

**THE ROYAL GLOUCESTER LODGE N<sup>o</sup>. 130 CHARITY BOX  
A HISTORY OF ITS ORIGIN AND PLACES ASSOCIATED WITH IT.**



**By W.Bro. Sean Jordan, Prov.G.Stwd**

This beautiful silver casket is the Lodge's Charity Box which has been used for many years and is still in use today as it is passed around the tables at the Festive Board after every meeting. I and, I dare say like many of you brethren, slip a few coins in to this casket as it duly passes around the tables without giving too much consideration to its origins. It is fair to say that there are many of you who may have looked a little closer at this beautiful object and particularly at the inscription or the engravings depicted thereon. But when was it first used by our Lodge? How did we come by it? What is its history? And what are pictures of?

In the minutes of the Regular Meeting of Royal Gloucester Lodge held on 8th August 1974, W. Bro. B.G. Adams, or Bert as he was affectionately known, referred to the death of the widow of the late W. Bro. Captain F.W. Thornback. He informed the Brethren that the Executor to her Estate had advised that an Indian silver casket had been bequeathed to the Royal Gloucester Lodge. W. Bro. Adams had collected the casket and had much pleasure in entrusting it to the Worshipful Master at that time, W. Bro. Frederick Woods. Hence, The Worshipful Master instigated its immediate use as the Lodge Charity Box as its form naturally lent itself to such suitable purpose. As to what was used before this time, I have been unable to ascertain.

But who was W. Bro. Captain F.W. Thornback? And how did he originally come to be the owner of it?

Frederick Walter Thornback was born on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1891 in the family home at 274, Priory Road, St. Deny's, Southampton, son of a Postman. His father hailed from London, but had married in Southampton in 1890. By 1901, his father's occupation was listed as a "Domestic Coachman". Frederick was by then the eldest of 5 children; 2 brothers and 2 sisters living at 38 Northam Street, St. Mary's, Southampton.

The 1911 Census shows the family home now being at 9 Bellvue Road, Eastleigh. Frederick then had 3 brothers and 4 sisters, although 2 had either died or left the family home (possibly married?). Now aged 21, Frederick is shown working as a Clerk.



W. Bro. Capt. F.W. Thornback



274 Priory Road (white house), St. Deny's as it is today

Tracing the steps of F.W. between 1911 and 1918 has proven difficult.

However, in 1919, we know that he was already in India and already a freemason. The first record I can find shows him joining Prinsep Chapter No. 413 in Meerut on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1919. Joining, because records show he was already a Royal Arch Mason in the Scottish Constitution, as he was likewise a member of a Craft Lodge under the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

Meerut is an ancient city approximately 40 miles north east of the current capital, New Delhi in the District of Uttar Pradesh. It still has the second largest military cantonment in India, so suspect that this could have been one of his earliest, if not his first, military posting in India.

By 1921, Bro. Thornback was living in Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan which was at that time in the North West Frontier Province of India under British rule. He was at this time a Sergeant Major in the Derajat Brigade, based in the cantonment lying south east of the town. The Derajat Brigade had been formed after the 1903 reforms of the British Indian Army by Herbert Kitchener when he was Commander-in-Chief, India. By 1914 the British military force in India was made up of units of the British Army and of the Indian Army. The two armies were mixed together in the same command structure to provide a field force and forces for internal security duties. The Derajat Brigade was part of the Northern Army and deployed along the North West Frontier. The Brigade had its winter head-quarters at Dera Ismail Khan, and the garrison consisted of a mountain battery, a regiment of Native cavalry, and three regiments of Native infantry.

It was here, on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1921, that Frederick Walter Thornback was initiated in to Derajat Lodge No. 3206 of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. His membership here was fairly brief as he resigned on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1922; but clearly only because of his movement in the Army.

He was unattached for only three days as on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1923 he joined Hope and Perseverance Lodge No.782 E.C. meeting at The Masonic Hall (Anarkali), Lahore, Pakistan which was at that time in Punjab, a district of India. Lahore had become the headquarters of Freemasonry in Punjab. Hope & Perseverance Lodge No. 782 was consecrated in 1858. As a separate point of interest, in April 1886, Rudyard Kipling was made a mason in the Lodge, but at the age of only 20 years and 2 months, required a special dispensation to do so. On the same evening that Kipling was raised in December 1886, he was elected Secretary of this Lodge so that he recorded his own raising in the minutes of his Lodge.

According to Bro. Thornback's own written accounts, he remarked that its members proudly told other brethren that it was "Kipling's Lodge" on the least provocation! The Lodge of Hope and Perseverance was largely made up, as one might expect in the India of that time, of soldiers, civil engineers, civil servants, doctors, men attached to various branches of the post and telegraph services and the police.

By the late nineteenth century, Lahore was a desirable posting for European officers and civilians due to its large size, moderate climate, and relatively cosmopolitan range of institutions and activities.



Lahore Masonic Temple - built in 1914, using the foundation stone from its predecessor. The new temple was designed by Basil M. Sullivan, Consulting Architect to the government of Punjab.

A survey conducted during the 1911 Census found that houses in Lahore's Civil Station (where European residences predominated) occupied lots averaging 2.25 acres in area; the corresponding figure for Lahore City was 0.027 acres, or roughly 1% of the Civil Station average. The spacious lots in Lahore's Civil Station thus formed a landscape that was as conspicuous for the lavish consumption of space as it was for the presence of Europeans.

Since most colonial officers moved every few years, housing for the European community was almost always rented; in the case of government officers, the resident paid rent from his or her monthly salary earmarked as a housing allowance.

Some bungalows, especially those located in military cantonments, were built by the colonial government for its officers and employees, and standard plans were produced by the Public Works Department (PWD) for the purpose. In larger cities, however, bungalows were often built by Indian businessmen and landowners who rented them both to government officers and to European civilians. Sergeant Major Thornback would have probably lived in one of these residences.

Channan Din recruited a small band of soldiers and armed them with sticks and toy guns. This, dubbed the Danda Fauj by Lahore's wags, was the mock fighting arm of a people's rebellion in Lahore against British rule. The Danda Fauj paraded the streets of Lahore on April 11 and 12, 1920, when the revolt against the Rowlatt Act was at its peak. This Act was made law by the British Raj in 1919, indefinitely extending "emergency measures" enacted during World War 1 to control public unrest and root out conspiracy. Passed on the recommendations of the Rowlatt Commission, this Act authorised the government to imprison, without trial, any person suspected of terrorism.

Channan Din's Danda Fauj was an amusing part of the great rebellion which emerged in opposition to the Rowlatt Act on Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha (peaceful resistance) call. This revolutionary movement's strongest manifestations were in Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab. Gandhi's call aroused people all around India but in Lahore the uprising was so intense that the city seemed to spin out of British control. Large contingents of the British Indian Army were deployed to protect the homes of Europeans.

When diplomacy failed to tame the rebellion in Lahore, General O'Dwyer called in the army which successfully crushed the upsurge. Several people, Hindu and Muslim, were killed in this process. The events of 1920 alarmed the British and raised the "spectre" of Hindu-Muslim unity, a factor the Raj did its best to undo in the following decades.

Bro. Thornback's progress in the Army meant that he was now to work in Bombay (now Mumbai and, incidentally, Rudyard Kipling's birth place) and he moved there from Lahore in August 1923 having resigned from Hope and Perseverance Lodge on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1923.

He had arrived in Bombay with letters of introduction to three Bombay Lodges. One Wednesday evening, he made an enquiry as to the location of the Masonic Hall from a tall Fire Brigade Officer standing on the pavement outside his Station on Hornby Road. – a certain W. Bro. "Buck" Taylor (another brother who gave Research Lodge a wonderful service). Bro. Thornback was immediately offered an invitation to attend The Research Lodge the following evening, and finding it was a Temperance Lodge, and he being a total abstainer himself, in his own words "that was that". He never needed to present any of the three introductory letters and Bro. Thornback joined the Research Lodge No. 3184 E.C. on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1923. He became affectionately known as "Scratchy"

On his first visit, he was asked to officiate as Deacon as the brother who held that office could not attend that night and he carried the "stick", as he called it, for the rest of the year and so commenced his progression to the chair of the Lodge and, as he later wrote in 1958, "which has no prouder member...."

A few months later, on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1924 in fact, Bro. Thornback joined the Research Chapter No. 3184

In 1927 he was installed in to the Chair of King Solomon in the Research Lodge No. 3184.

In 1928 Worshipful Bro. Thornback read a paper on "The Apron" and later that year presented a set of silver Square & Compasses for use on the V.S.L. These are, to this day, still in use at every meeting of the Research Lodge.

In 1929, Excellent Companion Thornback was installed First Principal of the Research Chapter – an office he was fortunate to hold again in 1933.

Whilst back in the Research Craft Lodge, on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1929, W. Bro. Thornback gave an explanation of the 1<sup>st</sup> degree Tracing Board and the second portion of the First Degree Lecture was worked.

It was also in 1929, on April 24<sup>th</sup> in fact, that Capt. F.W. Thornback married Emily Antoinette Freel at the Church of St John the Evangelist, Navy Nagar in the Colaba area of South Bombay. On the Marriage certificate, Frederick was confirmed as being a 38 year old Journalist and Emily a 44 year old school mistress.

It is interesting that his profession is recorded as a journalist. This appears ten again ten years later on a transcript of passage document. I can only speculate that he was possibly a journalist within the armed forces as all other records, military and Masonic, indicate undoubtedly that his employer was in fact the Army.

In 1932 W. Bro. Thornback, now holding the rank of P.A.G.D.C. read a paper on Masonic Etiquette. In the same year, he was appointed District Assistant Grand Director of Ceremonies of the District Grand Chapter of Bombay.

In 1933, he and Bro. A.G. Norman demonstrated how to prove and test a mason. Of more important note in this year, he was appointed as Past District Senior Grand Warden of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay.

In 1939, he was appointed Grand Chaplain of District Grand Lodge of Bombay

In 1940, he was appointed District Third Grand Principal of the District Grand Chapter of Bombay.



**These are to Certify** that the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has in his custody a Register of **Marriages** solemnized at St. John's (The Afghan Memorial) Church, Colaba, Bombay in which Register there is an entry of which the following is a true copy:

Number	142		
When Married	Year 1929	Month April	Day 24 <sup>th</sup>
Names of Parties			
Christian Name	Frederick Walter	Emily	
Surname	Thornback	Freel	
Age	38	44	
Condition	Bachelor	Spinster	
Rank or Profession	Journalist	School - Mistress	
Residence at the time of Marriage	Bombay	Bombay	
Father's Name and Surname	Frederick Richard Thornback	William Freel	
By Banns or Licence	Banns		
Signatures of the Parties	Frederick Walter Thornback	Emily Freel	
Signatures of two or more Witnesses present	Gerald L. Chard	W <sup>m</sup> . Geo. West	Edna Clyne
Names of Witnesses in full	Gerald Lionel Chard	William George West	Edna May Clyne
Signature by whom Married Name (and designation) of the person (Minister) by whom the ceremony is (was) performed	Francis Ernest Dossetor, Chaplain of Colaba		



**In witness whereof** I have hereunto set my hand, at 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB, this Eleventh day of April in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Twelve.

*Hedley Suttar*

*Foreign and Commonwealth Office*

A copy of the Marriage Certificate of F.W. Thornback and Emily Freel

In 1939, W.Bro. Thornback and his wife Emily had returned temporarily to England. They travelled back to Bombay by way of the steamship Strathallan, which departed from London on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1939 bound for Sydney, Australia.

The transcript of passage:

<b>Name:</b>	Frederick THORNBAC
<b>Date of departure:</b>	25 October 1939
<b>Port of departure:</b>	London
<b>Destination port:</b>	Bombay
<b>Destination country:</b>	India
<b>Date of Birth:</b>	1891 (calculated from age)
<b>Age:</b>	48
<b>Marital Status:</b>	Married
<b>Sex:</b>	Male
<b>Occupation:</b>	Journalist
<b>Notes:</b>	
<b>Passenger recorded on:</b>	Page 23 of 28

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The following people with the same last name travelled on this voyage: -

Emily THORNBAC

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<b>Ship:</b>	STRATHALLAN
<b>Official Number:</b>	166371
<b>Master's name:</b>	J H Biggs
<b>Steamship Line:</b>	P.& O.S.N.Company
<b>Where bound:</b>	Sydney, Australia
<b>Square feet:</b>	
<b>Registered tonnage:</b>	14134.41
<b>Passengers on voyage:</b>	973

W.Bro. Thornback left Bombay to go to the Sudan with the 29<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade of the Indian Army sometime around September 1940. Sudan is strategically placed as an East African state directly below Egypt with a coastline on the Red Sea. From June 1940, during World War 2, the British and their Empire allies were fighting Italian troops in the East African Campaign. It appears that F.W. and the 29<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade were placed on the Red Sea Coast to protect Port Sudan, the country's principal port. The Italians surrendered in November 1941. W. Bro. Thornback was recorded as a joining member of the Red Sea Lodge No. 4570 E.C. in Port Sudan on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1942. He was by now a Captain, which was how his title was registered upon joining this Lodge.

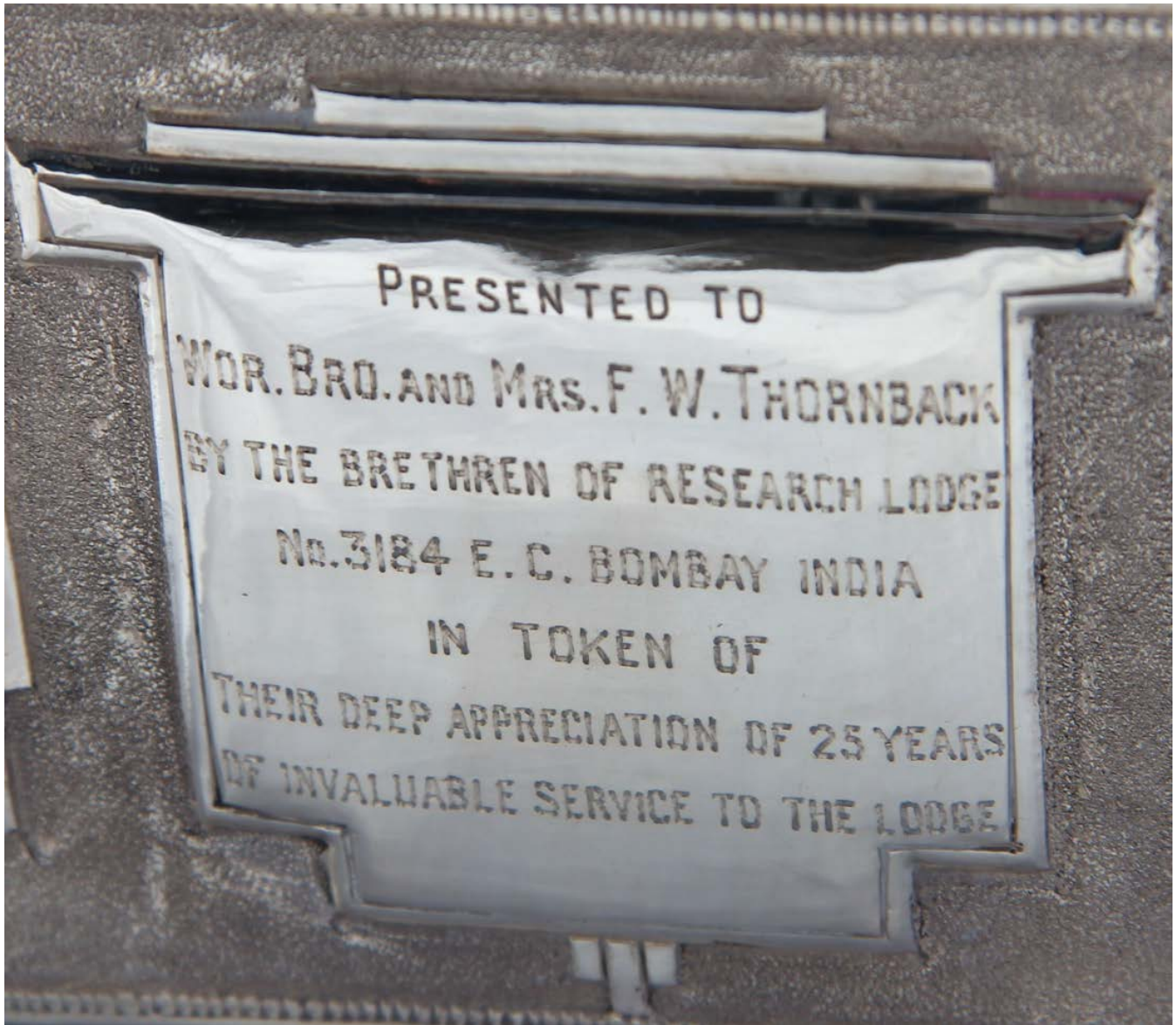
From Sudan, it is most likely that he travelled with the Movement Control Group to take part in the capture of Madagascar in 1942. Military records indicate that in 1943, Frederick Thornback was made a Temporary Major in the Movement Control Group of the British Army.

Subsequently returning to India, the only Movement personnel trained in combined operations there in 1943 were the officers and men who had taken part in the capture of Madagascar in 1942, some of whom had gone to India thereafter with 2 Division. These personnel had been concentrated in Bombay under the title of No. 3 Special Movement Control Group. So, this is how we can put together the pieces of his military career.

He resigned from the Red Sea Lodge No.4570 E.C. in Port Sudan on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1943 and so, presumably, this was around the time he left Madagascar or Sudan to return to India

Back in India, W.Bro. Thornback resumed his regular attendance at the Research Lodge No. 3184 in Bombay. In 1946, W. Bro. Thornback was elected Treasurer of Research Lodge and in October that year, he gave a talk on "The Symbolism of a Stamp". A "Lodge Monitor" was prepared by the Lodge's Worshipful Master and W.Bro. Thornback which was printed and circulated to all the brethren.

W.Bro. F.W. Thornback's last attendance at a meeting of the Research Lodge was on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1949. After the meeting, the silver casket was presented to W. Bro. Thornback and his wife to mark his service of 25 years to the Lodge. The presentation also included a printed address of the "Roll of Members". Whilst acknowledging his 25 years service to the Research Lodge, the casket was also a "parting gift" as W.Bro. Thornback and his wife were about to leave India and return to England, the country of his birth and infant nurture. However, he continued to be a member of the Lodge until his passing to the Grand Lodge Above.



Having returned to England to live, W.Bro. Thornback and his wife set up their home at No. 80 Bullar Road, Bitterne Park, Southampton and named their house "Colaba" after the suburb of Bombay where they had lived together for the previous 20 years.

A few months later, on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1949 in fact, W.Bro. Thornback made his first visit to Royal Gloucester Lodge. It is not known who introduced him to Royal Gloucester as at that time, guests didn't record who their host was. W.Bro. Stan Lebern was the Worshipful Master in 1949. F.W. attended the following month at the 1950 Installation meeting, where, it is interesting to note, there were 136 brethren in attendance.



“Colaba”, Bullar Road, Southampton – W.Bro. F.W. Thornback’s home 1949 to 1957

At the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1950, W.Bro. F.W. Thornback was elected a Joining Member of Royal Gloucester Lodge, having been proposed by W.Bro. B. Watts MBE and the then Prov.J.G.D and seconded by W.Bro. B.L.V. Kay PM and ADC of the Lodge. His occupation was recorded as a journalist, which I think is now accurate as clearly he would have retired from the Indian Army.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1953, he joined the Bramston Beach Chapter No.2955 in Southampton.

W.Bro. Thornback was a regular attendee at the Royal Gloucester and often stood in as an acting Officer when required to do so. On 12<sup>th</sup> August 1954, he gave a most interesting and instructive paper on the subject "Behind the Initiation" and under the Third Rising he suggested that instead of using a box for Charity in the in the First Degree Ceremony that an Alms Plate should be used. His offer of an Antient Alms Plate was gratefully accepted by the WM, W.Bro. F.K. Ryder. This plate is still used to this day in our First Degree Ceremonies.

At the May meeting in 1955, W.Bro. Thornback presented the Traditional History and Working Tools at the Raising of Br. W.C. Archer. A few months later in November, however, his first absence in 5 years was recorded. The brethren heard with regret of his serious illness. His next attendance at Royal Gloucester Lodge was some six months later in April 1956, where he was warmly welcomed by the Worshipful Master and all the brethren.

W.Bro. Frederick Walter Thornback's last attendance at Royal Gloucester was at the meeting of October 1957. The reason for this was that he was now 66 years old and retired so he and his wife were moving to Harrow in Middlesex to be nearer to F.W's brothers and sisters who resided there.

He joined Kenton Lodge No. 5046 in Harrow on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1961, where the Masonic Centre was a little over two miles from his home at Cunningham Park. He remained a member of Kenton Lodge, as he did Royal Gloucester Lodge and Research Lodge until his passing to The Grand Lodge Above on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1964.

His widow, Emily, outlived him by a further 9 years until her passing on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1973.

And hence the bequeathing of the silver casket to Royal Gloucester Lodge, which was effected the following year.

With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the town of Bombay, capital of Bombay Presidency, became a major trading center for the British in India. The extensive building activities undertaken during the second half of the nineteenth century converted Bombay into the foremost city of India, a centre for Gothic-cum-Indo-Saracenic civic architecture. Bombay was the port through which silver entered India for distribution to various regions. Silversmiths from other parts of India settled in this cosmopolitan centre, working in their own local styles. By and large, Bombay silversmiths were content to selectively combine regional styles in innovative ways. However, the most innovative local silversmiths incorporated Bombay's urban scene into their designs.

Bombay silver from the late 19th to early 20th centuries is some of the most prized in all India. It became popular largely a result of the Prince of Wales visit in 1875 and 1876. During this time he was presented with several examples of Bombay work.

Silverware was produced by Indian craftsmen during the Raj, the popular term for Crown rule of India between 1858 and 1947. The silverware, from various parts of the British India Empire, reveals a remarkable amalgam of tastes. Producing work for European customers, Indian silversmiths took European forms such as tea services, bowls, claret jugs, goblets, and beer mugs and developed a unique manner of embellishing these objects with designs that attest to an innate Indian fondness for decoration. While the shape and function of Raj silver catered to colonial tastes and demands, the exterior surfaces displayed indigenous decorative skills in design, including pattern, figuration, and all manner of embellishment.

In some respects, the casket is typical of Indian silver design other than Bombay. This is particularly so in respect of the themes depicted on the lid of the casket, namely the native flora and scenes of village life.

From 1900 onward, a number of Kutch silversmiths abandoned the practice of completely encasing their wares with the time-consuming scroll decoration. They now began to incorporate representations of bridges, ports, and other local landmarks, placing them in panels that alternated with the scrollwork.

Many Indian silversmiths did not stamp their works with hallmarks, but British Colonial silversmiths, as well as important and recognised native smiths did mark their work.



Indian silver was never of a uniform standard of purity, especially since items were frequently refashioned from old silver of varying quality. A popular source of the raw material was the rupee coins minted by the East India Company, which, ironically, were of 91.7 percent purity, lower than the sterling standard of 92.5 mandated for imports into Britain. Kutch silver, by contrast, which varied in purity between 96 and 98 percent, exceeded the sterling standard. Thus, the ease of its importation into Britain may have contributed to its immense popularity here.

In the absence of a hallmark which, as previously stated, is not unusual for Indian pieces of silver, our Charity Box has been tested by a local jeweler who confirms that it has a purity of at least 80per cent silver and possibly as high as the 91.7 per cent purity of the Rupee. Could it be that it is made of the recycled coins? A more comprehensive test would be required to confirm this for sure but it would be a romantic idea to think, for now, that this was the case.



Crafting silver is a workshop tradition in which artisans specialized in a range of individual skills: smithing, drawing, chasing, polishing, and gilding. The silversmiths, or sonars, received ingots, recycled silver, and coinage and forged this material into the shape of bowls, cups, jugs, and beakers. The object to be decorated was then filled with a resin-wax mixture to act as a shock absorber, and a wooden stick was inserted into the wax to serve as a handle. The chitera, or patterner, now took over, and, after having drawn the design on the object, chased the pattern from the outside in. Using brass chisels and a hammer, he worked from the outside, hammering in the background, repeatedly heating the object until red-hot and plunging it into cold water to restore malleability before working it again.

In some cases, this procedure was repeated several times to achieve a very high repoussé. Finally, a chisel was used to polish and burnish the background so that the raised foreground design would stand out dramatically.

At the 3750<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Royal Gloucester Lodge held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1991, the R.W. Bro Dr. Roeinton B Khambatta, Past District Grand Master of Pakistan, presented a lecture entitled “The District Grand Lodge of Pakistan from Alpha to Omega”. It was at the Festive Board that the silver Charity Box caught his attention and he gave a superb impromptu “After Dinner Speech” on all the pictures engraved on the Charity Box which was met with great acclamation. Twenty One years later and, in an effort to expand upon the Right Worshipful Brother’s impromptu remarks, the following will inform as to what the engravings on our beautiful Charity Casket depict and explain their relevance to W. Bro. Thornback and his wife.

It would be appropriate to make first reference to The Research Lodge’s banner at the top of the casket. The Research Lodge No. 3184 E.C. was constituted on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1906 and celebrated its Centenary in 2006. It is thought to be the only abstinence Lodge in Western India where members have to sign a pledge to the effect that they will not consume alcohol under the banner of the Lodge. So, at all its festive boards after the lodge meetings the brethren raise their glasses filled with soft drinks!

The Research Lodge, like Royal Gloucester Lodge, meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month, but no longer meet every month of the year. Their banner depicts a man standing on a chequered pavement throwing his hands up to the heavens below the “All Seeing Eye”, above which is the word “Truth”. There is also what appear to be Jacobs’s ladder and an Ionic Column either side of the figure. The words Temperance, Hope and Fortitude appear on the three scrolls at the bottom of the banner.

In the 10 years that passed after they celebrated their Golden Jubilee on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1956, the Research Lodge experienced some major changes. In particular, a number of the older members had either been called to The Grand Lodge Above or resigned due to differing enforced circumstances; ill health being a significant contributory factor. This accounted for no less than 29 of their stalwarts including their old and respected friend W. Bro. Capt. F.W. Thornback. Having joined the Lodge on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1923, he was the Lodge's oldest member and Senior Past Master at the time of their Golden Jubilee, but was called to the Grand Lodge above, as previously stated, on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1964.



The Research Lodge No.3184 E.C. Banner

The engraving on the **front left** of casket shows The **Gateway of India**. Located on the waterfront in Apollo Bunder area in South Mumbai, the Gateway is a basalt arch 85 feet (26 metres) high. It was a crude jetty used by fisher folks and was later renovated and used as a landing place for British governors and other distinguished personages. In earlier times, the Gateway was the monument that visitors arriving by boat would have first seen in the city of Bombay.

Its design is a combination of both Hindu and Muslim architectural styles. The arch is in Muslim style while the decorations are in Hindu style. The Gateway is built from yellow basalt and reinforced concrete. The stone was locally obtained, and the perforated screens were brought from Gwalior.

The central dome is 49 feet (15 metres) in diameter and is 85 feet (26 metres) above ground at its highest point. The whole harbour front was realigned in order to come in line with a planned esplanade which would sweep down to the centre of the town. The cost of the construction was 2.1 Million Rupees, borne mainly by the Government of India. For lack of funds, the approach road was never built, and so the Gateway stands at an angle to the road leading up to it.



The Gateway of India was built to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary to Bombay in December 1911. Indeed, there is a clear inscription on the monument which reads "Erected to commemorate the landing in India of their Imperial Majesties King George V and Queen Mary on the Second of December MCMXI".

The foundation stone was laid on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1911, by the Governor of Bombay Sir George Sydenham Clarke, with the final design of George Wittet sanctioned in August 1914. Between 1915 and 1919 work proceeded on reclamations at (Port) Apollo Bundar for the land on which the gateway and the new sea wall would be built. The foundations were completed in 1920, and construction was finished in 1924. The Gateway was opened on 4 December 1924, by the Viceroy, the Earl of Reading. Noting the date it was built is a possible reason why it may have such prominence on the casket presented to W.Bro. Thornback, who, as you may recall, arrived in Bombay in 1923.

The last British troops to leave India, the First Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry, passed through the Gateway in a ceremony on 28 February 1948. Likewise, but one year later, W.Bro. Capt. Thornback and his wife Emily left India.



The engraving on the **front right** of the casket depicts Freemasons Hall, Fort, Mumbai.

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Bombay was created in 1758, some 30 years after the constitution of the first Provincial Grand Lodge in India, that of Calcutta. Although it appeared in the Roll of Grand Lodge there is no record of how it came into being.

On 5<sup>th</sup> June 1897, a Special Communication of the Grand Lodge was held to lay the foundation of the present Freemasons' Hall at Mumbai by Rt. Wor. Bro. H. E. Lord Sandhurst. The District Grand Lodge of Bombay (English Constitution) and the Grand Lodge of All Scottish Freemasonry in India were opened successively and temporarily adjourned, and the Officers of the two Grand Lodges formed a procession and then laid the corner stone of the present Freemasons' Hall. A Plaque placed in the porch of Freemasons' Hall to commemorate this event can still be seen (indicated over page). The history of the District Grand Lodge of Bombay (English Constitution) records that this ceremony was held at Novelty Cinema, Esplanade, Fort, Bombay.





**A street side view of Freemasons' Hall, Mumbai.**

25<sup>th</sup> March 1899 was an important day for the Craft in Bombay, as it witnessed the opening, consecration and dedication of the present Freemasons' Hall at what was described as 'Home Street, Fort, Bombay'. The ceremony was performed by Rt. Wor. Bro. H. E. Lord Sandhurst, he being the Grand Master of both the English and the Scottish Constitutions and on this account the main Temple in the Freemasons' Hall is named after him and called the "Sandhurst Temple". The Minutes of the Half Yearly Convocation of the District Grand Chapter of Bombay (English Constitution) held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1899 record that the Pro Grand Superintendent, The Hon. Justice Parsons said that this was "the first time we meet in the new Hall, which was opened and consecrated by H. E. Lord Sandhurst, Pro District Grand Master for Bombay and Grand Master of All Scottish Freemasonry in India on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1899. ....

We must congratulate ourselves that Freemasonry in this city, has, at last, obtained a home worthy of the Craft, and I trust that the convenient position and many advantages of this building will lead to an increase in the membership of the Order."



The corner stone is at the entrance of the Freemasons' hall



A picture from the archives, Freemasons' Hall, Bombay, 1912



The engraving on the **rear left** of casket depicts the **Rajabai Clock Tower** in South Mumbai, India. It is located in the confines of the Fort campus of the University of Mumbai. The tower stands at a height of 280 ft (85 m).

The Rajabai tower was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, an English architect. He modeled it on Big Ben, the clock tower of the UK houses of Parliament in London.

The foundation stone was laid on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1869 and construction was completed in November 1878. The total cost of construction came to 2 Million Rupees, a princely sum in those days. This entire cost was defrayed by Premchand Roychand, a prosperous broker who founded the Bombay Stock Exchange on the condition that the tower be named after his mother Rajabai.

Premchand Roychand's mother was blind and as a staunch follower of the “Jain” religion she was supposed to consume her dinner before evening. The evening bell of the tower helped her to know the time without anyone's help.

The tower was closed to the public after it became a frequent spot for those attempting to commit suicide.



The tower was built in a fusion of Venetian and Gothic styles. It is built out of the locally available buff coloured Kurla stone. The tower has one of the best stained glass windows in the city. The best stained glass windows appear elsewhere, but more of that later.

The ground floor has two side rooms, each measuring  $56 \times 27.5$  ft ( $17 \times 8.5$  m). The tower forms a carriage porch  $26$  ft<sup>2</sup> ( $2.4$  m<sup>2</sup>), and a spiral staircase vestibule of  $28$  ft<sup>2</sup> ( $2.6$  m<sup>2</sup>). The Tower, over the carriage porch, has a square form up to the gallery at the top of the first level which is at a height of  $68$  feet ( $20.7$  m) from the ground. The form changes from a square to an octagon and the height from this gallery to the top of the tower is  $118$  feet ( $36$  m) and the third stage to the top of the finial is  $94$  feet ( $28.7$  m), thus making a total height of  $280$  feet ( $85$  m). During its time, it was the tallest structure in the city of Mumbai.



During the British Raj, it played the tunes of "Rule Britannia", "God Save the King", "Home, Sweet Home!" and "A Handel Symphony" out of a total of sixteen tunes, which changed four times a day. It currently chimes only one tune every 15 minutes.

The engraving on the **rear right** of casket shows the **Municipal Corporation Building, Mumbai**. Located in south Mumbai in Maharashtra, it is a Grade IIA heritage building ('V' shaped as viewed from top) opposite to the Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus (a UNESCO World heritage site) at the junction of Dadabhai Naoroji Road and Mahapalika Marg. It is also known as the Bombay Municipal Corporation Building, or BMC building for short.

As the name suggests, the building houses the civic body that governs the city of Mumbai, which is now named the Brihanmumbai Mahanagar Palika and which has as its Sanskrit motto, "Yato Dharmastato Jaya" which translates as "*Where there is Righteousness, there shall be Victory*" inscribed on the banner of its Coat of Arms. It is said to be the largest civic organization in the country and covers an area of 167.6 sq m. I believe that W.Bro. Thornback may have spent part of his life working in this very building. Even if he didn't, it is most likely he visited this building on many occasions.





The BMC was created in 1865 and Arthur Crawford was its first Municipal Commissioner. The Municipality was initially housed in a modest building at the terminus of Girgaum Road. In 1870, it was shifted to a building on the Esplanade, located between Watson Hotel and the Sassoon Mechanics Institute where the present Army & Navy building is situated. On December 9, 1884, the foundation stone for the new building of the Bombay Municipal Corporation was laid opposite Victoria Terminus (now known as Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus), by the then Viceroy, Lord Ripon.

This is perhaps another reason why this building is engraved on the casket as it has a clear Masonic point of reference. Lord Ripon was the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England from 1870 until his conversion to Catholicism in 1874.

Two designs were considered for the building; one of the Gothic designs done by F. W. Stevens and the other in the Indo-Saracenic design presented by Robert Fellowes Chisholm. The Gothic design was finally selected. The building was built using golden-beige basalt rock and was completed in 1893. The building is known for its 255 ft (77.7 m) tall tower. The chief architectural feature is the central dome that rises to a height of 71.5 m (234.6 ft). The gable has a huge winged allegorical figure representing the 'urbs prima in Indis', the first city of India as it was to be known then. The richly molded and paneled Council Chamber has a ceiling of unpolished teak. Records show that this was a location where public hangings took place.

During the period 1100 to 1500 AD the architecture of churches constructed with ornamental arches with ribs supported by buttresses resulted in the subsequent idea of the framed structural design with grandeur and monumentality during the renaissance period of 1500–1700 AD, as the distinct style; the Bombay Municipal Corporation building, the Victoria Terminus, the Rajabai tower and the University of Bombay are some examples of this style. The old style of dome construction was also revived and became popular. The period from 1750 onwards was considered to be the period of modern architecture. The Gothic architecture with controlled composition custom-made to the climatic extremes of the city has cusped window arches and elaborately domed corner towers.

The engraving on one end of the casket depicts **Sunk Rock Lighthouse**, one of the three lighthouses in the Mumbai harbour off the coast of Mumbai. It was built by Thomas Ormiston in 1884. The tower is 72ft (22m) high with lantern and gallery and mounted on a stone pier. The tower itself is painted in a red and yellow checkerboard pattern and the lantern and gallery is painted white. It has now been classified as a Grade I heritage structure.

The Lighthouse is located about 2 miles south east of the Gateway to India. It is only accessible by boat and is operated and managed by the Mumbai Port Trust. The lighthouse has an Active focal plane of 66 ft (22m) and gives two flashes every 6 seconds, white along the channel and red in other directions.



That there is, what appears to be, a sailing yacht on the engraving could be an indication that W.Bro. Thornback was keen on sailing. Maybe he had a yacht himself? This, however, we can only speculate on as it is not a known fact. Maybe, it is merely the signification of another architectural landmark, which together with the others, completes the quintet? I prefer to think of the more romantic notion that he used to unfurl the sails in his spare time!

Swimming races are held between the lighthouse and the Gateway of India, the aforementioned famous landmark on the Mumbai waterfront. The race, which was first held in 1947, two years before W.Bro. Thornback's departure from Bombay was organised annually until the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai in 2008, when a group of terrorists on a dinghy entered the city via a harbour in South Mumbai. After four years absence, the race has now received clearance and is back on the sporting calendar.

The engraving on the opposite end of the casket is similar to the other end in that it has a maritime theme, namely a tall ship, probably of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century design. It's difficult to ascertain whether this has a personal significance to W.Bro. Thornback. It is more likely that it symbolizes the busy port of Bombay and possibly F.W.'s links with the armed forces; the Royal Indian Navy maybe? The ship depicted is typical of those used during the period that the East India Company reigned supreme.

From its origins in 1612 as the East India Company's Marine, the Navy underwent various changes, including changes to its name. Her Majesty's Indian Navy resumed the name 'Bombay Marine' from 1863 to 1877, when it was renamed 'Her Majesty's Indian Marine' (HMIM). The Marine then had two divisions; an Eastern Division at Calcutta and a Western Division at Bombay.

In recognition of its fighting services, HMIM was given the title of 'Royal Indian Marine' in 1892. By this time it consisted of over fifty vessels. In 1905, the service was described as having "Government vessels engaged in troop-ship, surveying, police or revenue duties in the East Indies".

When mines were detected off the coasts of Bombay and Aden, during the First World War, the Royal Indian Marine went into action with a fleet of minesweepers, patrol vessels and troop carriers. Besides patrolling, the Marine ferried troops and carried war stores from India to Mesopotamia (now Iraq), Egypt and East Africa.



The hinged lid to the casket has two pairs of engravings on it.

On either end are depicted flowering plants. Having spent some time perusing images of plants native to India in general and the Western Ghats in particular, I believe that they are most probably the “Shade Loving Hemigraphis”. Also known as “Morpankhi” in Marathi, it is a beautiful tiny flower belonging to Acanthaceae (Ruellia family). The botanical name of the flower is *Hemigraphis latebrosa*.

Shade Loving Hemigraphis is an annual herb, growing to 10-20 cm high. Slender stem is covered with soft white hairs. Oppositely arranged ovate narrow leaves are 3-8 cm long. Flowers occur either in the leaf axils or in spikes at the end of stems. The tubular flowers are violetish white in the throat with streaks of violet. The flower throat is also hairy. Flowering in November to December, they have 5 blue, rounded petals. It is common in grasslands in the Western Ghats and because of its beautiful flowers, the plant has also become commonplace in Bombay gardens and parks.

Maybe Mrs. Thornback was an admirer of this plant and that’s why it has its place on the casket?





Along the lengths of the hinged lid is depicted the **Church of St John the Evangelist**, better known as the **Afghan Church**, a Presbyterian Church at Navy Nagar in the Colaba area of South Bombay. Its place on the casket is significant as this was the church where W.Bro. & Mrs. Thornback were married on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1929.

The church was built by the British to commemorate the dead of the disastrous defeat in the First Afghan War of 1838. Records also mention that only one person, one Surgeon William Brydon - a medical officer - out of 16,000 men, returned safely to Jalalabad to tell the tale of a war in which the British suffered their heaviest defeat yet.

As well as British soldiers, it also commemorates different Indian regiments, such as the Bombay Army, the Madras Army, and Ranjit Singh's army from Lahore. The fact that W.Bro. Thornback had been a Captain in the Army may also have been a reason why they married there.

The church began as a small thatched chapel, half a mile south in what was then known as the "Sick Bungalows" (now the *INHS Asvini*, the Indian naval hospital). There were no chairs, and patrons had to bring their own. Later, the government released a new patch of land for the setting up the church on the condition that the spire be seen from miles away and serve as a landmark to guide ships navigating the Bombay Harbour.





Aerial view of the Church of St John the Evangelist, better known as the Afghan Church

In March 1843, the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture (later the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society) received a request from the Chaplain to the Honourable East India Company, asking for a design for the new church. The English architect John Macduff Derick presented his designs to the Society in November of the same year, and they met with the Society's approval. But in June 1845 word came from India that the designs were unfit for purpose and the building would cost too much. Eventually, plans for the quintessentially English Gothic Revival architecture of the church were submitted in 1847 by city engineer Henry Conybeare and approved. The well-known architect William Butterfield designed the reredos, the Afghan War Memorial mosaics, and the tiles, pews and screen. The church was consecrated on January 7, 1858 by Bishop Harding. The spire cost a sum of Rs 565,000 and was finished on June 10, 1865. Much of the cost of this was paid by Sir Cowasji Jehangir. He also placed an illuminated clock in the tower.

The church consists of the nave and aisles, fluted columns with Doric style capitals, a tower and a spire. The walls are made of rubble faced with coarse Kurla Stone (buff coloured basalt). The piers, arches, and dressings are of Porbunder Stone, very similar to the Caen Stone (cream coloured soft stone from Caen in Normandy) of the English churches; the roof is built of varnished teakwood with hammer beam style ribbing.

Inside it is known for its wide gothic arches and beautiful stained glass windows. The chapel has a nave and aisle with a chancel 50 ft (15 m) in length and 27 ft (7 m) in width.

Butterfield's geometric floor pattern of the chancel is made of encaustic tiles (in-laid with coloured clay) imported from England. The east and west windows were designed by William Wailes, a nineteenth century stained glass expert. There are 21 lancet windows with exquisite stained glass fixed in the triangular apexes, on either side of the nave. The stained glass used is superior to that in the Rajabai Tower.

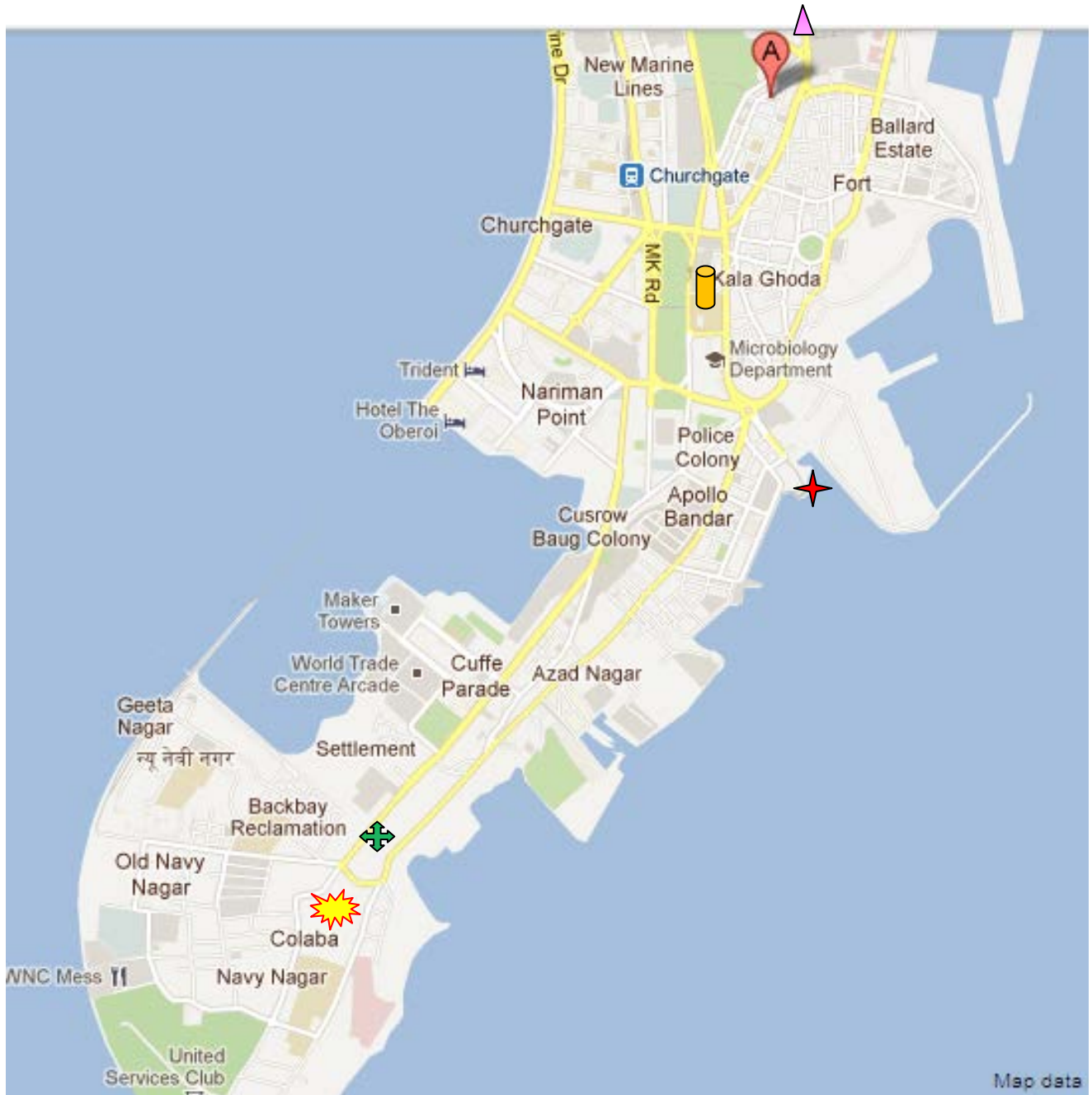
Eight large bells in the bell tower came from the Taylor bell foundry of England in 1904, and are acknowledged to be the best in western India. The tower and spire are 198 ft (60 m) high.

At the entrance of the church one finds plaque giving detailed information on the history of this church. In the old days it had a sizeable flock of British officers who turned up for the Sunday sermon. The friends of twelve officers of various corps have erected a reredos (ornamental screen covering wall at the back of altar). The altar was given in the memory of two officers and the marble pavement in the memory of those who had brethren in the Guild of the Holy Standard. The general memorial of all the officers, non-commissioned and the men of the Bombay Army were erected over the principle entrance in 1883.

After years of decay, the government elevated the church to a Grade I heritage structure. Funds of 30 lakh (or approx. £350,000) were allocated for the restoration of the church. The church holds a few weekly masses.



Front view of the Afghan Church



Freemasons Hall



Bombay Municipal Corporation Building



Rajabi Tower



Gateway of India



St. John the Evangelist or Afghan Church



Bro.F.W. Thornback's Home

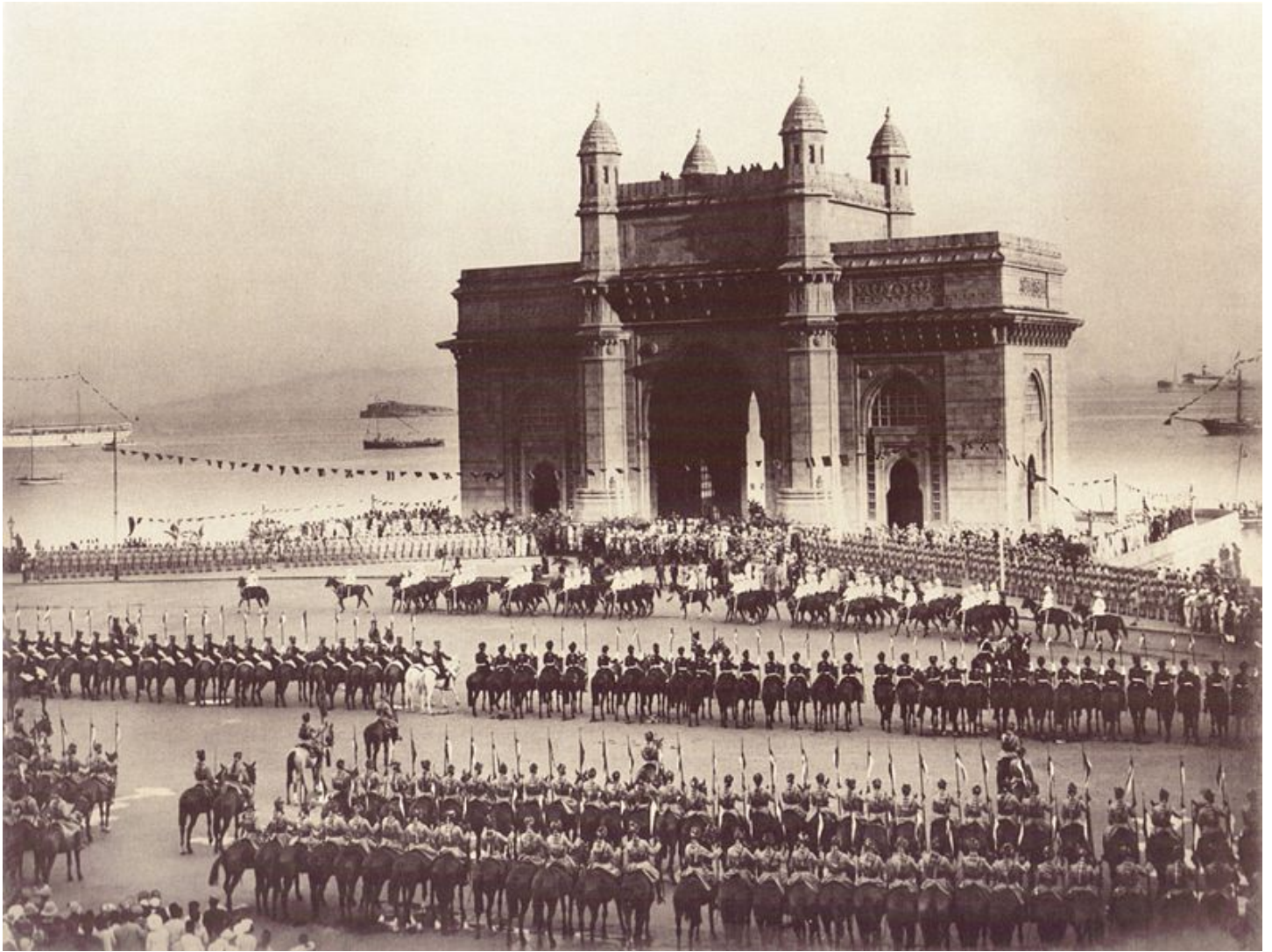
I have been able to gather information from several sources but I would particularly like to record my thanks to:

The Library and Museum of Freemasonry, United Grand Lodge of England, especially Peter Aitkenhead, for the records pertaining to W.Bro. F.W. Thornback's Masonic career.

W. Bro. Narendra S. Porwal, PM, The Research Lodge No. 3184 E.C. P.A.G.D.C., P.D.G.S.W. for a summary of the career and work within the Research Lodge of W.Bro. F.W. Thornback taken from the Research Lodge records. Also taken from "The Research Lodge No.3184 E.C. Bombay – A History of the First Fifty Years 1906 to 1956", published in 1958 in which W. Bro. Thornback wrote a detailed introduction and foreward:

*“ When I was asked by W. Bro. Slator, whom, as a young Naval Officer I had the privilege of initiating into the Craft, if I would write an introduction to his history of The Research Lodge, No. 3184, E.C., I experienced a feeling of considerable satisfaction that someone had tackled the task I had at one time hoped to do myself, but the circumstances ordained that I had to leave India and returned to the land whence I derived my birth and infant nurture before the Lodge had completed its half-century of years.”*

APAC Reference Services of the British Library, especially John Chignoli, for the birth, death and marriage certificates of Frederick and Emily Thornback (nee Freel).



Photograph attributed to the Myers Brothers of the ceremony honoring the landing of King George V and Queen Mary at Bombay, India, 2 December, 1911. Scanned from the book "The Last Empire: Photography in British India, 1855-1911". Texts by Clark Worswick and Ainslie Embree; preface by The Earl Mountbatten of Burma. Published by Aperture Books, 1976.