



From the RSAA Library



August 2003 Update

Restoration of four watercolours in the Society's Library.

The Society recently arranged for the restoration and mounting of four watercolours from its archives. The four portraits, were found rolled up in a cardboard tube labelled "Four Coloured Drawings of Indian Tribesmen 1815". They are hand-coloured but unsigned and there is no record of who donated them or when.

Research in the Society's Library and in the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society has led to a conclusion that these portraits are most probably the work of Lieutenant R M Grindlay of the Bombay Establishment who accompanied the Hon Mountstuart Elphinstone on his expedition of 1809 as far as Peshwa (sic). Grindlay is mentioned as the artist in the Preface to Elphinstone's book of the expedition, "An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul and Its Dependencies etc", published in 1815. A second edition, 1819, is in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society and its plates V, VI, VII and VIII were by Grindlay. Three of these four plates match our paintings. Grindlay, whose full name was Robert Melville Grindlay (1786 - 1877), was at that time in the 7th Bombay Native Infantry and went on to found Grindlay's Bank.

The four watercolours in the Society's archives could well be his originals.



"A Dooraunee Villager with his Arms"



"Sindian (or Indian?) Foot Soldier in his War Drefs" (sic)



"An Afghaun of Damaun"



"An Eusofzye"

They may be viewed by prior appointment in the Library. The Library does not hold a copy of the 1815 or 1819 editions of "An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul" but does have a copy of the two-volume 1972 Karachi OUP edition with a new introduction by Sir Olaf Caroe, a former member of the Society.

*The Royal Society for Asian Affairs
2 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PJ*

Tel: 020 7235 5122 E-mail: info@rsaa.org.uk Web: www.rsaa.org.uk

Secretary: Norman Cameron