

Valentines, the Raymonds and Company Material Culture

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Valentines Mansion and Gardens, Ilford

Introduction

This case study explores the history of a house (Valentines Mansion, Ilford), a ship (the *Valentine*, in its successive reincarnations) and a network of Georgian maritime investors associated with the East India Company (most notably Sir Charles Raymond and his family). More broadly, the case study examines the ways in which commerce conducted at great risk in Asian outposts and Indian Ocean waters came to be reinvested in Britain, refurbishing homes and gardens and reshaping the neighbourhoods in which they were located. Grounded in the eighteenth century, this material history extends to the present day: ‘Valentines, the Raymonds and Company Material Culture’ illuminates global commerce in the Georgian era, but it also reveals the ways in which the Company’s legacy has shaped the built environment of London in the twenty-first century.

The Valentines case study is especially distinctive in its broad-ranging and innovative methodology. Painstaking research in the Company’s archive at the British Library and the text-based practices of family and local history underpin this study. But so too does scuba-diving for shipwrecked Company treasure. The illustrations that accompany the case study’s text seek to capture the highly diverse methods and sources upon which it is based. Like the broader narrative presented here, the illustrations date from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century, encompassing Georgian prints and entries from ships’ log-books at one chronological extreme and dive reports and contemporary art installations on the other.

Valentine Mansion from the 17th to the 21st Century



Grotto feature in rococo gardens at Valentines Mansion, Ilford

Valentines Mansion, its Rococo garden and wider park (see above) are a beautiful oasis in the East London suburbs. They were purchased 100 years ago (1912) by the then Ilford Urban District Council (now the London Borough of Redbridge) and were used as council offices for much of that period. From 1993 the building was left empty. Due to public pressure, and thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund, the house and gardens were both given a major restoration in 2007-8 and are now used by the community. The final accolade was when Valentines Mansion and Park was the venue chosen for her Majesty the Queen to meet the people of Redbridge on 29 March 2012 as part of her Diamond Jubilee tour.

The house was originally built in 1696-7 for Mrs Elizabeth Tillotson, widow of John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury.¹ She was a lady of quality and status but not wealth, so Valentines has always been a modest family home and it appears to have provided a happy refuge for later, more affluent owners who had homes and business premises in the City.

It was in the Georgian period that the house saw its greatest luxury, in the ownership of successive men associated with the East India Company (EIC). Most prominent among these Company men was Sir Charles Raymond (1713-88) who became wealthy through the EIC's lucrative trade in India and China. Thanks to family connections, Raymond rose rapidly through the ranks and served as captain on four of the six voyages he made, all to India. He was able to make a small fortune through his legitimate private trade so that when he retired from the sea at the age of 34 he turned to managing voyages for the EIC. Raymond was never involved as a Director of the EIC but was a Manager of the Sun Fire Office 1756-1773 and in 1766 he was elected a Director of the South Sea Company. His charity work included being a

¹ Birch, Thomas *The Life of the Most Rev Dr J Tillotson* (1753) p.346-8

Governor of Bridewell and Bethlem Hospitals. He dabbled in politics and became a greatly respected banker before being created a baronet in 1774.²

The last private resident of Valentines, or Valentine House (the council gave it the title of Mansion) was Mrs Sarah Ingleby, widow of Dr Clement M Ingleby, a noted Shakespearian scholar and writer, who lived most of her life here. Her generous community involvement provides a wonderful example of Victorian philanthropy for the school children who now visit the building which was her home. She died in 1906 and her son sold the house and grounds to the council in 1912.³

In the early 1990s, after many years as council offices, the building was vacated and there was considerable discussion about the most suitable future use. Eventually, late in 1999 it was decided to set up a charity, the Valentines Mansion Trust, which would lease the building from the council at a peppercorn rent and run it for the community. However, a major restoration was necessary so the Trust drew up a business plan and other documentation to apply for Heritage Lottery Funding. This application was unsuccessful. The council took back responsibility, and they were eventually granted lottery funding. In order to support their application the Trust had set up the 'Friends of Valentines Mansion'.⁴ The public support they demonstrated was a significant factor in the lottery award.

In order to raise public interest, and assist the Heritage Lottery Fund application, existing knowledge of the history of Valentines was revisited and more research carried out by Georgina Green, the author of the present case study on Valentines and its EIC context. Georgina was born and brought up in Chingford, on the edge of East London and has been involved in local history in Waltham Forest and Redbridge since the early 1980s. She was asked to be a Trustee of Valentines Mansion and was also instrumental in the creation of The Friends. Her role was to research the history of the Mansion and its owners, to write and lecture, and to increase public awareness of the importance of the building.

There was already a bank of knowledge about the owners but Georgina tried to dig deeper and add to this. Starting before computers made research easier, she followed up a comment that Sir Charles Raymond may have been connected with the EIC. While at the Guildhall Library in London she came across two books by Anthony Farrington (both published by the British Library in 1999) which were the key to opening the door on this aspect of her research.

A Biographical Index of East India Company Maritime Service Officers 1600-1834 gave details of Raymond's rapid rise through the Company, showing the ships he had sailed in and positions he held. The *Catalogue of East India Company Ships' Journals and Logs 1660-1834* listed the

² Green, Georgina *Sir Charles Raymond of Valentines*, in *Essex Journal* Autumn 2008, Vol.43 No.2, p.38-43

³ Obituaries to Mrs Ingleby, e.g. *Ilford Guardian*, 5th January 1906; Private memoir written by her grandson, Clement R Ingleby; C M Ingleby in ODNB; Ilford UDC Report to Special Meeting of the Finance Committee, 4th December 1912

⁴ See www.valentines.org.uk (a website set up by The Friends of Valentines Mansion in 2001) and www.valentinesmansion.com (the official website set up by LB Rebridge in 2009). The two are complementary, the first including much of the history of the house and about the restoration, the second with details of all forthcoming events and activities, and information about hiring the house.

ships managed by Raymond, and gave details of the voyages of every ship which had sailed for the EIC. When she realised the value of these two books Georgina acquired her own copies and they have been invaluable in tracing the links between Sir Charles Raymond, some of his relatives, fellow captains and other business associates who lived in East London. Jean Sutton *Lords of the East: The East India Company and its ships 1600-1874* Conway Maritime Press (1981, new edition 2000) also provided an understanding of how the ships were staffed and managed.

Before long Georgina was consulting the EIC Court Books and reading the journals written by Raymond and other captains on their voyages to India and the East, held at the British Library. She was enthralled by the idea that the captain's journal in front of her had been written in his cabin, while at sea, 275 or so years ago. Georgina became fascinated by the experiences recorded and the adventures of some of the personnel who came to live in Ilford and nearby areas when they retired from the sea. Her "day job" gave Georgina the expertise to compile a spreadsheet of these voyages and add in details of owners and various officers, with her own notes, which enabled her to explore the links e.g. men who served under Captain Charles Raymond and later captained ships on voyages for EIC which he managed.

Georgina's background as a local historian, without prior knowledge of EIC, meant she was eager to explore every aspect of the subject and her first visit to the National Maritime Museum gave her much new food for thought. Now with ten years of experience looking at the EIC archives, Georgina is still amazed and delighted as she discovers new sources of information. It has been suggested that the EIC archives are too extensive to ever be fully explored by one person, but the staff are very helpful and half the fun is in trying! The connection with the EIC was a new aspect of Valentines' history revealed around 2001 by Georgina. Her research on this subject is continuing at the British Library and Georgina plays an active role as Project Associate on *The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857* project.



Georgina's research and subsequent lectures and displays encouraged two local artists, Margaret Duston and Kathy Taylor, to create an installation based on the wreck of the *Valentine* (for information on the wreck go to the 'Shipwrecks and the EIC's 'Immaterial' Material Culture' section featured below). This was displayed in the old restored dovecote in the Valentines Gardens in May 2010 and created considerable interest.

Stain by Kathy Taylor

Indian cotton, stained with tea, indigo and dye extracted from red dyewood/red sanders dust from the *Valentine* cargo. The flag design is based on the British East India Company Flag of 1707-1801

Valentines' EIC Owners and Their Material Objects

During the 18th century three owners of Valentines were involved with the East India Company (EIC): Robert Surman, Sir Charles Raymond and Donald Cameron. Robert Surman, Deputy Cashier of the South Sea Company in 1720, spent a short time in prison when the “Bubble” burst but survived with £5000 and purchased Valentines in 1724. He does not appear to have been unduly tainted by the ‘South Sea Bubble’ and returned to banking, becoming a partner in Martin’s Bank and later founding his own bank, Surman, Dineley and Cliffe. He invested in the EIC, managing the ship *Sandwich*. In 1754 he sold the house to Charles Raymond, a retired EIC captain who managed many voyages for the EIC and became a very respected figure in the City.⁵



Portrait of Sir Charles Raymond. Reproduced by kind permission of The Royal Bank of Scotland Group Copyright 2012.

Raymond was a successful captain whose profitable voyages in the Company’s service played a key role in his emergence as a man of wealth and fortune. Much of the Company’s profit derived from the private trade goods brought home by the captains and officers of East Indiamen. On his second voyage as captain of the *Wager* 1737/8 (i.e. she left England in the winter of 1737/8), for example, Charles Raymond earned £3,100 in this way. However while his ship was being prepared for the return journey he was free to work with local agents and he deposited Rupees with the East India Company’s Accountant in Bengal for which he was later paid £3,000 in London. So his earnings in trading privately earned him at least 30 times the salary paid to him as the captain (approx £200).⁶

Sir Charles Raymond was Valentines’ most important link with the EIC and the material goods from Asia which so decisively shaped Georgian domestic interiors. Valentines is not a grand house, but it was nonetheless a family home which boasted many exotic, luxurious objects. It is important as a lonely survivor in East London of the type of home described by Syllas Neville in 1785 as ‘the small but neat box of the retired East India captain.’⁷ The Sun Fire Office insurance documents illustrate the increase in value of the contents of Valentine House during Raymond’s occupancy (1754-78). The value of insured goods rose from £500 in 1755 with the household goods insurance tripling to £1,500 in 1769, with an additional £500 for china and

⁵ Carswell, John *The South Sea Bubble* Sutton Publishing, new edition 2001, p.188, 228, 254 etc; Martin, John Biddulph *The Grasshopper in Lombard Street* (1892) p.87; Price, F G H *A Handbook of London Bankers...* (1890) p.172; Farrington, Anthony *Catalogue of East India Company Ships’ Journals and Logs 1660-1834*; Essex Record Office DDU/539 *Abstract of the title of Charles Thomas Holcombe Esq to the Freehold Estate called Valentines situate in the Parish of Barking in the County of Essex* p.24, 26 OR *Robert Surman of Valentines* by Georgina Green, published in 2005 by the Friends of Valentines Mansion but this does not give specific references.

⁶ BL IOR/B/65 EIC Court Book 1738 –1740, p.403, 467, 607; BL Ledger L/MAR/B/592H(1) *Wager* 1737/8

⁷ *The Diary of Syllas Neville, 1767-1788* Edited by Basil Cozens-Hardy, p.325 24 April 1785



glass. (In spite of the restoration and refurbishment, the actual building insurance remained the same).⁸

Plate,
China, c.1760.
Porcelain
Private collection.

Domestic luxury goods produced in Britain figured among Sir Charles Raymond's purchases for Valentines: during Raymond's tenure, the original of Hogarth's 'Southwark

Fair' was at Valentines, probably one of several works of art in which Raymond invested his fortune. But goods from the Orient were especially conspicuous among the material objects recorded as belonging to Valentines during Raymond's day. A porcelain plate made for Raymond in China, with his arms is again displayed in the house (and is shown above): it seems he had large dinner and tea services made in China. Another interesting item which has been traced to Company trade is a book presented to Raymond by Captain Josiah Hindman. He served as first mate when Raymond was captain of the *Wager* and went on to captain the ship when Raymond retired and became the principal managing owner. The book was hand painted in China, larger than A3 landscape, and bound in leather. It has a series of 814 watercolour illustrations of plants and insects found in China, with Chinese and English captions detailing

medical use. It is now in Royal College of Physicians of London.⁹



Plate, Jingdezhen, 1580-1610, Porcelain
C.588-1922, Victoria & Albert Museum.

This example of Jingdezhen porcelain gives an impression of the vibrancy of goods that EIC captains traded. To learn more about Jingdezhen and the porcelain trade visit Warwick University's [Global Jingdezhen: Local Manufacturers and Early Modern Global Connections](#) research project website.

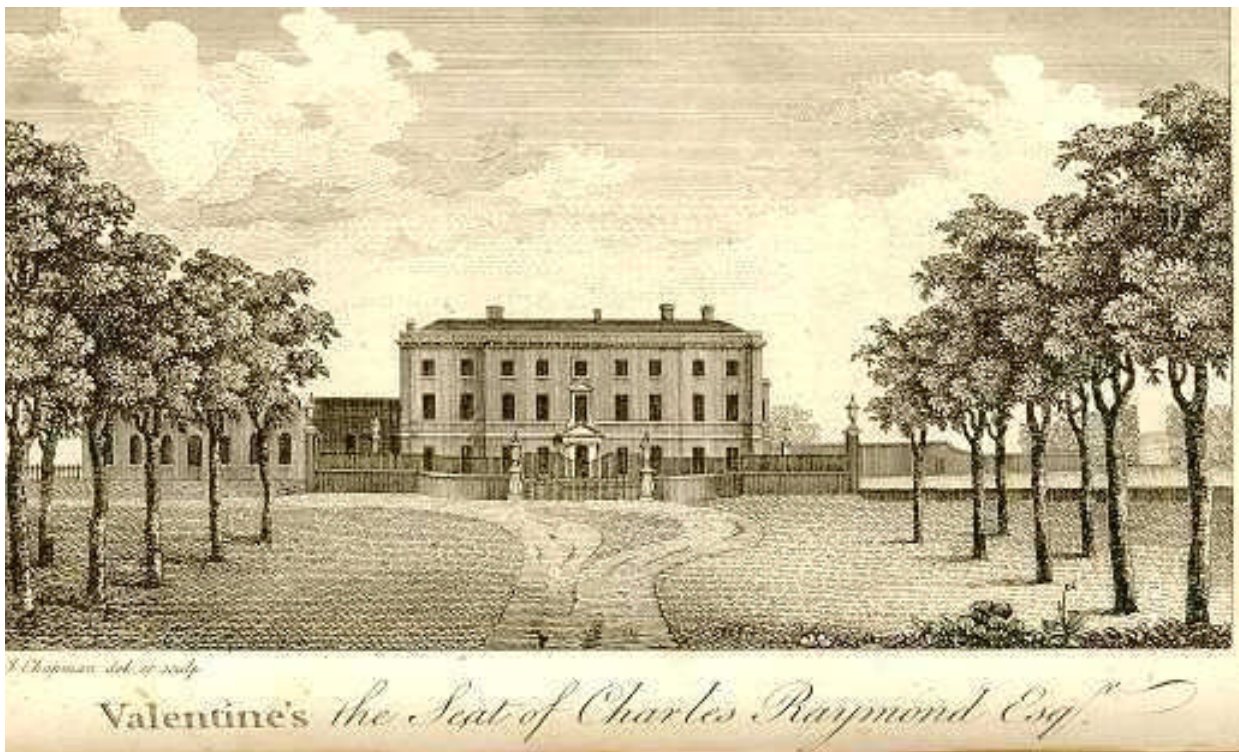
In 1771 it was said that Valentines House 'may, with great propriety, be called a Cabinet of

⁸ Guildhall Library, Sun Fire Office policy registers, MS 11936 Vol.109 policy no. 145324 p.614 (7 March 1755) MS 11936 Vol.188 policy no.269293 p.504 (21 April 1769)

⁹ Gifts of European goods and of exotic 'Oriental' luxuries, exchanged between relations and between patrons and their clients, were vital means by which the East India Company's servants and families established and maintained their ties of affection and obligation across vast distances over time. This function of gift exchange is discussed in Margot Finn, 'Colonial Gifts: Family Politics and the Exchange of Goods in British India, c. 1780-1820', *Modern Asian Studies*, 40 (2006), 203-231.

Curiosities’,¹⁰ suggesting Raymond had a collection of strange items he had brought home on his travels. We know he gave a neighbour a piece of sculpture of a hard, dark marble which had been brought home from the Island of Elephanta.¹¹ Contact with divers who have investigated the site of the wreck of Sir Charles Raymond’s East Indiaman *Valentine* (for information on the wreck go to the 'Shipwrecks and the EIC's 'Immaterial' Material Culture' section featured below) has provided another exciting insight into life at Valentines in the Georgian era, connecting Raymond’s home to the Company’s trade in exotic ‘Oriental’ luxuries that included the blue and white porcelain produced in China at Jingdezhen as well as vibrant Indian dyes used to produce cotton textiles such as fashionable chintz.

In 1769 Raymond made significant changes to Valentine House, adding a bay and raising the roof. In 1771 the building was described as ‘one of the neatest, and best adapted of its size, of any modern one in the county; its ornaments are well chosen, and the grounds belonging to it laid out with great judgement and taste.’¹² The external appearance of Valentines today is much as it was at that time. Raymond enhanced the gardens which had been created by Surman. In 1758 he planted a black Hamburg vine which became very prolific. A cutting was taken to Hampton Court Palace and has achieved greater fame than the parent plant which died late in the 19th century.¹³



A New and Complete History of Essex by a Gentleman (1771).
This image shows the orangery, situated to the left of the house.¹⁴

¹⁰ *A New and Complete History of Essex by a Gentleman, 1771* Vol. 4 p.276

¹¹ *Essex Review*, January 1927, No.141, Vol.XXXVI, p.16

¹² *A New and Complete History of Essex by a Gentleman, 1771* Vol. 4 p.276-279

¹³ Gilpin, William *Remarks on Forest scenery...* (1791) p.149-151; information board in the vine house at Hampton Court; Tasker, George *Ilford Past and Present* (1901) p.86

¹⁴ Picture from *A New and Complete History of Essex by a Gentleman, 1771* Vol. 4 p.276-279

Both Robert Surman and Charles Raymond came to live at Valentines when they had small daughters, and it is not hard to imagine the girls growing up, playing games when small and walking in the gardens as they grew older. In Raymond's time there was a conservatory or orangery beside the house (see image above – it was converted into the dairy wing c.1808, see image below) which would have given them an elegant but sheltered place on colder days. This could well have housed plants brought home from the East. Like the Oriental luxuries with which wealthy Georgians furnished their domestic interiors, gifts of exotic flora and fauna were integral components of the material exchanges that oiled the wheels of the Company's patronage and which helped maintain close ties among members of the Company's far-flung family networks.¹⁵



The image above shows the dairy wing, converted from the orangery in around 1808

Imports from the East adorned not only Valentines' interiors but also its gardens. A letter from George Edwards, FRS, was read to the Royal Society on 17 January 1771, in which he mentioned seeing 'some curious birds and other animals, from the East Indies' when he visited Valentine House 'last August'. Edwards described a new species of bird which he called a "snake-eater" but is known today as a secretary bird. His letter says that a pair of birds was brought home but one died before Raymond's servant arrived at the docks to collect them. The birds must have been caught when an East Indiaman (possibly the *Granby*) called in at the Cape (South Africa) on the way home.¹⁶

When Charles Raymond died in 1788 he left a lengthy, legalistic will. He ensured his eldest grandson would be provided for, and he left a small amount to his sister-in-law Elizabeth Webber, but otherwise his property was to be divided between his two surviving daughters, Sophia Burrell and Juliana Boulton.¹⁷ Raymond's eldest daughter, Lady Sophia Burrell, became known as a writer and poetess. She married William Burrell, grandson of Charles Raymond's uncle, Hugh Raymond, who has served as EIC captain and later PMO early in the 18th century. It was Hugh Raymond who ensured Charles had a good introduction to the sea

¹⁵ Finn, 'Colonial Gifts', *passim*.

¹⁶ Letter to the Royal Society from George Edwards *Philosophical Transactions* (1683-1775), LXI (1771) p.55-6

¹⁷ Will of Sir Charles Raymond, 29 August 1788, PROB 11/1169 (National Archives)

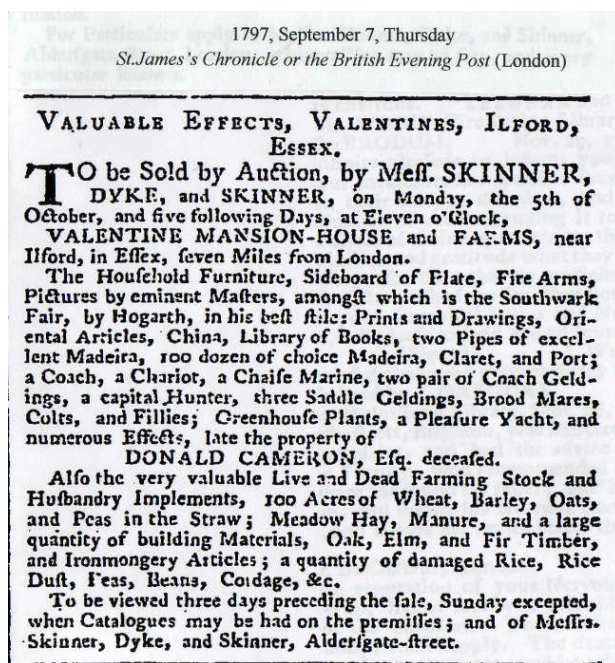
and who built the *Wager* for him in 1734. In default of male issue, William Burrell was named to inherit the baronetcy granted to Charles Raymond on 4 May 1774.¹⁸

Sophia's two younger sisters both married men closely connected with their father through the EIC. The youngest, Anna Maria, married Thomas Newte who was also a second cousin but through Charles Raymond's mother. He had come up through the ranks of the EIC to become captain and later PMO, working in close association with the Raymond family. Sadly Anna Maria died in 1781, two years after they were married.¹⁹ Juliana, the middle daughter, married Henry (Crabb) Boulton, the son of Richard Crabb who had sailed alongside Charles Raymond as a fellow captain and who also became a PMO. Richard's brother Henry Crabb had served as a senior clerk with EIC and later became a director. Both brothers took the name Boulton from their cousin Richard Boulton who was connected to EIC for 40 years, and left property to Henry which later passed to his brother Richard.²⁰

On Raymond's death, Valentines and many of its contents were sold to the third of its Georgian owners with EIC connections, Donald Cameron. He came from an ancient Scottish family and in 1763 married Mary Guy, a step-sister of Charles Raymond's wife. By 1778 he was working at the banking house of Sir Charles Raymond and Co. where he later became a partner. He took over the management of several East Indiamen in association with Charles Raymond. Cameron

had been living at a property owned by Raymond, immediately to the south of the Valentines estate, later known as Ilford Lodge. In 1791 Cameron served as Sheriff of Essex but by the time he died in 1797 the bank had suffered serious losses due to the French revolution and Valentines and its contents were sold with other property he owned in Ilford to meet the debts.²¹

An advertisement featured in the *St James's Chronicle* lists some of the 'Valuable Effects' that Valentines contained in 1797 and demonstrates the rich interiors it included.



¹⁸ See ODNB for both Sophia and William Burrell; *Wager* see BL IOR/B/63 EIC Court Book, p.226, 18 Dec 1734

¹⁹ Tablet on the wall inside St.Margaret's church, Barking, career etc from Farringdon

²⁰ Clube, J R *The Boulton Family of Thorncroft Manor, 1763-1828* in Leatherhead & District Local History Society Proceedings Vol.6, No.1 1997, p.10-13; careers etc from Farringdon

²¹ Essex Record Office D/P 167/1/7 Parish Register for St Mary the Virgin, Woodford, 12 July 1763; Price, F G H *A Handbook of London Bankers...* (1890) p.79, 177-8; Farrington, Anthony *Catalogue of East India Company Ships' Journals and Logs 1660-1834*; Essex Record Office DDU/539 *Abstract of the title of Charles Thomas Holcombe Esq to the Freehold Estate called Valentines situate in the Parish of Barking in the County of Essex* p.36-7, 53.

The details of the sale included paintings by eminent masters, prints and drawings, oriental articles and fine ornamental china, a library of books and a considerable quantity of fine wines. As the advertisement for the auction in the *St James's Chronicle* attests (see above), by the later eighteenth century, Asian luxuries were fully integrated with English objects d'art in the homes of Company families in Ilford.

The East India Company in Ilford

The East India Company relied on dense networks of kinship, patronage and sociability to maintain its monopolistic control over Asian trade. Charles Raymond had married Sarah Webster in 1743. Her father had died when she was small, leaving her mother, Judith, with Sarah and three little boys. A sister, Elizabeth, was born in 1725, after his death. A couple of years later Judith married William Guy and had more children. It appears that Ann (born 1734) and Mary (born 1737) were the only daughters of Guy to survive their mother. All three girls married men connected with their older sister's husband.

Unsurprisingly, Company men and women often chose to reside in close proximity to each other. Sir Charles Raymond and his circle were no exception. In 1754 Raymond purchased Valentine House at Ilford, and before long several other retired EIC captains who followed a similar path became neighbours in this area:

William Webber (died 1779) started his EIC career as third mate on the *Wager* when Raymond was the captain. He went on to serve as captain, became a PMO and later a Director of the East India Company. In 1755 he married Elizabeth Webster, a sister of Charles Raymond's wife. They lived at Highlands, a house owned by Raymond on land close to Valentines, to the west.

John Williams of Aldborough Hatch in Ilford (died 1774) captained *Hector* on four voyages and then became PMO for EIC. He part-owned a ropeworks at Blackwall in which Raymond had shares. In 1754 he married Ann Guy, a step-sister of Charles Raymond's wife.

Pinson Bonham (1724-1791) moved into the house at Aldborough Hatch when it was vacated by Williams's family. Bonham had served as a captain on ships managed by Charles Raymond after two eventful voyages. As second mate on the *Princess Mary (1)* he had been captured by the French while helping to defend Madras, 10 September 1746. On his next voyage he was shipwrecked off Cape Verde (Senegal) on 16 Jan 1750 while second mate on the *Duke of Cumberland (2)*. Once he retired from the sea he became PMO for EIC, working closely with Charles Raymond.

Andrew Moffat (died 1780) had not been to sea although two brothers were retired captains, closely involved as PMO or Directors of EIC. Moffat lived at Cranbrook House in Ilford,

opposite Valentines and next to Highlands, and was a ship insurer who often worked in partnership with Raymond as PMO.

Henry Fletcher (died 1807) had worked his way through the ranks to captain on ships managed by Charles Raymond and then became PMO of EIC and later a Director. In the late 1770s a Henry Fletcher was paying rates on a property just south of Valentines, although it has not been possible to confirm that this was the same man. He was created a baronet in 1782.

Donald Cameron (died 1797) was the next occupant of Fletcher's house and he later purchased Valentines when Sir Charles Raymond died. As previously stated, he married Mary Guy, a step-sister of Charles Raymond's wife. He had not been to sea and his involvement as PMO was as a result of becoming a business associate of Raymond.

In 1771 Charles Raymond, John Williams and Henry Fletcher became founder members of a bank known as Raymond, Williams, Vere, Lowe and Fletcher, with each partner investing £5,000. This eventually became Williams Deacon's Bank and is now part of the Royal Bank of Scotland. William Webber and Donald Cameron became partners in later banks established by Sir Charles Raymond.²²

Richard Benyon, retired Governor of Fort St. George (Madras), also purchased property in the area in the 1740s and 50s. On his return to England he married a wealthy widow and lived at her home, Englefield House, in Berkshire. He acquired the Great Newbury estate (which at that time adjoined Valentines to the east), Gidea Hall at Romford and land at Ockendon in Essex, as investments for his descendents. They were still living in the area a hundred years later.

Several other close EIC business associates lived nearby at Woodford including Richard Warner, Charles Foulis, Robert Preston and Pitt Collett. Identifying these residential nodes—and their connections with other concentrations of Company homes in town and country—adds a new dimension to our understanding of the EIC as a networked monopoly that operated simultaneously at local and global levels.

The Valentine: The EIC's Ships at Trade and War

Navigating, investing in and managing the vessels that carried the EIC's goods from India to Britain was a risky business in the 18th century. European maritime skills and technologies were severely challenged by the vast distances entailed by trade with China, India and Japan. European death-rates in India were horrific: the majority of the Company merchants who traded in 18th-century India failed to survive to return home to Britain. Conflict with indigenous military formations (notably the Mughal empire and its successor states on the Indian

²² Wills etc; J G Parker *The Directors of the East India Company, 1754-1790* (PhD thesis, Univ. of Edinburgh, 1977); Barking Parish Poor Rate Books held at the Local Studies & Archives, Valence House, Dagenham. Ref. 2/3/1

subcontinent) and competition with the rival East India Companies established by the Dutch and the French raised the costs of trade, and could rapidly annihilate individual traders' profits. War between the British and the French, endemic in the eighteenth century, continually spilled over from European military theatres into the two powers' emerging empires in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean worlds. The maritime trade that allowed Company men such as Sir Charles Raymond to purchase and refurbish homes such as Valentines was fraught with danger, as the history of Raymond's East Indiaman *Valentine* makes emphatically clear.²³

East Indiamen were for carrying cargo, the container ships of their day, and at that time they were built on the banks of the Thames at Blackwall. Each ship was usually owned by a group of investors, with one of them managing the voyage and signing the paperwork on behalf of the group when the ship was chartered for a voyage by EIC. As East Indiamen were not built for speed they were vulnerable when laden, so were armed and ready to defend themselves. The picture below shows three ships *Suffolk*, *Godolphin* and *Houghton*, which fought off two French men-of-war in March 1757.

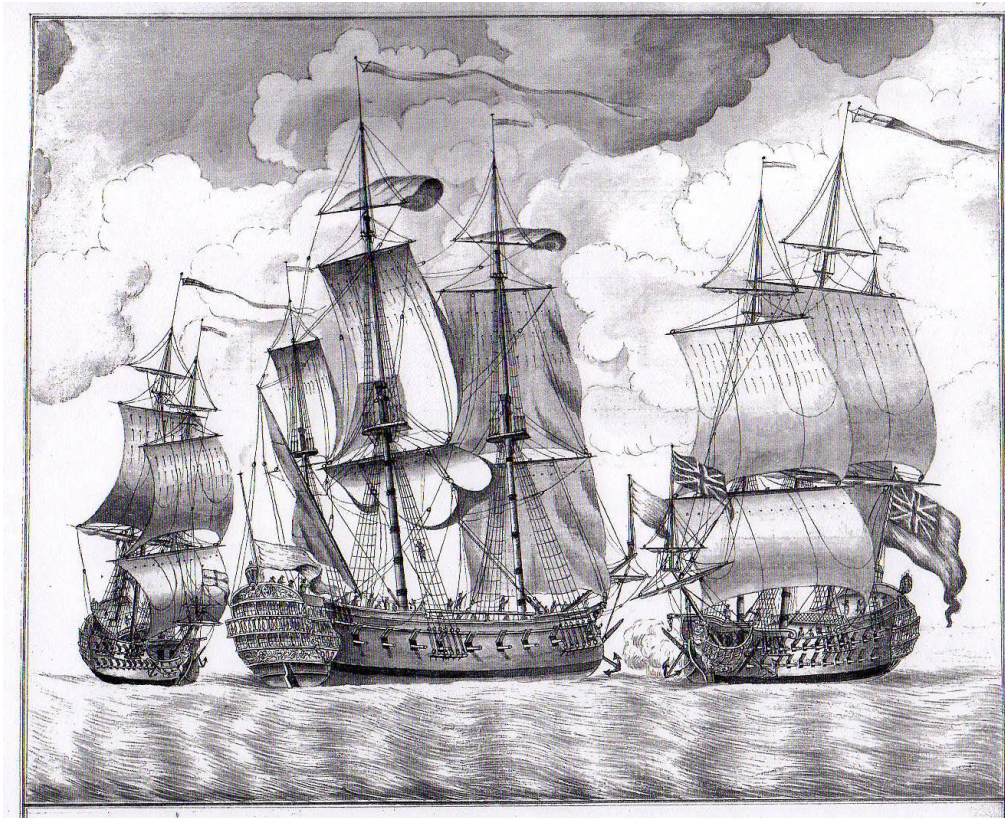


Illustration from the journal of the East Indiaman *Suffolk* 1755/6 (L/MAR/B/397D) British Library

One of the East Indiamen which Charles Raymond built was named the *Valentine* after his home in Ilford. The first ship of this name was built by Perry and had three decks, with 3 inch

²³ The horrific death rates of Company men in India are detailed by Philip D. Curtain, *Death by Migration: Europe's Encounter with the Tropical World in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). The wider world of risk inhabited by Company servants in the Georgian era is explored by P.J. Marshall, *East India Fortunes: The British in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

bottom, registered as 655 tons, and was launched in 1758. Her first voyage was to India and China and on her way home she witnessed the sinking of the *Griffin*, Captain Thomas Dethick, with whom she was in convoy. This was in January 1761 when *Griffin* struck a reef off the 'island of Zelo' to the east of the northern tip of Borneo.²⁴ *Valentine's* second voyage was to Benkulen and China. She was then rebuilt as was customary after deterioration due to weather and the effect of sailing in the warm seas.

Valentine (2) was also built by Perry with three decks and 3 inch bottom. Her length was 135 ft 11 inches, keel 110 ft 11½ inches, breadth 34 ft 4 inches, hold 14 ft 3 inches, wing transom 20ft 10¾ inches, between decks 5 ft 9¾ inches, she was registered at 690 tons and was launched in 1767. Again the Principal Managing Owner was Charles Raymond. He would have put up a substantial part of the capital for rebuilding the ship, along with several others who relied on Raymond to manage the results of their investment. Others in the consortium may have included his cousin John Raymond and Richard Crabb Boulton who had sailed as a captain at the same time as Raymond (his son Henry had married Charles Raymond's daughter Juliana on 3 November 1774) as well as some of the friends and relations previously listed.

Valentine (2) made four voyages. The first two were under the command of Captain Charles Purvis: the first voyage 1767/8 was to Bengal, and the second 1769/70 to Madras and China. The third and fourth voyages were under Captain James Ogilvie: 1772/3 to China and 1776/7 to Madras, Bengal and Bombay, The last voyage ended in disaster when she was wrecked off the island of Sark in the Channel Isles (for information on the wreck go to the 'Shipwrecks and the EIC's 'Immaterial' Material Culture' section featured below).²⁵

James Ogilvie first appears in the EIC records as fourth mate on the *Duke of Richmond* 1763/4. The ship was managed by Charles Raymond who knew the captain well and he probably selected this voyage as a good introduction to the sea for Ogilvie. He then served as second mate on the *Neptune (3)* 1768/9, also managed by Raymond. He was approved by the EIC Directors to be a Captain on 18 August 1772, aged 29, when he took command of the *Valentine (2)*. It seems likely his father was known to Raymond or a close associate to have such a rapid career. Maybe Ogilvie was Scottish and was connected to Andrew Moffatt who was on very friendly terms with the Scottish Earls of Mansfield and Elgin.

Valentine (3) was built by Randall and launched in 1780, but this time the Principal Managing Owner was Donald Cameron who became a partner in the bank of Raymond, Harley, Webber & Co. Cameron. He purchased Valentine House from Raymond's daughters after he died in 1788. These relationships again illustrate the dense webs of family, residence and business that bound the men and women of the EIC.²⁶

²⁴ *Diving for the Griffin* by Charles Daggett with Christopher Shaffer (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1990, ISBN 0 297 81063 4) gives a full account of the voyage and the discovery of the wreck in 1986.

²⁵ Farrington, Anthony *Catalogue of East India Company Ships' Journals and Logs 1660-1834*

²⁶ Discussed, for example, in Margot Finn, 'Family Formations: Anglo India and the Familial Proto-State', in David Feldman and Jon Lawrence, (eds), *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 100-117.

Like very many record books of the East India Company, the Captain's journal of the last voyage of *Valentine* (2) can be seen at the British Library. The ship left Portsmouth on 1 January 1777 and arrived at Madras on 25 June. She then visited other ports en-route to Calcutta, but from then on she had a very unusual voyage. In December, when loaded for her return home, the ship ran aground near Madras due to an error in navigation. She suffered damage to the hull and it was necessary to cut away her masts in an attempt to get her afloat. Soon another East Indiaman came to help lighten her by off-loading her cargo. Once re-floated, temporary repairs were made at sea so that she could make it to the shipyard at Bombay where she spent ten weeks being repaired and refitted.

However, at this time war was endemic with the French and in August the *Valentine's* Captain, James Ogilvie, was summoned to the Select Committee of the East India Company in Madras. After being sworn to secrecy Ogilvie was informed of the Company's orders to besiege Pondicherry (on the coast, south of Madras), and that Sir Edward Vernon was to attack the French Squadron with HM navy ships and had requested the assistance of the *Valentine* along with another East Indiaman, *Seahorse*. On 10 August 1778 the five French and four English ships drew together and in two lines, and exchanged fire as they sailed past each other, before the English ships turned to cut through the enemy line and further engage them. Eventually the French withdrew back to Pondicherry, giving an indecisive end to the encounter.

The *Valentine* fought bravely, taking a leading role in the battle. She lost two dead and fifteen injured, and limped back to Madras for repairs. She was on her fourth voyage and had been repaired in Bombay earlier in the year. Consequently when she arrived in the English Channel she was struggling to keep up with her companions. At this time a convoy with naval protection was essential due to enemy vessels lurking in the vicinity. But a fierce storm blew up and the convoy was scattered. Evidently Captain Ogilvie must have decided to try and make for shelter at St. Peter Port in Guernsey. Sadly *Valentine* was unable to reach this safe haven. As darkness fell on 16 November 1779, with a gale blowing through the remains of her tattered sails, she struck the rocks off the little island of Brecqhou, close by Sark. Her crew and passengers were able to get ashore safely so thankfully there was no loss of life.

For several weeks the ship herself was broken up by the waves and her cargo was looted. She had loaded 4,000 bags of salt petre and a several hundred bales of raw silk, with 18 boatloads of redwood for the "Honourable Company" as well as the private trade goods of the officers. Local tradition says the ladies of Sark enjoyed the luxury of silk dresses the following summer! The East India Company were naturally concerned by the loss of the ship but their enquiry exonerated Captain Ogilvie. They reported that 'his behaviour was very commendable, and that he exerted himself to the utmost for the Preservation of the Ship and Cargo, and the Officers on board acquitted themselves properly on the Occasion.'

Shipwrecked East Indiamen provided conspicuous (and common) illustrations of the very high levels of human and financial risk in which the Company's fortunes were grounded in the Georgian era. After Raymond's time the *Abergavenny* East Indiaman was wrecked just outside

Weymouth Bay on a dark winter night (5 February 1805), having struck the Shambles sandbank at about 5pm. As she began to sink, perhaps 180 men climbed up the rigging as the main and mizzen masts still remained above water to below their yards. But she slowly settled deeper into the sandy seabed and the men lower down in the shrouds (sails) gradually lost their hold in the icy spray and frosty wind. In the morning her topmasts and shrouds could still be seen, while her keel was ten fathoms below the waves (10 fathoms is approximately 65 feet or 20 metres) about 1½ miles from shore.

The Captain of the *Abergavenny*, John Wordsworth, was very experienced, but just unable to save his ship. He was the younger brother of the poet William Wordsworth who wrote a poem about his brother, including the lines:

*All vanished in a single word,
A breath, a sound, and scarcely heard:
Sea – Ship – drowned – Shipwreck – so it came,
The meek, the brave, the good was gone;
He who had been our living John
Was nothing but a name...²⁷*

Shipwrecks and the EIC's 'Immaterial' Material Culture:



Diver Richard Keen preparing to dive near Guernsey in order to complete further research on the *Valentine* wreck

²⁷ Wordsworth, John *Elegiac Verses in Memory of My Brother, John Wordsworth*; Hayter, Alethea *The Wreck of the Abergavenny* (2002, Macmillan)

As the fate of both the *Valentine* and the *Abergavenny* attests, shipwreck was a frequent occurrence in the history of the EIC in the Georgian era. Of the 980 EIC voyages between 1747-88, and discounting those ships which were to remain abroad, less than 94% returned home: 39 were wrecked or “lost”, 7 were burnt and 12 were captured. By far the worst year was 1779/80 when six ships were captured and two were lost out of 26 which sailed.²⁸ It was for this reason that ships were owned by a number of investors, and it seems Raymond had a group of associates who worked together in partnership. Cargos from shipwrecked vessels provide historians with a ghostly counterfoil to pristine collections of Oriental luxuries assembled in many surviving stately homes in Britain, offering a unique, ‘immaterial’ perspectives on the Company’s domestic material culture. When divers investigated the wreck of the *Griffin* East Indiaman, which sank in 1761 on her way home from China, they estimated she carried 125,800 pieces of chinaware.²⁹

Fragments such as the *Griffin*’s porcelain shards have rarely featured in analyses of the Company’s material legacies, but they offer historians a wealth of material for understanding the EIC’s contribution to consumer culture. As they remind us, the Asian items displayed in stately homes and country houses today are only a fraction of what arrived in England in the 18th century. Indeed, much of the cargo brought home from India and China was of short term value and use. Tea, spices, fabrics – all were for immediate consumption and almost all are lost to us now. As an example, the cargo carried home from India in 1739 by Captain Charles Raymond on his second voyage of the *Wager* included cotton materials (callico, seersuckers, chints, gingham etc) valued at approximately £85,030; raw silk at £9,780; redwood at £112 (this was dunnage: it was packed between cargo to prevent movement and keep it dry); salt petre at £1770; turmeric at £125; and cowries at £1,875. The total value of the cargo was nearly £100,000 which in present day terms would be around £10m.³⁰ Unlike Raymond’s porcelain plate, books and artwork, these imports have left no traces in domestic interiors. Recovering their histories requires us to step outside the home, and outside the archive, diving instead (quite literally) into the waters in which East Indiamen sailed to trade with the Orient.

Nearly 200 years after the *Valentine* was wrecked, a young Guernsey diver, Richard Keen, decided to try and find the wreck (see image above). Richard was born and brought up in an old farmhouse in Guernsey (Channel Isles) where he father grew roses. It was expected he would join his father when he left school, but his life changed when tried out the new sport of scuba diving while in his mid-teens. On leaving school he took up a career diving for shellfish. While looking for scallops he found many objects on the sea bed and his enquiring mind led him to an interest in marine archaeology.

Richard has discovered over 30 wrecks on the rocks and reefs in Guernsey waters, some by accident and others while un-snagging crab pots and trawl nets. He started to research these wrecks, and others which had been recorded in old newspapers and diaries but had never been

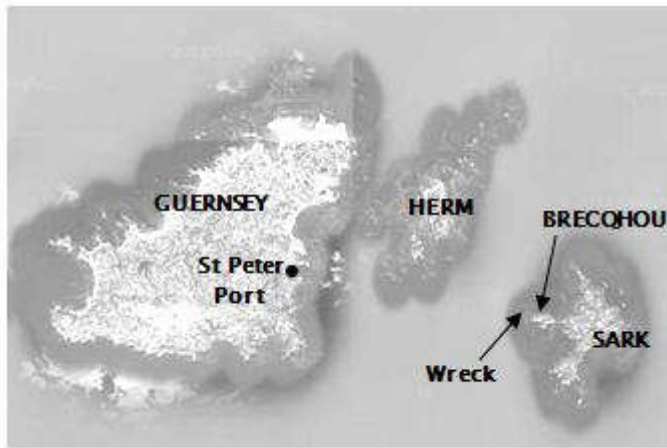
²⁸ Spreadsheet compiled by Georgina Green from Charterparties shown in EIC Court Books and Farrington, Anthony *Catalogue of East India Company Ships’ Journals and Logs 1660-1834*

²⁹ *Diving for the Griffin* by Charles Daggett with Christopher Shaffer (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1990, ISBN 0 297 81063 4) p.107

³⁰ BL East India Co Commercial Ledger L/AG/1/6/11 p.178 August 1739

located. His most important discovery was that of a Roman wreck, known as “Asterix”³¹ which he identified in the harbour mouth at St Peter Port in 1982.

Some years before this Richard came across a map in the Priaulx Library ³² at St. Peter Port which houses the island’s archives. This is dated 1816 ³³ and shows a rock off the island of



Brecqhou (close to Sark) with the words “Le Neste upon which the Valentine Indiaman was wrecked in 1779”. He became fascinated by the idea of finding the wreck and organised a survey of the site with some friends.

Their first attempt to dive on the wreck site was in the autumn of 1975. However, the very high rise and fall of the tide and the many rocks in the area made this hazardous and the attempt was aborted. Eventually some pieces of lead, red dyewood, canon, agate and

pottery were located but the tide was too strong for further investigation. It was agreed that the few items retrieved would be declared to the Receiver of Wreck.

On 9 January 1976 Richard gave a lecture to everyone interested in the wreck and as a result the ‘Valentines Excavation Group 1976’ was established to undertake a coordinated survey of the wreck site, near a rock called “Le Neste” off the western tip of Brecqhou. Dives were made on ten days, starting on 10 April with the last on 12 December. The seabed in the area comprises a mass of rocky gullies with gravel in the bottom, and with kelp growing on the rocks. Work on the site was only possible during neap tides and then only close to slack water, due to the strong currents. However the depth of the remains at diving time is between 10 to 18 metres, so the divers did not have any problems from decompression.

The main cargo of the vessel was salt petre which was much in demand for the manufacture of gun powder, a substance which would have dissolved in the sea. Another significant part of the cargo was red dyewood which was dunnage as well as being of value for dyeing. Large logs of dyewood were found as this is extremely hard wood. The timbers of the ship decomposed long ago although some canons remain to mark the site where the *Valentine* foundered. One interesting find was a broken anchor (which had been mentioned in the captain’s journal) with a

³¹ <http://www.museum.guernsey.net/asterix.htm>

³² <http://www.priaulxlibrary.co.uk/>

³³ **A topographical map of the islands of Guernsey, Sark, Herm & Jethou**

likewise all the adjacent rocks, shoals and passages with the tides, soundings, anchorages etc.

Surveyed and drawn by the late Andrew Gray Esq, a Dept. Q^umaster General

and Captain Nova Scotia Fenabler, assisted by M P Goodwin (Map prepared 1808)

Dedicated to Lt. General Sir John Doyle who was responsible for the reclamation of the Braye du Valle.

cannon strapped to it. This illustrates the desperate attempts made by the crew to save their ship in 1779.



Since 1976 other dives have been held and a number of local people have retrieved items from the cargo. Shards of blue and white Chinese porcelain are often found. It was made in China, loaded in Canton and either brought directly to England or taken to India by one of the many EIC ‘country ships’ used by the Company to transport their cargo in Asian waters. Porcelain was often packed in boxes with loose tea or pepper for padding, and best use of space. The *Valentine* had only visited India on her last voyage,

but her cargo consisted of a range of Chinese porcelain from best quality items for the aristocratic tea party to thicker items for general use. The finer shards illustrated are from a better quality bowl (see image above left), decorated inside. The blue and white china was a popular design in England.

Many small pieces of agate were discovered, mostly orange or rust in colour (see image right). They were cut and roughly shaped square or rectangular in India to be made into signet rings and broaches in England. Agate is an extremely hard stone and it is remarkable that these pieces were smoothed and bevelled by India craftsmen without modern technology. Their loading was not noted in the captain’s journal so it is likely they were private trade.



Other items retrieved illustrate life on board ship: metal handles from furniture or travelling luggage, and broken stoppers (see image left) which may have been loaded in Madeira and would have contained fortified or non-fortified wine. Madeira wine was collected on the outward journey and some of it was required for EIC staff in India.

³⁴ Apparently, the voyage improved the quality, if it wasn’t drunk by officers and passengers before they got back to

England! Ground glass stoppers for decanters or medical jars were also found. They may have been for items used on the voyage – although there was a significant quantity found, which may suggest they were also part of the private trade. As already stated, quantities of redwood have also been salvaged. Even after being in the sea for 200 years the red colour is vibrant when the wood is cut, and it can still be used to dye fabric.

Conclusion: Only recently brought to light through an innovative combination of historical research and marine exploration, Valentines Mansion’s many connections to the East India

³⁴ BL IOR/E/1/61 Miscellaneous Letters received by the EIC, ff. 35-37v : 22 Jan 1777

Company in the eighteenth century illustrate many of the characteristic features of Company commerce in the Georgian era. The Raymond family's operation as a collective unit—joined by marriage, patronage, investments, gifts, material objects and residence—testifies to the Company's corporate culture, a culture well calculated to moderate the impact of the enormous risks entailed by trade with China and India in this era. The contrast between the luxury objects with which Valentines Mansion was furnished in Sir Charles Raymond's day, on the one hand, and the fragmentary shards of Chinese porcelain recovered in recent times from the *Valentine's* wreckage, on the other, nicely captures the threats that challenged Company servants' efforts to extract fortune and status through Asian commerce. By recovering the Company components of Valentines' history, this case study reminds us forcibly of the global dimensions of eighteenth-century Essex.