

# THE EAST INDIA COMPANY AT HOME, 1757-1857

## MAY 2012 NEWSLETTER

### New case studies in progress

After our visit to the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales in April, Strategy Assistant Rachael Barnwell has generously offered to complete our first Welsh case study for *The East India Company at Home* project. Rachael's case study will focus on a group of town houses on Anglesey which feature mid-eighteenth century 'Chinese' lattice-work staircases. It appears that these staircases were possibly inspired by Thomas Chippendale's 'Chinese' furniture designs. Local historian **Georgina Green** met with Margot recently to discuss the case study she is working on for the project. Georgina works closely with Valentines Mansion & Gardens in Ilford and has extensively researched and written about the Mansion owners and their connections to the company. Her case study will focus on the era of Sir Charles Raymond, a retired East India Company captain who purchased the house in 1754, but also stretches into Valentines' 21st-century history. Sir John Sykes is also working on a case study, which examines a small seal given to **Sir Francis Sykes** during his time in India. The case study explores the seal's role in the intertwined histories of Sir Francis Sykes and his banian (man of business) Krishna Kanta Nandy (known as Cantoo Baboo). These case studies will initially be circulated to *EIC at Home* project associates for comment; after revision, they will be made publically available on the web. We now have over 150 project associates with different specialisms involved in the project, as well as over 50 followers on Twitter.



**Ellen at the Shropshire Record Office**

### New website feature

The *Unknown Object* Series has begun in earnest, with a number of intriguing suggestions made about the portrait's identity. Please visit the website homepage ([www.warwick.ac.uk/go/eastindiacompanyathome](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/eastindiacompanyathome)), for more details and do let us know if you can tell us anything about Raeburn's 'Portrait of a Young Indian Woman'.

### Out and About

May saw further work on the Company's Clive and Kentish domestic connections. On 3 and 4 May, Kate visited the newly reopened Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone. While there she examined various inventories and a dinner book from Montreal Park in Kent, which belonged to the Amherst family in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century. On 10 May, Margot and Kate visited Belmont House in Faversham, Kent and met with Andrea Davies, Margaret Woodall and Angela Pierce. After a fascinating tour of the house, led by Angela, we discussed possible collaborative projects over a wonderful lunch. Thanks again for your time and generosity! We look forward to returning to Belmont again soon and encourage Project Associates to visit if they get chance—the photo below gives an indi-



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cation of the wealth and diversity of Belmont's rich material culture. On 10 and 11 May, Ellen visited the Shropshire Record Office to examine a series of documents relating to the Clive family. She also looked at the letters of Ralph Leeke of Longford Hall.

On 16 May, Kate gave a paper titled 'A Foreign Presence?: Migration and Material Culture in Nineteenth-Century Britain' as part of the V&A/ IHR Early Modern Material Cultures seminar series. The paper examined how the Amherst family used objects to understand and facilitate their return home to Britain after five years in India. (<http://www.history.ac.uk/events/seminars/308>)

On 25 May, Margot, Kate and Meike Fellingner (PhD student on the Trading Eurasia project) gave a talk about the East India Company to fifty or so volunteers at Osterley Park and House. The presentation drew upon research undertaken by several historians affiliated with Warwick's Global History & Culture Centre on porcelain production at Jingdezhen in China, cotton textile manufacture in India and the role of the Company supercargo in bringing Asian luxuries to British homes. We were pleased to see that the talk was enthusiastically received and enjoyed talking with the volunteers afterwards.



**Margot and Kate with Margaret from Belmont**

## Upcoming Events

On 7 June, Ellen will be giving a paper titled 'Global Routes and Imperial Spaces: Burnfoot, Eskdale and the Creation of East India Company Servants' at the Space and Social Relations in Historical Perspective Conference at the University of Edinburgh.

On 13 June, Kate will give a talk titled 'Englefield, Essex and the East India Company' as part of the East India Company Study Day organised by Valentines Mansion and Gardens. (<http://www.valentinesmansion.com/whatson.php#three>)

On 1 July, *The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857* project will move to University College London. We will inform you of our new contact details and website address as soon as possible.



**Margot, Meike and Kate with Judith and Claire from Osterley Park**