

Faith in action

John Graham

1861-1942

Britain's age of empire brought forth many men and women of note – for better and for worse.

Among them were Church of Scotland missionaries John Graham and his beloved wife Katherine McConachie, who went to work in the remote hill station of Kalimpong, India, situated 4,000 feet up in the Himalayas.

Their work went far beyond the creation of a series of Christian congregations.

They created schools, a teacher training centre, and a co-operative credit society which helped local people escape the punitive rates charged by moneylenders.

Deeply religious John, however, was non-sectarian and wanted to see a united church in north India.

Katy, as she was affectionately known, founded the Charteris Hospital in 1892 with a chain of village dispensaries.

Cottage industries were set up which provided training in skills from lacework to carpentry and employed 1,000 people by the early 1920s.

The couple also secured land to build a model village for the 'lost tribe' of Anglo-Indian children.

Many of the residents, who knew John as 'Daddy Graham', were rescued from destitution on tea plantations or in the slums of Calcutta.

Katy died in 1919, but her husband's work continued and his humanitarian efforts were hailed by both the British and Indian governments.

- Read the Oxford DNB biography here: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/public/dnb/33503.html>.