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HENRY HARDY ONGLEY

Born 27th April 1845: Died Unknown.

Henry Hardy Ongley was born on the 27th April 1845. He was the fourth child of Henry Sarell Ongley and his wife, Lucy. He was named after his father, and his grandmother's second husband, Jonathan Hardy.

His father was the Consul at Crete, and was living at Chalepa near Canea (Hania), and this where Henry Hardy Sarell grew up, until the family moved to Patras in September 1858, when Henry was thirteen.

From his sixteenth birthday in April 1861, Henry Hardy Sarell joined his father in the Consulate, working as a clerk. He continued to work as the clerk at the Consulate at Patras until November 1865.

His uncle Charles Alison C.B., who had married his mother's late sister, Eliza Baltazzi, in February 1863, was the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Teheran, and it was probably through this family connection that the twenty-one year old Henry became the Acting Consul at Resht in northern Persia, from the 11th September 1866. He would continue in this post until June 1869.

On 20th July 1871, Henry was appointed Vice-Consul and Translator to the Mission at Teheran and was in this post when his uncle died on 29th April 1872. Henry had also been Private Secretary to his uncle during periods of his time in Persia, which may explain the gaps in his service record with the Foreign Office.

Charles Alison funeral was reported in The Times, of 8th June 1872 which reprinted a report from the Levant Times:

“Mr Charles Alison C.B., Her Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Teheran, died on Monday night, the 29th April, from pleuro-pneumonia, after an illness of 20 days. He was attended by Dr J. Dickson physician to the British Legation, assisted by Dr. Tholozan, chief physician to His Majesty the Shah, and by Dr Baker, medical superintendent to Her Majesty's Telegraph Staff in Persia; he was, moreover, throughout his illness, most assiduously and affectionately attended by his own sister, Mrs Hill. In October last he had a severe fall while out riding which, together repeated attacks of gout, impaired his general health very much. His funeral took place at 2 o'clock on Thursday afternoon, the 2nd inst., with most unusual honours. All the Persian Ministers of State except the Sadr'azam, all the generals and principle officers of the army, the Governor of the town, the Mayor, and the heads of the Armenian and Jewish communities, accompanied on foot from the British Legation to the Armenian Church. All the foreign representatives with their staff, all the European officials and residents, and a large concourse of people attended the funeral. Everybody was in full uniform, and the street was lined by troops the whole way, on each side. The military band, the Shah's horses richly caparisoned, and also those of the Sadr'azam formed part of the cortege. On the next day the Sadr'azam, accompanied by the Minister of War, went to the British Legation to pay a visit of condolence, and called also on Mrs Hill (Mr Alison's sister). Every

possible respect and attention was paid to the memory of our late chief; and it was really touching to hear among the crowd the cries of grief uttered by the numerous poor people to whom he had always extended a charitable hand.”

Henry H. Ongley appears to have been involved with the administration of a famine relief fund during his time in Teheran. This was the fund raised by public subscriptions in England and sent out to Persia. It appears that he used part of this money for the purpose of building what in Persia are known as qanats. These are water tunnels with air-holes every fifty yards or so, which bring the water from the mountains down to the towns. These qanats are valuable property, as it gives the owner control over the water supply.

Henry had a qanat built, outside Teheran, which was slightly lower than two existing qanats and thereby caused them to run dry. This action was not what the famine relief fund was for, but could possibly been defended, if causing the other qanats to run dry had been accidental. However Henry then sold the qanat under the seal of the British Legation and took the money.

When this became known in London, the Foreign Office issued categorical instructions that the qanat had to be bought back, because it had been sold under the Legation seal.

Henry resigned on the 11th October 1872.

Henry's father retired from his position at Patras in 1874. But in July he commuted his pension and withdrew it as a lump sum. It has been stated that this was at the instigation of his son, Henry Hardy Ongley, who then defrauded him of it.

Henry Hardy Ongley did marry at some point during his career and had two daughters from this marriage, but after 1875, his life is unknown.