collector, factor and commissioner of police in the service of the EIC.

The 2nd Marquess of Zetland became Secretary General to India and his papers reveal a fascination with Indian culture, education and philosophy.

Lord Ripon's statue in Spa Gardens, Ripon.

George Frederick Samuel Robinson became Viceroy of India in 1880. Unlike most previous Viceroys, he was well regarded by the Indian public. On leaving India in 1884 he was overwhelmed by the expressions of thanks, support and goodwill he received from ordinary people in the streets.



East India House

East India House (1648 – 1726). The East India Company's first premises were in the City at Leadenhall Street, London. This was the mansion house of Sir William Craven, who had been Lord Mayor of London in 1610.

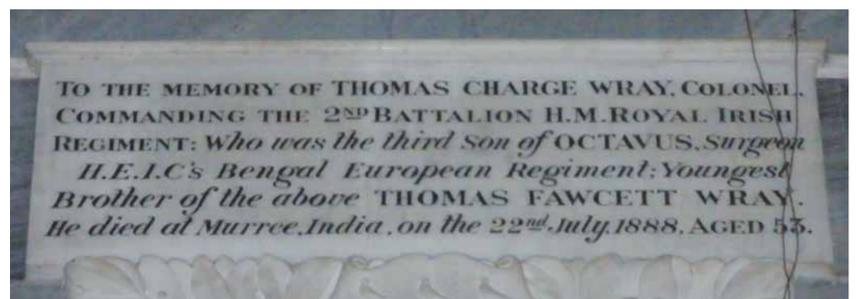


Memorial to William Wilson

Memorial to William Wilson, husband of Rachel Jackson (formerly of Hill House, Richmond). The memorial depicts the East India Company ships under the command of Wilson, which successfully fought off an attack by French frigates, enabling them to bring their valuable cargoes home safely.

Wray memorial, Aysgarth Church

The Wray family had many connections with India. Colonel Thomas Charge Wray commanded the 2nd Battalion H.M. Royal Irish Regiment. Ann Wray married Lt George Fraser in Bengal, India in 1850 and is described as the heroine of Cawnpore. Having survived the massacre at Delhi, she "won the admiration of all... by her indefatigable attentions to the wounded" during the siege of Cawnpore, only to die of cholera shortly before her fellow captives were massacred.



If you have any information you are happy to share, please contact the Dales Countryside Museum, Hawes on 01969 666210 or email

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Eastern influences...

The trading of products from the East began hundreds of years ago. The East India Company (EIC) dealt in silk, tea and porcelain, but their employees also bought fabrics, ceramics, lacquer ware, fans, wallpaper and ivory, shipping them home as 'private trade'.

Few of these items ever made it on to the open market but it is likely that they helped fire an interest in styles and products from the East which at the time was seen as one entity. Many people made no distinction between China, Japan, India or Siam (modern Thailand). Eastern goods such as rice, spices, indigo, cotton textiles, precious stones, opium and laudanum increased in popularity and demand for these goods quickly outstripped supply. By the 1700s, the Chinese were manufacturing goods specifically for the European market and Europeans were commissioning items such as furniture, adapted to Western taste from Chinese makers.

The fashion for 'Chinoiserie' was not limited to the rich or aristocratic. It was spread through pattern books of craftsmen such as Thomas Chippendale of Wharfedale. *The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director* (1754) contained designs that could be applied to even the humblest of household objects. Eastern goods were imitated by western craftsmen or inspired them to create new designs. Willow pattern china and patterned shawls are both examples of this. Many Indian words entered the English language: examples include 'bungalow', 'chutney', 'pyjamas', 'shawl' and 'shampoo'. Board games such as chess and snakes and ladders also came from India.

Willow pattern china

Eastern products influenced the design and production of household goods in Britain.



Board games

Board games like chess originated in Asia. Snakes and ladders was designed to teach children aspects of their religion.



Hidden



Indigo dye

At the age of 22, Alexander Nowell joined the 6th Bengal European Battalion as an Ensign and sailed for India. His infantry regiment was stationed in Tirhut, a region where the production of indigo dye was an important economic activity. He returned to England with his wife in about 1805, bringing with him the hugely important secret of how to 'fix' indigo dye. His family were already involved in the textile industry and he was able to gain lucrative contracts to supply blue cloth which would keep its colour. This earned him a second fortune and between 1820 and 1822 he built himself Netherside Hall, a shooting lodge at Threshfield, near Grassington.



Netherside Hall

Netherside Hall, Threshfield near Grassington, purchased out of the fortune of Alexander Nowell.

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Eastern connections in the Dales...

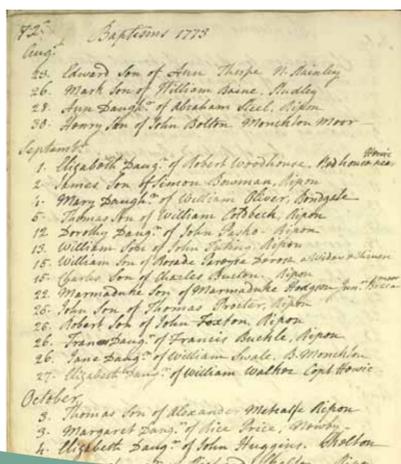
Asian people have come to live in Yorkshire and the Dales for a variety of reasons. The activities of the East India Company (EIC) in China and India resulted in a number of Asians arriving in Britain.

Some came as servants with returning officers or their families while others came as part of the workforce. Lascars (Indian sailors) were among the earliest Asian settlers in Britain. Recruited by the EIC to replace British men who had either died or deserted on the voyage out to India, they made up the crew for the return trip. They possibly left their ships because they were ill or as a result of the poor working conditions on board and small communities grew up in many seaports, including Middlesbrough, which was once within the old North Riding of Yorkshire. These people needed to earn a living and some took the entrepreneurial step of becoming door to door salesmen, travelling over to the Dales to sell silk ties, scarves, clothes and household linen.

In the 1881 census, 737 people living in Yorkshire had been born in India. Although the majority had European surnames, this highlights the links that existed between Britain and Asia at this time. Sometimes it is unclear as to how and why a person came to the area. Nothing is known for example of the origin of Parciria Derosa who baptised her son William at Ripon Cathedral in 1773 and two years later was married to James Doe.

In the latter half of the 19th century, Indian oculists (specialists in eye diseases) practised in Yorkshire. Some people also worked in travelling shows or fairs. It is thought that Isabella Paula, painted in York in 1834, was employed by a circus. Lingha Singh, a celebrated Indian magician, performed at Harrogate's Empire Theatre. Other performers would also have featured within the 'Indian Villages' that toured the country providing a taste of India.

The Dales has attracted visitors from all over the world for the last 200 years. One visitor who left a wonderful record of his stay was Chiang Yee, born in China in 1903. He came to live in England in 1933 and was invited to stay at Parceval Hall near Skipton. His trip inspired him to write *The Silent Traveller in the Yorkshire Dales*.

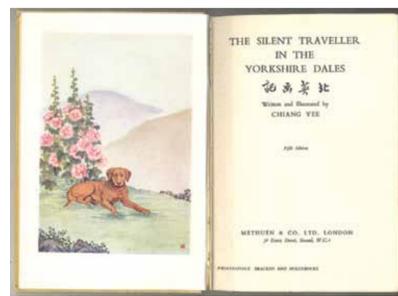


Parish register

15 September 1773, parish register entry refers to Parciria Derosa 'widow and Chinese'.



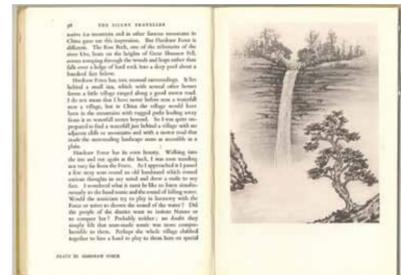
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The Silent Traveller

The front cover of Chiang Yee's book, *The Silent Traveller in the Yorkshire Dales*, first published in 1941.

Chiang Yee illustrated his book *The Silent Traveller in the Yorkshire Dales* with drawings of the landscape and on occasions also drew himself within it.



Lingha Singh

Lingha Singh (1844 – 1937) Born in Punjab he had been sent to Britain to study, but chose instead to learn the art of magic in the USA. By 1911 he was touring Britain.

Isabella Paula

Isabella Paula wearing a patterned dress. Shawls originated in India. Some were patterned, some were plain but everyone wore them, rich and poor. By the 1850's they had become popular in Britain. British textile firms copied Indian patterns and the one seen here was renamed as 'Paisley' pattern.



Salesman

Door to door salesman and customer.



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