

SIR FRANCIS MUDIE OF BROUGHTY FERRY, FORMER GOVERNOR OF WEST PUNJAB,

Introduction

This note relates something of the history of Seafield House School in Broughty Ferry before focussing on the career of Sir Francis Mudie one of its former pupils who spent his final years resident at Eastcotte on The Esplanade at Broughty Ferry.

Seafield House Preparatory School

In the grounds of the recently completed replacement Grove Academy there is a monument to 23 young men who gave their lives for their country 1914-1919. All were former pupils of Seafield House Preparatory School which stood on the site of the new building.

Seafield House was a 19th-century Victorian villa built for the flax merchant George Jameson (1816-1886). Situated on the west side of what became the Grove Academy its grounds, which extended to 5 acres and accommodated green houses and conservatories, extended from what is now Seafield Road to Claypots Road. Following Jameson's death the property was converted for use as one of a number of preparatory schools set up to meet the needs of the affluent residents of Broughty Ferry. It was demolished before 1953.

Seafield House School accepted day pupils and boarders and the grounds were laid out as cricket and football pitches. The first Headmaster was Robert Lockhart the father of the future Sir Rob Lockhart. The War Memorial in the grounds of Grove Academy remembers Private Norman Burritt Lockhart who was the son of Reginald R. and Louise B. Lockhart, of 36 Dale Avenue, Toronto, Ontario.

Three men who were to go on to be at the heart of Government in India and Pakistan before, and after, independence all began their education at Seafield House School: General Sir Rob McGregor MacDonald Lockhart, KCB CIE MC (1893–1981); Sir George Cunningham, GCIE, KCSI, OBE (1888–1963); and Sir Robert Francis Mudie KCSI, KCIE, OBE (1890–1976)

On 15 August 1947, the day India became independent, Rob Lockhart was appointed Commander-in-Chief, India. In the newly formed Pakistan George Cunningham became first Governor of the North West Frontier Province (astonishingly succeeding Rob Lockhart in that post) and Francis Mudie became the first Governor of the West Punjab Province.

Sir Francis Mudie: Governor of West Punjab.

On his death The London Times of 17 September 1976 carried the following Obituary:

"Sir Francis Mudie, KCSI, KCIE, OBE, died on September 15 at the age of 86. He was one of the handful of British officials in India to continue in high positions after the transfer of power in August, 1947, when, on the advice of Mr Jinnah, the first Governor-General of Pakistan, King George VI appointed him Governor of the Province of West Punjab.

Robert Francis Mudie, son of Patrick Spence Mudie, of Dundee, was born on August 24, 1890. He was educated at Fettes College, Edinburgh, and at King's College, Cambridge, where in 1911 he was a Wrangler. He taught mathematics at Clifton College for a year or so and at Eton in 1912-13. He was

then still young enough to compete for the Indian Civil Service and passed the 1914 examination. He volunteered and became a subaltern in the City of London Rifles. On going out to Bengal at the close of 1915 he was enrolled as a Territorial in the Indian Army Reserve of Officers. So it was not until 1919 that his experience of civil administration began. In district work he gained a reputation for vigorous personality and good sense, and in 1930-31 he was one of the secretaries of the Indian Round Table Conference in London. Later he had a short spell of duty in Delhi with the Railway Board.

In 1936 he was made Revenue Secretary to the United Provinces Government, and a year later Chief Secretary. He acted as Governor of Bihar in the fateful days of 1943-44, for it was there that the "open rebellion" decided on by the National Congress in August 1942 had given most anxiety and had been most inimical to the war effort. Next in 1944 Lord Wavell made him Home Member of his Executive Council in succession to Sir Reginald Maxwell. His tenure was short but strenuous, for in 1946 he went to Karachi as the pukka Governor of Sind, where there was much friction between Mr Jinnah's supporters and those who looked with grave misgiving on his separatist policy. But such was the confidence reposed in Mudie that when partition came in August 1947 Mr Jinnah selected him for the governorship of West Punjab.

A more difficult and anxious post could scarcely be conceived. Murder and arson on a large scale had started in the eastern half of the Punjab, giving rise to a stream of Muslim refugees into Pakistan. There the tales of horror they told excited their co-religionists to retaliation against Hindus and Sikhs, thus setting in motion a contrary movement of refugees. The task of preventing mass murder and the burning of villages, and of affording safe conduct to the vast hordes of refugees proved beyond the capacity of the two army divisions which had been hastily formed into a Punjab Boundary Force. It was disbanded a fortnight after the partition. Nor was the civil administration by ministers with Mudie as Governor able to cope with the vast new problems presented without the assistance of the Pakistan Army.

It was not to be expected that the West Punjab Government would run smoothly in view of the personal rivalries of ministers and would-be ministers. There was constant bickering between two leading members of the Muslim League, the Khan of Marndot and Munraz Daultana, for ascendancy. It was soon evident that the new province was unfitted for the time being for ministerial government; and the Pakistan authorities decided that Sir Francis should rule under Sec 92a of the Provisional Constitution, which had been borrowed from the India Act of 1935. Thus a system of Governor's personal administration which had been applied in most Indian provinces during Congress opposition to the war was now brought into force in a great part of Pakistan. This caused considerable discontent among aspiring ministers, and in May 1949 the provincial Muslim League passed a resolution asking for the recall of Sir Francis and his replacement by a Pakistani. Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister of the Dominion, had been absent at the London Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers when the storm blew up. Though on his return he expressed his confidence in Sir Francis continuing, political opposition to his governorship induced him to resign in July 1949.

He returned to Britain but continued active in international affairs. He was Head of the British Economic Mission to Yugoslavia in 1951-54. He also chaired the Mission of Inquiry into the Rubber Industry of Malaya in 1954; the Commission on the Desert Locust Control Organization in 1955; and the British Caribbean Federal Capital Commission in 1956.

He was made an OBE in 1919, CIE in 1935, CSI in 1941, KCIE in 1944 and KCSI in 1945.

He was twice married, first, in 1919, to Mary Spencer by whom he had one daughter. She died in 1960. He married, in 1960, Mary Elizabeth Abercromby, daughter of the late John Ellison Macqueen."

Retirement in Broughty Ferry

Following his first wife's death in 1960 and his subsequent remarriage, Sir Francis moved to Eastcote on The Esplanade in Broughty Ferry. In the 1960s he served as President of the Abertay Historical Society and co-authored with D. M. Walker that society's ninth publication, "Mains Castle and the Grahams of Fintry". Following Sir Francis death in 1976 Lady Mudie stayed on at Eastcote and passed away in 1994.

Main Sources

RCHMS description of the former Seafeld House School with pictures.

Obituary of Sir Francis Mudie, The Times of 17 September 1976.

Ilyas Chattha Faction-building in Pakistan: Sir Francis Mudie and Punjab politics, 1947–49 *Contemporary South Asia*, Volume 22, Issue 3, 2014