

Edinburgh author to talk about the Scots in India

According to the history books, British Rule in India ended in 1947 with Indian independence, but the reality for the battalions of Scots who manned the myriad of jute mills that lined the majestic Hooghly river in Bengal was somewhat different.

Reluctant to give up what they had, these dyed-in-the-wool old mill hounds continued their mansion-house lifestyle uninterrupted until the mid 1960s.

Like many Scots of his generation, Max Scratchmann's father worked in the Calcutta jute mills and Max's early childhood was spent being shuttled from continent to continent. However, in 1965 the family suddenly found themselves back 'home' and rattling around their draughty Scottish bungalow like displaced souls.

It seemed that an era and a way of life were well and truly over, until the fledgling republic of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) suddenly opened its doors to the expertise of the Hooghly river boys, and, for a few brief, stolen, years, the Scots were permitted one last stab at the good life.

Today Max has shared his memories of this lost way of life, where ordinary Scots lived in lofty mansion houses with fleets of servants, and his travel memoir, *The Last Burrah Sahibs*, reflects on the leisured imperial lifestyle of the East India British, as seen through the eyes of an eleven-year-old boy, recording both the good life and the growing political unrest in the Indian sub-continent during those last stolen years.

And we're delighted to announce that Max will be discussing the book at Fountainbridge Library on **Monday 11th February 2013** at **6.30pm**. Come along to hear more of his story.

Submitted by [Max Scratchmann](#)

