

Sponsored by NZIRI & ICHR

Anglo-Indian Studies Workshop

28th-29th December, 2014

Organized by Massey University
with University of Calcutta and IIT Kharagpur

Allan Sealy in conversation with Keith Butler

followed by Film Screenings and High Tea

3-5 PM, 28th December, 2014,
SN Bose Auditorium, IIT Kharagpur



**MASSEY
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New Zealand
India Research Institute
Te Pitihiri Rangahau o Iria ki Aotearoa



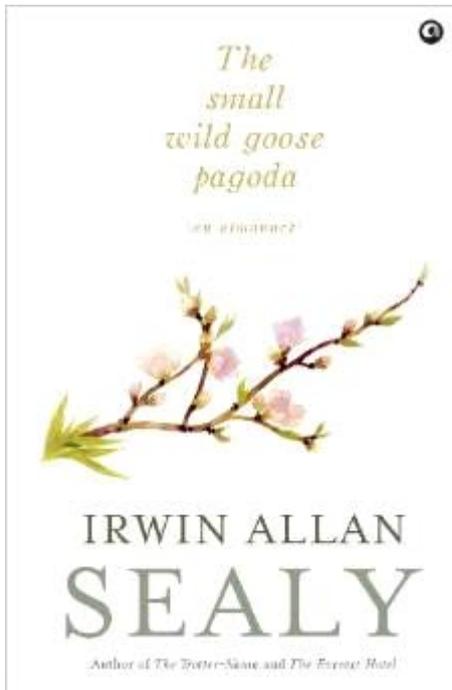
AN INTERACTIVE EVENING WITH WRITERS IRWIN ALLAN SEALY, KEITH BUTLER & FILMMAKER PAUL HARRIS

Date: 28th December 2014

Time: 3.00-5.00 p.m.
Kharagpur

Venue: SN Bose Auditorium IIT

BOOK RELEASES AND MEET THE AUTHOR

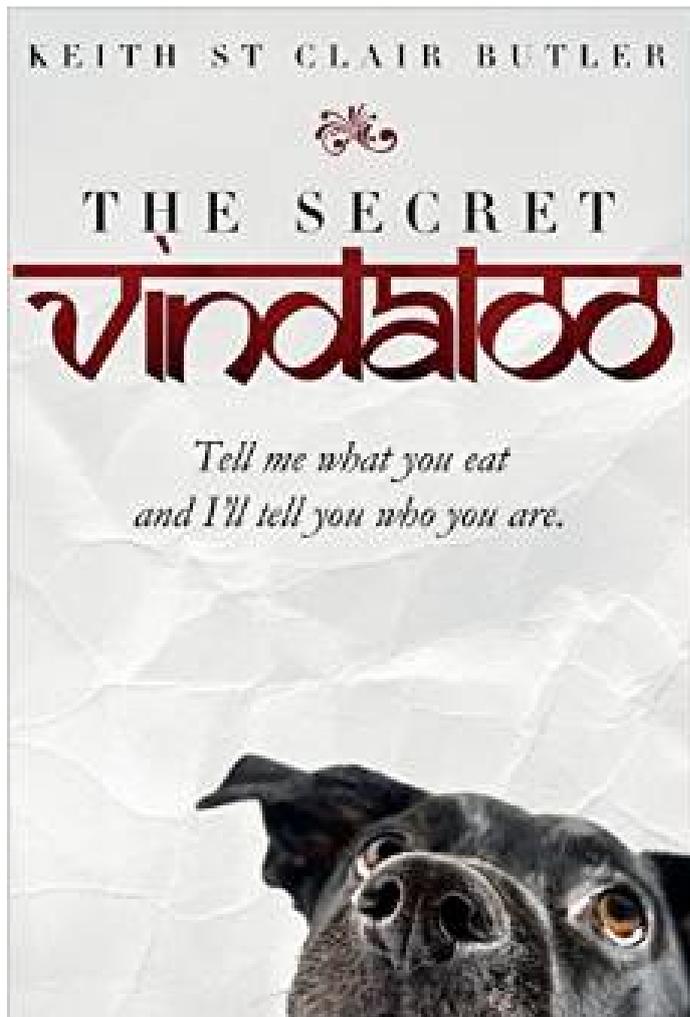


A social and cultural history of 433 square yards of India written in the form of an almanac *The Small Wild Goose Pagoda* is a natural and social history of 433 square yards of India. On this piece of land in the foothills of the Himalaya, the Sealy family have a small brick house with one-and-a-half bedrooms, two-and-a-half gardens, front, back and side, an old Fiat, an internet link with the world and a terrace roof for walking on under the sky. Here surrounded by trees: litchi, rosewood, magnolia, silk cotton, jacaranda, a reluctant pear, a profusely flowering peach Allan Sealy looks back on his life as he turns sixty and goes from Householder to Forest Dweller (the two middle stages in the life of a man - as set out in Indian philosophical tradition). Lending depth and texture to a narrative written in the form of an almanac is his experience of building, after a visit to China, a pagoda on his roof. As the pagoda takes shape we are introduced to a host of extraordinary characters who drift in and out of the 433 square yards: Dhani, family retainer and mali, bent in half by age; Habilis, master brick-layer and contractor with a roving eye; Beauty, part of Habilis' s crew, who may or may not be his lover; Victor, stoic assistant to Habilis. In this remarkable book, his first in a decade, award-winning novelist and travel writer, Irwin Allan Sealy, gives us an evocative account of the drama of small town

life; at the same time it is an extraordinary meditation on work, family history, nature, Indian society and the passage of time.



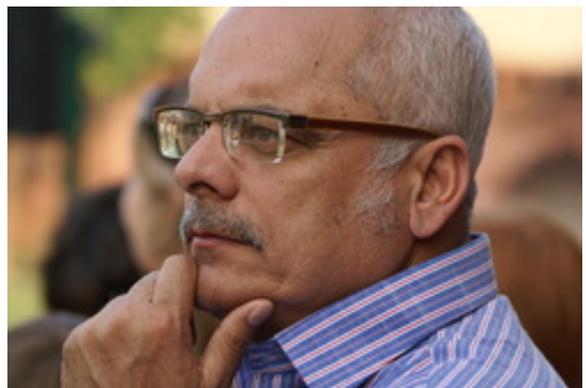
Irwin Allan Sealy was born in Allahabad in 1951 and educated in Lucknow and Delhi. He is the author of *The Trotter-Nama*, *The Everest Hotel*, *The Brain fever Bird* and other novels and a travelogue, *From Yukon to Yucatan*. He lives in Dehradun, where he is apprenticed to a bricklayer.



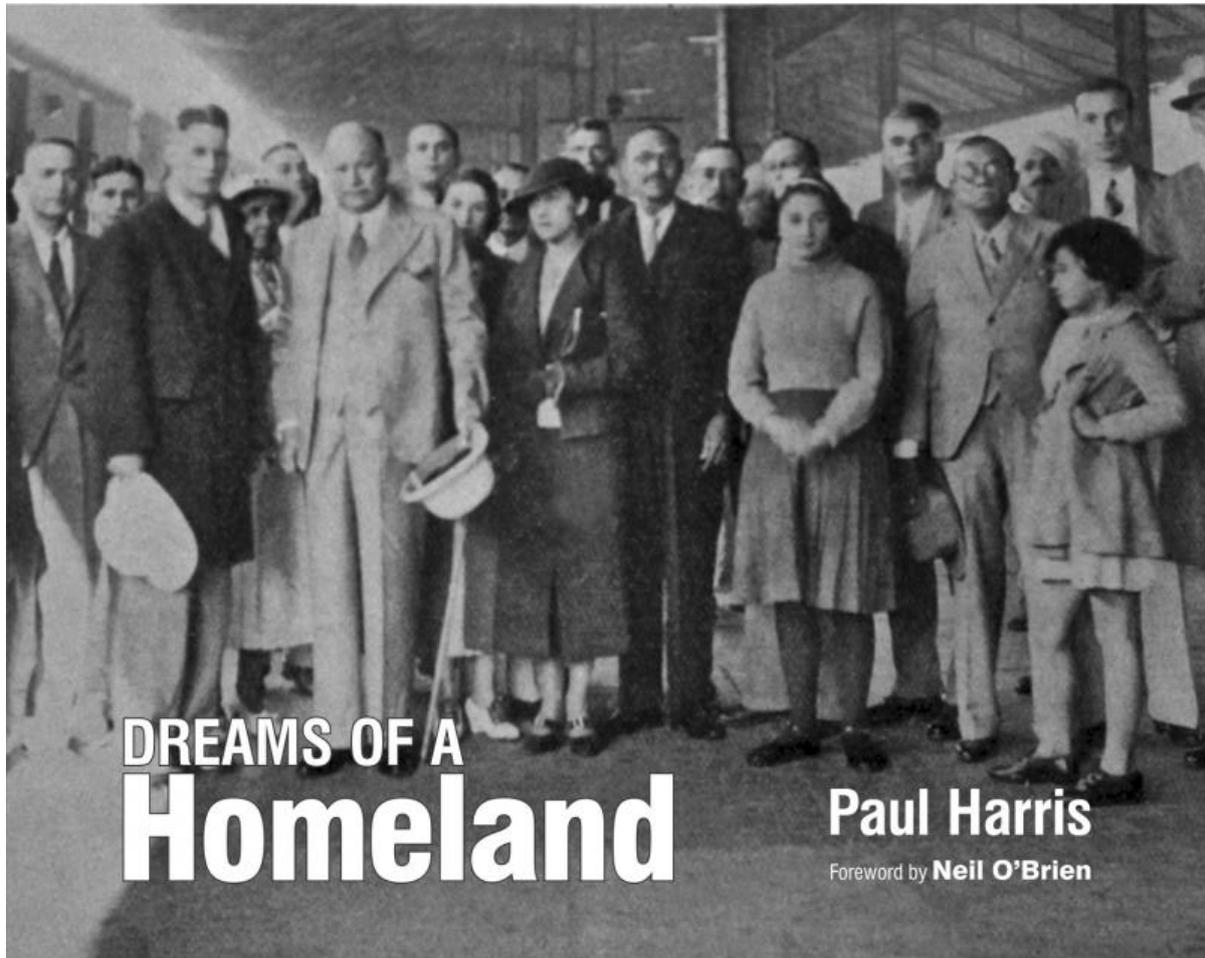
Suffering from a bout of food rage at the local food court, Anglo-Indian food critic Puttla Marks creates a hullabaloo over vindaloo, and is hauled off to the Melbourne Detention Centre. There, the intrepid government interrogator Claude Anttick awaits. Convinced the culinary stoush is more than just an isolated incident, Anttick grills Puttla. The stakes are high. The authorities want Puttla to prove his patriotism or face deportation. Is Puttla up to the challenge? Can he dish up a story? Will Anttick swallow the repast? Probably not. But Puttla's going to give it one hell of a college try. After all, Memsahib Marks did not raise her boy to be a fool, she raised him to be British! The Secret Vindaloo takes the reader on a wild and wickedly funny ride at street-level in a bygone Calcutta. With laser-like accuracy, the author cuts to the bone in a tale of identity: that which we seek, that which is thrust upon us, and maybe, in

the midst of it all, discovering who we really are.

India-born Keith Butler is an Indian writer living in New Zealand. Designated "stateless" by Indian legislature, he was literally thrown out of his homeland in 1972 although he says he "emigrated". Winning the prestigious Melbourne Age Short Story prize in 1998 for his entry "Sodasi", kicked started his writing career and he went on to be variously published by Penguin Short Story Collections (Australia), The Metro (Calcutta), The Age (Melbourne), Meanjin (Melbourne University), and Good Weekend (Melbourne – Sydney). His first novel, The Secret Vindaloo, was funded by The Literature Board of Australia and the Victorian Premier's Department. It is only a rumour that Butler spent a lot of that money sampling *haute cuisine*.



FILM SCREENINGS AND MEET THE FILMMAKER



McCluskieganj is a small town about 70 kilo-meters from Ranchi in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand. It was the brainchild of Ernest Timothy McCluskie, who created this homeland of members of the Anglo-Indian community. Between the 1930s and '40s, scores of Anglo-Indians from all parts of the Indian sub-continent came as settlers to this remote location that was once called Lapra in the erstwhile state of Bihar. Dreams of a Homeland is a film that explores the historical reasons for the creation, development and eventual failure of this town.

Paul Harris is an independent documentary film maker living in Melbourne, Australia. He is Indian, born in India of mixed European and Indian descent, and part of the Anglo-Indian community, as defined in the Articles of the Indian Constitution. Having recently completed a film called *Nine Nights of Devotion*, and *Dreams of a Homeland* he is currently producing a film on the history of the Anglo-Indian community called *End of the Raaj*.



Above is documented a day in the life of an Anglo-Indian railway driver. A day which happens to be his birthday and also the day he hangs up his boots. A man who knows Kharagpur like the back of his hands. This is the story of an ordinary man and an extraordinary Indian. This is the story of Duncan Jude Hall.



The White Cloud



Ashay Gangwar, a graduate from IIT Kharagpur'14, is currently living in Mumbai and is working as an independent filmmaker. He has been working with various production houses ever since the college and during his final year made a short documentary, The White Cloud, on a day in the life of an Anglo-Indian railway driver. Currently he is working on a full-length documentary on Komagata Maru and also a travel documentary in Rajasthan.

NZIRI & ICHR Sponsored
Anglo-Indian Studies Workshop
Based on Collaborative Project "Ethnographic Profiling of Anglo-Indians in Small Towns of
India" with Massey University New Zealand



A B.N.R. GARDEN.

Photo courtesy <http://web.ncf.ca/kharagpurdiaspora/>

Dept of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur
University of Kolkata
December 28-29 2014

Overview

Despite the long history of their presence on the Indian subcontinent since the 16th century, Anglo-Indians, or people who have descended from a European parent on the paternal side, have remained largely invisible in colonial and postcolonial histories. The declaration of Indian Independence in 1947 resulted in something akin to an Anglo-Indian exodus with Anglo-Indians migrating to countries such as the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. While many Anglo-Indians migrated, a considerable number stayed back in India making their homes in cities like Kolkata, Madras and Bombay but also in small towns such as Kharagpur, Hubli, Asansol, Mussoorie and Kochi.



A picture of a house on Third Avenue, Kharagpur 1938

Photo courtesy <http://web.ncf.ca/kharagpurdiaspora/>

Media representations of Anglo-Indians, particularly in Hindi cinema, have contributed to the misrepresentation of Anglo-Indians as an exotic 'community in decline' living in an anachronistic British past. This Workshop hopes to alter mainstream perceptions of Anglo-Indians through an ethnographic study that throws light on 'the way they are'¹ in present-day India.

Aims and scope of the Workshop

In the recent years literature on Anglo-Indians has emerged from the disciplines of anthropology, social geography and history largely by scholars based in the West. Most of this literature, however, has focused on Anglo-Indians in the metro cities such as Kolkata and Madras while Anglo-Indians living in small towns have largely been ignored. Anglo-Indian research tends to have focussed mainly on Chennai and Kolkata – which are the two centres of highest Anglo-Indian population. Currently there is a dearth of ethnographic research on the Anglo-Indians in the small towns: the railway junctions, the hill stations and other areas such as the States of Goa, Pondicherry, and Kerala.

¹ This is the title of the 2008 CTR publication which also encapsulates the ideas we have for this project.

The Workshop's aim is to remedy this situation by investigating, ethnographically, contemporary Anglo-Indian life styles, issues of concern, and challenges faced in locations other than the metros. In so doing it will draw attention to the shared characteristics as well as to the points of difference between the experiences of Anglo-Indians in the targeted locations. Whilst common threads are emerging between the experiences and ways of life of Anglo-Indians in small towns, what is also notable and will be explored together are the specific differences that make Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Indian lives in each of these towns distinctive from one another.

Workshop

The workshop will comprise two parts: one day of paper presentations at University of Calcutta, and a visit to one of the 'small towns' highlighted by the project: Kharagpur.

The paper presentation day is an opportunity for the researchers from a variety of humanities and social science backgrounds to get together to present their findings about the lives of marginalized Anglo-Indian communities living in small towns in India; the railway towns such as Kharagpur, Hubli and Asansol; the hill stations, Mussoorie and Kalimpong; a French enclave, Pondicherry; and Anglo-Indian settlements with Portuguese histories such as Kochi and Goa. This day will include presentations of other Anglo-Indian-focused research with the presenters being expected to be part of the discussion of the project-focused papers.

The visit to Kharagpur will give the group of researchers the chance to spend time with Anglo-Indians in a railway town which is home for many Anglo-Indians still, and is one which features in the project. Local Anglo-Indians will also be invited to be part of the day's events which comprise a panel discussion, two short film screenings featuring Anglo-Indians in small towns by Melbourne based independent documentary filmmaker Paul Harris and by Ashay Gangwar, an alumnus of IIT Kharagpur and experimental filmmaker, as well as a book release by Keith Butler – Anglo-Indian and novelist who is also contributing to the project. Eminent Anglo-Indian writer Irwin Allan Sealy has agreed to read from his new book *The Small Wild Goose Pagoda*.

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