

# RAJ CONNECTIONS

The Newsletter and Contact Maker

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## Memories start flooding back

Letters and telephone calls have shown that the concept of Raj Connections has been appreciated by our respondents. The enthusiasm for contacting, hearing from and meeting friends from the past is displayed by the number of requests received for more information : "Have you any news of...?", "Do you know where...?", "I would love to be able to contact..." are typical of the queries and comments which have been liberally sprinkled about in correspondence and conversations which we have had since our first newsletter.

Starting with just the one name from Fr. Rodger "Podgy" Lesser, we have now progressed to the grand total of thirty-four contacts - all within a matter of a few weeks.

Thanks are due in particular to **Les Mahon, Gerry Barnes, Jimmy Campbell** and "**Johnny**" **Brown** who have all been sources of so much information. As a result of their initial leads, our contact list has grown, not only within the UK but also in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

When we get to hear about you it is, most times, just an address. Unless we hear from you when we write to that address, there is no telling for sure that you have not moved away, or that the information was otherwise flawed. We need to hear from you, at least once, in order to confirm that you are still there. We need to hear from you AGAIN, if and when you change your address.

### " 'Podgy' Lesser is a priest and he is stationed in Udaipur."

That's what they told us at St. Mary's. So when we went through Udaipur, we duly called at the local church in mid-town. "No, sahib, this church is C of E. Try the school across the road. There are catholic priests there." We did. They knew Fr. Lesser but, "He is not here today. Try the school on the way out to the airport that is where he usually lives. It is by the 4km stone on the right. You can't miss it." We left a "chitty" for Roger.

On our way out to the airport to catch our plane to Bombay, we searched for the 4km stone. We found a 5km stone and a 3km stone. No.4 was missing. We went back to look for it but had no luck. So we carried on to the airport and quizzed a bullock-cart wallah. "How's your local geography, Bud?".

He directed us to the stone - It is between No1 and No3 !!

Eventually we found the school where we spoke to a couple of nuns who told us in Hindi that "Podgy" wasn't there but might come back that evening. Disappointed, we left another "chitty" and headed off to the airport.

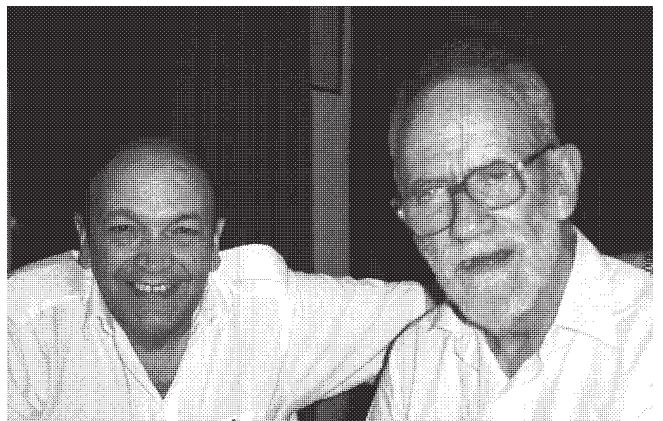
Imagine our surprise when with barely an hour or so before departure - thank goodness we had set off early - in walked a somewhat 'blown-about' Roger, who had scrounged a lift on the back of a motorcycle - looking for whoever it was who had been leaving messages around Udaipur State. We chatted until the last minute and promised we'd meet up again in 1995, if not before.

**Look what you've done, Roger. Raj Connections is your baby !**

### Where are the ladies ?

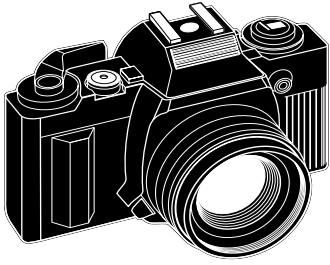
Many of the post-Indian contacts, it seems, were made through the armed services and sports connections, particularly hockey. Though, daresay, there are still many of you who could swing a mean hockey stick or, for that matter, even boot one of the old style "lace-up" footers or thump a six off the back foot, we all hope that we will soon have the pleasure of the cheer leaders, meaning, the ladies. There must be lots of ladies out there who would like to contact their old school-chums and child-hood friends. We blokes are definitely not misogynists ! Ladies we love you ! Please get in touch with us.

### From the mid-'40s... to their mid-sixties !



*Rev. Fr. Roger "Podgy" Lesser (right), and Patrick O'Meara.  
Udaipur Airport, October 1993.*

## Photos, please.



In talking to many of you about India, I have noticed that there have been lots of questions about how things are in India today. OK, it is only a couple of months ago since I was there, so I can give you up-to-date “gen” on the places we visited. But the more interesting stuff is about all of you ; what you are doing now,

and about your families and the things about which you feel you want to tell the rest of us - the happy, sad, good and bad things that have happened or are happening to you right now. Remember what they say, “a picture is worth a thousand words”. Send us your pictures - not the originals, mind ; nip down to your local quick-print store and have them photocopy the pictures and send us the photocopies. Don’t forget that you can often get several onto one sheet We would like to have pictures of just about everything - you and the wife, you and the new love in your life, your old school as it used to be, pictures of you in your romper-suit, pictures of you standing by the cup you won for ‘gilly-dunda’, pictures of how you were and how you are now. What about pictures of the old ‘khansama’, or the ‘ayah’, the ‘dhobi’, the bearer, “marli” or the ‘bunghi’ ? We would even enjoy pictures without people and not necessarily of the Raj days. Have you recently, or ever, been somewhere nice, or nasty (including Abu!!), and got a picture to entice or warn us ? All pictures will be most welcome, and I will endeavour to include all of them in future editions of the newsletter. The print quality won’t be the best in the world, but I’ll try to bring them up as good as I can within the limitations imposed using a hand-scanner. Photos, snaps, ‘pickies’, call them what you like, please feel free to send them in.

We all want to have a "dekko" !

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## Dates

There were two date palms, a lady palm and a gent palm, growing next to each other.

The lady palm said to the gent palm :

“Darling, I love you so much, I would do anything for you”.

“OK,” said the gent palm, “let’s make a date !”



No, I wasn’t talking about those dates : What would be useful information though, is to have the dates when you were in school, or in India, or whatever. Something which would give the rest of us a need to scratch our heads and wonder if you were contemporaries, if not with us, at least so that we could do the thing which was done so often in those halcyon days of mangoes, custard apples and plantains. Do you remember ? :

“Oh, you went to such-and-such a school. You must remember Old Fotheringay. He was there about that time”.

Isn’t it strange, just how many times the reply would be along the lines of...

“Yeah, we were great pals, and incidentally, you probably new his sister, Claire, too. Wasn’t she a ‘cracker’ !” -

We knew of her. That was about as near as we ever got..... and yeah, she certainly was a “beaut”.

So, it is dates we are after, anything other than the calendar type would be nice, but this is a real world. Isn’t it ?

## Social Stuff.

While Podgy’s intended visit was the original impetus for starting this newsletter, and we do not want to hi-jack the whole shooting-match, it has occurred to many of us that waiting for, at least, another twelve months could

- 1) allow the current enthusiasm to fade,
- 2) encourage ‘Old Nick’ to get his hot fingers into the soup
- 3) et al.

Most of us would like to meet up soon. Perhaps those near each other could make preliminary personal or telephone contact and suggest ideas for group meetings. We’d like to hear from you.

Raj Connections respects the fact that some of you might prefer not to be contacted on a “free-for-all” or “call-on-me-anytime” basis. Forbid the thought, but it is possible, that you may be ill, going through some tough personal tragedy or feeling that, for the time being, you really DO want to be alone. It is hard for us to keep totally upto date but, who knows, maybe next month you could be in a more receptive mood. In order to minimise any inconvenience which might be caused in such circumstances, please remember to write or telephone your intended Rajah or Ranees first.

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## Naming Names and Dulcet tones

Short of actually spelling out a list of those who have been in contact with Raj Connections, you will probably agree that the best way of letting you know that we are in touch with, have heard about, or are actively seeking contact with a specific person, is to highlight their names. As you can see, we are doing that in this issue. Let’s all hope that we can get a newsletter brim-full of highlights.

**Mel (Gordon) Campbell**, called me the other day. You would know of him as **Mel** or **Melville**. He left Abu in about 1942. He sounded in great form. **Kelvin “Snooker” Campbell**, Mel’s brother, also telephoned and it sounds like he is “pocketing” the black sufficiently often to keep himself happy - retired and a landlord too - the life of Hendry, methinks ! Younger brother, **Jimmy Campbell** (Abu -1946 and a classmate of mine. He belted the hell out of me at boxing, but I still love him !) was also on the ‘blower’. I can’t tell you how nice it is to hear these voices again - in Jimmy’s case, ringing in my ears!! Just wait until you start getting in touch with each other for yourselves.

Some 15-18 years ago I met another very good pal, and yet another classmate, **Johnny Wenmouth**. We had a beer and a meal together. What happened ? Yes, you guessed it, we lost contact. But Jim. C. reckons he’s got the address and I’m looking forward to hearing from that brilliant cricketer friend of mine in the near future.

The **Abu Road Martins** are all over the world. **Edward (Busty)**, is now an Antipodean. I have written to **Noel (Baldy) Martin**, and am waiting to hear that he is still combing his locks. Younger brother **Harvey (Hairy) Martin**, another good mate, is looking forward to retirement. I never figured out why the ‘Hairy’ ‘monika’ took hold. Was it because Baldy (who certainly wasn’t bald at all, after it grew back !!) had such a telling name ? Young brother **Leslie (Lala) Martin** is also on the list - I haven’t had a ‘peep’ out of you, you boulder. Give us a ‘bell’ soon. We’d love to hear from you.

**Carl ("Henry the VIII, I am, I am") McCann** is also reputed to be on the other side of the globe. What a 'hoot' he was! And when you get around to contacting us, Carl, please let us have news of your brother **Trevor (Beetle-Crushers) McCann**. You could easily have gone into the fight-promotions business, Trev. Those crinkets and lizards in the globe-case were something to behold.

What can I say about the glorious **Callaghans, Lance, Mike and Chris**? I'll tell you the best thing. When I was ill with malaria in Mt. Abu, I was coming around after the high fever stage and feeling knackered and still delirious. An angelic figure kneeled by my bed, wiping the perspiration off my brow. I thought I had died and gone to Heaven and here was my guardian angel. My gosh, she was so beautiful - It was **Mama Callaghan**. Listen, lads, you have a pulchritudinous (!) mum. I know. And I also know she is alive and well and 84 years young. Please give her a kiss from me and tell her I love her.

**Godfrey Wade** was older than I was, (could anyone be ? 'strewth, its unbelievable !), only a couple of years, mind you, but I remember him well. He was, and still sounds, such an exceptionally nice guy. Keep in touch, Godfrey and many thanks for your call.

**Randolph (Randy) Williams** is "cooking-up" a few more exciting episodes in his life. He hasn't called on the telephone, but he was kind enough to write a really 'newsy' letter. Now, when he finds out that this Raj Connections 'thingey' is proving just what the doctor ordered to get the blood circulating, he's going to be even more enthusiastic about the whole idea. Randy was one of the first contacts for Raj Connections.

We are in touch with **Peter Blake**, another classmate, who so often had us sitting around while he regaled us with his stories of The Trek out of Burma. Pete and I are already in personal contact. He is in fine fettle. We look forward to hearing from big brother, **Frank (Super) Blake** who, on his name alone, must also be in Super shape!

**Reg Parks**, (St Joseph's, Naini Tal) I've known him since 1938 tho' we seem only to meet or talk once or twice in every ten to fifteen years, sounded good on the 'blower'. Lots of you will know him from his hockey-playing days and I hope that he will be the source of several new contacts. Get your arm out of that sling, Reg, and write.

**Eric Crotty** (Lawrence College - Abu) got in touch with us through **Johnny Brown**. I've not met him, but he sounds like a great chap. We're still working on the business of contacting some other Lawrence College chaps - **John Conroy's** name keeps popping up, but no contact yet. It's good to have you on board and we look forward to meeting up personally, and soon. If anyone knows of ex-Lawrence College lads and lasses (they were lucky co-eds, weren't they !?), please let's have their names.

There are enough of the **O'Meara** family to fill a book leave alone a newsletter ! **Kathleen** (now Thesken) is in the States. She did the trip out to India with us. **Philomena** (Lindsey) is also in the States and looking forward to an early retirement, around about the age of eighty something (she's only sixty now !). **Mary** (Fairhurst) is the one we see and hear from most regularly... but I suppose that's natch', she only lives sixty miles away. She looks in on **Mama O'Meara** (94 and still totally 'with it') each day. **Sean O'Meara** is still in the army after nigh on 37 years... *Let us all rise now and sing... "Bless 'em all, bless 'em all...etc."* *"It serves you right, you shouldn't have joined. It jolly well serves you right."* Finally, youngster **Denis**, a mere stripling of a lad at 50, is also doing his bit for the country... educating the "wayward" in the new technologies. 'Nuff said !

**Gerry Barnes** wrote from Canada and remembered with bitter sweetness being regularly thrown out of the classroom by **Bro. Costello** who would, on entering shout, "**Cooper, Penman, Jordan,**

**Jelly, Loveday, Barnes.** OUT !! ". Gerry also reminds us that the same crew were responsible, again on Costello's orders, for rebuilding the dam at Shallow Bay. No sweat ! Guess who enjoyed the

Gerry tells me that he thinks the **Penmans** and **Lovedays** are in Australia. Come in **Douglas, Elwin** (where is **Cynthia** ? One of our gang has written and confessed that he always had a 'crush' on her ! No names, no pack-drill !) and "**Ducky**" **Loveday** !!

We have tried to contact Mrs. **Shirley Jennings** (sister to **Peter Smith**), Mrs. **Blossom Ward** (widow of **Harry Ward**), Miss **Jenny Vieyra** (niece of **Bro. Trevor Vieyra** still in Abu), **Mrs Joy Gallagher** (Fr Roger "Podgy" Lesser's sister), Mrs. **Teresa Hourigan** (Gerry Barnes's sister), **Fr. Mark Barnes**, (Gerry's brother in India), **Carl Maine** (Could he be a relative of **Freddie Maine** ?), **Fr. Tony Sacry** (friend of Podgy). No responses yet, but we are hoping to hear soon.

More Contacts : **Joe Martin, Betty**, widow of **Aubrey Vieyra**, - Thanks for your help, Betty. Mr. **J.P.Harrison** - Nice to hear from you, Joe. **Peter Lesser** (Podgy's brother) - Thanks for your letter and the intros to **John Hopcroft, David Alfred** and **Stanley Rogers**. Thanks for your call, Stanley.

We have also written to **Sidney Brown**, Johnny's brother, in Canada and young brother, **Philip Brown**, now in Australia. Thanks for your great letter, Sidney. It was most welcome. Please forgive me for not yet replying personally.

### ... which very nicely leads me to a point ...

It doesn't take very long to sit down and bash out a few words for a newsletter such as this. Neither is there any pain in doing it, especially since I enjoy the knowledge that I am communicating with so many of you at one time. However, our Raj Connections group is beginning to show signs of growing very fast indeed and it means that we need to organise ourselves pretty soon and decide what our priorities are. The questions are...

1. Are we to develop into a central registry type of organisation, essentially maintaining a list of names, addresses and, where applicable, telephone numbers?  
Or...
2. Do you fancy having someone collect all your news and occasionally shove it down into this type of newsletter?

Both alternatives need the "muscle power" which I referred to in the first Raj Connections. We would need a separate organiser in each country. This person would do what I have been doing so far and try to locate other Rajahs and Ranees, only concentrating their efforts, however, in their own countries. This means that they would be looking, not only to find residents within their own countries who want to contact and hear of past friends, but also to gather whatever information they can about other Rajahs and Ranees who live abroad. From time to time this local organiser would need to make a list of ALL of the names and addresses which he/she had collected and send it back to me. I would enter them onto a central database and whenever the list of names was updated I would send ALL local organisers a print-out of the international list for their own records. This list could then be photocopied locally. In this way, somebody who lived in Auckland, NZ., and who wanted to find out if his old mate from Bombay had been located anywhere in the world by RC, would only need to pick up the phone and call his local organiser.

If you prefer the second alternative, I will happily bash out the newsletter with your anecdotes and any other information which you feel would interest the rest of us and send a master-copy to the local organiser who could distribute it locally.

Please let me have your comments on these suggestions and if you have some other brilliant ideas, we would love to hear of them. Meanwhile, please see over.

## The important thing to remember.....

is that the local organiser will not have to "bust a gut" beyond trying to find out if there are ex- Raj folk who live in the relevant country and who are interested in joining us. All he needs to do then is just to maintain a list of their names, addresses and telephone numbers and any other information which they might wish to provide. Send me copy of the list and... Hey, presto !

Volunteers for the job of organisers, please.

Oh, dear ! Another form to fill... ?

I have drawn up a form below - completion is optional. Please feel free to photocopy it if you need to. In it, I have listed the sort of detail we would need to have if we want to be in a position to make a meaningful search of our records. The form is set out in a convenient A5 size in order to enable the local organiser to use it within a flat file and without the need of a computer. By completing it you will provide me with sufficient information to search on the basis of all sorts of criteria such as nicknames, maiden names, approximate age, which school, which town and even hobbies.

I would appreciate it if ALL current correspondents could also fill in the information they want me to hold on record. It is important, listen. - I have currently got two Peters in a certain town who write to me, no return address, and sign themselves "Peter", and I haven't the foggiest idea which one is which !!

**THERE IS NO NECESSITY TO COMPLETE THE FORM.**

Your name and address are the only essential requirements.

**Our lists will be used for own record purposes only and will not be sold, hired or loaned to any commercial organisation for any reason whatsoever.**

## Finally.... !

Do you like travel, dining out, theatre, dancing, music, reading or whatever ?

Do you have connections with, or contacts in businesses which provide activities which might suit other Rajahs and Ranees?

Please let us know AND please be prepared to organise groups or individuals who might wish to partake. Future newsletters will carry details sent in to us.

Please excuse any grammatical errors, dangling participles, spelling mistakes and other junk of which you would not normally approve.



Sincerely,

*Patrick*

### RAJ CONNECTIONS - Record Form

Surname \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Nickname \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_ Other Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Home telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

County/State \_\_\_\_\_ Post / Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

When did you live in the Indian sub-continent? \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ or Age Group.  upto 30  over 30  
(please tick)

Main town or towns of residence in the Indian sub-continent. \_\_\_\_\_

Schools/Colleges attended, with dates. \_\_\_\_\_

Interests / Hobbies \_\_\_\_\_

Other information, comments etc. e.g. children, names, "especially seeking to contact". Below this line, please \_\_\_\_\_