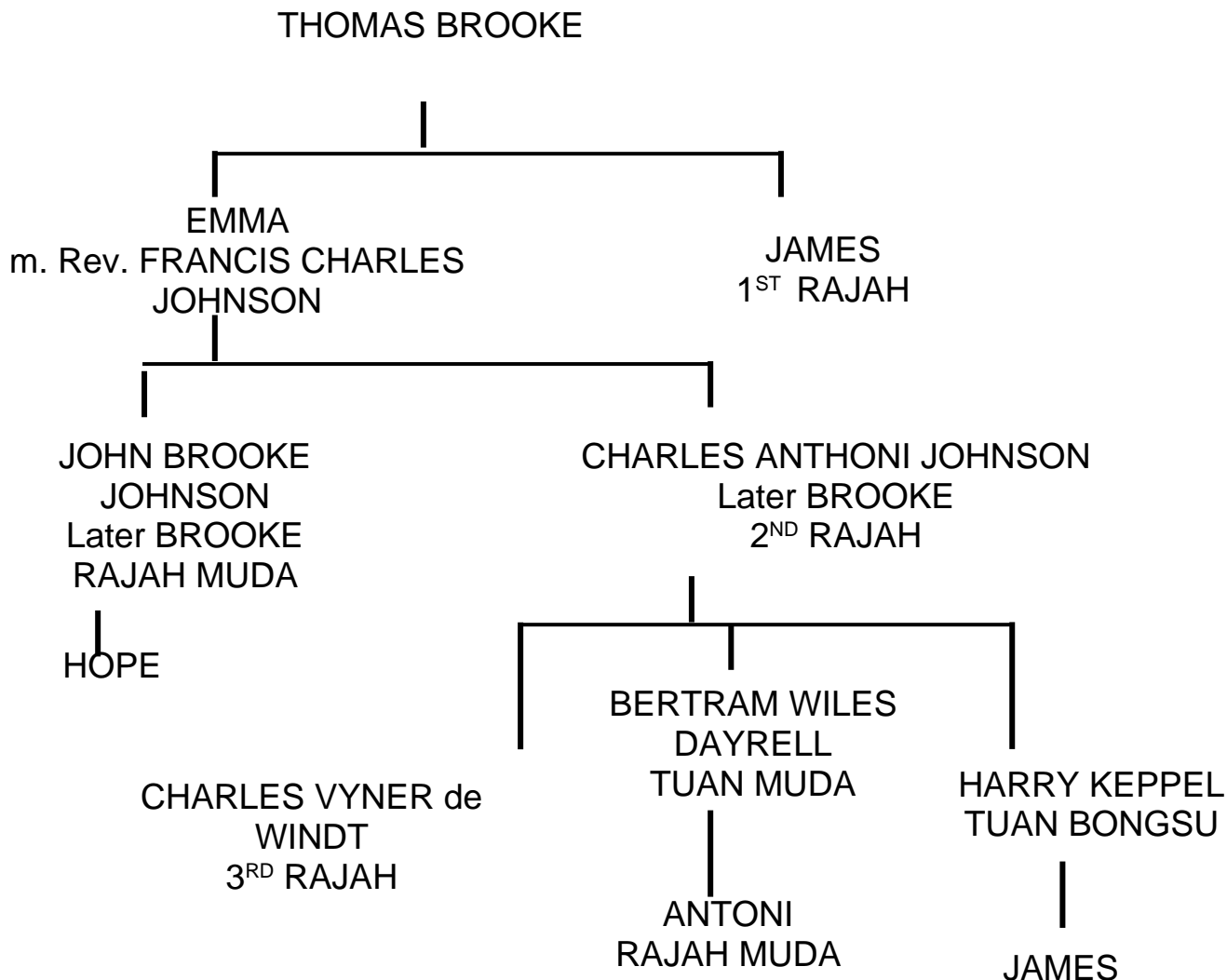
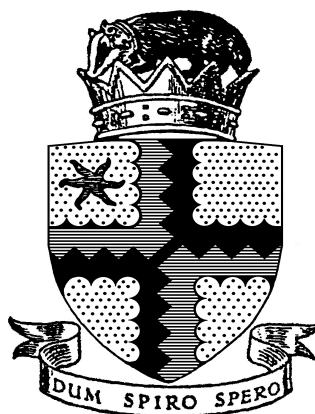


BROOKES OF SARAWAK

Sheepstor Church is linked to Sarawak in Malaysia through the choice of the village as the retirement home of the first Rajah. He and his descendants are buried in the churchyard. The story of their role in Sarawak is told on a plaque at the back of the church which is reproduced below.



Arms of the Raj of Sarawak



Arms of Sir James Brooke.

THE BROOKES OF SARAWAK

These four Englishmen of different character and temperament were at one in their fidelity to the policy enshrined in the First Rajah's words:

"Sarawak belongs to the Malays, the Sea Dayaks, the Land Dayaks, the Kayans and other tribes; not to us. It is for them that we labour; not ourselves."

JAMES BROOKE, son of Thomas Brooke, Judge in the East India Company's Civil Service, was born in Bengal in 1803. He entered the Company's Army in 1819 but, wounded in the Burmah War of 1825 and honourably mentioned in despatches, resigned his commission and traveled in the Far East. On his father's death he bought the schooner *Royalist*. Arriving at Singapore in 1839, he was commissioned by the Governor to convey thanks and gifts to the Rajah Muda Hassim of Sarawak for kindness to some shipwrecked British sailors, and, after surveying over seventy miles of uncharted and almost unknown coast, he sailed into the Sarawak River and was graciously received. He found a country torn by insurrection and ravaged by pirates. After venturing along the coast and up rivers, learning to know the people and their problems, he was able so to help and advise the local administrators that they implored him to stay and become their Rajah. He was formally installed on September 24, 1841, and from then he began, with a few British friends, the task of fostering peaceful trade and just dealing to subjects of many different races whom he was to rule, with sympathy and understanding, for twenty-two years. He endeavoured to suppress piracy, head-hunting and slavery and greatly reduced inter-tribal warfare. To the native laws and customs, which he respected, he added a simplified British Code of Justice which he administered personally, making himself available to anyone seeking his counsel. He devoted his fortune to the needs of his people and was helped by a generous loan from his friend, the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. He never married. In 1848 he visited England and was created K.C.B. by Queen Victoria and appointed Governor of Labuan. When he returned to Sarawak he took with him his nephew, Captain John Brook Johnson, who changed his surname to Brooke, and whom he created Rajah Muda and his heir. In their unremitting and selfless work they endured many dangers but succeeded in bringing peace to their country and development without exploitation. Sarawak was recognised by America as an independent State in 1850 and by Great Britain in 1864. In 1859 the Rajah bought Burrator in this parish to which he retired in 1863 and where he died on June 11, 1868. John Brooke Brooke died in England in the same year as his uncle leaving an infant son and daughter.

CHARLES ANTHONI JOHNSON, second son of the Rev. Francis Charles Johnson and his wife, Emma Brooke, was born at Berrow Vicarage, Somerset in 1829. He entered the Navy in 1842 and served under his uncle, Commander Willes Johnson, on the China Station. With Captain the Hon. Henry Keppel - a close friend of James Brooke - he visited Sarawak for the first time in 1844, and in 1852 obtained leave of absence for two years to help the Rajah administer the country. In 1854 he resigned from the Navy and was granted the title of Tuan Muda, and a few years before his uncle retired, changed his surname to Brooke. By his courage, resource and integrity in many hazardous encounters he won the trust of the Sarawak people to whose service and the laws laid down by the First Rajah he dedicated himself. Inheriting a country considerably in debt, he lived for many years with great frugality and in 1871 repaid the money loaned by Baroness Burdett-Coutts. During his reign many more tribes in Borneo sought protection under his sovereignty so that the boundaries of the State were much extended. Ruling it like his uncle with only a handful of British assistants and a small force of Sarawak Rangers founded in 1846, he continuously travelled its 50,000 square miles, consulting with the chiefs of many different tribes of diverse race, language and custom and making himself accessible to all. Austere, direct and autocratic, he was also radical and far-sighted with clear perception of what was likely to happen to colonial possessions in the twentieth century. He sailed his own ships. He established a sound economy and an effective Civil Service and introduced many Public Works. Agriculture and trade prospered; medical services, schools and Christian missions were established. In 1874 he was created a Commander of the Crown of Italy and promoted in 1899

to Grand Officer. In 1888 Queen Victoria created him G.C.M.G., and Sarawak was recognised as a fully Independent State under the Protection of Great Britain. In 1869 he married his cousin, Margaret de Windt. Their first three children died of cholera, but three further sons, Charles Vyner, Bertram and Harry, were born to them. Sir Charles Brooke died in his eighty-eighth year at his house in Cirencester on May 17, 1917. He had been Rajah for nearly fifty years.

CHARLES VYNER de WINDT BROOKE, eldest surviving son of the Second Rajah, was born in London on September 26, 1874, and taken as an infant to Sarawak where he stayed for three years. At birth he was granted the title of Rajah Muda. He was educated in England and, on leaving Winchester, returned to Sarawak to tour the country and be introduced to the people before going to Magdalene College, Cambridge. He entered the Sarawak Service at the age of twenty-three, working in out-stations and taking part in expeditions. From 1904 he was in charge of the country when the Rajah was absent, and in 1916 the administration of Dayak Affairs was formally entrusted to him. He was in Sarawak when Sir Charles died and one week later he was proclaimed Rajah. The years that followed the First World War were prosperous, and revenues increased. Public Works were further developed and included the making of roads, much rebuilding and extension of the wireless service. The Officer Personnel was enlarged and the Legal System reformed. In 1923 the Rajah went up-country in his yacht to preside over a reconciliation ceremony that virtually ended the inter-racial troubles of the interior. By 1940 the occasional outbreaks of head-hunting had almost ceased, and the First Rajah's aims of peaceful cooperation among the tribes appeared to have been achieved. At the beginning of the Second World War the Rajah was able to make gifts amounting to nearly three million Sarawak dollars from his Treasury to Great Britain. In 1941 at the Centenary celebrations of the State, he proclaimed his intention of divesting himself of his absolute rule and establishing a Constitution. This accomplished, he was on leave in Australia when his country was engulfed by the Japanese War and Occupation in December 1941. Engaged in its life and death struggle with Germany the British Government was unable to protect Sarawak which, like the rest of Borneo, suffered great devastation. After the liberation in 1945, feeling that his resources were unequal to the task of restoring the country, the Rajah ceded Sarawak to Great Britain. In 1963, after eighteen years as a Crown Colony, its people joined with Malaya, Singapore and North Borneo in the Federation of Malaysia.

The Third Rajah was created G.C.M.G. in 1927, by King George V. He married the Hon. Sylvia Brett, younger daughter of the second Lord Esher, by whom he had three daughters. He died in London on May 9, 1963.

BERTRAM WILLES DAYRELL BROOKE, second surviving son of the Second Rajah, was born in Kuching, Sarawak, in 1876 and granted the title of Tuan Muda by his father. Like his brother he was taken to Sarawak during his youth in order that he might know and be known by the people. He was educated at Winchester and Trinity College, Cambridge and rowed for the University in 1900 and 1901. He was commissioned in the Royal Horse Artillery, and in 1905 he was appointed A.D.C. to the Governor of Queensland, Lord Chelmsford. At the beginning of the First World War he was posted with his Regiment to the Middle East and later, as Instructor to Shoeburyness. On the death of his father in 1917 he resigned from the Army at his brother's request, to help in the government of their country. Sir Charles had appointed him Heir Presumptive and ordained that no important changes in the State should be made without his consent, that he should administer the Government when the Rajah was absent, and that he should preside over the Sarawak Advisory Council in Westminster. These duties he observed with loyalty and deference to his brother, as Rajah, until the Japanese Occupation and, when administering the country in his brother's absence, arrived at decisions with the same solicitude and wisdom as his forebears. He married Gladys, daughter of Sir Walter Palmer, M.P., by whom he had three daughters and a son, Antoni, the last Rajah Muda. He died at Weybridge in Surrey on September 15, 1965.