

ENDANGERED ARCHIVES PROGRAMME

Appendix 3: FINAL REPORT

This form must not be submitted until all project outputs (the digitised content and metadata or pilot survey) have been submitted to the British Library and signed off by the EAP team.

An appropriate senior person in the Host Institution must sign to certify that the statement of expenditure is accurate. All figures must be in GBP.

The final grant instalment will be paid only when the digital collections and metadata or pilot survey plus final report have been satisfactorily received. Any unspent funds must be returned to the Programme.

The project outputs should be sent to:

*Endangered Archives Programme
British Library, 96 Euston Road
London NW1 2DB, United Kingdom*

*Please save as a PDF or Word document, naming it as follows: **EAPxxxx_[name]_final_report** and email to endangeredarchives@bl.uk*

1 Grant details

Name of Project Lead	Dr. Mark Balmforth
Project title	EAP1450: Caste, land, and labour in Jaffna: a survey and digitisation project in Sri Lankan agrarian history
Type of grant	Pilot
Start and end dates (as per Agreement)	01/08/22-31/07/23

2 What was the aim of the work supported by this grant?

(200 words maximum)

The aim of this pilot project was to survey and digitise records relating to caste, land ownership, and agricultural labour in Sri Lanka's Jaffna Peninsula, created prior to the island's independence in 1948. Digitisation was to begin with the William Digby collection, a diverse collection of manuscript, print, and photographic materials created by the editor and political campaigner William Digby (1849–1904) and held by the Evelyn Rutnam Institute. Our goal was to digitize 4000 physical items which we estimated could be captured in 15,000 images, as well as create associated bilingual (English and Tamil) metadata.

Our survey sought manuscript (paper and palm leaf) and printed material relating to the management and ownership of land, labour contracts, and agricultural records. The goal was to survey and digitize materials that would provide valuable sources for scholars of agrarian, labour, social, and economic history in Sri Lanka, South Asia, and the Indian Ocean World more broadly. Conceptually, these types of materials provide an alternative vantage point with which to consider government or company-based archives. In so doing, our larger goal was to facilitate new scholarly agendas that examine the history of capitalism and the durable career

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What have you achieved?

Please be specific. If digitisation has been carried out as part of the project, ensure that you include information on the age and significance of the material that has been digitised, and the number of digital copies created. This text will be used on the EAP website.

Digitisation

EAP1450 completed digitization and bilingual (English and Tamil) metadata production for the Evelyn Rutnam Institute's entire William Digby Collection. In total, 24,074 images were produced, divided over 232 files. Digitised materials are divided into twelve series:

1. Personal Diaries

The collection includes William Digby's personal diaries from 1888 and 1897. The diaries include summaries of daily activities and correspondence.

2. Notebooks

The William Digby Collection contains six notebooks with a variety of manuscript material such as personal and official notes and calculations. Four are from unknown years, and two date from 1898 and 1900.

3. Photographs, Poetry, and Illustrations

This series contains five files that include individual and group photos, a collection of pencil sketches, and a manuscript poem. Dates are largely unknown, however, the manuscript poem is dated 1868.

4. Postcards

This series includes five postcards which were sent to Digby while he was living in India and the United Kingdom. The dates range from 1890 to 1903, and the postcards primarily pertain to his professional work.

5. Political Documents

This series of the William Digby Collection is made up of 43 files pertaining to his political activities. They include manuscript speeches and papers presented by Digby (e.g., "An Appeal to the People of Ceylon") and pamphlets associated with the 1885 general election in India. The dates range from 1872 to 1904.

6. Legal Documents

There are three files of legal documents in this series, largely court records, which date between 1888 and 1890. The files relate to legal issues connected to the British Government, Burma, and Tanjore District Court.

7. Correspondence

This series of 140 files contains correspondence to and by William Digby dated between 1866 and 1904. The topics of the letters concern Digby's professional life and political activities, including publishing, social, and political activities in India, and political efforts in the United Kingdom, including his involvement with the National Liberal Club.

8. Telegraphs

This series includes four files of telegraphs sent and received by William Digby while he was living in India and the United Kingdom. The subjects include professional activities and the payment of bills. Dates fall between 1876 and 1903.

9. Memoranda

This series includes four files of memoranda sent by and to William Digby. The subjects relate to British India, Digby's professional work, and his role in the National Liberal Club. This collection of memoranda date between 1882 and 1899.

10. Magazines

This series contains five files of magazines, both printed and handwritten. Periodicals from the Quernmore School include information about school events and activities. The series also includes handwritten and/or unfinished magazines. The files date between 1897 and 1899.

11. Newspaper Clippings

This series contains eleven files of newspaper clippings from British and Indian newspapers. The files include his writings and articles in the Ceylon Observer, the Madras Times, and the Hindu, including his activities during the South Indian Famine Campaign. The collection of newspaper clippings date between 1868 and 1904.

12. Bills and Receipts

This series contains four files of bills and receipts and contains details about, among other things, printing expenses related to his work. The files date to 1888 and 1889.

The Evelyn Rutnam Institute's William Digby Collection is arguably the single most important collection of primary sources available to understand Digby's life and professional campaigns. From his vociferous advocacy for political reform in British India to his intervention and fundraising in response to the Southern India Famine of 1876-78, Digby leveraged the power of print media to issue a precocious critique of empire that deserves to be better understood.

Survey

In total, EAP1450's survey conducted 129 meetings in more than 40 villages. The team spoke with 202 landowners and labourers, as well as representatives from multiple agriculture-related organizations including cooperative societies, training institutions, and government industry development organizations. Our efforts revealed a group of materials centered on the mid- to late-twentieth century, with concentrations in administrative materials associated with agricultural cooperatives and societies.

While our primary interest was the location and survey of unknown manuscript and print materials related to the management and ownership of land, labour contracts, and agricultural records, early on we determined that the family-held materials were largely being withheld from our team due to questions of trust. Given our team's experience, these issues are not surprising—the most important materials located for EAP835 and EAP971 resulted from a multi-year relationship built over more than a dozen meetings. Due to this experience, we used the survey time to locate as many potential contributors as possible, interview them, and initiate a relationship upon which the Noolaham Foundation can continue to build.

Except for a handful of items, materials dated prior to 1948 were not located. Most labouring communities interviewed for this project explained that successive waves of displacement meant most families had lost everything, sometimes twice or three times. Some had lived in camps designed for internally displaced people, and all had struggled to protect family records (e.g., photographs, identity documents, school leaving certificates), let alone records connected to employment or livelihood. Institutional holdings generally contained print and manuscript materials dating from the 1950s and later, and some institutions reported having had their collections destroyed due to war-time shelling and displacement-related neglect.

In total, the survey located 1650 pages of manuscript and print material unavailable in international libraries and not found on WorldCat. Of that amount, only 479 pages were produced prior to the island's independence, and thus fall within the scope of EAP1450.

As a consequence of these findings, we conclude that a major EAP grant application would not be appropriate. That said, the materials located possibly warrant a future Modern Endangered Archives Program application, presuming Noolaham is able to continue relationships built under the auspices of EAP1450.

Full details of the survey can be found in the EAP1450 Survey Report.

- 4 Provide details of where the endangered archival material is now housed and where the copies of the material have been deposited, if applicable.**
Details should also be provided of the accessibility of the material. This text will be used on the EAP website.

The archival material remains housed in the Evelyn Rutnam Institute in Thirunelvely, Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Copies of all material digitised are held by the Noolaham Foundation and are in the process of being uploaded to their website. A copy of all digitised materials was also delivered on 25 February 2025 to the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India, which oversees the management of the Evelyn Rutnam Institute.

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5 How has the project contributed to the professional development of local staff and/or institutions?

This text will be used on the EAP website.

Over the course of our pilot grant, multiple metadata and digitisation trainings were held to strengthen the skills and abilities of our staff.

On 5 September 2022, Henria Aton (EAP835 and EAP971 Metadata Officer) led an in-person metadata training workshop in Jaffna. This included a column-by-column discussion of EAP's metadata listing, an explanation of how description works and why it is important, guidance differentiating between administrative and custodial history, as well as between collections, files, and items. In early November 2022, Ajita Krishnakumar replaced M. Nagatheebiga as Metadata Officer. On the 16th, 17th, 23rd, and 30th of November 2022, Project Lead Mark Balmforth conducted a series of metadata trainings to ensure Ajita was equipped to produce project metadata.

During the grant period, Project Manager Stephen Kanagalingam conducted regular, ad hoc digitization trainings to sharpen skills and correct issues.

Stephen, along with V. Rupesh, R. Hibakaran, and M. Nagatheebiga all attended the EAP's Regional Hub Training Workshop, hosted by the School of Cultural Texts and Records at Jadavpur University on 14 September 2022.

Finally, between November 2022 and August 2023, R. Hibakaran and V. Rupesh participated in a Jaffna-based research training program called the Lanka Critical Caste Studies Working Group (LaCCS), run by Project Lead Dr. Mark Balmforth and Dr. Ponni Arasu. In addition to supporting student-led research projects, the program included eight methods-based workshops that sought to build the kind of skillsets necessary for archival and ethnographic fieldwork, including surrounding semi-structured interview protocols, the consent process, and ways to develop critical reading skills. The program also brought in ten senior caste-studies experts from India, the UK, Germany, and the US to discuss their research.

6 Provide details on how the results from your project have been disseminated, including any reports in the local, national or international media.

Include references and links to content where possible.

Noolaham sends out a monthly report to its donors and EAP1450 has been featured in this report several times. EAP1450 has also been discussed in various Noolaham Foundation social media posts, and during multiple public exhibitions in Jaffna, including:

Jaffna International Book Fair in August 2024:

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=122165322518132043&id=61553961315800&_rdr

Yarl IT Hub:

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=122159789030132043&id=61553961315800&_rdr

“Agricultural Exhibition 2024” held at the Tirunelveli Agricultural Training Center in October 2024:

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=122170740494132043&id=61553961315800&_rdr

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7 **State the steps taken to obtain any copyright clearance in the materials copied. Where available, please provide supporting documentation.**

Please refer to the Grant Agreement.

No copyrighted materials were copied under the auspices of this project.

8 **Have any other funding bodies been involved in supporting this project?** Yes No

If yes, please provide details.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada provided funding for the Lanka Critical Caste Studies Working Group, which helped train EAP1450's field researchers.

9 **Do you have any comments you would like to make regarding your research, this award or the Endangered Archives Programme as a whole?**

None.

- 10 If the language of the project was not English, please provide below a summary of the aims and achievements in the language(s) of the project. This will be used to enhance discoverability of the digitised material online.

இந்த முன்னோடி செயற்திட்டத்தின் நோக்கம் இலங்கையின் யாழ்ப்பாணக் குடாநாட்டில் 1948 இலங்கை சுதந்திரம் அடைவதற்கு முன் உருவாக்கப்பட்ட சாதி, நில உரித்துடைமை மற்றும் விவசாயம் சார் உழைப்பாளிகள் தொடர்பான பதிவுகளை மதிப்பாய்வு செய்து எண்ணிமப்படுத்துவது ஆகும். ஈவ்லின் ரட்ணம் நிறுவனத்தில் உள்ள வில்லியம் டிஃபி சேகரிப்பான பதிப்பாசிரியர் மற்றும் அரசியல் பிரச்சாரக்காரரான வில்லியம் டிஃபியால் (1849-1904) உருவாக்கப்பட்ட கையெழுத்து பிரதி, அச்ச மற்றும் புகைப்பட ஆவணங்களுடன் எண்ணிமப்படுத்தல் தொடங்கப்பட இருந்தது. 15,000 படங்களை கைப்பற்ற முடியுமென்று மதிப்பிடப்பட்ட 4,000 பெளதீக ஆவணங்களை எண்ணிமப்படுத்துவதும், அவை தொடர்புடைய இருமொழி (ஆங்கிலம், தமிழ்) மீதரவுகளை உருவாக்குவதும் எங்கள் இலக்காக இருந்தது.

நிலம் முகாமைத்துவம் மற்றும் உரித்துடைமை, தொழிலாளர் ஒப்பந்தங்கள் மற்றும் விவசாயப் பதிவுகள் தொடர்பான கையெழுத்து (காகிதம், பனையோலை) மற்றும் அச்சிடப்பட்ட ஆவணங்கள் எங்கள் ஆய்வில் தேடப்பட்டது. தெற்காசியாவில் இலங்கை மற்றும் பரந்த இந்தியப் பெருங்கடல் உலகின் விவசாயம், தொழிலாளர், சமூகம் மற்றும் பொருளாதார வரலாற்றின் நிபுணர்களுக்கு பெறுமதி மிக்க மூலங்களை வழங்கும் ஆவணங்களை மதிப்பாய்வு செய்து எண்ணிமப்படுத்துவதே இலக்காகும். கருத்தியல் ரீதியாக இந்த வகை ஆவணங்கள் அரசாங்கம் அல்லது நிறுவனம் சார்ந்த சுவடியகங்களை கருத்திற் கொள்வதற்கான ஒரு மாற்றீடான கண்ணோட்டத்தை வழங்குகின்றது. அவ்வாறு செய்வதன் மூலம் முதலாளித்துவத்தின் வரலாறு மற்றும் தெற்காசியாவில் நீடித்த அடிமைத்தொழில் ஆகியவற்றை பரீட்சிக்கும் புதிய அறிவார்ந்த நிகழ்ச்சி நிரல்களை எளிதாக்குவதே எங்கள் பெரிய இலக்காக இருந்தது.

எண்ணிமப்படுத்தல்

EAP - 1450, ஈவ்லின் ரட்ணம் நிறுவனத்தின் வில்லியம் டிஃபி முழுச் சேகரிப்பிற்கான எண்ணிமப்படுத்தல் மற்றும் இருமொழி (ஆங்கிலம், தமிழ்) மீதரவுகள் தயாரிப்பை பூர்த்தி செய்துள்ளது. மொத்தம் 24,074 படங்கள் எடுக்கப்பட்டுள்ளதோடு அவை 232 கோப்புகளாகப் பிரிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. வில்லியம் டிஃபி வாழ்க்கை மற்றும் தொழில் முறைப் பிரச்சாரங்களை புரிந்து கொள்ள ஈவ்லின் ரட்ணம் நிறுவனத்தின் வில்லியம் டிஃபி சேகரிப்பு முதன்மை மூலங்களின் மிக முக்கியமான ஒற்றைச் சேகரிப்பாகும். பிரிட்டிஷ் இந்தியாவில் அரசியல் சீர்திருத்தத்திற்கான அவரது உரத்த வாதத்திலிருந்து 1876-78 தென்னந்தியப் பஞ்சத்திற்கு பதிலளிக்கும் வகையிலான அவரது தலையீடு மற்றும் நிதி திரட்டியது வரை, டிஃபி அச்ச ஊடகத்தின் சக்தியைப் பயன்படுத்தி சாம்ராஜ்யத்தின் மீது முன்கூட்டிய விமர்சனத்தை வெளியிட்டார். இந்த விமர்சனம் நன்கு புரிந்து கொள்ளப்பட வேண்டியதாகும்.

மதிப்பாய்வு

மொத்தத்தில் EAP - 1450ன் மதிப்பாய்வு 40ற்கும் மேற்பட்ட கிராமங்களில் 129 சந்திப்புக்களை நடாத்தியுள்ளது. கூட்டுறவுச் சங்கங்கள், பயிற்சி நிறுவனங்கள் மற்றும்

அரசு தொழில் அபிவிருத்தி நிறுவனங்கள் உட்பட பல விவசாயம் தொடர்பான நிறுவனங்களின் பிரதிநிதிகள் மற்றும் 202 நில உரிமையாளர்கள் மற்றும் தொழிலாளர்களுடன் குழுச் சந்திப்புக்களை மேற்கொண்டனர். எங்கள் முயற்சிகள், விவசாயக் கூட்டுறவுகள் மற்றும் சங்கங்களுடன் தொடர்புடைய நிர்வாக ஆவணங்களில் கவனம் செலுத்துவதோடு, 20ம் நூற்றாண்டின் நடுப்பகுதி முதல் பிற்பகுதி வரை மையப்படுத்தப்பட்ட ஆவணங்களின் ஓர் தொகுப்பை வெளிப்படுத்தியது.

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11 Statement of expenditure

	Amount awarded (£)	Amount spent to date (£)	Amount committed to end of project (£)	Total spend (estimated) (£)	Variance (+ or -) (£)
Fees & salaries	10,200	10,700	0	10,700	+500
Equipment & consumables	2,490	2,490	0	2,490	0
Travel & subsistence	2000	1500	0	1500	-500
Training costs	0	0	0	0	0
Other costs	110	110	0	110	0
TOTAL	14,800	14,800	0	14,800	0

For and on behalf of the Host Institution

I confirm that this is a true statement of expenditure of funds awarded under the Endangered Archives Programme

Signature

Date

5 March 2025

Name

Ransuthamalar Nanthakumar

**Institutional stamp
(if available)**

Email address

ransuthamalar.n@noolahamfoundation.org

Position in Institution


Chief Executive Officer

Institution

Noolaham Foundation

I confirm that the information provided in this report is accurate and complete.

Signature of Project Lead



Date

4 March 2025