

Afghanistan a Colonial Exposure and Australasia's Immigrant links from 1859.



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The Baba Mountain range of the Hindu Kush between Kabul and Kandahar in Afghanistan

Royal Geographical Society of S.A. exhibition May to Oct 2013

Afghanistan a Colonial Exposure and Australia's Immigrant links from 1859.

Cameleers came here from 1859, from that area we now know as Pakistan and Afghanistan, areas with changeable borders until the late 1800s. These men boarded ship generally at Karachi and sailed to Australia. Here they were referred to as Sepoys and gradually as 'Ghans'. Camels appeared to be of the Sind desert type from the same geographical area. *In 1901 the working camel population was assessed as 4,000 Western Australia, 1,500 South Australia, 2,000 Queensland and 500 in Western New South Wales. Immigrant cameleers reached their maximum number at 393 in that same year. There is no doubt that they rendered a service to the exploration and development of Australia out of all proportion to their small numbers and, had it not been for them and their camels, the development of our harsh and dry interiors would have been delayed by at least a century.*¹

*Afghanistan*² -The country was a loose group of tribes until a strong leader, Ahmed Shah, consolidated the tribes by the mid 1700s into a region to be known as Afghanistan, which was, up until as late as the 1800s a feudal system of clans. Prior the **Safavid dynasty** of Persia, one of the most significant ruling dynasties of Iran, ruled one of the greatest Persian empires from 1501 to 1722 (experiencing a brief restoration from 1729 to 1736) and at their height, they controlled all of modern Iran, Azerbaijan and Armenia, most of Iraq, Georgia, Afghanistan, and the Caucasus, as well as parts of Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Turkey. Safavid Iran was one of the

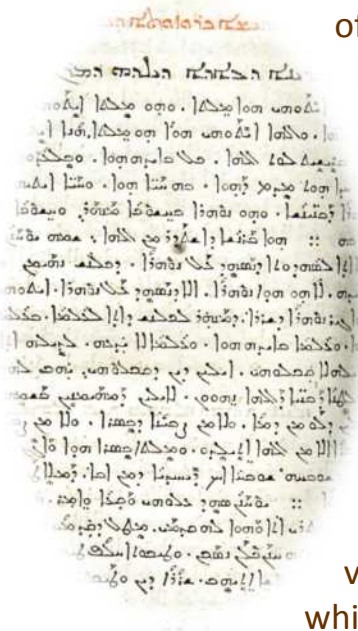
¹ J.W. Fiddman, *Camel and Cameleers*, 1940 private publication.

² Alexander the Great arrived in the area of Afghanistan in 330 BC after defeating Darius III of Persia a year earlier at the Battle of Gaugamela. His army faced very strong resistance in the Afghan tribal areas where he is said to have commented that Afghanistan is "easy to march into, hard to march out of."^[2] Although his expedition through Afghanistan was brief, Alexander left behind a Hellenic cultural influence that lasted several centuries. Several great cities were built in the region named "Alexandria," including: Alexandria-of-the-Arians (modern-day Herat); Alexandria-on-the-Tarnak (near Kandahar); Alexandria-ad-Caucasum (near Begram, at Bordj-i-Abdullah); and finally, Alexandria-Eschate (near Kojend), in the north.

Islamic "gunpowder empires", along with its neighbours, the Ottoman and Mughal empires. The Safavid dynasty also ruled Greater Iran which included present day Afghanistan. It was also referred to as Greater Persia, while the term Iranian Cultural Continent is also used.

Traditionally the Afghans were used to hostilities, used to repelling invaders, and fiercely defensive of their territories, large or small. Alexander the Great and his Macedonian army arrived in what is now Afghanistan in 330 BC after conquering Persia. Afghanistan (meaning "land of the Afghans") has been a strategic important location throughout history. The land served as "a gateway to India, impinging on the ancient Silk Road. In his later years Ahmad Shah also had to contend with rebellions in the north. His empire never regained the heights it had attained in 1761, when it had been second only to the Ottoman Empire. At the time of his death in 1773 the extent of his power had thus been curtailed and he had retired to his home in the mountains east of Kandahar. Nevertheless, he "succeeded to a remarkable degree in balancing tribal alliances and hostilities, and in directing tribal energies away from rebellion."

Ahmad Shah was succeeded by his son, Timur Shah, not a popular choice with the Dorrani chieftains, as he had already failed to retain power in northern India on his father's behalf. Civil war broke out and the empire began to crumble. On his death in 1793 his fifth son, Zaman Shah, succeeded him. However, some of Zaman's many brothers were rivals for the position. Ironically, it was Zaman Shah who, in an effort to control the Punjab, made the mistake of appointing the young Ranjit Singh as governor there. Civil war in Afghanistan resulted in the overthrow of Zaman Shah in 1801. More violence followed.



Mahmud Shah had two years in power before he was ousted by another of Timur Shah's sons, Shuja Shah, or Shah Shuja, who ruled from 1803-1809. From a native Persian perspective, the languages of both Iran and Persia are interchangeable.



We say "Afghans" but in truth there has always been more than one linguistic group and more than one variation of Islam practised in the area which we think of today as "Afghanistan."

The Afghans were fiercely independent and Islamic from the 700s. The

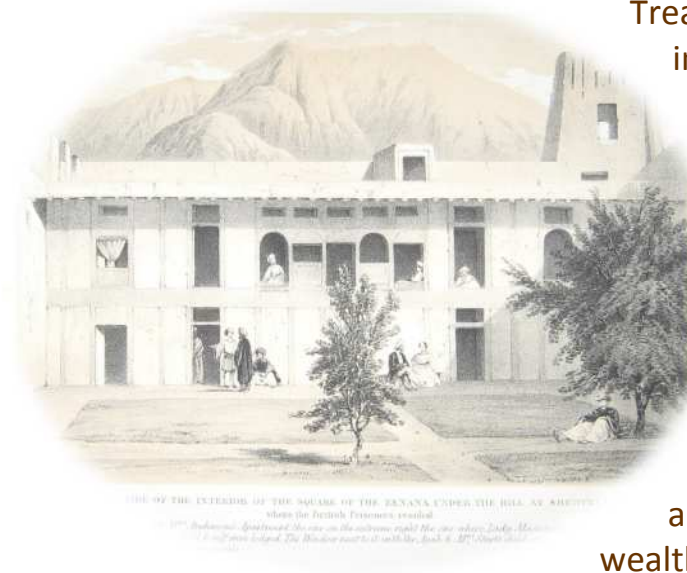
Pillars of Islam (*arkan al-Islam*; also *arkan ad-din*, "pillars of religion") are five basic acts in Islam, considered obligatory for all believers. The Quran presents them as a framework for worship and a sign of commitment to the faith. They are (1) the shahadah (creed), (2) daily prayers (salat), (3) almsgiving (zakah), (4) fasting during Ramadan and (5) the pilgrimage to Mecca (haji) at least once in a lifetime. European influence from Russia, France and Britain in the early 1800s wrought much change.

As the European powers were vying for influence to the Middle East the countries we now know as Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Israel and Egypt were carved up and borders redefined, with very little thought, if any, given to the local populace who lived their lives through significant cultural ties and traditions, with no 'borders'. This carve up was a plan for disaster and future dissention up until the current time. Persia lost many of its territories gained under the

Safavid dynasty, including Iraq to the Ottomans (via Treaty of Amasya in 1555 and Treaty of Zuhab in 1639), Afghanistan to the British (via Treaty of Paris in 1857 and MacMahon Arbitration in 1905), and its Caucasus territories to Russia in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The illustrations in the books held by the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia will attest to the fact that Afghanistan has had some extraordinary architecture, and it was not a case of gentlemen having the time and the wealth to venture abroad. Far from it. Very many

of our 19th-century travel books were written by people who were abroad on business. What business? Broadly speaking it was the business of Empire. There were diplomats, soldiers, doctors, civil servants, "intelligence" officers (spies, yes!)—and their wives. The books on Afghanistan offer examples of all of these. As one would expect, they present a range of views. We always need to remember that such witnesses write from within a consciousness formed by their own century, just as we cannot help but view them from our rather different perspective.



PEUTINGER TABLE [TABULA PEUTINGERIANA]

The Peutinger Map is the only map of the Roman world to come down to us from antiquity. First printed in Antwerp in 1598 the map depicts the cities and roads from England (Kent and Norfolk) through to Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh and China and is in eleven sections. Parchment sections VII, IX, X and XI range from the Dardanelles through India to China.

Here, the ancient world's traditional span, from the Atlantic to India, is dramatically remolded; lands and routes take pride of place, whereas seas are compressed.

Drawn in 1265 by a monk from Colmar and made up of 11 parchment scrolls measuring approximately 34 cm high by 6,74 m. long when assembled, this document was discovered in 1494 by Konrad Meissel, alias *Celtes*, and given in 1507 to an Antiquarian of Augsburg, Konrad Peutinger.



The map is the result of successive copies and overprints carried out at various times from one or several ancient originals. The oldest information probably goes back to before 79 AD since Pompeii is indicated. Other temporal indications can be drawn from Jerusalem which is named Aelia Capitolina, the name given in 132 AD, and from Constantinople (now Istanbul), the name being commonly used since the 5th century for Byzantium.

On display section XI, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, this copy is from an 1871 printing

The Society and the western world owe a debt to the Muslim scholars:-

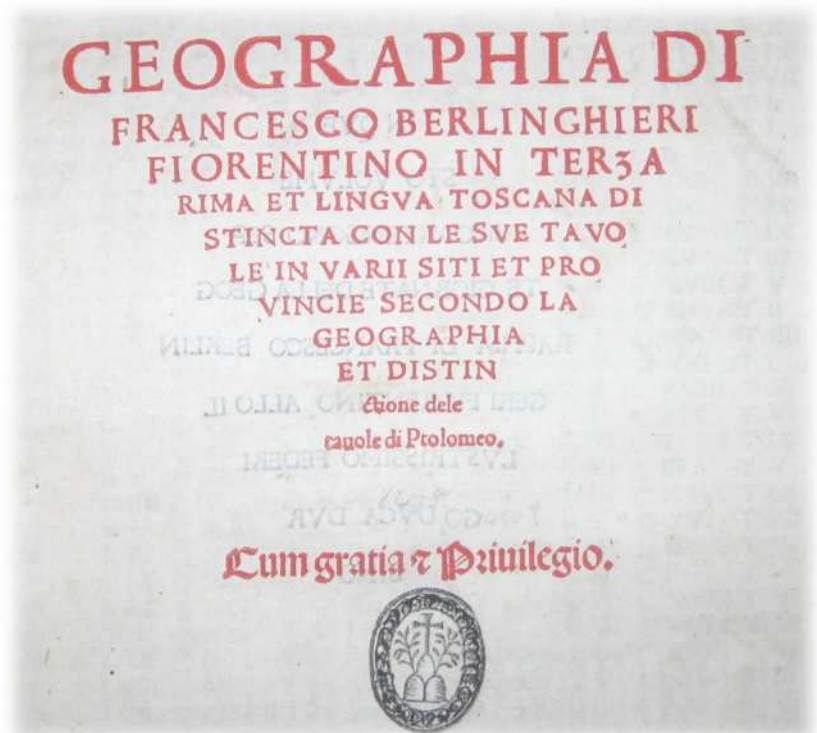
Ptolemy's Projection - our Oldest Printed Work 1482

Ptolemy's works are dated from around 1482. *Claudius Ptolemaeus*, known as *Ptolemy*, lived between *circa* AD 100 and AD 168 in Alexandria in Egypt. Alexandria was one of the intellectual centers of the world at that time.

Ptolemy was a mathematician and astronomer and applied these skills to map making. He based the projections of the world on the world's circumference being 18, 000 miles (28,800 kilometers) and developed a grid system base of latitude and longitude devised by *Marinus of*

Tyre. Within this framework Ptolemy was able to establish the coordinates and in his major work *Geographica* he listed over 8,000 places and their respective coordinates. These were given the coordinates down to the degree, minute and second division used today.

Fanatical Christians burned down the library at Alexandria in AD 390, but at least one copy of Ptolemy's works had survived somewhere and these survived in Byzantium for the next 1,000 years, developed and used by Arab Muslim scholars.



Shown is the front page

From nurturing in the Moslem world the information was passed to the Benedictine monk *Nicolaus Germanus*, who slowly assembled these references so that by 1482 Ptolemy's map of the world was now in Renaissance Italy and Spain where *Geographica* was translated into Latin in the Scriptoriums.

The Society's edition has the maps printed in Florence from metal engravings and *contains the first printed map of France*.

In the late 1400's it was discovered that Ptolemy underestimated the circumference of the earth by about 25 percent. It seems likely that Christopher Columbus was

aware of this error and as the map was recast he was setting out on his voyage of discovery to the Americas.

The publisher - Francesco Berlinghieri , (1440–1501) was an Italian scholar and humanist who lived during the fifteenth century. He promoted the value of classical Greek learning and was one of the first to print a text based on Ptolemy's *Geographica*. Berlinghieri studied poetry under the tutelage of Cristoforo Landino.

Bible - Syriac 1555

Syriac - is a dialect of Middle Aramaic that was once spoken across much of the Fertile Crescent. Having first appeared as a script in the 1st century AD after being spoken as an unwritten language for five centuries. *Syriac became the vehicle of Syriac Christianity and culture, spreading throughout Asia as far as the Indian Malabar Coast and Eastern China, and was the medium of communication and cultural dissemination for Arabs and, to a lesser extent, Persians.*

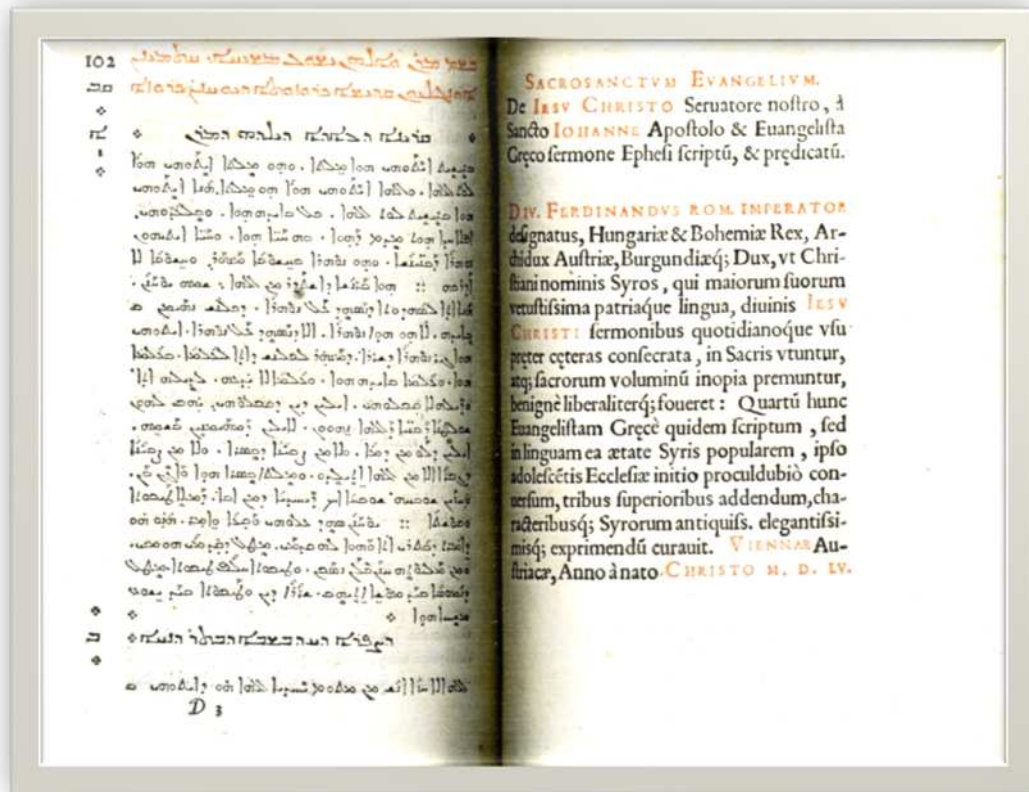
Liber sacrosancti evangelii de Iesu Christo, domino & Deo nostro. Reliqua hoc codice comprehensa pagina proxima indicabit. Div. Ferdinandi Rom. imperatoris designati iussu & liberalitate, characteribus & lingua Syra, Iesu Christo vernacula, diuino ipsius ore consecrata, et á Ioh. Euāgelista Hebraicadicta, Scriptorio Prelo diligenter expressa

Liber sacrosancti evangelii de Iesu Christo, domino & Deo nostro

Bible. N.T. Syriac. Peshito. 1555 Widmanstetter, Johann Albrecht, 1506?-1557, Vienna, Michael Cymbermannust Text in Latin and Syriac. Title page at back in Arabic custom. Inscribed : *Ex libris Monasterii Beatae Mariae Ambroniensis Ordinis Sti-Benedicti Congregationis Sti Mauri... Anno 1746*. First edition of the New Testament in Syriac of the Peshito Version. And *Thomas Styogor Ē verns possessor hujus libri 1640*, And *ex libri j.m. janhuzen* Provenance: York Gate Library.

Possible translation - This book belongs to Marie Ambronica, ordained to the Benedictine Order of the Congregation of St Maur³ (France) - 1746; And, The owner of this book in the spring of 1640 Thomas Stryogor,, And, from the book of j.m. janhuzen n.d.

³ The **Congregation of St. Maur**, often known as the **Maurists**, were a congregation of French Benedictines, established in 1621, and known for their high level of scholarship. Towards the end of the 18th century a rationalistic and freethinking spirit seems to have invaded some of the French houses. The congregation was suppressed and the monks scattered at the revolution, the last superior-general with forty of his monks dying on the scaffold in Paris.



Syriac is the dialect of Eastern Aramaic that was spoken in the early Christian period in the principality of Edessa, which corresponds to present day northern Syria and Iraq, and southern Turkey. It was a major literary language, written in the same alphabet of 22 consonants as Hebrew, but also with characters of its own. Aramaic is the original language of large sections of the books of Daniel and Ezra, and is the main language of the Talmud. It is believed to have been the native language of Jesus.

In the British Library, signed and dated 463-4 by its scribe, a bishop called John, is an important early copy of the first five books of the Bible. The first five books of the Bible are in 'simple' version. The scribe John the deacon, writing at Amid, the seat of a bishop (now Diyarbakir in eastern Turkey). It is the oldest known copy of part of the Bible dated by its scribe. This 1555 imprint is probably a copy of this early version.

Ceramic frieze tile, lion hunting in the Persian Empire 1795-

The tile is of the Qajar art type from the Qajar dynasty of the late Persian Empire, which lasted from 1781 to 1925.

This tile features an image of two men, mounted, hunting a lion in a swamp. The tile is clear glazed, scrolling flowers and dado complement the ovoid image design. The tile was possibly one of a set of six to eight.

Afghanistan has had some extraordinary architecture. The boom in artistic expression that occurred during the Qajar era was the fortunate side effect of the period of relative peace that accompanied the rule of Agha Muhammad Khan and his descendants.

Courtesy the Ralph Grandison collection



I. Afghanistan from 1807

By the time Mountstuart Elphinstone visited Afghanistan in 1808, northern India and the North-West Frontier had seen the rise of the Sikhs under Ranjit Singh (1780-1839). He had occupied Lahore in 1799, then being declared Maharajah of the Punjab. The British were resisting his attempts to expand eastward: he would sign the Treaty of Amritsar with them in 1909. In the 18th and early 19th centuries most parts of the area which now forms the country of Afghanistan had not seen a Westerner since the days of Alexander the Great. Very few Europeans made it to Afghanistan in the 18th century. The Royal Geographical Society of South Australia holds a handful of these remarkable travellers' writings:

A Diplomatic Mission in 1808-1809: Mountstuart Elphinstone

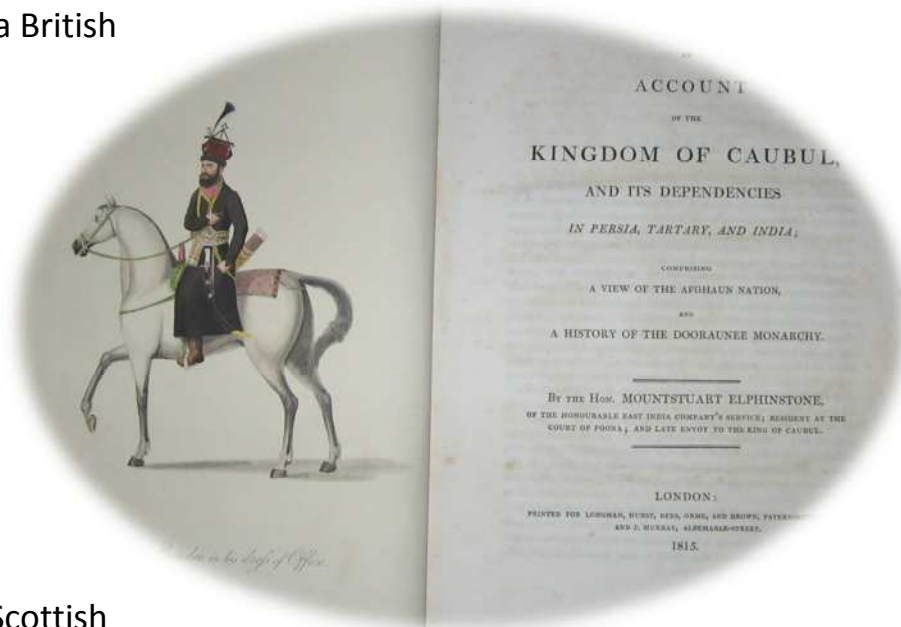
Elphinstone, Mountstuart, 1779-1859

An account of the kingdom of Caubul and its dependencies in Persia, Tartary and India: comprising a view of the Afghan nation and a history of the Dooraunee monarchy. London: Printed for Longman, 1815.

Mountstuart Elphinstone was a British administrator, statesman and historian who became the Governor of Bombay, "where he is credited with the opening of several educational institutions accessible to the Indian population."⁴ He wrote books on India and Afghanistan.

Early Career

He came from an upper-class Scottish family, and as one of his uncles was a director of



⁴ "Mountstuart Elphinstone", Wikipedia

the East India Company, had no difficulty in gaining a post in its civil service. He reached Calcutta in 1796.

The Kabul Posting: First European Treaty with Afghanistan

At the cessation of hostilities in 1804 Elphinstone was appointed British resident at Nagpur.

After a brief posting at Gwalior, in 1808 "he was appointed the first British envoy to the court of Kabul, Afghanistan with the object of securing a friendly alliance with the Afghans against Napoleon's planned advance on India." ⁵ The treaty Elphinstone successfully negotiated was the first Afghan pact with a European power. Its main purpose was an agreement to oppose the passage of foreign troops through the Afghan Empire: this was intended by the British, who were in the middle of the Napoleonic Wars, to prevent any French incursions into India. However, only a few weeks after signing the agreement, the Amir, Shuja Shah, was deposed by his predecessor, Mahmud. The article on Elphinstone in Wikipedia in fact sees his book as the "most valuable permanent result of the embassy".

Perils of Afghanistan in 1819-1825: William Moorcroft & George Trebeck

Moorcroft, William, 1767-1825, and Trebeck, George
**Travels in the Himalayan provinces of Hindustan and the Panjabi: in
Ladakh and Kashmir; in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz, and Bokhara / by
William Moorcroft and George Trebeck, from 1819-1825 ; prepared for
the press from original journals and correspondence by Horace Hayman
Wilson. London: J. Murray, 1841. 2 v.**

"William Moorcroft, the first Englishman to have seen the Oxus [the great river known today as the Amu Darya], set out in the 1820s with a large train laden with money, veterinary equipment (he was interested in the horses of Central Asia) and even a small cannon. But the obvious display of his wealth aroused the cupidity of one of the petty chiefs—Murad Beg, the slave-trading ruler of Kunduz—who harried and detained him, exacting from him his possessions, so that eventually he and his companions perished, destitute, near Balkh and Mazar-i Sharif." ⁶

⁵ "Mountstuart Elphinstone", Wikipedia

⁶ Bijan Omrani, "Will we make it to Jalalabad?", <http://www.bijanomrani.com/?p=jalala>
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Undercover Through Central Asia, 18--: Arthur Conolly

Conolly, Arthur, 1807-1842?

Journey to the North of India: overland from England, through Russia, Persia, and Affghaunistaun. 2nd ed., rev. London: R. Bentley, 1838. 2 v.

"A small number of Western travellers had made it through Afghanistan and survived, such as George Forster at the end of the 18th century, and Arthur Conolly ... but they had travelled without baggage, and in disguise, often in the company of poor pilgrims or as penniless wanderers with a caravan."⁷

Conolly survived that trip. He was still an experienced traveller, an intelligence officer in the service of the East India Company—that is, of British interests—who is credited with coining the phrase "the great game"--though in the reference quoted he appears in fact to have said "the grand game"

II. The First Afghan War, 1839-1842

The First Afghan War (or First Anglo-Afghan War, sometimes called "Auckland's Folly") was fought against Afghanistan by the forces of British India, the Army of the East India Company, from 1839 to 1842. It effectively ended with the one of the greatest disasters in British military history: humiliatingly, not a pitched battle, but the ill-conceived and appallingly badly managed retreat from Kabul. 4,500 British-led Indian soldiers and 12,000 of their camp followers died.

Prelude to War

By the 1830s Russian expansionism led the British to fear a possible Russian invasion of India by way of Afghanistan. The British government therefore decided to send an envoy to Kabul to form an alliance with Afghanistan's Amir Dost Mohammad Khan against Russia. "Whoever they chose to lead such an expedition would have to be a man of exceptional qualities; the endeavour, and its dangers, would be the equivalent of a pioneering trek to the South Pole, or the first flight to the Moon. The man they chose would need to be able to withstand mountain passes and deserts, the threat of bandits, of being held hostage or sold into slavery. More than this, he needed to be an expert in languages, to possess an intimate knowledge of native culture, to have a gift of affability, of making friends in difficult circumstances, and

⁷ Bijan Omrani, "Will we make it to Jalalabad?", <http://www.bijanomrani.com/?p=jalala>
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above all to be observant: a sponge for current and reliable information, that might be brought back and presented to the government in Delhi as it pondered its policy. Fortunately for them, the hour presented the man: the one to undertake this task would be Lieutenant Alexander Burnes."⁸

The RGSSA's collection includes the two major works by this remarkable man. The first is:

Burnes, Alexander, Sir, 1805-1841.

Travels into Bokhara: being the account of a journey from India to Cabool, Tartary and Persia; also, Narrative of a voyage on the Indus, from the sea to Lahore, with presents from the King of Great Britain: performed under the orders of the supreme government of India, in the years 1831, 1832, and 1833. London: J. Murray, 1834. 3 v.

Captain Sir Alexander Burnes (1805-1841) was a Scottish soldier, traveller and explorer whose first great expedition earned him the nickname "Bokhara Burnes."⁹ It is this expedition which is described in his "Travels into Bokhara." Burnes had joined the Army of the East India Company as a lad, and once in India showed remarkable abilities, earning rapid promotion. He also, remarkably for a British officer, learned Hindustani and Persian.

Mission to Afghanistan

The expedition to "Bokhara" (Bukhara) was a great success and led to Burnes's next appointment, the mission to Afghanistan. The second work held by the RGSSA is his posthumously published account:

Burnes, Alexander, Sir, 1805-1841.

Cabool: being a personal narrative of a journey to, and residence in that city, in the years 1836, 7, and 8. London: J. Murray, 1842.

After the success of his venture up the Indus to Lahore, the organisation of this second mission was left up to Burnes. Both his own experiences and the example of earlier European travellers to Afghanistan decided him to travel light, with no

⁸ "Durrani Empire", Wikipedia

⁹ "Mountstuart Elphinstone", Wikipedia

display of either military power or wealth to incite an attack. He took only three companions ¹⁰. On his way through the Punjab he again called in at Lahore, where he encountered a Frenchman, a "M. Court" who had come over from Persia by way of Afghanistan. It was his advice about the safest way to travel in the area which prompted Burnes to dress in the local Afghan clothes and get rid of his European tents, beds, chairs and so forth. As a result, he made it through safely. It was not to be the marauding tribesmen who would be responsible for his death in the country, but the stupidity of his military superiors.

Burnes's wonderfully detailed account of his journey, encompassing Jalalabad, Kabul, Bamiyan, Kunduz, Mazar-i Sharif and much more gives an astoundingly unprejudiced and appreciative picture of all he observed: the way of life, the natural features, the architecture, the wild flowers in bloom on the hills and the formal gardens of the towns, and all the local variations in religious observances and beliefs—even discussing theology, which M. Court had expressly warned against. "Most important of all, he was able to understand the contemporary politics of the country, by meeting and conversing with many of the chiefs and leading men. ... With his characteristic charm, he was able to form close relations with many members of the ruling Barakzye family in Peshawar and Kabul". ¹¹

Of these the most important was Dost Mohammad Khan (1793-1863), who had become Amir of Afghanistan in 1826 after the decline of the Durrani dynasty and the exile of Shuja Shah Durrani to the Punjab. "Burnes found him to be of a keen intelligence, and inquisitive nature."

Encounters of the First Afghan War

What was it really like in Afghanistan for the British during the First Afghan War? We have several books which tell us. Two are by husband and wife. The first is a volume of contemporary lithographs produced by Sir Robert Sale, one of the British commanders:

Sale, Robert Henry, Sir, 1782-1845.

The defence of Jellalabad / by Sir R.H. Sale; drawn on stone by W.L.

Walton. London: Published for the proprietor by J. Hogarth ..., [1846?]

¹⁰ Bijan Omrani. "Will we make it to Jalalabad?" <http://www.bijanomrani.com/?p=jalala>

¹¹ Bijan Omrani. "Will we make it to Jalalabad?" <http://www.bijanomrani.com/?p=jalala>

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The defence of Jellalabad

The other is an autobiographical account by his wife, Florentia, Lady Sale.

Sale, Florentia Wynch, Lady, 1790-1853

A journal of the disasters in Affghanistan, 1841-22. London, J. Murray, 1843.

When the First Afghan War began in 1838, Colonel Sale was assigned to the command of the 1st Bengal Brigade. He reached Kandahar in April 1839, and in May occupied the Heart plain. Heading for Kabul, the British stormed the city of Ghazni, "Sale in person leading the storming column and distinguishing himself in single combat."¹² They then reached Kabul easily. Sale was awarded the KCB and promoted to major-general. "He was left, as second-in-command, with the army of occupation, and ... conducted several small campaigns ending with the action of Parwan which led directly to the surrender of Dost Mahommed Khan."¹³

The British forces were now in cantonments, and everything seemed so peaceful that many of their families came to join them in Kabul, including Lady Sale and her daughter, married to a serving officer. Lady Sale's journal gives a vivid picture of the carefree, elegant life of the British in cantonments in Kabul.

¹² "Robert Sale", Wikipedia

¹³ "Robert Sale", Wikipedia

But the Afghans had never truly accepted either the presence of the British or their puppet ruler, Shuja Shah, and hostilities flared. Note the link with the Sturt family.

A third book documenting the realities of the First Afghan War is:

Eyre, Vincent, Sir, 1811-1881

The military operations at Cabul, which ended in the retreat and destruction of the British Army, January 1842: with a journal of imprisonment in Affghanistan. London: J. Murray, 1843

Vincent Eyre (later Sir Vincent) was one of the many young Englishmen who joined the East India Company's army: in his case, the Bengal Establishment. After 10 years' service he was appointed "Commissary of Ordnance" to the Kabul field force, in 1839. Like the Sales, his family went out to Afghanistan expecting the comfortable life of a peaceful posting. Eyre and his family were captured during the Afghan uprising led by Akbar Khan in January 1842. Ironically, it was their months in captivity which saved their lives. Eyre had kept a diary of his experiences. He was a considerable artist: he also sketched the personalities—officers, women, and even enemies—whom he met. The manuscript of the diary is said to have been smuggled out to a friend in British India. It was published in England as "Military Operations at Cabul" in 1843 and immediately ran into several editions. The colour lithographs of his portraits were sold as a set under the title: "Portraits of the Cabul Prisoners". They are charming works, with a great delicacy of touch. The lucky Eyres, like Lady Sale, were later rescued. Eyre went on to a distinguished military career.

The Second Afghan War, 1878-1880

The Second Afghan War (or Second Anglo-Afghan War) was the second major conflict between the British and Afghanistan. It took place from 1878 to 1880 and incorporated both a crushing defeat for the British and a resounding victory for the Afghans, at the Battle of Maiwand, and a much-celebrated victory for the British at the Battle of Kandahar, or Relief of Kandahar (1880), which ended the war. The British were enabled to claim over-all victory but they never managed to establish British rule in Afghanistan.

The first phase of the campaign began in November 1878. The British sent in a force of about 40,000 troops, penetrating the country from three different points. The

major battle of this period was the battle of Ali Masjid. Much of the country was successfully occupied by the British. On the death of the Amir Sher Ali on 21 February 1879 the British seized the opportunity to make a treaty, the Treaty of Gandamak, with the new Amir, Sher Ali's son Mohammad Yaqub Khan.

In the second phase of the campaign "Major General Sir Frederick Roberts ... defeated the Afghan Army at Char Asiab on 6 October 1879, and occupied Kabul. Ghazi Mohammad Jan Khan Wardak staged an uprising and attacked British forces near Kabul in the Siege of the Sherpur Cantonment in December 1879"¹⁴. He was not successful and his rebellion collapsed. Yaqub Khan, suspected of complicity in the massacre of Cavagnari and his staff, was obliged to abdicate.

Ayub's next move was to besiege the remainder of the British garrison at Kandahar. In response, on 8th August 1880 General Roberts set out with an army of 10,000 from Kabul to relieve Kandahar—over 300 miles away.

The Relief of Kandahar

Barttelot, Walter George, and Barttelot, Edmund Musgrave, 1859-1888
**The life of Edmund Musgrave Barttelot, Captain and Brevet-Major
Royal Fusiliers, Commander of the Rear Column of the Emin Pasha
Relief Expedition : being an account of his services for the relief of
Kandahar, of Gordon, and of Emin, from his letters and diary.** 3rd ed.
London, R. Bentley, 1890

The relief of Kandahar is one of the military exploits recounted in the book based on Edmund Musgrave Barttelot's writings, published after his death by his brother Walter. Barttelot had a successful military career but his reputation in Britain was seriously marred by his madness and resultant death in Africa. His name crops up in several publications of the late 1880s and early 1890s about the Dark Continent because he was one of the explorers in "Stanley's rear-guard", the Rear Column of Henry Morton Stanley's "Emin Pasha Relief Expedition" of 1887-1889. According to some accounts Stanley's own picture of this incident was extremely prejudiced. Walter Barttelot's book was intended to defend his brother's reputation.¹⁵

Several years before this tragic episode, however, Edmund Barttelot was an officer with the 7th Royal Fusiliers in India, and was thus amongst the troops who relieved Kandahar.

¹⁴ "Alexander Burnes", Wikipedia

¹⁵ "Edmund Musgrave Barttelot", Wikipedia

From this campaign culture the Cameleers were brought to Australia from 1859

Ghan cameleers were generally from that area of Afghanistan around Peshawar, Kabul and Kandahar and parts of The Sind, now known as Pakistan. The first Afghans were brought to Australia in 1859 by Sir Thomas Elder and later in 1860 by George Landells for the Burke and Wills Expedition. They were known locally as Sepoys, a term used by the British who used Indians in the service of the British Army. These Afghans generally spoke Pashtu or Dari. These cameleers were from farming families in Afghanistan and understood climate extremes, no doubt seeing at times similar climate and terrain in Australia.

Landells (for Burke and Wills) and Peter Edgerton Warburton (SA Police Commissioner) later Australian explorers had both served in the British Army in India and promoted the use of cameleers from Afghanistan, yet even from 1860 there was a social division, brought about by the Britishness of the Australian population between the cameleers and the explorers.

To overcome some of this social divide Afghans let their supervisors know in Australia that they had fought alongside, or under British Units in the Colonial Wars. Mahomet Allum, Adelaide's famous herbalist was a young man in Kandahar during the Second Anglo-Afghan War. He sold horses in Afghanistan to pay his passage to Australia to take up a career as a cameleer.

In 1865 Elder and Stuckey brought to South Australia thirty-one Afghan cameleers. Transport by camel in Australia was sorely needed after the coastal fringes had been explored usually by horse or bullock and transport routes set up. Among those thirty-one were Faiz and Tagh Mahomet from Kandahar. Faiz had experience in overland telegraph line construction in what is now Pakistan.

Elder's Scientific Expedition was undertaken in 1891. The Afghans were the strength of this expedition and many other expeditions as they sought out native wells, managed the camels, and assisted the explorers with single tasks. There was a downside, as the Afghans performed their ablutions, (and water was often scarce) said prayers and insisted on Halal food. But generally a cultural compromise was reached. By the 1930's any division of culture had all but evaporated. By 1924 the camel had almost entirely ousted the horse, the bullock and the donkey as a means of transport in the Australian Inland.

Afghans Sultan Raz Mohammed developed a camel stud at Marree S.A. and Coolgardie W.A. and Abdul Wahad (Anglicised to Wade) imported in 1893 340 camels and fifty-nine Afghans.

Very little is known about the family origins of the Afghans until after 1897 with the Imported Labour Registry Act. Their names did not appear on Electoral Rolls as itinerant and 'foreign' workers were very often excluded. Many Afghans turned from cameleering to storekeeping or being hawkers, drapers and tailors travelling mainly around the Outback towns.

Some Afghans did return home, but most continued to live on the margins of established Society and became a part of the Australian community, in some cases forming close relationships with the Aboriginal communities.

Possibly some early photographs of aboriginal women with headscarves may be an early legacy of these relationships.



Camel Nose Peg and rawhide lead from the Outback - collection RGSSA

The Elder Scientific Exploration Expedition 1891 used **Tagh Mahomet, Mahyedin, Alumgool, Mahmoud Azin** and Hadji **Shah Mahomet**, who had completed the *hadji*.

Possibly the most ambitious Australian expedition of all time was the Elder Scientific Exploration Expedition. Sir Thomas Elder financed the Expedition which was organized and run by the Society. The expedition led by David Lindsay, left the railway at Warrina, south of Oodnadatta, on 2 May 1891 on a 6,886 kilometre journey that was to last 12 months. The party was one of the strongest and best equipped expeditions ever sent into inland Australia and consisted of 14 men (three of them scientists) and 44 camels.

Following on the coat tails of its mentor, the Royal Geographical Society in London, the South Australian Society actively encouraged exploration '... for the purpose of exploring the remaining blanks of Australia'.

It was the close of the 'heroic' age of Australian exploration. The arable areas had been largely 'opened up' by settlers, albeit generally in large holdings. Parts of the 'Dead Heart' remained unexplored and while not providing much scope for

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agricultural or pastoral pursuits, these areas presented opportunities for scientists to observe and collect in areas that as yet were untouched by Europeans. The Society brought a methodical and academic approach to the expeditions which it supported and was instrumental in ushering in the 'scientific' exploration era.

Elder Scientific Exploration Expedition at Warrina- collection of RGSSA



The Calvert Scientific Exploring Expedition 1896 used cameleers **Bejah Dervish** , **Said Ameer** and **Joorak**. Help was later provided by **Faiz Mahomet's** camel team to search for lost expedition members.

Albert Calvert was a London mining engineer and author of two books on Australian exploration. He had struck it rich in the Western Australian goldfields and in 1896 sponsored an expedition into the eastern regions of Central Western Australia, areas that had been left unexplored by the Elder Expedition. The expedition was managed from Adelaide by the then Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (SA Branch). Lawrence (Larry) Wells was appointed leader of the Calvert Scientific Exploring Expedition. The party set out from Mullewa in June 1896 heading north towards the Fitzroy River. The party comprised 12 men and 24 camels and included Wells' cousin, Charles Wells as second in command; George Jones (a nephew of David Lindsay), a mineralogist and collector of native vocabularies; and George Keartland, a naturalist and botanist. Charles Wells and George Jones died on the expedition.

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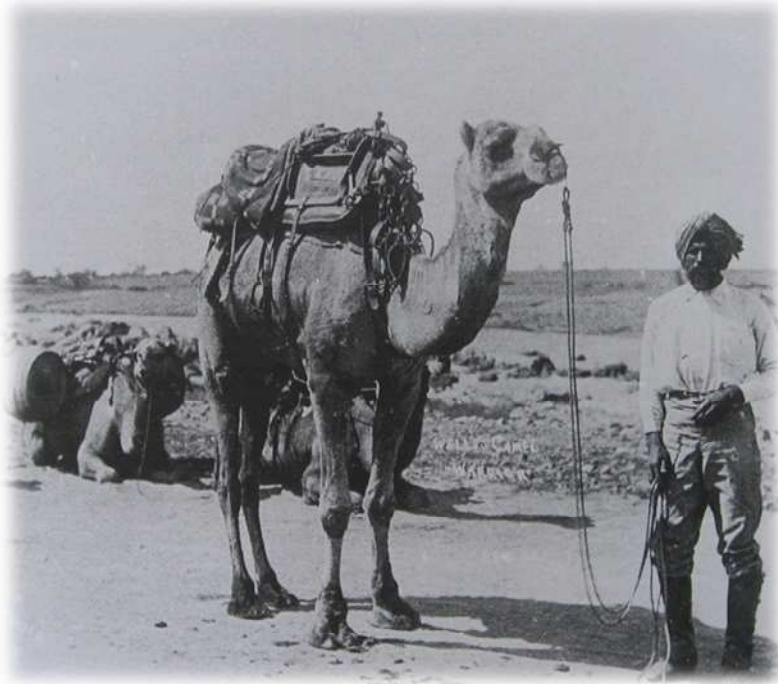


Image State Library of SA, Bejah Dervish leading "Warrior", Larry Wells' camel.

Gosse and the Central Australian expedition 1872 Gosse's diary shows the first sketch of Uluru (Ayer's Rock). Cameleer **Kamran** was his companion.

In 1872 the South Australian government invited William Gosse to lead a party to explore a way from central Australia to Perth. Major Egerton Warburton hoped to get this leadership but the government thought he was too old at 58. His champion, Thomas Elder, promptly fitted out another



expedition with Warburton as leader. The rival parties, scrupulously avoiding each other, both set off from Alice Springs station in April 1873. Gosse, instructed 'to avoid mention of Mr Warburton's party', was harassed by trying to avoid the other's

tracks and find a separate, manageable way of his own. Gosse's party consisted of Edwin Berry, second-in-command, William's youngest brother Henry as collector, two other white men, Winnall and Nilen, three Afghans and an Aboriginal boy.

The Giles expedition – 1872 used as cameleers **Saleh** and **Coogee Mahomet**.

Ernest Giles was chosen to lead a small expedition organized by Dr von Mueller to investigate parts of central Australia west of the new overland telegraph line. From Charlotte Waters the party followed the Finke valley to the Missionaries' Plain south of the MacDonnell Ranges but found its way blocked to the west by lack of water and to the south by the salt-pans of Lake Amadeus which Giles named. There his second-in-command, Carmichael, insisted on turning back despite Giles' wish to find a route to the coast of Western Australia. This ambition was to inspire his remaining expeditions, the first of which, again backed by Mueller, was assembled the next year. Starting further south Giles followed the line of the Musgrave Ranges which, unknown to him, had just been discovered by William Gosse. On reaching Mount Olga which he had earlier named from a distance, Giles found from Gosse's dray tracks that he had been anticipated but since they soon turned back he was encouraged to persevere.

The Burke & Wills expedition 1860 used cameleers **Dost Mohomet**, **Esau Khan**, **Belooch** (said to be a Parsee) and **Samla** (said to be a Hindu).

In 1860 Robert O'Hara Burke was given leave to take command of the exploring expedition to cross the continent from south to north organized by the Royal Society of Victoria and supported by the government. When Robert O'Hara Burke was made leader, he chose William John Wills as surveyor, astronomer and third-in-command. The government's inquiry into the tragedy criticized Burke's leadership and decisions, the appointment of Landells and William Wright, the unsuitability of appointed member Brahe, and the errors and delays of the exploration committee; but there was little or no criticism of Wills, who was as the tragedy inquiry progressed was demonstrated to have been a faithful second-in-command.



Model of cameleer's saddle collection RGSSA

The Central Australian Exploring and Prospecting Association

In 1887 the South Australian and Victorian branches of the Royal Geographical Society came together to arrange an expedition to explore the Lake Amadeus region of Central Australia. Despite their efforts, they were not able to raise the necessary £5,000 capital. The expedition was taken up by a private company, the Central Australian Exploring and Prospecting Association. The expedition was led by Society foundation member William Tietkins, who had been second in command on Ernest Giles' expeditions of 1873 and 1875. On the 16th April 1889 the party including two Aboriginies, a tracker and a boy, set out with 12 camels from Glen Helen Station west of Alice Springs. This expedition was unique in that it had no cameleers!

They reached the Western Australian border where Tietkins named Lake Macdonald after the secretary of the Victorian Branch of the Society. Returning east, the party determined the extent of Lake Amadeus, which Tietkins had visited with Giles in 1874. They went on to photograph Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) and Uluru (Ayers Rock) for

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the first time. After four months travelling, the party arrived at the Charlotte Waters Telegraph Station where Tietkins telegraphed the Society in Adelaide.

Horn Expedition to Oodnadatta and the Macdonnell Ranges in 1894 used **Moosha Balooch** and **Guzzie Balooch** as cameleers.

The **Horn Scientific Expedition** was the first primarily scientific expedition to study the natural history of Central Australia. It took place from May to August 1894, with expedition members first travelling by train from Adelaide to the railhead at Oodnadatta in South Australia, then using camels for transport to traverse over 3000 km of largely uncharted country from Oodnadatta through the Finke River basin to Alice Springs and the Macdonnell Ranges in what is now the Northern Territory.

The expedition was equipped and sponsored by William Austin Horn, a wealthy pastoralist and mining magnate, who accompanied the expedition in its early stages. The area studied included the country of the Arrernte and Luritja people, whose assistance and goodwill was crucial to the success of the expedition through the provision of natural history specimens, artefacts and information.

Madigan's Simpson Desert Crossing 1939 with **Jack (Abdul) Bejah** (son of Bejah Dervish)

In 1929 Madigan won the support of the RGS (SA Branch) and its president, industrialist Alfred Simpson, for an aerial reconnaissance over Lake Eyre and the vast sand hill desert to the north. The 1937-38 wet season brought heavy rains to the centre of Australia and Madigan was encouraged by Simpson to take the opportunity to mount an expedition. Simpson put up the finance and Madigan successfully led a camel borne scientific expedition across the desert in the winter of 1939. His major focus was to obtain information on the natural sciences of the desert and the party included a botanist, biologist, and photographer. For a camel team Madigan turned to Bejah Dervish who had been Larry Well's cameleer in 1896. Bejah professed to being too old to make the trip but 'volunteered' his son Jack who turned out to be, in Madigan's eyes, 'a worthy son of his father'. Simpson's son, R A Simpson joined the group as wireless operator, operating a pedal powered Traeger wireless set.

Mosques a part of our shared cultural heritage



Little Gilbert Street, built 1888-1890, minarets added 1903.



Marree built just prior or around 1882. This is built with a mira, a semicircular niche in the centre of the wall that faced North West (to Mecca). Inside the mirab the Koran was carefully wrapped, and rested on a stool when not in use. Within the mirab the mullah would stand to lead prayers, the worshippers in rows behind him facing Mecca.



The Baba Mountain range of the Hindu Kush between Kabul and Kandahar in Afghanistan

There was a significant contribution made to Australian exploration by the immigrant Afghani Community in the late 1800s. Cooperation between the British, Australian and Afghani community developed so that many well know identities throughout Australia can trace their ancestry back 4 or 5 generations to this aspect of Australian immigration, exploration and settlement.

Many immigrant cameleers did return to their homes overseas, but some, or their descendants stayed and form a part of multicultural Australia.

Now, Australia has provided some development facilities to rural Afghanistan. The Society has had a subcommittee meeting in Kabul in 2012, planning rehabilitation services to peace keeping troops returning back to Commonwealth countries.

In the 21st century there is still cooperation between the British, Australian and Afghani community.

Now on humanitarian grounds the immigration scenario repeats itself. Based upon the past the future looks bright for multi cultural Australia.

Used as main reference sources for the exhibition:-

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Private collections of Frank Lyman MBE, Ralph Grandison



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The exhibition resources were curated and displayed through the Society's volunteer 2012/13 appointed Library Committee. Extra resources were supplied by member Mr Frank Lyman MBE for Afghanistan and Mr Ralph Grandison and members of the Afghani Community in South Australia who also volunteered to staff the exhibition.



This 1860s bandolier comes from the Peshito region of Afghanistan and has an ornate powder bottle, 2 musket (bullet) bags, a wooden comb, two bottles, one double necked, presence bells, a baton and pectoral hooks for other portage.

Also two Afghan caps the ecru one is a formal hat, the other a skull cap is a common cap, both made of wool and cotton. On Loan from Frank Lyman MBE.