

## Lionel Egremont Anscombe Shimla

From his marriage record we can see that Lionel was Assistant Hotel Manager at the Wild Flower Hotel in Mahasu. I believe this is what is now known as the Wildflower Hall Hotel which is an upmarket hotel and part of the Oberoi Hotel group. Although Mahasu does not appear on present day maps as a settlement there is a house called Mahasu House near the present Wildflower Hall Hotel. Also the original hotel was the first in a chain of hotels developed by the Hotz family and a luggage label from another hotel owned by the Hotz family gives its location as Mahasu.



The history of the hotel is described in the following article which is taken from the obituary of Robert Hotz grandson of the founder.

Robert was born on 13 February 1912 in Bombay. After schooling in Shimla and Nainital, he went on to take a degree in hotel management in Switzerland. It was during this time that Robert visited the Weissshorn where his uncle Hermann had died in a climbing accident. Robert was never awfully superstitious or religious, but a tinted picture of the Weissshorn always hung above the family breakfast table.

Robert then joined the family hotel business, managing some of the best-run hotels in India. Robert was the last of the Hotzes in India. His grandfather, Carl Robert Hotz, worked as a telegraphist on the Suez Canal project in 1864 before making his way to Bombay, where he met and married Florence Wilkinson. In 1908 he won the Calcutta Sweepstake, and with the proceeds Florence Hotz bought a property outside Shimla which became the first of the family hotels, Wildflower Hall.

This event, incidentally, gave rise to one of the many architectural inaccuracies that mar the authenticity of Shimla guidebooks, "that Lord Kitchener lived here and used it as his official residence"!

In fact, as Robert pointed out in a letter to The Tribune in 1993, the original property, known as Wildflower Cottage, was owned by Mr G.H.M. Batten and leased to Lord Kitchener for a number of years. It was only after Kitchener's departure from India that the property was bought by Florence Hotz who commissioned her architect son Roland to construct a 34-room hotel in 1911, naming it Wildflower Hall. She retained the lovely rose garden that Lord Kitchener had designed. Lord Kitchener did not live to see the hotel, and it was never the official residence of the Commander in Chief of the Army during British rule.

From this we can see that Lionel may have been one of the first staff members at the hotel. Although the hotel was presumably not as luxurious as the current one in this photo it was obviously a remarkable position.



It would seem that Lionel spent most of the time he was married to Doris in the Shimla area. As described in the following article the population of the area increased dramatically during the summer and it may well have been that Lionel spent the summer working in Shimla or Kausali and the rest of the year in Ambala or elsewhere on the plains.

The Simla hills were ceded to the British through a series of transactions with **the Raja of Keonthal**. In its early days, Simla, like its neighbouring hill station, Kasauli, was used as a sanatorium. The cold weather, it was believed, helped in recovering from long term illnesses. It also provided respite from the usually hot and humid conditions in the plains.

The British moved from Calcutta to their summer capital Simla, between April to October every year.

**The annual move to Simla** was not only undertaken by the Viceroy and his council but the entire infrastructure of colonial bureaucracy and their Armed forces. Some departments such as the Sanitary Commissioner, the Examiner of Accounts and the Military Works department established permanent offices in the hill station. Others, like the Accountant General, the Press Commissioner and many more travelled up each year with their officers, clerks, documents and luggage to set up a base near the Viceregal Lodge. The Simla Allowance Act ensured that the clerks belonging to these departments received a travel allowance to shift themselves and their families to Simla and return to Calcutta in due time. In addition, the Pay and Acting Allowances Code gave them an additional claim on two thirds of the allowance as 'personal allowance'.

Extract from <https://indianculture.gov.in/stories/simla-summer-capital>

RETURN OF BURIALS AT KASAUली										(Being an extract from the Register of Burials.)				
Serial No.	When Died.			Christian name.	Surname.	Age.	Quality, Trade or Profession, &c., &c.	When Buried.			Cause of death.	Person by whom Buried.		
	Year.	Month.	Day.					Year.	Month.	Day.		Name.	Designation.	Signature.
	1927	April	29 <sup>th</sup>	Doris Madeline	Anscombe	37 yrs. 11 mths.	Wife of Colonel Edward Anscombe, Manager, Grand Hotel, Kasauli.	1927	April	29 <sup>th</sup>	Voluntary Burial in Heart.	F. G. H. Tumbling	Chaplain Kasauli.	F. G. H. Tumbling

Certified that the above which contains one entry regard to No.          regarding          is a true copy of all the entries in the Register of Burials kept by me for the three months ending the 29th day of June 1927.

EXAMINED.  
*[Signature]*  
M. G. Clerk  
MAGISTRATE & JUDICIAL OFFICER

Dated the          day of          1927.

S. (Agency) 155.  
8172-12 9 of 11 P. D.M. 18-5-22-3,000.

*[Signature]*  
F. G. H. Tumbling  
Chaplain of Kasauli.

Madeline Doris Anscombe Burial



**ANSCOMBE** Madeline Doris of Parrys Hotel Ambala Cantonment India (wife of Lionel Egremont Anscombe) died 29 April 1927 at the British Family Hospital Kasauli India Administration (limited). **London** 8 November to Lionel Eric Ward architect and surveyor attorney of the said Lionel Egremont Anscombe. Effects £148 19s. 10d. in England.

Her burial record tells us that Lionel was, at that time, the Manager of the Grand Hotel in Kasauli and the fact that she was in the hospital there presumably means that the family were living in Kasauli at the time. However, her probate record gives her address as Parry's Hotel in Ambala Cantonment. It's possible that the two hotels were under the same ownership and Lionel moved between the two, but we don't have enough information to know exactly what the situation was.

This left Lionel with two young sons to look after. There is no information as to what happened to them in this period and we must assume that they weren't sent to school in England but stayed in India with their father.