

India Office Records at the British Library: digitisation activity and plans

India and South Asia are government priorities for engagement and cultural diplomacy. South Asia's increasing global significance fuels international interest in the region, and the countries themselves have ambitious plans to improve and extend education, which suggests that the British Library's South Asia collections -- the richest and most extensive outside the sub-continent -- will be increasingly important to them. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the British Library and the Indian Ministry of Culture in 2010 was an essential first step towards greater collaboration between the Library and institutions in India, which has been followed by significant progress. Key priorities include:

Continue to develop strategic partnerships in India and elsewhere to share knowledge, prioritise work, and secure greater access to and engagement with the collections by a range of audiences in South Asia and the UK

Make collections freely accessible online, so that they are available to anyone anywhere

Engage with a range of audiences

The India Office Records contain some of the richest and most comprehensive documents for the history of science in undivided India during the British colonial period. Although created mainly by the British administrators and designed for official use, they reflect a diversity of opinion and give insights into Indian as well as European understanding and practices.

The Library is keen to make these holdings more accessible and better known. To this end, the following projects have been undertaken:

In 2003 an AHRC research-enhancement grant was awarded to British Library and SOAS to identify sources for science and environment in the India Office Records (£280,572: award holder David Arnold). This resulted in a British Library publication, *Science and the Changing Environment in India, 1780-1920: a guide to sources in the India Office Records*.

In 2011, sources in the Guide relating to Calcutta Botanic Garden were digitised for *Wallich and Indian Natural History*, a project funded by the World Collections Programme (£248,090: a partnership between the British Library, the Natural History Museum and Kew Gardens) to map and digitise sources relating to Nathaniel Wallich, Supervisor of CBG 1817-46. See www.kew.org/wallich (IOR contribution under 'Correspondence').

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