

## Sections

### Collaborations and Partnership

<b>Collaboration Title</b>	Botany in British India study day
<b>Contributions Made</b>	An international study day held to launch the Botany in British India project, hosted by the British Library. This event was held in conjunction with a University of Sussex AHRC-network international conference 'Collaborative Research on the meteorological and botanical history of the Indian Ocean'. The two events were designed to be complementary in terms of content and speakers.
<b>Year Commenced</b>	2012
<b>Year Ended</b>	2013

### Further Funding

<b>Funding Scheme</b>	India Office Medical Archives
<b>Organisation Name</b>	The Wellcome Trust Ltd
<b>Funding Currency</b>	GBP United Kingdom Pound
<b>Funding Amount</b>	41583
<b>Reference Number</b>	103483/Z/14/Z
<b>Start Year</b>	2014
<b>End Year</b>	2015

### Engagement Activities

<b>Activity Title</b>	Blog postings on British Library's 'Untold Lives' blog
<b>Activity Type</b>	A magazine, newsletter or online publication
<b>Recognised Scheme</b>	Yes

**Geographical Reach** International

**Activity Years** 2012

**Result Description** Blog posts as follows:

*Overview of project* at

<http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/untoldlives/2012/07/botany-in-british-india.html>

*Gardening as therapy* at

<http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/untoldlives/2013/05/gardening-as-therapy.html>

*Convicts and ploughs* at

<http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/untoldlives/2013/02/convicts-and-ploughs.html>

*Roxburgh discovers the breadfruit tree in India* at

<http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/untoldlives/2012/10/roxburgh-discovers-the-bread-fruit-tree-in-india.html>

*Dr Griffith's report on Caoutchouc (rubber tree)* at

<http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/untoldlives/2012/08/dr-griffiths-report-on-caoutchouc-rubber-tree.html>

*Cultivator or Inventor?* at

<http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/untoldlives/2013/12/cultivator-or-inventor.html>

**Impact Description** Blog posts to publicise the digitised resource and particularly to draw attention to the information on commodities (bread-fruit, rubber, cinchona) contained in the records

**Activity Title** Lectures and talks

**Activity Type** Scientific meeting (conference/symposium etc.)

**Recognised Scheme** Yes

**Geographical Reach** International

**Activity Years** 2012

**Result Description** Digitised resource promoted at talks and conferences in UK and India, to academic and public audiences

**Impact Description** Antonia Moon promoted the online resource at public conferences and workshops in India and the UK, and dealt with many follow-up enquiries.

**Activity Title** Blog postings on AHRC 'Commodity Histories' website

**Activity Type** A magazine, newsletter or online publication

**Recognised Scheme** Yes

**Geographical Reach** International

**Activity Years** 2013

**Result Description** Blog posts as follows:

*Catalogue of the edible vegetable products of India* at  
<http://www.commodityhistories.org/resources/primary-sources/catalogue-edible-vegetable-productions-india-1810>

*India rubber trees* at  
<http://www.commodityhistories.org/resources/primary-sources/investigation-india-rubber-trees-brazil-1877>

**Impact Description** Blog posts support the informal collaboration between the India Office Records at the British Library and the AHRC-funded 'Commodity Histories' project at the Open University

**Activity Title** Blog post on Royal Asiatic Society web-site

**Activity Type** A magazine, newsletter or online publication

**Recognised Scheme** Yes

**Geographical Reach** International

<b>Activity Years</b>	2013
<b>Result Description</b>	The William Jones Collection of Drawings at the Royal Asiatic Society at <a href="http://royalasiaticsociety.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/William%20Jones">http://royalasiaticsociety.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/William%20Jones</a>
<b>Impact Description</b>	A little-known resource at the Royal Asiatic Society brought to light by the Botany in British India study day

## Key Findings

**Discoveries** The overall aim of the project was to supplement and to extend the sources on the history of botanical science in British India which are becoming freely available online. The specific proposal was to digitise the main sources in the India Office Records relating to botanical enquiry between 1780 and 1850, creating new and detailed catalogue entries for them, and mounting the images on the British Library's digitised manuscripts web-site, <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts>.

The goal was to digitise 120 files. In the event, 136 files were digitised (8318 images) and are now available on the web-site. They are also listed on a separate web page at <http://bit.ly/RbQ54c> Each file has been either catalogued for the first time or re-catalogued in depth, to include information about key plants, people, places, and events. Additionally, the catalogue records were submitted to the heritage portal Europeana. This portal brings together digitised material across Europe: our material in this context greatly increases its visibility to users outside the UK. The Library's digitised manuscripts web-site is extremely popular (1,127,419 total page views from 102,286 unique browsers in 2013), and the records have been well promoted on British Library and external blogs. India Office Records staff have also publicised the records through talks in South Asia and the UK to a variety of audiences (archivists, interested public, academics, civil servants).

A further aim was to host an international study day at the British Library to promote the records and to build upon the Library's partnerships with other institutions working in this field. The event was held on 7 December 2012, directly after a two-day international conference hosted by the University of Sussex 'Collaborative research on the meteorological and botanical history of the Indian Ocean, 1600-1900'. Many delegates attended both events. There were 25 delegates at the study day from South Asia and the UK, representing academia, learned societies, botanical gardens, and government institutions. A full report of the day is at <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=report-on-study-day-7-12-12.pdf&site=253> The day's purpose was to uncover relevant archival sources in the UK and South Asia and to find out how accessible these were. This was amply achieved, with several new sources being identified and information on access being widely shared in the discussions. A list of sources was subsequently

sent to the Centre for World Environmental History (CWEH), University of Sussex. This has served as the foundation for the Centre's 'road map' of archival sources for the environmental history of the Indian Ocean world, which is currently in development.

The British Library continues to work with the University of Sussex and (through its memorandum of understanding with the Government of India) with Indian institutions, to develop proposals to digitise material in the field of environmental studies. In the short term, the Library has received a grant from the Wellcome Trust to catalogue the India Office medical archives online, the overlap between botanical and medical sources being highlighted by the work of this project.

**Further Details** <http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelpregion/asia/india/indiaofficerecords/botanymat.html>

**Taken Forward** The British Library's website attracts a wide non-academic audience, which can use the freely-available images and catalogue information creatively and innovatively. By promoting these particular records through popular, non-specialist blogs, we help a wider public to appreciate the importance of South Asia for the history of botany, agriculture, forestry, climate, and medicine.

Through visits, talks and informal contacts, we have raised awareness of these records in South Asia. Recent visitors who have viewed the online resource have included civil servants from Pakistan and journalists from India and Pakistan. By maintaining our links with policy-makers and opinion-formers, we hope that the resources will help to inform current debate on environmental matters.

Through our links with UK government organisations such as the Meteorological Office (MO), we have raised awareness of the records as a source for climate studies. Some of the hard data that we have uncovered could be contributed to data-modelling projects being undertaken by the MO.

Cultural institutions such as the Indian Museum and the Royal Asiatic Society of Mumbai have shown an interest in these records. Links to our resources from these institutions' web-sites will help to bring the records to a wider public in India.