This article was downloaded by: [Bangor University]

On: 24 December 2014, At: 19:37

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954

Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Scottish Geographical Magazine

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rsgj19>

Report to council

Mr. Coutts Trotter ^a

^a The Society's Delegate to the British Association ,
1885

Published online: 27 Feb 2008.

To cite this article: Mr. Coutts Trotter (1885) Report to council, Scottish Geographical Magazine, 1:11, 562-569, DOI: [10.1080/00369228508732313](https://doi.org/10.1080/00369228508732313)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00369228508732313>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

transport. There are numerous towns and villages and much cultivated land on or near it, and at the south-eastern extremity is Bangkok, a city of half a million inhabitants. As to the importance of retaining by all means in our power the share we possess of the trade of Siam, Mr. Satow's last report on the commerce of that country may be consulted with profit. From the returns for the year 1884 the Consul-General shows that "the commercial interests of Great Britain in Siam, as compared with the rest of the world, are:—In fixed capital, as 2 to 1; in steamers, as 8 to 1; in exports, as 9 to 2; and in imports, as 2 to 1;" further that "nine-elevenths of the total export trade of Bangkok, valued at nearly £1,650,000, is with Hong-Kong and Singapore."

Mr. Colquhoun's proposals are therefore worthy of the careful consideration of the Indian Government and of the British nation. The projected line would, as far as Raheng, be part of the trunk line to China, and the section from Raheng to Bangkok would be a feeder; it would be the base of operations, the first step in one of the boldest and not the least promising of the enterprises in the history of Eastern commerce. Whatever may be said of it from a political, commercial, or financial point of view, Geography must desire that the surveys may be completed and the work of penetrating China by railways successfully begun.

REPORT TO COUNCIL.

BY MR. COUTTS TROTTER, THE SOCIETY'S DELEGATE TO THE
BRITISH ASSOCIATION, 1885.

GENTLEMEN,—As you did me the honour of appointing me to represent our Society at the recent meeting of the British Association at Aberdeen, it appears desirable that I should lay before you a short notice of the geographical work which was done on that occasion. We are now affiliated to the Association as a Corresponding Society, and as such are represented on the General Committee; but our more immediate and intimate relations are, naturally, with the Geographical Section, and, as will be seen from the following list, our Council was adequately represented on the Committee of the Section—the President being also a distinguished member of our Society.

SECTION E.—GEOGRAPHY.

President.—General J. T. Walker, C.B., R.E., LL.D., F.R.S.

Vice-Presidents.—Professor James Donaldson, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S.E.; John Rae, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S.; Admiral Sir E. Ommanney, C.B., F.R.S.; Lieut.-Colonel R. L. Playfair.

Secretaries.—J. S. Keltie; J. S. O'Halloran; E. G. Ravenstein (*Recorder*); Rev. G. A. Smith, M.A.

Committee.—A. Buchan, M.A., F.R.S.E.; Dr. W. G. Blackie; Hugh Cleghorn, M.D.; Robert Capper; Sir George Campbell, K.C.S.I.; Sir James Douglass; Admiral Farquhar; Francis Galton, M.A., F.R.S.; James Matthews, Lord Provost of Aberdeen; Admiral Bedford Pim; Trelawney Saunders; David Stewart; Rev. Canon H. B. Tristram, F.R.S.; Coutts Trotter; H. A. Webster; William Westgarth; Captain W. J. T. Wharton, R.N.; A. Silva White; Cope Whitehouse, M.A.

The Committee sat on the 9th, 10th, 11th, 14th, 15th, and 16th September, and among other resolutions passed were a request to the Committee of Recommendations for a grant in aid of Mr. H. O. Forbes's Expedition to New Guinea,—the Committee for furthering the Exploration of New Guinea being also re-appointed.¹ Committees were also appointed—the resolutions having been approved by the Committee of Recommendations:—

(a) For the purpose of organising a systematic investigation of the depth of the permanently frozen soil in the Polar regions, its geographical limits, and relation to the present pole of greatest cold; Mr. H. W. Bates to be secretary.²

(b) For the purpose of taking into consideration the combination of the Ordnance and Admiralty Surveys, and the production of the bathy-hypsographical map of the British Islands; Mr. E. G. Ravenstein to be secretary.³

(c) For the purpose of inviting designs for a good differential-gravity meter in supersession of the pendulum, whereby satisfactory results may be obtained at each station of observation in a few hours, instead of the many days over which it is necessary to extend pendulum observations; Professor J. H. Poynting to be secretary.⁴

(d) For the purpose of drawing attention to the desirability of further research in the Antarctic regions, nearly half a century having elapsed since the last exploration; Admiral Sir E. Ommanney to be secretary.⁵

Reports were received from the Committee for furthering the scientific examination of the country in the vicinity of Mount Roraima in Guiana, and from the Committee for promoting the Survey of Palestine. An abstract of the latter report appeared in the *Magazine* for October.

¹ The Committee consists of:—General J. T. Walker, Sir J. H. Lefroy, Lieut.-Colonel Godwin-Austen, Mr. W. T. Blandford, Mr. Selater, Mr. Carruthers, Mr. Thiselton Dyer, Professor Struthers, Mr. G. W. Bloxam, Mr. H. W. Bates, Lord Alfred Churchill, Mr. F. Galton, Mr. J. S. O'Halloran, Mr. Coutts Trotter, and Professor Moseley.

² Members of the Committee:—General J. T. Walker, Sir J. H. Lefroy, Sir William Thomson, Mr. Alexander Buchan, Mr. J. Y. Buchanan, Captain Dawson, Mr. John Murray, Dr. John Rae.

³ Members of the Committee:—General J. T. Walker, Sir J. H. Lefroy, Sir William Thomson, Mr. H. W. Bates, Mr. Alexander Buchan, Mr. J. Y. Buchanan, Mr. Francis Galton, Mr. John Murray.

⁴ Members of the Committee:—General J. T. Walker, Sir J. H. Lefroy, Sir William Thomson, General Strachey, Professor Chrystal, Professor A. S. Herschel, Professor C. Niven, Professor A. Schuster.

⁵ Members of the Committee:—Sir Joseph Hooker, Sir George Nares, Sir Leopold M'Clintock.

A resolution, expressing sympathy with the action of our Committee in the matter of New Guinea, was also sent in by the Committee of Section H (Anthropology), whose President, Mr. Francis Galton, has interested himself warmly in Mr. Forbes's success. The Committee of Recommendations has, accordingly, again shown its confidence in Mr. Forbes, and its approval of his previous work, by a grant,—this time of £150, being the largest sum voted by them this year in support of any undertaking whatever.

To give an idea of the geographical area embraced, or, it would be better to say, attempted to be embraced, by the work of the Section, it will be sufficient to mention that at its five sittings, averaging something less than four hours each, thirty-eight papers were read on different subjects, besides the President's address. It was hardly possible that the varied topics could all receive, and in fact they did not all receive, adequate attention, and it was generally felt that some better regulation, or reform of procedure, is desirable. This feeling was by no means confined to the arrangements of Section E, and various suggestions have been made to meet the difficulty.

Obviously in those Sections where, from the nature of the subject treated, a full discussion of the paper is necessary, arrangements must be made some time beforehand. This no doubt applies less to Section E than to some others; still even here the occasional discussion of a paper may be of much value or interest, and the contingency should be provided for. Something might perhaps be done, as a last resort, by the strict enforcement of a ten or fifteen minutes', to say nothing of a thirty minutes' rule; something by the authority of the chair. Some papers again which, however valuable, would be fitter for a magazine or a gazetteer article, might be taken as read. In fact it is probably by more systematic organisation and stringency of supervision and selection by the officers and committees of Sections, as regards the number, length, and quality of the papers, that the difficulty will have to be met.

President's Address.—The subject chosen for his Address by General Walker was, naturally, the great work which he so long and ably superintended, viz., the Trigonometrical Survey of India. The title of the "Father of Indian Geography" is, as he tells us, usually applied to Major Rennell, whose life and work were recently the subject of a sketch of singular interest by Colonel Yule; but, as General Walker also reminds us, Indian geography counts besides, among its direct ancestors, the venerable names of Hakluyt and D'Anville.

The sketch which follows, of the progress of the Indian Survey, is full of interest. This work is entirely European in its conception and execution. Occasional local measurements of land were made by previous Asiatic Governments, "but merely with a view to acquiring some idea of the relative areas of properties" for purposes of assessment. As the British began to take possession of the country, the survey of their territory was among their first acts, and gradually this "survey became developed from

a rude and rapid primary delineation of the broad facts of general geography, to an elaborately executed and artistic delineation of the topography of the country, and in some instances to the mapping of every field and individual property. Thus there have been three orders or classes of survey, and these may be respectively designated geographical, topographical, and cadastral. All three have been frequently carried on *pari passu*, but in different regions, demanding more or less elaborate survey according as they happened to be more or less under British influence. There is also the Great Trigonometrical or Geodetic Survey, by which the graphical surveys are controlled, collated, and co-ordinated."

How this takes place is clearly and fully described in a historical summary, which includes a discussion of the various schemes and methods employed at different times, with notices of successive workers in the department, culminating with a sketch of the important labours of Everest, and ending with the completion of the great work under the writer's own superintendence in 1882.

Of the numerous papers read on various subjects connected with India, abstracts have already appeared in the *Magazine*, of General MacLagan's interesting notice of the "Rivers of the Punjab," and of Major F. Bailey's "Observations on Indian Forestry"—an important subject, which called forth some remarks from Dr. Cleghorn and other experts. The other papers on Indian matters were by Colonel B. R. Bramfill, "On the Physiography of Southern India," where the elements of change are, according to the author, exceptionally active and perceptible; by Major Baird, "On Levelling Operations in India;" by Lieutenant-Colonel H. H. Godwin Austen, "On Colonel Woodthorpe's Recent Trip into the Khamti Country, and the Western Branch of the Irawadi"—a region about which our information is still very incomplete; by Mr. Trelawney Saunders, "On the Exploration of Lake Yamdok, in Tibet;" by Lieutenant-Colonel W. Barron, on the Cadastral Survey of India, showing its great administrative advantages to the Government; by Colonel H. Tanner, "On Himalayan Snow-Peaks," and by Mr. Douglas Freshfield, "On Recent Mountaineering in the Himalayas." The latter author proposed to substitute the name of Gaurishankar for Mount Everest, which was objected to by the President on the ground that the mountain had already three native names, of which no one had a pre-eminent claim. Papers dealing with both the land and people of Brazil were read by Mr. Colin Mackenzie and by Professor J. W. H. Trail of Aberdeen—the latter giving the result of his experiences as botanist and surgeon of an exploring expedition in the tributary valleys of the Upper Amazon.

After the Report of the Roraima Exploration Committee had been read, Mr. Everard im Thurn gave an excellent account of his ascent of that mountain. Sir Erasmus Ommanney, a veteran Antarctic explorer, gave a very full summary of the work done in past years in that quarter, and he, as well as Mr. Murray and Dr. W. B. Carpenter, spoke of the great interest which would attach to further exploration of the region;

the two last speakers, however, dwelling emphatically on the serious character of the difficulties to be encountered, compared with those of a North Polar expedition.

Mr. J. G. Bartholomew opportunely called attention to the geographical importance and economical value of "North-West Australia;" and Mr. Trelawney Saunders to the "Ordnance Survey of Cyprus." Dr. John Rae read a long retrospective account of Expeditions to the North Pole, and suggestions as to the best mode of reaching a very high latitude.

Mr. Cope Whitehouse, in his paper on the "Projected Restoration of the Reian Moeris, and the province, lake, and canals ascribed to the Patriarch Joseph," proposed to fill up the great depression said to exist in the south of the Fayum, and effectually to drain the latter and less important basin. The result, as he confidently anticipates, would be to supply an immense reservoir for high-level irrigation and navigation; to avert the dangers of a high Nile, and to reclaim the great lakes of the Delta.

Lieutenant-Colonel R. L. Playfair, who is a standard authority on the French territories in North Africa, gave an interesting account of the changes in "Tunis since the French Protectorate," describing, *inter alia*, the plans to be adopted for promoting archaeological research: good roads are being made, and municipal and sanitary improvements carried out without interfering with the picturesque.

Papers were also read by Major Hill, "On a Clinometer to use with a Plane-table;" by Mr. C. Meldrum, "On a Supposed Periodicity of the Cyclones of the Indian Ocean south of the Equator;" by Mr. E. G. Ravenstein, "On Batho-hypsographical Maps;" by the Rev. W. Wallace, Rector of the High School, Inverness, "On the Geographical Features of the Beaully Basin," which shows that some schoolmasters, at all events, appreciate geography and are competent to teach it.

A short abstract of Sir J. H. Lefroy's valuable paper "On the Depth of the Permanent Frozen Soil in British North America," in which the author suggests further inquiries into this important question in physical geography, and points out its obvious bearings on the agricultural capabilities of a district, will appear in the *Magazine* for November.

Mr. J. Y. Buchanan's paper on "Ocean Islands and Shoals," gave some important facts, taken from his own observations, bearing on the permanent character of the great oceans; he also, in another paper, gave some interesting statistics of the "Depth and Temperature of some Scottish Lakes," and adverted to some of the *lacunæ* still remaining to be filled up in the Scottish Survey, which are dealt with in Mr. Webster's paper.

Mr. R. N. Cust's paper on the "Progress of African Philology," and Mr. A. Hosie's on "South-West China," have already been published in abstract; Mr. H. H. Johnston's on the "Portuguese Possessions in West Africa;" Mr. Coutts Trotter's "On Recent Explorations in New Guinea," and Mr. H. A. Webster's "On the Requirements of Scottish Geography" *in extenso*, in the last number of the *Magazine*.

Last, and perhaps the most important, Mr. J. S. Keltie's paper on "Geographical Education," which also appeared in the October number, is condensed from his valuable Report to the Royal Geographical Society, the result of the journeys, undertaken at their instance, to inquire into the mode in which geography is taught in the various countries of Europe. The full Report, which is expected shortly to appear as a supplementary volume of the Royal Geographical Society's *Proceedings*, is amplified and illustrated by a variety of suggestive matter, and is well worthy the attention of teachers and parents, and all who are interested in education.

In an important and very interesting evening lecture, delivered by Mr. John Murray, on the results of the Challenger Expedition, with especial reference to the bed of the ocean, the fact brought most prominently forward was the extreme paucity of specimens, as well as of species and genera, found at depths below 2000 fathoms in mid-ocean, compared to those found in similar conditions, but much nearer the shore. These abysmal regions seem to be the most permanent areas of the earth's surface, thus so far negating the possibility of a Lemuria, an Atlantis, or any tertiary continent in the mid-Pacific. Dr. W. B. Carpenter expressed his agreement with Mr. Murray's views, and his sense of the value of his researches. It is intended to publish an adequate notice of this lecture in the *Magazine*.

The Corresponding Societies.—I have already explained that our Society has been selected as one of the Corresponding Societies of the British Association, and as it was, in fact, in virtue of this selection that I became your delegate to the Aberdeen Meeting, perhaps you will now permit me to state in a few words, for the information of members who may be unfamiliar with the details of the subject, the advantages to be derived by the Society from such affiliation, and the services expected from it in return.

It is hoped, then, that the Conference of Delegates, under the auspices of the Association, will act as a focus for collecting, transmitting, and, in short, systematically utilising the fruits of much of the work done by Local Societies all over the country. The Association has arranged that papers of special interest or importance which have appeared in the journals of these Societies shall be published, in abstract at all events, in the Transactions of the Association, thus giving them wide publicity, and affording means of ready reference to them. The objects of this conference will, it is felt, be further promoted by personal intercourse among the delegates, and discussion of suggestions thrown out at their meetings.

The two meetings held at Aberdeen were, from one cause or another, but scantily attended. It was arranged, however, that next year the delegates should cement each other's acquaintance at a dinner, and this—the orthodox British solution of the problem—will no doubt prove efficacious.

The thirty-nine Societies represented at the conference form, no doubt, but a small proportion of those which exist throughout the country; but

several of the delegates represent Unions or groups of Societies, and this will probably be the case to a greater extent in future. Of Scottish Societies, those represented at the conference were, besides our own, the Geological Societies of Edinburgh and Glasgow; The Natural History Society of Glasgow; The Aberdeen Natural History Society; The Dumfriesshire and Galloway Scientific, Natural History, and Antiquarian Society; The East of Scotland Union of Naturalists' Societies; The Inverness Scientific Society and Field Club; and The Perthshire Society of Natural Science.

Thus the Societies represented are pretty evenly distributed over Scotland, a point of which the importance will be noticed presently.

It is open to the Secretaries of any Section, during the meeting of the British Association, to send to the conference of delegates of the corresponding Societies any communication bearing on matters coming within the province of that Section, which would then be taken up by the delegate of the Society whose work is in connection with that Section. On the present occasion no such communication reached the conference from Section E (Geography), and there is consequently no special point to which our attention is officially called. If, however, this conference of delegates is to have, as is hoped, some practical outcome, it behoves us—seeing that our connection with the local Societies, through affiliation to the great scientific centre, must tend to the advantage and practical usefulness of our Society—to make this connection, as far as in us lies, a working reality.

It will be readily seen that the aims of our Society are in many respects not only wider than, but different from, those of an ordinary local Natural History or Archæological Society, or even of a union of such Societies. But I do not think that our sphere of activity falls the less on that account within the intended scope of the conference; for in our active and increasing Branches we may expect to find most appropriate agencies for local investigation. And, considering the wide sphere which Geography embraces, I would even suggest the possibility of our acting as a medium of communication—at all events in Scotland—between other Societies or individuals engaged in researches, or seeking for information on those branches of knowledge which are interdependent with our own.

Before leaving the subject, I ought, perhaps, as your delegate to the British Association, to refer to one definite suggestion, which was made to our Society by the President of the Geographical Section, *à propos* of Mr. Webster's paper on the needs of Scottish Geography.

The author, as you will remember, called attention to various points of information falling within the department of a Survey, which, as they are fully provided for by governmental authority in other countries, might fairly, he considered, be required from the Ordnance Survey of this country. The proposition was at pronounced by the Chair to be impracticable, which was to be regretted because, owing to the lateness of the hour, there was no time or opportunity for independent expression of opinion on what, after all, was a fair subject for discussion, and has in fact

been ventilated already at the Royal Society of Edinburgh. But what we are now concerned with is the decided opinion, expressed by the President, that the matters in question, which will be found duly enumerated in Mr. Webster's paper, ought to be undertaken not by the Ordnance Survey, but by our Society. The position so long held with distinction by General Walker gives much weight to his opinion on such a subject; and accordingly, without at all abandoning the hopes and suggestions put forward by Mr. Webster, I have no doubt that the Council will take an early opportunity of considering in what manner they may be able to act up to the advice thus given.

Loan Collection.—The principal contents of the Loan Collection, organised by our Society, of maps and other works bearing on Scottish Geography, will be noticed in the *Magazine*. The idea of such an exhibition was generally approved, and though the collection could, with a little more time, have been made fuller and more interesting, it was evidently much appreciated by numerous visitors of all classes. Its success was entirely [due to the great personal labour devoted to the work by Mr. Webster and Mr. Silva White, and by the Rev. George A. Smith, of Aberdeen, aided by the cordial co-operation of Mr. David Stewart, Convener of the Aberdeen Branch of our Society.

LOAN COLLECTION OF SCOTTISH MAPS.

As the Loan Collection of Scottish Maps, etc., exhibited under the auspices of the Scottish Geographical Society, at the Aberdeen Meeting of the British Association, excited a more general and intelligent interest than the promoters of the scheme had ventured to anticipate, it may not be out of place to give some notion of its scope and character. The idea of forming such a Collection was first broached by Mr. Ernest Ravenstein, Recorder of Section E; and it was not till within a few weeks of the opening of the Association meetings that any steps could be taken by the officials of the Society. In spite of this late start, and in spite, too, of the absence from home of several who would have been, and the apathy of some who ought to have been, interested in the scheme, a sufficient number of exhibits were sent in to insure the success of the Exhibition, and forming a highly suggestive body of documents. While, unfortunately, Timothy Pont's autograph maps—the most remarkable cartographic relics in Scotland—had not been obtained, the style of this artist's work was shown in a fine copy of the Spanish edition of Blaeu's Atlas (Amsterdam), lent by Mr. Mackenzie, and in a map of Cunningham, reproduced for Mr. Dobie's edition of Pont's notes on that district. The visitor had only to turn to the quaint old map of Scotland in Mercator's Atlas to see how great an improvement resulted from Pont's enterprise. A little map in Hermannides, *Britannia Magna* (1661), showed into what curious blunders a copyist might stumble, even with good material to hand—the two Aber-