

Oxford DNB: November 2020

Welcome to the sixty-eighth update of the *Oxford DNB*, which comprises fifteen new articles adding ten lives and revisiting five other lives, accompanied by six portrait likenesses. The new articles have a special focus on global lives connecting the United Kingdom with Australia and New Zealand, the Far East, India, the Indian Ocean, Africa, and North America.

From November 2020, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford DNB)* offers biographies of 63,817 men and women who have shaped the British past, contained in 61,508 articles. 11,815 biographies include a portrait image of the subject – researched in partnership with the National Portrait Gallery, London.

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worldwide. Full details of participating British public libraries, and how to gain access to the complete dictionary, are available [here](#).

November 2020: summary of newly-added content

The lives of two gay men from Australia and New Zealand, respectively, who settled in Britain immediately after the First World War are included in this update. Made a scapegoat for an outbreak of Spanish influenza at a hospital in New South Wales in 1918, the Australian medical practitioner **Norman Haire (1892-1952)** moved to London where he went on to lead the British branch of the World League for Sexual Reform. A leading sexologist and advocate of contraception, he established a successful private practice dealing in areas and offering procedures which most doctors in that period avoided. His importance as a sexologist lay in his role as a disseminator, popularizer, and propagandist. **Sir Rex de Charembac Nan Kivell (1898-1977)** came to Britain in 1916 with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, and reinvented himself and his origins, gaining a long sought-after knighthood shortly before his death. He made his way into the London art world where he became director of the Redfern Gallery, which led the way in promoting modern British art. His principal legacy was his antiquarian collection of Pacific exploration material, which

became one of the foundation collections of the National Library of Australia.

Three lives in this release have connections with the Far East and India. **Oswald Thomas Tuck (1876-1950)** began his career as an astronomical 'computer' at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich before becoming a naval instructor in astronomy and navigation, based on the China Station, where he began to learn Japanese. He became an interpreter following the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902 and served as British Naval Attaché in Tokyo. He came out of retirement at the start of the Second World War and from 1942 ran the six-month course in Japanese at Bedford to meet the needs of cryptanalysts at Bletchley Park. His course in the essentials of military Japanese was regarded as an extraordinary success, training over 220 students. Born in India, **Alice Marietta Marval (1865-1904)** spent most of her early life in Clapham, London, where she felt a call for missionary life and qualified in medicine before being sent as a junior doctor to St Catherine's hospital for women and children in Cawnpore. There she treated plague victims in their own homes, and herself succumbed to the disease. Her example of self-sacrifice inspired memorials and depictions including stained glass windows dedicated to exemplary women at Liverpool Cathedral and All Saints church, High Wycombe. Joining the Indian Civil Service in 1927, Oxford

history graduate **Hugh Trevor Lambrick** (1904-1982) opted to serve in Sindh where members of his mother's family had previously served. Much of his career was occupied with framing an administrative structure for the Sindh province, which was separated from Bombay in 1936. But from 1941 until his retirement in 1946 he was placed in charge of suppressing the Hur revolt in Sindh, though he evidently disliked the authoritarian power he was required to exercise. His later life was spent researching and writing historical works on Sindh, revealing an unexpected affinity for the Hur community.

The lives of two Welsh missionaries whose work was affected by changing British relations with the rulers of the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar are revisited in this update. Both were farmers' sons, and Congregationalists, trained at Gosport Missionary Academy under the auspices of the London Missionary Society. In 1820 **David Jones (1797-1841)** arrived in Antananarivo where in 1821 he was joined by **David Griffiths (1792-1863)**. They received the support of the Merina ruler, Radama I, preached and taught in the Malagasy language, translated the Bible into the language, and compiled grammars and vocabularies. Their relations with the Merina crown brought them into conflict with the British authorities in the

region, who were trying to assert informal rule over the island. In 1835 Radama's successor, Ranavalona, banned Christianity and the missionaries left. Jones was sent to Mauritius where in 1836 he opened schools for formerly enslaved people and died there. Griffiths returned to Madagascar clandestinely in 1838 but was expelled in 1840 and spent his later life in Wales revising the Malagasy Bible. Jointly, Griffiths and Jones are credited with laying the foundations of the first indigenous Malagasy Christian community, which survived a quarter of a century of persecution from 1835 to 1861.

Two of the articles in this update record lives connected with Africa. Lanarkshire-born geographer, **James MacQueen (1778-1870)**, whose life is revisited, spent his early career as an estate manager in Grenada, arriving there in the aftermath of an insurrection by the enslaved, and on his return to Glasgow became a leading pro-slavery propagandist. At the same time he promoted a scheme for a chartered company to establish trade with the West African interior, founded on his theory that the river Niger flowed into the Atlantic Ocean. He was a founder of the trans-Atlantic shipping line, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, and was involved in planning the Niger expedition of 1841, before turning his attention to the Nile and schemes for the British commercial exploitation of Africa. The army officer and colonial police officer **Alan**

Maxwell Boisragon (1860-1922), was born in India into an army family (Ethel Grimwood, 'the heroine of Manipur' was his half-sister). He served in India and then in the Niger Coast Protectorate Force in Africa, where he was a survivor of the massacre of the mission to open Benin City to British traders, which led to the notorious punitive expedition in 1897. His later tenure as captain superintendent of the Shanghai Municipal Police was ended as a result of his ineffective handling of the Mixed Court riots of 1905.

Finally, the update surveys some trans-Atlantic lives. The recipient of an honorary doctorate from King's College, Kingston, Ontario, and later from the University of Aberdeen, **Dame Ishbel Maria Gordon, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair (1857-1939)**, whose life is re-appraised in this update, always regretted that she had been prevented by her father from pursuing higher education at Girton College, Cambridge. She and her husband, the Liberal politician the seventh earl of Aberdeen, had an egalitarian marriage, and she pursued her own interests in social reform and the women's movement. They made tours of the British empire and she accompanied him to Canada, where he was governor-general. She became president both of the National Council of Women of Canada and the International Council of Women, organizing its London congress in 1899. Irish-born civil servant **Henry Valentine**

Leonard Swanzy (1915-2004) joined the BBC in 1941 as a producer for the general overseas service and became best-known for his involvement in the radio programme Caribbean Voices between 1946 and 1954. He encouraged writers from the Caribbean to contribute and some 150 did so during those six years, notably Derek Walcott and V. S. Naipaul. In 1954 he moved to Accra as head of programmes for the Gold Coast Broadcasting System. Brought up and educated in California,

Howard Eugene Root (1926-2007) taught in Egypt where the Anglican bishop encouraged him to study theology in England. Ordained in the Church of England in 1953, he settled in Cambridge, becoming a British citizen in 1960. As an Anglican observer at the Second Vatican Council he promoted ecumenical dialogue and he later became director of the Anglican centre in Rome. In his writings he showed a fundamental concern to re-establish contact between the church and modern women and men by connecting everyday life to theology. US folk singer **Grace Hedwig (Hedy) West (1938-2016)**, brought up in the traditions of the Appalachian Mountains, came to Britain in 1965 and went on to make three appearances at the annual Cambridge Folk Festival, and went on to influence the English folk scene.

2020 marks the quatercentenary of the *Mayflower* voyage, whose commemorations have taken different and changing

forms. Married to a Herefordshire clergyman, **Annie Webb (1806-1880)** dramatized the story of the Pilgrim Fathers in a novel published in 1853, characteristic of the importance of female authors in the popularization of the *Mayflower* narrative in British fiction. Her other novels, which had Christian moral themes and often had oriental settings, were addressed to an Evangelical readership who might otherwise have shunned works of secular fiction. Among the most energetic promoters of the *Mayflower* tercentenary in Britain, in 1920, was the Plymouth-born biblical scholar and palaeographer, **James Rendel Harris (1852-1941)**, who had become a Quaker and had spent his early academic career in north America. After the First World War, he believed that Britain must build a strong relationship with the United States to secure world peace, and sought to draw together Anglo-American nonconformist communities to celebrate the Pilgrim Fathers.