



BRITAIN-NEPAL

SOCIETY

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The Newsletter in this Journal reveals another eventful year which included a memorable gathering in the House of Lords to say farewell to the Ambassador and Madame Bhuvan Singha shortly before their departure at the end of a long and successful tenure during which they were unwearying supporters of the Society and very hospitable friends to its members. As we go to press we welcome the new Ambassador and Madame Pandey and take this opportunity to record our appreciation of all the kindness shown to us during the intervening period by the First Secretary and Charge d'Affaires, Mr. Prabal S. J. B. Rana and his charming wife. During this period a notable event was the private visit of HM The Queen of Nepal and HM The Queen Mother. Your Committee had the privilege of being invited to meet them.

The Journal reflects the activities of the Society, especially for those members who are not able to attend the meetings in London, and continues to justify - may we say it without seeming to boast - our reputation as one of the most active Societies of its kind in the Capital.

We again thank our distinguished contributors for allowing us to publish the text of their talks to the Society at the Alpine Club and elsewhere or for providing us with articles based on them. It is always tempting to re-design the cover of a Journal but ours remains unchanged and in doing so meets, we believe, the wishes of our Members.

EDITOR

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The season opened with a well-attended talk and slide show at the Alpine Club on 13 October by Miss Nancy Noël whose fascinating subject was "Less Well Known Aspects of Nepal" (reproduced in this Journal). Miss Noël was followed, in November, by Mr. F. F. Steele on "A Visit to Tibet and the Northern Side of Everest", also at the Alpine Club. At the Royal Nepalese Embassy, on 28 March, Mr. P. S. J. B. Rana addressed the Society on a subject of great interest and importance, "The Evolution of Modern Medicine in Nepal" (text in this Journal) and on 27th April we came together at our usual venue again, the Alpine Club, to hear Miss Letta Osman Jones on "A Horticulturist's Experiences in Nepal". The substance of this successful talk appears as an article in The Journal and although much is lost from such a subject without the colour slides, we feel sure readers will find the article full of interest. We cannot thank our lecturers enough for giving up their time to come and talk to us. The slides are of course always a most attractive part of the programme and as we now have our own up-to-date projector, the preliminaries should be less troublesome. Our Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Celia Brown, is always very pleased to receive any suggestions for future talks.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sir George Bishop presided over the Annual General Meeting which was held at the Royal Nepalese Embassy, by the kind invitation of H.E. The Nepalese Ambassador, on 2 December 1982 and was well attended. The proceedings, which included a brisk and amusing address from the platform by Sir George, thanking all who had helped during the year, concluded as usual with an enjoyable social gathering at which drinks and an abundance of "small eats" were provided.

FAREWELL RECEPTION FOR H.E. THE NEPALESE AMBASSADOR AND MADAME SINGHA

The official farewell to His Excellency and Madame Bhuban Singha, CBE, took place at the House of Lords on Monday evening, 31 January. This arrangement was made possible through the kindness of Lord Hunt, a Vice President of our Society, who sponsored the occasion. We were limited to 120 persons and inevitably many who wished to attend were unable to do so. The Honorary Secretary faced the sad and difficult task of disappointing over 50 members and is grateful to them for understanding her difficulty.

Both the Ambassador and his wife had been founder members of the Society in 1960 and this fact contributed to the warm and friendly atmosphere in which the party was held. In his speech Sir George referred to this long-standing association and in thanking our honoured guests for their generous support of the Society through the years he hoped their interest in its affairs would continue in the future. Gifts were then presented and the Ambassador

spoke with feeling of his and his wife's involvement in the Society and their regard for its members. They were happy to think that this official farewell by the Society would be followed by an unofficial one at the Annual Nepali Supper Party in February.

ANNUAL NEPALI SUPPER

This popular event took place at New Zealand House, in the Haymarket, on 15 February, the guests of honour being Lord Maclehoze, late Governor of Hong Kong, and Lady Maclehoze. The Ambassador and Madame Bhuvan gave great pleasure by attending unofficially and an excellent turn out of members and guests included representatives of the Inter-Parliamentary Group and many "Yetis" who are always so welcome at the Society's functions. The Society's thanks are due to the Commanding Officer of the 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles for kindly providing the extremely smart and helpful Gurkha Orderlies and a Piper. The delicious food, which is properly a feature of this yearly gathering, was provided again by Mr. Manandhar. A full account of this event and of the speeches occurs elsewhere in this Journal.

FIRST FLIGHT OVER EVEREST (1933)

Also in this Journal will be found the story of the first flight over Everest and of the celebration held by the Society on Monday, 23 May 1983, at the Royal Society of Arts, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of that notable event.

THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

The Society's programme took many of our members to the Royal Geographical Society, on 2 June 1983, to hear Mr. Roy Lancaster and Mr. A. D. Schilling speak about "Plant Expoloration from Nepal to China". Mr. Schilling is a member of our Society and has kindly agreed to give us a talk on another topic during the forthcoming season.

THE SUMMER OUTING

There had been some doubt about the demand for this event especially as our friends, the Yetis, were reported to be planning their own outing for about the same time. However a large number, including 112 Nepali members and friends, took part in the outing which was to Thorpe Park on 23 July, and a full account by Lieutenant Colonel Mercer of all they saw and did there appears in this Journal.

YETI ASSOCIATION

The Yeti Association, whose members are Nepalese persons resident or studying in this country and many of whom are members of our Society, held their Annual General Meeting in January. The

Nepalese New Year was celebrated with a successful Dinner Party at which many Nepalese residents in this country and guests were present. Their Summer Outing was to Bushey Park in June and was greatly enjoyed by all who went.

MESSAGES

Birthdays messages were sent on behalf of the Society to His Majesty The King of Nepal and to our Patron, His Royal Highness Prince Gyanendra.

FUTURE EVENTS

The programme for the coming season will be sent to members in the usual way. Having already welcomed the new First Secretary, Mr. Prabal S. J. B. Rana and his wife, and enjoyed their support and hospitality during the long period when Mr. Rana was Charge d'Affaires, our Society has arranged for the new Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Ishwari Raj Pandey, and Madame Pandey, to be welcomed at a Reception to be held at the English Speaking Union, Charles Street, London W.1. on Wednesday, 19 October 1983. This will probably have taken place by the time members receive the Journal but they will have been advised in good time in the usual way.

H.E. Mr. Ishwari Raj Pandey, accompanied by Madame Pandey and one of their sons, arrived in London at the end of July. It seems unlikely that Madame Pandey will be able to attend the Reception on 19 October as she has not been well. We look forward to meeting her when she has fully recovered. Flowers were sent from the Society on her arrival. As many members will be aware, His Excellency was First Secretary at the Embassy in the late Sixties and early Seventies and we are assured he is looking forward to renewing contacts.

RETIREMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Brigadier Taggart intends to hand over the reign of his onerous office as Chairman of the Society at the next Annual General Meeting. Brigadier Taggart's enthusiasm and friendliness and his patient and efficient conduct of the Society's affairs since he took over in 1979 from Paul Broomhall, whose Vice Chairman he had been, are well known to us all and our thanks and appreciation are sure to be suitably recorded at the appropriate time. He is a most regular and popular attender of the Society's functions and we can but hope he will continue to be for a very long time to come.

SOCIETY TIE

The price of the Society Tie, made by a leading tie maker in London, is £4.20 including postage. Your Honorary Secretary holds a good stock of these.

STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPES

Once again I should like to mention that it would be a great help in keeping down costs if members sent a SAE when they write if their letter requires an answer or other action.

CORPORATE MEMBERS

A full list of firms and other organisations who are corporate members of the Society appears at the end of the Journal. Our thanks are due to them for their generous support of the Society. Membership enquiries should be addressed to:

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LESS WELL-KNOWN ASPECTS OF NEPAL

by Nancy Noël

[Based on a talk to the Society at the Alpine Club on 13
October 1982]

Following my slide show I was asked to write an article for the Journal. I will follow, roughly, the sequence of the talk, but with some additions and deletions.

For years I had dreamed of travelling to the Himalaya. At last, in 1971, I had the opportunity of taking part in one of the first treks for 'ordinary' people - following Chris Bonington's route up into the Annapurna Sanctuary. I thought that this would be the holiday of a lifetime, my one and only visit. But the inevitable happened. I fell in love with the country and the people. I have been back - to the Trisuli Valley and Langtang, and to the Base Camp of Everest. In the Kathmandu Valley and Pokhara I saw the things that most tourists see, and on my treks I saw the views and villages that trekkers see. But subsequently I have made two treks rather off the beaten track - in 1979, with a companion, to Kalinchowk and Bigu Gompa, and in 1981, on my own, with Sirdar and porters of course, to the area North of the Kathmandu/Pokhara road, Lumjung and Gorkha. I also rafted down the river to the Gaida Wild Life Park. On my visits I have seen some things of interest that other people may have missed.

In the Kathmandu Valley everyone sees the stupa of Swayambunath and Bodinath, but in my wanderings I found a small, entrancing one. It was in a courtyard, right off the road. Around it rice was being dried, in attractive patterns, and the hens were scratching an abundant living. Not far away were closed doors on which were painted the ever-seeing eyes, overlooking a fruit stall selling those delicious green-skinned oranges and small bananas. The temples were impressive, with their carving, their 'guardians' and prayer wheels, but interesting too were the small shrines found in the byways. On earlier visits I had, as a tourist, been whisked for a brief time to Pashu Patinath, but last time I wandered at leisure up and over the hill to the other temples, and in the village where the rice was being dried.

Besides the main market areas I found what I call 'the minaret market'. And the pottery market, with the interestingly fashioned wares piled so high - I wondered what happened if someone wanted the pot at the bottom. In an alley was a shop selling all manner of baskets and trays, and opposite I bought some blue, cotton trousers - not elegant, but they served me well during my trek. The bean shop sold a wonderful variety, and there was a most sophisticated sweet shop, with goodies set out on dishes on glass shelves, and Wrigley's chewing gum and plastic counters. Change I noticed in one of the main carpet shops. Ten years before the carpets held the eye; now they are challenged by a brilliant display of vivid cotton caps.

There have been many changes. Whether you see them as good or bad depends a lot on where you are standing! We, visitors, may deplore the loss of character in the modern streets and buildings. The variability of the electricity supply provides moments of hilarity for us, but is not so funny if you are living and working in the city, and work to improve the situation must be applauded. The pollution of the air in the Valley from the cement works is sad, but people rearing families prefer to do so in a concrete box rather than in an insanitary hovel. On my last visit I found the main areas very much cleaner than previously. I understand that a new system of rubbish collection has been provided, and saw some of the yellow carts in operation. In spite of all the changes though, Kathmandu still holds its magic.

There were big changes in Pokhara too. On my first visit there was unseasonal rain and the roads and lanes were quagmires. The rather superior sounding Himalayan Hotel proved a shock to my tourist eye. It was a dark, smokey, crowded house, covered with that black gunge that seems to grow in hot, damp places, and was full of dogs and children. Here it was I who provided the entertainment by producing a birthday cake, plus candles, to celebrate my 50th. Ten years later the building was still there, but was no longer an hotel. I had travelled from Kathmandu in the local bus and was feeling decidedly scruffy, so I was somewhat disconcerted to find that I was booked in at the beautiful New Crystal Hotel. I crept into the gracious hall, past the uniformed staff, and was delighted but embarrassed to see a face

I knew. It was Colonel Gregory. He greeted me most kindly and said those magic words, "Would you like a drink?" Yes, Pokhara has changed. There are now many hotels and far more people camping and living by the Phewa Tal. But "the mountains remain", and I was supremely lucky to see the full moon, sunrise and sunset, over them, and their reflexions in the lake.

Those of us who have trekked know how wonderful are the Sirdars and porters. The Sherpas were excellent, well trained and professional, but I felt I was more accepted, and got closer to the people when my Sirdar and porters were 'local', and I enjoyed meeting Tamangs and Chhetris, Gurungs and Limbus. Our Yak man on the Everest trek was a character. He refused to smile for the camera at first, but in due course his good humour won and his face split into a gorgeous grin, displaying his one tooth.

The villagers were invariably kind and tolerant. I enjoyed particularly the children and remember with pleasure playing singing games, blowing bubbles, a young exponent of Kung Fu, the solemn pair who presented me with rhododendrons. There was a contrast between the comparative prosperity of the Gurung villages on the Annapurna trek, and the dairy in the Langtang, with the poverty of some other areas where the people seemed to be scratching a very poor living from unrewarding soil. When off the beaten track we were the focus of much interested attention. This palled, especially when I was suffering, but I hope that I put on a creditable performance!

Moving from people to animals one is bound to consider the Abominable Snowman. Having seen the terrain in which there have been reported sightings, my initial scepticism has lessened. I photographed footprints in the snow near where Don Whillans saw his Yeti, but they were probably made by musk deer. Yak were rather alarming when encountered face to face on a narrow path, but were very useful on the Everest trek, carrying loads and even one of the group laid low by High Altitude Sickness.

Like Matthierson I have not been lucky enough to see the snow leopard, but I had the thrill of watching a family of what he describes as "the loveliest of all forest animals in the Himalaya" - the red panda. They are similar to racoons. The adults were a lustrous foxy red with bushy black tails but the youngsters were milky coffee colour and dark brown. On my last trip I had hoped to return to the forest to get some pictures but was not able to. But I did see the Himalayan Yellow-throated Marten, and heard their angry chattering and screeching.

Down in the Gaida Wildlife Park we had close, and at times scarey, encounters with rhino. Our hopes of seeing some of the big cats were not fulfilled. We saw only spore and droppings of tiger, leopard and jungle cats. I got a photo of an interesting grey, spotted animal but I suspect it was just a village doggie. We

were lucky to see both kinds of crocodile. I did not mind getting close to the fish-eating gharial, but as I was in a very unstable dug-out canoe I was not too keen on approaching the marsh mugger, although I was told they prefer cadavers. The bird life was extraordinarily rich. I remember the brilliant colours, the strange calls, and my surprise at the vast flock of cormorants that took to the air as we paddled down the river.

I had little success with photographing birds. The butterflies only kept still enough when they settled to drink, or eat my sandwich. There was a large red and black one that looked as if it was wearing baggy pyjamas. I watched a gathering of caterpillars lifting and lowering their heads in perfect unison as if under orders. In the jungle there was a termite mound, about five feet high. Spiders were interesting, or at least their webs were. Some were beautiful, spangled in mist. One bank was covered with a thick layer of web and in the centre of each patch was a dark tunnel leading into the bank where I imagined a large spider lurking, ready to pounce on his prey.

Botanically I am ignorant. I tend to say "pretty flower", and then be told what it is in Latin! I was surprised at the size to which the poinsettia grew, and delighted with their brilliant scarlet in my photographs. It was lovely to see our garden plants backed by the mountains, pierris, clematis montana, and especially the wonderful blue Himalayan poppy, and a tall pink dahalia. I am used to rhododendron, in the Dell at Kew and the Isabella Plantation in Richmond Park, but was not prepared for the height of the trees nor the number and variety. The orchids, too, were a delight. Interesting were a sinister looking arisaema, a scarlet and navy blue succulent, and a fruit of a climbing plant that went through the colour changes of tomatoes - trichosanthes bracteata I am told.

My most exciting find was in the Langtang. When climbing up a waterfall I came upon two flowers growing in a cave, in a mist of spray. Both were primula - one a white deutorona, the other, aureata. The botanists in the party saw that all was done correctly - a pressed specimen of the aureata is now in the British Museum, Department of Botany, and a plant grown by one of the party won an award at the R.H.S. Show the following year.

In the villages I was interested in the different types of house, and was lucky enough to be entertained in several. I was impressed by the 'built-in' furniture, and the beautiful pots and pans. Spinning and weaving I watched, and the making of mats and baskets, and chairs. In the fields there were many activities, ploughing and weeding, harvesting and threshing, rice and maize, barley and millet. A more unusual activity I watched was paper-making. This took place in the high pastures where family groups had taken their yak and other animals to graze. The bark was stripped from daphne bushes, and shredded

and soaked into a kind of mush. This was then scooped out and deftly spread on to muslin tautly stretched on a wooden frame held just below the surface of a pool. When the pulp had been spread evenly, the frames were lifted out, and placed around a huge fire, or at an angle to the sun. When dry, the sheets of paper were peeled off, piled into heavy bundles, and carried down to Kathmandu for sale. All members of the family, except the infants, seemed to be involved in some way with the work.

In the villages there was plenty of hard work, but fun and laughter too. I saw several play wheels, and in one camp a very high swing was erected, and young people came from far and wide to enjoy it, while their elders sat and talked, smoked and drank, around a huge fire. There were processions and the sound of drums and trumpets. One of these trumpets was most ingenious, it was curved and telescopic. A young boy played me 'Frere Jacques' on his fiddle, but to the village audience he played Nepali tunes.

At Hyangi there was the beautiful but highly schooled dancing and singing by the children at the Tibetan centre. We were entertained right royally at Ghandrung. Hundreds of people converged on the village that night. The master of ceremonies was an ex-Gurkha. Two of the young men danced in 'drag'; they wore long wigs, but kept on their husky watches. On my last trip villagers convivially gathered with the boys at our camps, and sang and danced and drank and smoked. But one night we had a more formal arrangement. Now I must admit that I am not a devotee of Nepali music. I find it repetitive and it seems to go on interminably. To any trekker who feels like me, I suggest that they arrange the price for the entertainment to last one hour, and then deduct one rupee per minute overplay, or ensure that their tents are at a distance from the scene of play so that they can retreat and let the fun continue.

In the country, too, I was aware of the power of religious belief. We passed many chorten and mani walls, some very simple wayside shrines and places of sacrifice. On the outskirts of villages were bells, prayer wheels turned by water power, and prayer flags fluttering in the breeze. We camped for two nights below Kalinchowk, on the summit of which was a place of pilgrimage, a most inaccessible spot. When we got up we found the crag in swirling mist, and the shrine and guardians and tridents buried in snow.

We came to Bigu Gompa at the end of a long and tiring day. The sight of it in the valley below was most cheering. Nuns welcomed us and our sleeping bags were put out on the terrace, beneath a wall painting of a fearsome looking god. In the courtyard was chained a huge Tibetan mastiff. He was set loose at night to guard against wild animals and unwelcome visitors.

We were presented with cudgels to defend ourselves against him if we needed to sally forth in the night - a daunting thought, especially to my companion who was suffering the pangs that afflict trekkers! At five in the morning we were wakened by the blowing of conch shells. Later we sat in cross-legged discomfort through a seemingly interminable service. There is a remarkable prayer wheel at Bigu. It is about ten feet high and heavy, but so well balanced that we could turn it.

I have told you of some of the more unusual things I have seen. On the Everest trek I climbed well above Thangboche and, looking down on it, I could see that it was set on a perfect example of a geographical saddle. By the time I got to Base Camp I had double vision. This unusual view is not to be recommended as the accompanying symptoms are highly unpleasant and long lasting.

Having sampled the heights of Nepal I got a different view when rafting down the river. There were idyllic times floating gently between high cliffs and forest clad banks. Once we stopped to watch people panning for gold - remarkably unsuccessfully it would appear. Interspersed were moments of high activity and fear when we were shooting the rapids and skirting whirlpools. Then we had to paddle furiously and saw nothing but dark water, foam and rocks as we were swamped by waves. It was only when, from the bank, we watched other rafts coming through the maelstrom we realised how exciting it was! That there was also an element of danger we were made aware when one of the rafts was overturned and everyone was thrown into the river, luckily with no really disastrous results. We all got soaked and the evenings were spent trying to dry out sleeping bags, clothes and tents around camp fires.

Eventually we broke out of the mountains into the lowlands of the Terai, and to the Gaida Wildlife Park. I have told you of the wild life we saw, and did not see, there. But I also remember looking across the brilliant yellow of the mustard fields, and the placid river to the peaks in the distance - the Far Pavilions.

I hope I go back to Nepal. But if I do not, I have many wonderful memories.

EVOLUTION OF MODERN MEDICINE IN NEPAL
by Mr. P. S. J. B. Rana, FRCS

[Talk given to the Society, with slides, at the Royal Nepalese Embassy, on 28 March 1983]

When Mrs. Brown asked me if I would talk to the Britain Nepal Society I was hard pressed to think of a topic. As a surgeon I was not quite sure what I have to say in medical terms that

would interest a group of eminent non medical people, but I did choose this subject on the evolution of Modern Medicine in Nepal because I feel that it would be interesting and because I thought I should up-date all the members on how Nepal has progressed so quickly in a short period of time under the leadership of our King.

Some people consider Nepal to be a lucky country and some not so. In the broadest possible sense I think Nepal has been both lucky and unlucky. We have been lucky in that we have not had to suffer the will and domination of the people of another country. Unlucky in the sense that because we have been isolated for such a long period of time we have fallen behind very badly in terms of development. One particular area is the area of health. I need not impress upon you that good health is something very important and precious to all of us. I do not think that anyone will contradict me when I say that medical science has advanced further in the last sixty years than in the whole history of mankind. For those of us who are lucky and live in this country medical services have advanced rapidly and we have been provided with one of the best in the whole world. There is no argument about that. But for people living in the rest of the world, particularly in the third world countries, medical services provided are still in their evolutionary stage. This leads me on to the topic which I must address myself to.

In the early fifties there was a change in the leadership in Nepal. King Tribhuvan then dissolved autocratic rule by the Rana family and dismissed the Rana Prime Minister. Shortly after this the king's untimely and early death was a sad loss to the Nation, for the King was a man of vision and his rule and leadership would have gone a long way to solving some of the problems that Nepal faces today.

King Mahendra inherited the throne of Nepal and his coronation was the first occasion when the doors of the country were open to the rest of the world. And it was from this point onwards that the evolution of modern medicine started. This is not to say that there were no doctors in Nepal; yes, there were a few, but only in Kathmandu. I know because in 1950 my brother and I had our tonsils out in our own home after an operation theatre was rigged up in one of the rooms.

But how was health care delivered prior to the fifties and to a certain extent even now?

I am not in a position to give you exact details but in the main cities like Kathmandu the people who practised medicine apart from the doctors are called Baidya, Kaviraj and Compounder and in the hills of Nepal Jhakri. Now who are the Baidya? These are a special class among the very versatile Newari people of the valley of Kathmandu.

Baidyas have for generations in some form or another helped those afflicted with illness and with evil spirits. Knowledge has been handed down from one generation to another in the diagnosis and treatment of those not only afflicted by disease but by evil spirits as well. In the majority of cases the Baidyas have a cure of some sort or another. Previously the ratio between the people who first went to a Baidya and those who went to a doctor was 90 to 10. Now it is more likely 60 to 40. It is the belief of many of the people who live in the valley that many illnesses are cured by consulting the Baidya. I am told that in the majority of cases the evil spirit that causes the illness is the result of jealousy and hatred among the people who live as neighbours in a particular locality. The Baidya acts by feeling the pulse and recommends a line of treatment which invariably involves offerings of various things and prayers to a particular God in a temple. Once the offerings and prayers are complete it is remarkable how many of these ill patients recover quickly from their illnesses. Of all the Baidyas the Ghat-Baidya is the most interesting. He is the chap who usually hangs about near a river edge close to temples where cremations take place.

In the Hindu religion when a person is dying it is important for him to die near a temple or a river bed, and when a person is dying and the end is imminent the patient has to be transferred from his home to a temple or riverside where he will be cremated. The end must come outside his own home and here the Ghat-Baidya comes into his own. He can predict, some say much more accurately than a doctor, to within a few minutes when a patient is actually going to die, just by feeling the pulse of a dying person, and this is remarkable.

Now what about the Kaviraj? These are mainly people who practice homeopathic medicine. They read books on herbal medicine which have been written many hundreds of years previously. They practice by using both the stethoscope and dispensing their own brand of pharmaceutical drugs. The essence of their treatment lies mainly in giving sound advice and prescribing herbal remedies that do take a long time to work, sometimes so long that it is doubtful whether a cure has not been a natural one. The compounder is essentially a paramedic; he starts working with the doctor and learns from the doctor how to give injections, take blood for investigations, and even carry out minor operations such as incision and drainage of an abscess. In essence he takes over some of the minor tasks of the doctor thereby releasing the hard pressed doctor to attend to more urgent matters. It is believed that the Baidya and the Kaviraj treat some people with a measure of success and people still tend to think along the lines that if you believe it works you do not need to know how, and I have nothing against this.

The Jhakri are the true witch doctors of Nepal. They are so called after the name of a female monster. This female monster is described as having no face, long finger nails, with its feet

pointing in the opposite direction. She is only visible to the chosen person who eventually becomes a Jhakri. The female monster chooses a particular person from a particular village and hypnotises the person. The person concerned can be of any age from a child to a mature adult but must be single. This chosen person then follows the instructions of the female monster and goes into the mountains for solitude, penance and learning. In the mountains when he is alone he does not prepare a cooked meal but must survive on wild plants, roots, herbs, insects and even raw meat which is actually the remains of a carcass of a dead animal. It is surprising but it is true that they also eat the carcass of a cow killed by a predator. During this time of solitude and penance in the hills he is taught by the female monster everything that he needs to know about the art of healing. This educational experience is not the same for all as far as the time is concerned. The clever ones need only spend six months, but the less clever ones need more time, perhaps up to a year. Once they return to the village they have completely forgotten their experience but they do remember all the instructions and teachings as a Dhami, alias a doctor. Of course the Jhakri has various remedies and treatments for various illnesses, but if you were to have a stomach ache and consulted him he would pray for you and do puja for you, meaning some sort of ritual, and tell you the ingredients required for a cure. He would advise you that you need two eggs, a live chicken, two rupees, rice, flowers and some vermilion powder. Then on the appointed day the Jhakri will visit you at home and in front of you start talking with his master in a language unknown to anyone but themselves alone. Having communicated with his mistress and having received instructions he will then kill the chicken with the chicken's head pointed in a particular direction and then take a little bit of the blood of the chicken and paint your forehead with it. He will then throw flowers, rice and vermilion powder at you and then put his mouth over your naked abdomen and bring out hairs, stones etc., from within the abdomen. After this the patient becomes better. So if you are planning a trek to the hills and you develop a stomach ailment, you know what to expect if you consult a Jhakri. This type of medicine is practised mainly among the hill tribes of Nepal; among the Rais, the Tamangs, the Limbus, the Gurung, the Lepcha, the Bhote and the Sherpa.

After the coronation of our late King Mahendra, scholarships of every description became available to the students of Nepal. Medical students were sent to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Russia, Poland, Israel, Czechoslovakia and many other countries to study medicine. Having qualified as doctors and obtained a medical degree these doctors returned to Nepal to be absorbed into the Nepalese National Health Service.

There are basically three grades of doctors in the National Health Service in Nepal. The junior most doctor is graded as a Medical Officer Class III. These doctors are fresh from

Medical School and they stay as Medical Officer Class III for a period of five years, after which they are promoted to Medical Officer Class II grade, where they work for another five years and finally become Medical Officer Class I, which is of Consultant Grade in Nepal.

Once he arrives in Nepal after qualifying as a doctor he is then immediately put into a rotation for 4-6 years. He spends two years in the Durgam areas, which are the most remote areas of Nepal, and for the next two years to the Terai Chetra area of Nepal which is less remote and finally two years in the Kathmandu valley which means service in a hospital in Kathmandu. Of course this type of rotation is very important from the Government point of view because as human nature would have it, most junior doctors are very reluctant to work in the Durgam areas and in the Terai Chetra areas simply because the facilities are not as good as the ones in the Valley and because there is no supervision over their work.

Regarding the future developments of hospitals in Nepal, Nepal is to have District Hospitals, Zonal Hospitals and Development area Hospitals. Nepal is basically divided into 14 zones. And each zone is divided into districts. Each district hospital is to have 15 beds and be manned by three doctors. Two Class III Medical Officers and one Class II Medical Officer who is in charge of the hospital.

The nursing staff will consist of three staff nurses and three auxiliary nurses and only two administrators. (Here I think His Majesty's Government is absolutely spot on. I need not remind you that in this country we have our fair share of administrators in the Health Service and if you were to ask one administrator how many of them there are, the administrator suddenly develops a voluntary numerical dyslexia, of course to his own advantage.) Each district hospital is also manned by ten ward coolies who at times are frightfully powerful.

Each zone is to have a zonal hospital of approximately 50 beds and patients from district general hospitals can be referred to the larger zonal hospitals. Again, Nepal is divided into four development areas - the far western region, the western region, the central region and the eastern region. Each development area is to have a 200-bedded hospital which will be mainly run by doctors in the main-line specialities such as General Medicine, General Surgery, Gynaecology and Obstetrics, Orthopaedic and Accident Surgery, Paediatrics, etc. Under the leadership of His Majesty King Birendra progress is being made in every aspect - in economy, in government, in cultural life, in education, in transportation and in health and social services. Ninety-six per cent of the people live in rural areas and only one per cent of the people of Nepal were literate prior to 1951. Now over twenty per cent of the people are literate. Success has been

achieved in carrying out preventive health care measures. Nepal is now a smallpox free area, malaria has been eradicated, although tuberculosis is still rife, but mercifully the incidence is falling rapidly. Family planning programmes are being pursued vigorously with some measure of success.

In the past twenty years with the help of many nations the public health programmes of Nepal have to a certain degree improved the quality and longevity of the Nepalese people. The crude death rate has been reduced from 22.8% per thousand in 1972 to 19.8% per thousand in 1979. Statistics have shown that there has been a great reduction in the infant mortality rate. The infant mortality rate has dropped from 172.2 to 159.07 per thousand live births during the same period of time. The life expectancy has also risen from 42.5 years in 1972 to 45 years in 1979. According to these statistics my own life expectancy has risen by 6 to 8 years. Infant mortality rate is a measure of a nation's development. In the third world countries the rate is still unacceptably high while in the western countries and Japan the rates are pretty low.

These statistics can only improve with time. It is interesting to note that in the first decade of the 1900's the infant mortality rate in the United Kingdom was the same as we have in Nepal today. Since that time there have been a lot of changes in the United Kingdom because of the change in the pattern of social and economic development. Again in this country in the first decade of the 1900's one in twenty of the population was over the age of 65, compared with approximately one in eight at the present time. One woman in every 200 who experienced childbirth was likely to die in contrast to the present position where only one maternal death in 4000 deliveries.

In this country in the first decade of the 1900's the major hazards to health were associated with infectious diseases. The major hazards still exist even now in Nepal. Today in the United Kingdom the major hazard to health besides accidental injuries are those that are experienced by the unborn foetus, the middle aged man and the elderly. In Nepal even now the major hazards spare no age group and are very real. Today in Nepal the primary medical care programmes have already been established and now need to be consolidated. In every country the provisions for primary medical care present great difficulties and unsolved problems. The geography of the country alone renders any universal solution impractical. In some countries primary care is dispensed from hospitals and in others from separate specialist poly clinics. In the United States many patients receive primary medical care from individual specialists. In Britain such a service is furnished largely by General Practitioners to a defined population. In Nepal primary medical care is dispensed from hospitals and primary health centres.

Now what about the doctors who come to this country for post-graduate studies? Having worked in Nepal for a number of years they apply for and are granted leave to come here to obtain a higher qualification. They come here and try to obtain the Membership of the Royal College of Physicians or the Fellowship of one of the Royal colleges of Surgeons. Many of them fail to obtain these qualifications and become very depressed and disappointed because they have not been told that to obtain these qualifications is a very difficult task. Only 40% of candidates pass the Membership Examination and only 20% pass their Fellowship Examinations. Many doctors from India, Pakistan and Nepal are afraid to go back home without a higher qualification. I think we, the Members of the Britain-Nepal Society, could help these doctors, specially the new-comers, by advising them and making ourselves available for consultation and I am sure this will go a long way in helping them.

And finally it is my belief that every country must find its own pace of development and this is of vital importance. It must not allow itself to be hurried on. The East must not be hurried on. This reminds me of Rudyard Kipling's epitaph for a fellow countryman: "Here lies buried a fool who tried to hurry the East". Nepal has a very long way to go in developing its own health care system and I am convinced that under the leadership of His Majesty King Birendra Nepal will succeed in bringing good health and prosperity to its people.

A HORTICULTURIST'S EXPERIENCES IN NEPAL

by Letta Osman Jones

[Based on a talk given to the Society at the Alpine Club on 27 April 1983]

As a VSO volunteer at the Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science in Chitwan District for two and a half years between 1979 and 1981, I took a variety of photographs to illustrate a range of plants I came across in my work. I divided my slides into four sections for this talk. Firstly, some trying to illustrate images and contrasts in the world of plants there, and then slides showing plants in everyday life. Next some pictures concerned with my own work as a horticultural instructor and finally some of my favourite plants.

Reminding members that some of our most popular garden plants are native to Nepal, I illustrated this with pictures of the

famous rhododendron and magnolia. Following this were pictures of the University campus garden contrasting with the lush farmland in Lamjung, showing different crops being grown.

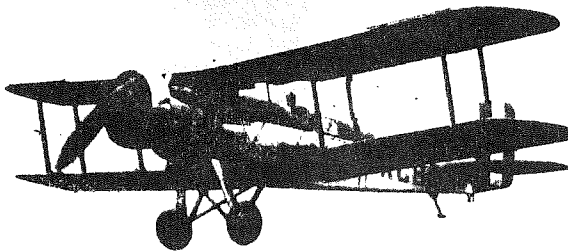
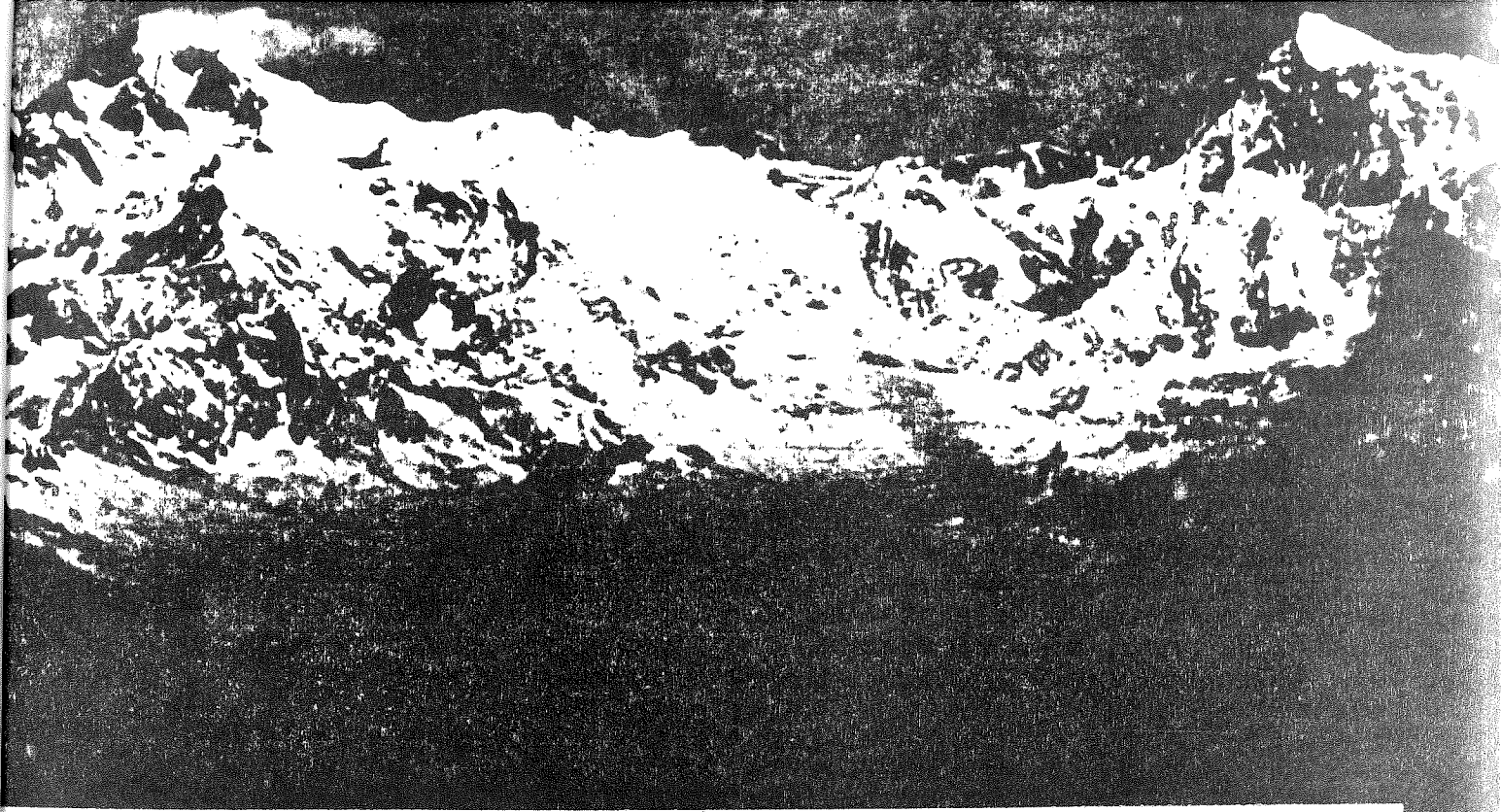
By way of introducing everyday plants, a teacher's lunch table of 'dhal-bhat' was shown followed by some girls collecting firewood from the Daman district on the Birjung-Kathmandu road. Viewing the intricate pattern of the paddy fields of the Kathmandu valley from the border road illustrated the different stages of rice growing.

At the huge 'mela', or February fair in Narainghat, stalls are brightly colourful with red 'tika' powder made from a powdered seed of the Sindure bush. The bright red seeds appear in prickly pods by March and April ready for harvest. Two teachers' wives from our Lamjung campus reminded us of the use of 'tika' in everyday life. At a Terai bazaar in the East the tobacco sellers were shown selling their ware.

Part of my work involved visiting other farms, and the shade house at the HMG Surlei Horticulture farm inspired me to establish a nursery house at Rampur. By growing a convolvulus closely over a frame, shade has been provided for young seedlings and cuttings. At Rampur, we used a traditional thatched house for shade to protect plants. This house became a valuable resource, full of teaching materials for use with students and visiting farmers. Our tapioca or Cassava trials at Rampur were started with cuttings brought from South India by one of our campus teachers. At the Surlei farm, the trials seeking methods of preventing growth of the parasitic plant Orybanche on wheat were in progress during my visit. An illustration showed the bulbous parasite attached to the weakened wheat seedling. Seed production was also important, and black spinach was seen in flower on a plot used to collect vegetable seeds.

Indicating how I spent some of my leisure time, I showed slides of elephants and rhinoceros at Chitwan park, where I often went elephant riding in the jungle, enjoying the lush plant growth around.

Amongst my favourite plants which grew profusely in my own garden in Rampur were the fragrant Frangipani (Plumeria spp), the climbing white Moonflower (Ipomoea alba) opening at night to ensure moth pollination, and heavily laden Banana trees. The colourful pink Bourgainvillea, so often seen adorning houses, and the majestic coconut palm, are also among my favourite plants, with which I concluded my short illustrated talk.



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Photos: The Times

FLIGHT OVER EVEREST

by Mayura Brown

On May 23 the Society held a special meeting at the Royal Society of Arts to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first aerial conquest of Everest. A large number of members and guests gathered for a sherry before going upstairs to the beautifully appointed Lecture Theatre to watch a film of the Expedition from its preparation to its conclusion.

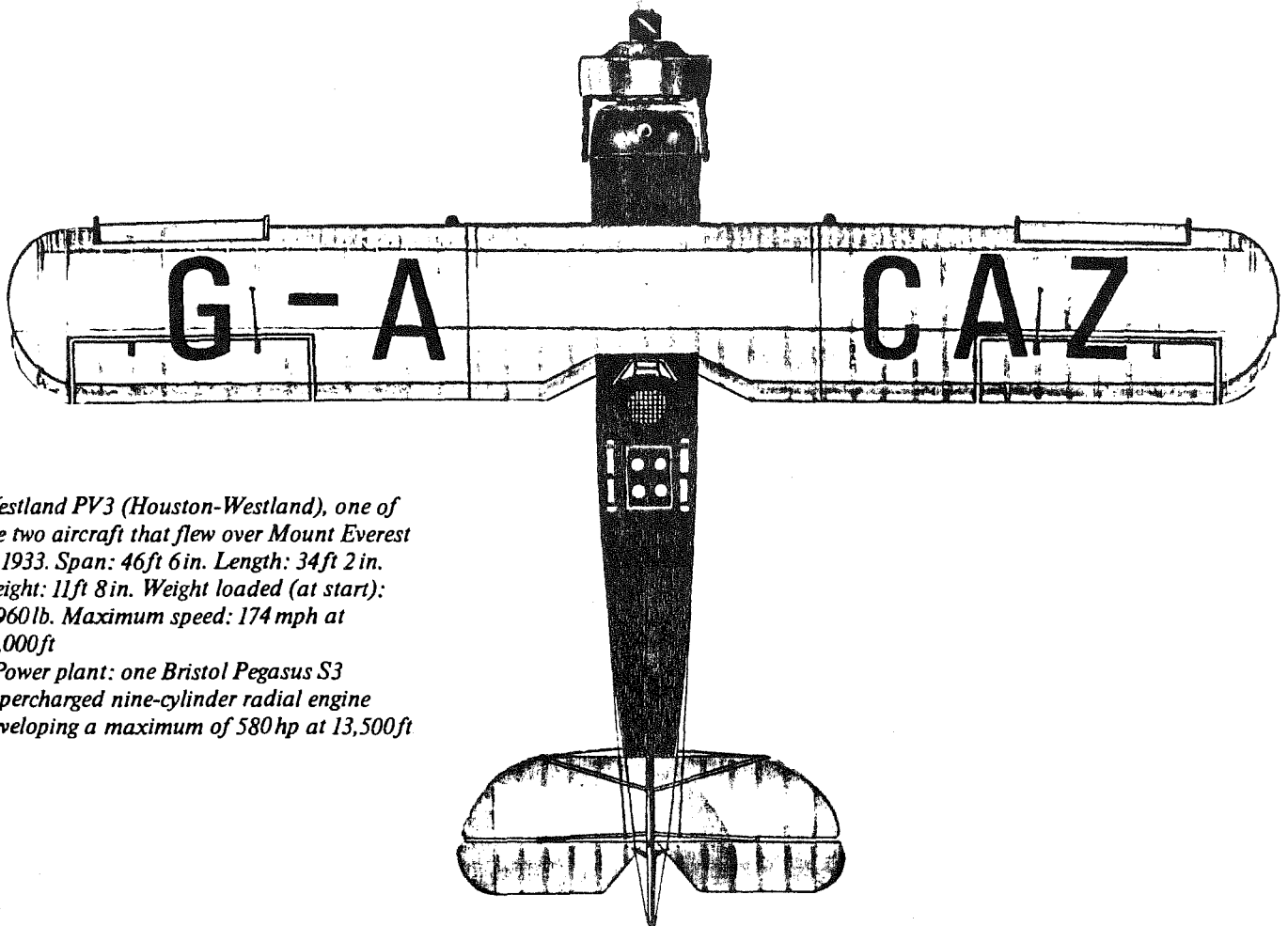
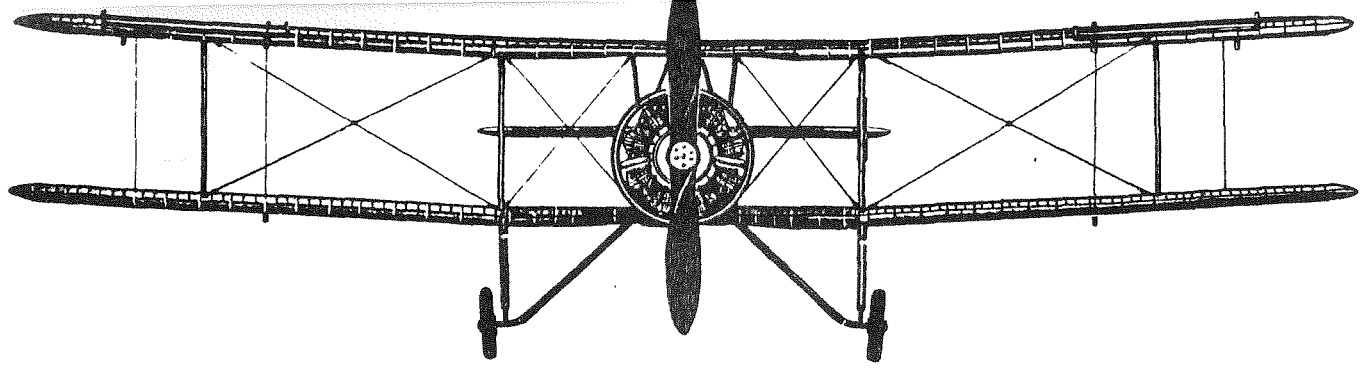
All expenses for the Everest Expedition were donated by that great patriot, Lady Houston. She was prepared once more to finance a project to prove the outstanding ability of British airmen and British machines as she had done for Britain to win the Schneider Trophy. The senior pilot was to be Squadron-Leader the Marquis of Clydesdale, the second pilot, Flight-Lieutenant David MacIntyre. The planes chosen were the Westland PV3 (later called the Westland-Houston) and a Westland Wallace.

While work began to install the stronger Pegasus engines in the aircraft, clothing was prepared for the high altitude flight (electrically heated suits) and the pilots and photographers had to get used to their clumsy oxygen masks and other apparatus. In the meantime, Colonel Etherton, the Secretary of the Expedition, had set out for Kathmandu to confirm permission from Maharaja Joodha for the planes to cross Nepalese air-space and fly over Everest. (It is a pity there is no film record of the Colonel's stay in Nepal as a Military Review was being held at the time. During one of the parades, an English lady remarked to me: "My dear, all these handsome young men in splendid military uniforms. I feel I'm in Ruritania!" In the marquee near me sat Mr. Bonnett, one of the Expedition's photographers).

When the planes had been crated and shipped out to India with the other equipment, some members of the Expedition travelled out by sea. Others, including the pilots, flew out in three small "Moths". After the Westlands were re-assembled at the RAF depot in Karachi, the final preparations for the flight began when they reached the Lalbalu Aerodrome in Purnea. Now they had to wait on the weather, and regular reports were received by telegram from the Indian Meteorological Office in Calcutta.

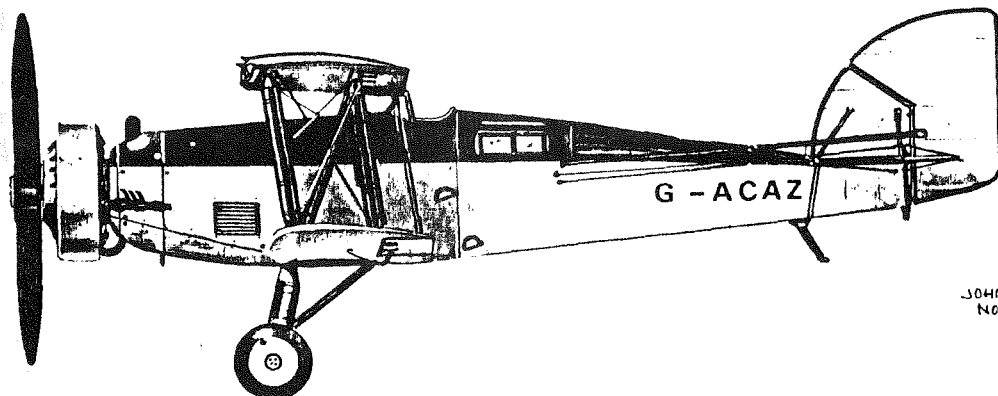
From Purnea to Everest in a direct line, passing over Dhankuta, is just over 160 miles. The planes had to carry enough fuel to reach their objective, fly over it, and return to Lalbalu. There were no airstrips in Nepal, and no chance of re-fuelling. Colonel Stewart Blacker, who had the original idea for the flight, acted as navigator and photographer to Clydesdale, and Bonnett was MacIntyre's photographer who filmed Clydesdale flying over Everest. The aerial views of the mountains were spectacular, but as we sat in our comfortable chairs in the Lecture Theatre and saw those great peaks looming up on the screen with their knife-edged ridges, we could not help our hearts pounding with fear for the frail craft at the mercy of those mountain winds with their downdrafts and eddies. The Pegasus engine could manage 140 miles per hour. Few people nowadays can imagine the courage and skill required to take a small plane with an open cockpit and try to fly over that formidable mountain and her sisters. But the two planes survived the buffeting and Everest was conquered on April 3rd 1933. The only casualty was poor Bonnett who fractured his oxygen feed-pipe as he stepped on it while re-loading his camera. He bound his handkerchief around the fracture but became unconscious, and only regained consciousness when the plane had retreated from the mountains and was flying at 8,000 feet. It could have been a fatal tragedy. However, it was a relief to the audience to see the planes arrive back safely to Lalbalu with the victorious crews. Everyone present was moved tremendously by what they had seen and there was prolonged applause at the finish of the film.

We returned downstairs where an excellent spread of food and wine awaited us to round off an unforgettable evening. Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, MP, who was unable to attend because of the



Westland PV3 (Houston-Westland), one of the two aircraft that flew over Mount Everest in 1933. Span: 46ft 6in. Length: 34ft 2in. Height: 11ft 8in. Weight loaded (at start): 4,960lb. Maximum speed: 174 mph at 15,000ft

Power plant: one Bristol Pegasus S3 supercharged nine-cylinder radial engine developing a maximum of 580 hp at 13,500ft



JOHN W. WOOD
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impending General Election, sent us good wishes from Edinburgh for the success of the meeting. Two young ladies from Hatchards of Piccadilly were taking orders for his book, "Roof of the World". (See Review in this Journal.)

Our grateful thanks go to Mr. Decominck, Keeper of the film archives of British Aerospace, for his kindness, not only for loaning us this unique record of a British triumph, but also for coming (with Mrs. Decominck) and showing us the film, adding a shot of that most elegant of creations, the Concorde, which impressed on his audience the enormous advance British aviation has made in 50 years. Many thanks are due to Dr. W. Brown, the husband of our hard-working Honorary Secretary, who found Mr. Decominck for us, and also enabled the Society to hold this event at the Royal Society of Arts.

NEPALI SUPPER IN NEW ZEALAND HOUSE

by Susan Elizabeth Roberts

People arrived before time, eager not to miss out at this grand opportunity to mingle freely with so many whose common interest is Nepal. The cacophony of chatter during the pre-supper drinks heralded the enthusiasm of the Society's members and guests for such a gathering. A meal had been prepared and cooked for us by Mr. Manandhar's able and cheery-faced team. Drinks were served to us by gentle mannered Gurkhas, the cheery countenance of each stood out against his dark green uniform. Each Gurkha present had been serving in the South Atlantic Falklands conflict. One of the evening's highlights, to me anyway, was the Gurkha piper. A lone Gurkha, whose solitary figure stood out as he wandered slowly between the supper tables, tartan clad, playing that most unique wind instrument - the bagpipes; the man a Nepalese, which his distinguished features so clearly displayed, the bagpipes of Scotland, New Zealand House and we present, forming a rich and interesting link.

Sir George Bishop proposed the loyal toasts, to Her Majesty The Queen of England and to His Majesty The King of Nepal. The Members of Parliament who had been present had to depart immediately after supper to return to Parliament to vote.

Sir George read a message from the Nepal-Britain Society: "The Nepal-Britain Society were delighted to receive greetings from their sister society in London and to have news of the Britain-Nepal Society activities. The newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of HM Government of Nepal was Guest of Honour at

the Nepal-Britain Society's Annual Dinner in November. In his speech, General Padmah Bah Katri spoke warmly of Nepal's relations with Britain, in his reply the British Ambassador referred to the Minister's personal associations with the United Kingdom. After two consecutive years as President of the Nepal-Britain Society, Colonel U. B. Basniat handed over his office to Mr. Murari S. J. B. Rana. The Society wished the Britain-Nepal Society every success in their forthcoming year and at their Annual General Dinner." Signed Murari S. J. B. Rana. After which Sir George asked we thank our sister society very much for that message.

Sir George expressed delight at seeing so many present at the supper, despite near arctic weather and the dramatic water situation. There were over 200 members and guests present, being a tribute to all members of the Society. Sir George expressed his appreciation to the Chairman, Honorary Secretary and all members of the Committee for the work they undertake to make these functions such a success.

Sir George then referred to the splendid reception two weeks ago, at the House of Lords, to bid a formal farewell to His Excellency the Ambassador and Madame Singha. Sadly 70 people had to be disappointed because the authorities in the House of Lords restricted attendance to only 120 people. He went on: "It was a formal goodbye to His Excellency, but we are so glad that he has found time, despite all the commitments in his last few days in London before leaving to return to Kathmandu, to join us tonight. We are very grateful to have this opportunity to say how much all of us in the Britain-Nepal Society, Your Excellency, are indebted to you and your wife, for the interest in our work, for the sustained support you have given us on every occasion, and for the most generous hospitality we have all enjoyed from you in your beautiful Embassy in the years you have served in this country. The Society has never been so strong, our membership is at the highest level, and Madame Singha, as one who played such a leading part in forming the Society, we feel, you must be proud of the strength of the infant you helped to bring into the world, thank you so much. When the Ambassador returns to his home country, he must look back with pride on the achievements of his mission in London. Never has the relationship between our two governments and two people been as close as it is today."

Sir George thanked the High Commissioner for New Zealand for allowing us once again to return to what we felt to be our rightful home for dinner on these occasions. It was our privilege, because of the special relationship between New Zealand and Nepal, to have our dinners there. "The two countries with mountains, two small countries: the relationships developed with the Ed Hillary relationship."

Sir George welcomed the evening's guests, the principal guests being Lord and Lady MacLehose. Sir George referred to Lady MacLehose's knowledge of Nepal as she had been walking in Nepal on several occasions. "With Nepal", Sir George stated, "Hong Kong has the distinction of being the next door neighbour of China, and indeed being Governor and Commander in Chief in Hong Kong, Lord MacLehose had the great good fortune to have such a large proportion of his forces from the Brigade of Gurkhas: nothing could give a Commander in Chief more confidence. In his varied Foreign Office career, beginning in China, then Prague, Vietnam, Denmark and a two year sojourn in New Zealand, it will be the record you establish as a pro consul in Hong Kong that will be the outstanding success of your career. Few leaders of a country have ever achieved, in post war years, the economic growth that Lord MacLehose had achieved in Hong Kong. In a country with few natural resources, so much depended on the leadership and judgement of the Governor, and of course, Lord MacLehose's smooth and remarkable relationship with the Government of China."

Lord MacLehose responded by thanking all for inviting him and his wife to such a pleasant dinner, and said that for them it was a sentimental occasion, because 18 or 19 years ago they did see a lot of the Nepalese community in London, when he was Head of the Far East Department. He had not visited Nepal but, "It is not unique for a head of department not to visit the country he represents". Both Lord MacLehose and his wife remembered the hospitality and happy gatherings at Kensington Palace Gardens, sometimes honoured by the presence of His Majesty King Birendra who was then a student at Eton and later a cadet at Sandhurst.

Lord MacLehose continued: "As Principal Private Secretary at the Foreign Office, it was a stimulating period and left little time for social life. Then when at the Embassy in Vietnam in 1968 there was a very good connection with Nepal, as the Embassy had a guard of retired members of the Brigade of Gurkhas. In the excitement and anxiety of those days it was such a comfort to have such a reliable and totally encouraging group with us. After Denmark, ten and a half years in Hong Kong, and there the contact with Nepal was quickly resumed through the presence of the Headquarters of the Brigade of Gurkhas. We often met them, formally in barracks or informally on patrol. They worked so well with the Chinese population; they were indeed an enormous comfort."

Referring to Lady MacLehose's many visits to Nepal to trek, "Trek, is I think", said Lord MacLehose, "the operative word. This I understand is walking, and sleeping when you are not walking. If you walk when not sleeping it is trekking!" The greatest kindness, official and unofficial was given to his wife, he said,

from the Nepalese Head of Protocol department who had arranged some of his wife's excursions. "He is here tonight."

Lord MacLehose stated: "All the more pleasure we are your guests here tonight, and to discover that the work of the Society is being done so well and that some of the faces we knew 19 years ago are still there and that the spirit of the community has not changed. In recent years, it is a fact, that the focus of British Government interest, in addition to the Commonwealth, has tended to be on Europe and the EEC, and North America and the Atlantic Treaty, and there is all too great a danger that these preoccupations could result in old links, and particularly links with countries in Asia, links of great value, being allowed to rust and decay. So the work of societies such as this, which keep alive and encourage in England interest in Asian countries, is of very great value, and this particularly applies to countries with historical connections with the United Kingdom. I think the connection between Nepal and the United Kingdom has been a particularly happy one, and I congratulate the Society on the way you take pleasure and give so much pleasure to others in keeping this connection so very much alive. In conclusion, I would like to thank you for your hospitality and to drink a toast to the future of the Society."

His Excellency the Nepalese Ambassador responded: "The kind words which have been spoken about us overwhelm me, and surely, that goes for my wife also." His Excellency continued: "If we had stuck to our original schedule, we would have missed this, our sixth supper since our arrival in 1977. Returning shortly to Nepal we will be taking remembrances and sweet memories of our association with people individually and this Society generally. My wife and I wish this Society to flourish and prosper and continue to do the good work to strengthen the friendly relation that has existed between our two countries and people."

His Excellency thanked Lord MacLehose for speaking so warmly about the relation between the two countries and the people of Nepal and the United Kingdom. "It seems that we both missed each other by a few years, when he was in charge of the Asian Desk at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He took over after I left this country and we never met until tonight. As Lord MacLehose said in his speech, he has gone through the files but he has never visited the country. I hope he will find an opportunity of visiting Nepal; if he does so we will personally be there to welcome him. I hope your visit will be sooner than later."

His Excellency continued: "Friends, and members of Britain-Nepal Society, we are finally taking leave of you, personally tonight and officially on 25th February. We don't say its a goodbye, its just 'au revoir'. We'll meet you either, some of you, in

the course of your travels in Kathmandu, or in London again. We have no doubt you will keep on the good work you have been doing to foster still better relations between the two countries of Nepal and the United Kingdom. Thank you very much."

Over the years, we have wandered in and out of New Zealand House for our Annual Suppers, but what of New Zealand House and its treasures? New Zealand House in the Haymarket was opened by H.M. The Queen on 9th May 1963. The New Zealand High Commission was previously situated in the Strand. The New Zealand Government decided to enhance the building by commissioning works of art by three New Zealand artists: Mr. John Drawbridge whose mural is in the Reception Hall, Mr. John Hutton, a self-taught artist whose work is manifest in the two glass panels, and Mr. Inia Te Wiata. Te Wiata, in his youth, had been sent by his tribe, the Ngati Raukawa, to the Tainui School of Carving to study the ancient Maori craft. When he came to Europe to further his musical career, he was shown over New Zealand House while it was being constructed. Te Wiata said to the Architect, Sir Robert Matthew, "You want a Pouihi." The Architect asking what that was was told, "It is the representation of Maori works of art on a kind of totem pole." So it was that Te Wiata carved the Pouihi from one giant totara tree, felled in New Zealand. He started carving in 1964 working in the basement area of New Zealand House. The duration of the work on the Pouihi was extremely long, due to the fact that Te Wiata could only work at periods between his singing engagements. Sadly, this great artist died in 1971 just prior to the completion of the last part. However, two sons of Te Wiata worked under the guidance of the man who had taught Inia Te Wiata and completed the last part. The first of the five enormous carved logs is that depicting Kupe, the legendary discoverer of New Zealand, and those who looked at him on entering New Zealand House that evening would have noticed him facing them in the traditional stance of welcome.

An evening where East and West were harmoniously and happily one! To respect and appreciate the national identities and characteristics of other lands and their people, without destroying, but rather cherishing their variations, can only serve to widen man's appreciation and understanding of the world and its inhabitants generally, and thus enrich each individual. It is these feelings, that I personally, was left with at the end of the Britain-Nepal Society Annual Supper.

SUMMER OUTING

by Lieutenant Colonel A. E. E. Mercer, OBE, MC

The Summer Outing for 1983 took place on Saturday, 28th July, the destination being Thorpe Park, the huge leisure centre near Chertsey, reached by Exit 2 from the M3. As usual, the rendez-

vous was the Royal Nepalese Embassy, where two 53-seater coaches were ready in good time. Eventually our muster was complete and some 112 Nepali family members and Yetis (as well as several little children too small to be counted) were ready to start despite the overcast sky and prospect of rain, which might have deterred less hardy people. So the two coaches and two cars set off for Thorpe Park, which was terra incognita to almost all of us.

After a journey of something over an hour, we arrived at the enormous car and coach park in front of the impressive entrance to Thorpe Park and, after completion of the procedures for gaining admittance for such a large group on a party-ticket, we were inside the correctly-described leisure-centre! Adequate supplies of beer and soft drinks, and the exciting-looking containers of Nepali curry and side-dishes, provided by Mr. Manandhar, were unloaded from the coaches and carried to the covered picnic area, which consisted of a giant marquee. Preparations for lunch were started.

Thorpe Park contains four very large lakes, originally man-made gravel pits. These pits and their surroundings have been most attractively rehabilitated and landscaped, the available land being developed most ingeniously to provide as many facilities as possible without overcrowding any particular area. Many of the activities are within easy walking distance of each other, and some are reached by comfortable water-bus or by "land-train", a tractor towing passenger trailers. The leisure activities that may be enjoyed within the park are too numerous to list in full, but they include a roller skating rink, a board sailing school, pedalos and rowing boats, children's rides and "funhouse", horse-drawn char-a-banc, 180° "dome" cinema, crazy golf, water-ski school and ski simulator, "bumper" boats, go-kart track, radio-controlled boats and tanks, jet skis, cable water ski tow, nature trail, a farm incorporating a Shire horse centre, and a variety of static features such as Viking long ship, Roman galley and port, historic aircraft exhibit, model world, Japanese garden, a replica of Treasure Island complete with pirates, and even trout fishing! All these activities and facilities, and others besides, may be enjoyed without any further payment, except where actual instruction is involved.

There are of course a wide variety of restaurants, cafes and shops, a complete shopping arcade, a craft centre and a farm cafeteria and shop. Enough, in fact, to keep even the most blase adult or facetious child occupied for a whole day. The slogan of the park is "If you can do everything in one day then you've missed something!" I think all who went on this outing would agree.

However, most of our party deferred investigation of these delights until they had consumed the magnificent and delicious curry lunch, followed by ice-cream. From then on, it was

impossible to keep track of our members who dispersed in small groups throughout the vast complex of leisure facilities and proceeded to enjoy themselves according to their various preferences. Most, I think, managed to make their way to Thorpe Farm, where a variety of farm animals, cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, ponies, were to be seen housed or loose in paddocks, under ideal conditions. The farm is run commercially, despite its being such an attraction for visitors.

A very large number of calves were on view, none in the narrow crates which animal welfare lovers rightly find so objectionable, but on the contrary, in large loose-boxes well-bedded with straw. Several newly-calved cows still had their calves with them. Particular interest was shown in the several litters of very young piglets of several different breeds. The Shire horses were out earning their keep by drawing loads of visitors elsewhere in the Park. Their comfortable stable was, however, on view, together with spare sets of harness and various agricultural implements. By this time, I should add, the weather had cleared up and was ideal for sightseeing or for more energetic activities. A popular indoor feature was the 180° Dome cinema in which hair-raising films of death-defying car-chases and roller-coaster rides were shown in such a way as to make the audience feel they were actually inside the moving vehicle, so much so that the solid ground seemed to be moving beneath our feet, causing one to lean against the (imaginary) 'motion'.

In short, a very enjoyable time was had by everyone, and although it is very unlikely that any individual was able to sample all or even nearly all the wonders of Thorpe Park, everyone will have carried away his or her memories of a very special day.

Indeed, so fascinated were some of the younger Yetis by what they were doing that they forgot that five o'clock was the departure time for the coaches, and a search party under the two Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers had to be dispatched to locate and recover the absentees. All was well however, the mission was a success, and both coaches left with their respective full quotas of tired and happy passengers.

There were general expressions of appreciation of the efforts of our Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Brown, in arranging the outing, and of Mr. and Mrs. Manandhar and their family for providing and serving the sumptuous curry lunch.

WELSH FLAG AROUND ANNAPURNA

by Susan Elizabeth Roberts

Intrigue, fascination! "What is it?" "I like it, I want it" - thus spake the Sherpas of the little Welsh flag.

Sanduk, a little (although all Sherpas are of small build and stature) Sherpa from Namche, near Everest, asked, "What is it?" He had noticed a stick poking out of my bag. When the flag was revealed his eyes twinkled, and moments later the flag was flying in the cool mountain air, as smiling faced Sanduk proudly carried it affixed to his backpack. He seemed captivated by the dragon on the flag. Could it be it reminded him of Tibet, where he was born and lived until his mid-teens (for the dragon features in Tibetan culture)?

Another Sherpa, Lhakpa Tshering, from Kunde (also in the Everest region of Nepal) having once spied the Draig Goch decided he wanted it! Lhakpa found a 4 ft long bamboo stick and carefully affixed the flag to the top. Whilst preparing the stick for the flag, the Draig Goch was flying from his "Everest '82" cap. Lhakpa, an extremely tough and energetic Sherpa in his late 20's, had earlier in the year accompanied a Canadian Expedition to Everest, and he was one of the privileged few selected to make the ascent to the summit of Sagarmatha (in Nepali) or Chomo Lungma (in Tibetan) meaning Goddess of the Wind, known to us as Everest (named after Colonel Sir George Everest). Lhakpa went proudly, and somewhat merrily, running through a village inhabited by Manangi people (of Tibetan origin) waving his 'prize' flag, thus arousing much interest in the local people. Tibetans gazed at the flag - could it be a special or unique prayer flag? - for all around prayer flags few and blew in that clear unpolluted air.

Eventually, the flag was returned to Sanduk, but only after Lhakpa shouting, "I like it, I want it!" and an energetic chase over rugged terrain. Sanduk then, almost reverently, carried the little Welsh flag to 17,700 ft over Thorong La and around Annapurna.

BOOK REVIEW

by Mayura Brown

(Mrs. T. T. Brown, Vice President of the Society)

ROOF OF THE WORLD - Man's First Flight Over Everest.
by James Douglas-Hamilton. Mainstream Publishing Company
(Edinburgh) Ltd.

The Author is the second son of the Marquis of Clydesdale (later the Duke of Hamilton, who did so much for Scottish aviation and was one of the founders of Prestwick Airport).

We have a well researched and truly interesting account of the Expedition and it gives a great deal of information that an hour's film cannot supply, besides allowing us to achieve a better acquaintance with the various members of the Expedition than the fleeting glances on the screen could afford. It is

a record of great determination and courage, as well as a piece of Imperial history that should be read with appreciation and pride.

This is not only a book for those interested in flying, but also for mountaineers, for the photographs taken during the flight were extremely useful to climbers when they were permitted eventually to use the route through Nepal for their expeditions. Previously they had approached Everest from the Tibetan side. At that time nobody had a close acquaintance with the Nepalese Himalayas; so the survey work done by this Expedition was invaluable.

There are well over seventy pictures in this book which will fill older readers with nostalgia and help the young to get the feel of the period. I must comment the gallantry of the Author for incorporating a charming photograph of Lady Houston when she was quite young. Dame Lucy was 75 when she became the benefactress of the Expedition.

A copy of the book has been sent to H.M. King Birendra by the Author.

BOOK REVIEWS

by Lieutenant Colonel T. M. Lowe
(Member of the Society)

FIRST ACROSS THE ROOF OF THE WORLD
by G. Dingle and P. Hillary. Hodder & Stroughton
£9.95. 232 pages.

A pair of brothers recently (June 1983) went jogging across the Himalayas, but this journey of 5000 kilometres from Sikkim to Pakistan by Dingle and Hillary was something of a very different order. Both are high-altitude climbers of international stature. Hillary, of course, has a famous father. In the opening chapter, Dingle outlines the reasons which led him and Hillary to traverse the Himalayas. Everything in those mountains was on the grand scale, but 'clearly it would be impossible to traverse over the top of every peak. The compromise was to travel as close as physically and politically acceptable to the main summits.' In order to meet their target of 300 days for completion of the project 'the alpine style approach - namely, sleeping rough, eating little, moving fast and thinking big - unencumbered by porters' had to be adopted. This was something new.

The book as a whole will appeal to climbers and trekkers alike. Dingle and Hillary have each contributed chapters and there is

some joint work. The chapter "Time Warp" would be useful to anyone who proposes trekking in Western Nepal, but parts of Garhwal and the former Kumaon also get extensive mention in other chapters.

The authors were joined by a fellow countryman and two girls at about the halfway stage. Their constant companion, however, from start to finish was Tashi - a Tibetan, masquerading as a Sherpa, from the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in Darjeeling. He spoke fluent English, Nepali and other languages.

The average reader might find some of the longer passages difficult to read. The literary style doesn't quite match up to the technical skill of the authors and, as so often happens, the book has no index. But the photos, mostly in colour, are very good. Four appendices which add to the value of the book include an Expedition Diary, details of important peaks en route, helpful details of equipment and a Layman's Guide to Physiological Survival in the Himalayas.

HIMALAYAN SOLO - by Elizabeth Forster
Antony Nelson £9.75 202 pages

For a long time the Himalayas have attracted climbers who want to get to the top (of those mountains) and trekkers who want to get away from civilisation, as we understand it. Miss Forster - a widely travelled lady - was someone in between. She is not young (73 at the time of publishing the book) and has been trekking in the Himalayas since she was 64. She has an attractive literary style combined with a nice touch of humour. The importance of establishing quickly a rapport with the Nepalese (male and female) who accompanied her, was something Miss Forster understood. Her companions quickly reciprocated to the extent that she was "Mummy" to them most of the time, but quite often just plain "Sir"!

The Forster Story covers her travels to the Everest Base Camp, the Annapurna Sanctuary and Eastern Nepal. Her descriptions of the scenery, the people and bird life of Nepal are considerably better than those of many professional authors who have trodden the same ground.

To this thoroughly good book the author has added helpful appendices about Nepal and hints for a trek - Forster style. A third and valuable appendix is the list of birds mentioned in the text. A sprinkling of photos in black and white and, of course, in colour round off a book which you will want to read quickly from cover to cover.

A MOUNTAIN IN TIBET - by Charles Allen
Andre Deutsch. £12.95 255 pages

Charles Allen is no stranger to the Indian sub-continent, its people and its ways. In 1967 he won the "Traveller of the Year" trophy for a solo walk through the Himalayas. This book is the fruit of much patient and diligent research.

The great rivers of India have their sources in the area of Mount Kailas and Allen has drawn together the story of those who went in search of the sources of those rivers from the earliest attempts in the 17th century to the rather more ambitious efforts in the 20th century. One thing motivated those explorers from the Jesuit (de Montserrate) to the Swede (Sven Hedin) and that was an ambition to be the first to identify the sources of the Ganges, the Sutlej, the Indus and the Brahmaputra.

As you would expect, Nepal and Gurkhas figure in the text from time to time and Kumaon is not forgotten. One of the later explorers, Henry Savage Landor, tried unsuccessfully to persuade the then CO of the 1/3rd Gurkhas to lend him 30 Gurkhas to act as porters. We are told that the Colonel sent him packing.

The opening chapter deals with the legends which surround the mystery attaching to the sources of the rivers mentioned above. At times the story gets somewhat complicated, but towards the end of the book Allen's account unfolds more easily. Constant reference to the maps is necessary and these are well-drawn. The maps are complemented by numerous photos in black and white and a number of sketches. A glossary of Asian words is essential in a work of this nature and this has been provided.

The publishers have produced a good book of reference for anyone who proposes to follow in the steps of those who tried so hard to trace the sources of the great rivers. It might persuade a new generation to leave the Kathmandu trail and head for Mount Kailas instead.

THE TREKKER'S GUIDE TO THE HIMALAYA AND KARAKORAM
by Hugh Swift. Hodder. £5.95. 342 pages

In Journal No. 5 of 1981 a "Guide to trekking in Nepal" was reviewed. This Guide by Hugh Swift covers a wider field and includes trails leading into Garhwal. Charles Allen's "A Mountain in Tibet" is a story of discovery, but Swift tells you how to get to the places described by Allen. There is a glossary for each of the seven more important languages spoken in the places you might wish to visit and an excellent chapter on Himalayan natural history. Gastro-intestinal problems get a mention. A chapter on advance planning includes reference to toilet paper - 'take it, buy it in the bazaar or use "The Times" international edition'. So now you know that "The Times" isn't just for the top.

OBITUARIES

Mrs. Ruth Rhodes died on January 26 after a very long illness which she bore with great courage. She never lost her interest in the Society even when she was unable to attend meetings.

Mrs. Rhodes was one of the first Committee members of the Society and then became the Honorary Secretary. I was privileged to work with her in the days of the Society's infancy when we had to manage on the proverbial shoe-string. It takes a great deal of effort to build up a society from scratch, and to that end she never shirked any task however trivial or large.

We are grateful for the hospitality given by Dr. Rhodes and Ruth to the Committee and members of the Society, and above all to the Yetis. In those days they were young students and army cadets without any families here, and they greatly appreciated her kind concern for their welfare, and the welcome they always received at the Rhodes household.

The Society gave a donation of £100 in her memory which Dr. Rhodes sent to Lady Sue Ryder for the Cheshire-Ryder Home in Kathmandu for the young disabled. Private donations by members were also given, some going to the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

M.B.

Sir Ralph Turner, who was the Director of the School of Oriental and African Studies from 1937-1957, died on April 22 aged 94. At the time of his death he was working on an addendum to his Nepali-English Dictionary. He had received the Prabala Gorkha Dakshina Bahu (1st Class) from His late Majesty King Mahendra for his services to the Nepalese language.

M.B.

Most distinguished of Sanskrit and Nepali scholars, Sir Ralph Turner served with the Gurkhas during the first world war (3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles) and his tribute to them, in the preamble to his Nepali Dictionary, has been quoted again and again, "As I write these words, my thoughts turn to you who were my comrades....."

Ed.

Mr. Evan Charlton CBE who died on June 25 after a long illness had been on the staff of The Statesman of Calcutta from 1936 until he retired as its editor in 1967 and became well known in the Society. He fought in Malaya as an officer of the 3/16th Punjabis and was mentioned in despatches. He was taken prisoner in Singapore.

After returning to Britain in 1967 he was appointed CBE and joined the BBC External Services. In 1977 he became editor of The Round Table and in 1980 he took over Asian Affairs but illness forced him to give it up.

His one novel had the excellent title "Go and Order the Drums" and he was proud of having been asked by Pyarelal, author of the biography of Mahatma Gandhi, to read the work to make sure it was not unfair to the British.

His friendliness and humour were known to many members of our Society. His sense of fair play and generosity were known best to his staff in India and to his fellow prisoners of war. For his family we can but record our deepest sympathy in their loss.

Ed.

THE GURKHA WELFARE TRUSTS

For Gurkha ex-Servicemen and their dependants the Gurkha Welfare Trusts do what the Army Benevolent Fund does for the United Kingdom ex-Servicemen. During the current year they are providing a sum of £169,800, excluding a reserve sum, for distribution in the hill areas of Nepal in the form of grants, pensions and scholarships.

The income available for distribution comes from three sources. The first and chief one is invested capital. This money was donated in several Commonwealth countries, but mainly in the United Kingdom and is handled by a leading investment management company in the City of London, Robert Fleming & Company Limited. The second source is covenants which have been entered into by serving and retired officers of the Brigade of Gurkhas and civilian well-wishers, including many leading UK firms. The third source is current donations and funds raised by voluntary supporters, and this includes the Gurkha Battalion stationed in the UK. In addition, all serving officers and soldiers of the Brigade of Gurkhas contribute one day's pay to the Fund. Further very substantial support for the welfare operations comes from the Gurkha Welfare Trust Foundation (U.S.A.) set up by Mr. and Mrs. Ellice McDonald, Jr., of Delaware. This important Foundation is designed to help the Gurkhas now and in the long term.

The Brigade of Gurkhas Welfare Scheme which operates with the full approval of the authorities in Nepal is responsible for distributing the money. It does this through 25 Welfare Centres, each one specially built for the purpose. These have been paid for by the Gurkha Welfare Trust (Canada) which is a separate Trust financed in Canada. Each Welfare Centre is staffed by Gurkha ex-Servicemen whose salaries are covered by a British Government grant.

The Gurkha ex-Servicemen who can benefit from the money provided by the Trusts are broadly in two groups - those who have served with The Brigade of Gurkhas which since 1948 has been an integral part of the British Army, and those greater number of volunteers, now growing old where they still survive, who served for a few years during the Second World War. The majority of these went back to their homes in the mountains after the war and received no pension as their service of five or six years was, of course, not long enough. Many were disabled and the survivors of these do, of course, receive disablement pensions for which the Government of India has assumed responsibility. But such pensions are relatively small and extra help can be badly needed in some cases. Assistance is also given by the Trusts to many widows and this help has been substantially increased.

The character of the Gurkha is never lost sight of in the plans that are made for assisting ex-Servicemen. He always has been and still is a self-reliant hill farmer who is proud without being arrogant. He does not hold out his hand for assistance easily. This fact is well understood and respected by those who operate the scheme.

The Trusts are managed by twelve Managing Trustees, including the Major General Brigade of Gurkhas who is the Chairman. In Nepal the Commander British Gurkhas Nepal and his Welfare Officer are responsible for all decisions and disbursements. The Managing Trustees meet once a year in London and decide on the amount of money to be provided in the following year. This yearly meeting is usually also attended by Mr. and Mrs. Ellice McDonald, Jr. (Gurkha Welfare Trust Foundation (USA)), and the Chairman (or his representative) and Secretary of the Gurkha Welfare Trust (Canada), Major General A. B. Matthews, CBE, DSO, ED, CD, and Major M. L. J. Burke, MBE, CD.

Anyone wishing to contribute by donation or covenant to the Gurkha Welfare Trusts should contact the General Secretary, Miss Jacqueline Craig, whose address is given below:

The Gurkha Welfare Trusts
Room 120, Ministry of Defence (Army)
Old War Office Building
Whitehall, London SW1A 2EU

H.C.S.G.

NOTES ON THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

Patron: H.R.H. PRINCE GYANENDRA OF NEPAL

Our aim is to promote and foster good relations between the peoples of the United Kingdom and Nepal.

The Society was founded in 1960, under the patronage of His late Majesty King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva of Nepal during his State Visit to London: Lord Hunt became the first President.

British and Nepalese subjects, and business firms or corporate bodies resident in Britain or Nepal are eligible for membership.

Members include serving and retired Gurkhas, mountaineers, members of the Diplomatic Service, schoolmasters, doctors, nurses and businessmen.

Ordinary members pay a subscription of £3 per annum. Life Members - a single payment of £40. The annual subscription is under review and may be increased.

The "Yetis" - Nepalese Students in Britain - are honorary members during their stay in the United Kingdom and are particularly welcome at all functions, especially the annual Summer Outing. They are eligible to join as full members in the usual way.

The Society's programme includes:

- Monthly lectures at the Alpine Club and elsewhere;
- Meetings and films from October to May;
- Receptions and hospitality for visiting Nepalese;
- An AGM in November and an annual supper party in February (Shrove Tuesday).

We keep in touch with the Nepal-Britain Society in Kathmandu which the late H.H. Field Marshal Sir Kaiser, a Life Member of the Society, founded shortly before his death.

The Britain-Nepal Society has a growing membership and there is tremendous enthusiasm for Nepal. Our Meetings, which are usually attended by about one hundred people each, provide an excellent opportunity for us to get together over a drink. Our membership, not counting the "Yetis", Honorary Members and Corporate Members, is now well over five hundred.

The Committee welcome new members amongst people with a genuine interest in Nepal. The address of the Honorary Secretary is:

Mrs. W. Brown (Celia)
1 Allen Mansions
Allen Street
London W8 6UY

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Stafford House, 16 East Street
Tonbridge, Kent.

The Gurkha Museum
(Lt. Col. M. P. Dewing, Curator)
Queen Elizabeth Barracks
Church Crookham
Aldershot, Hants GU13 ORJ

Society of Friends of the Gurkha Museum
(Lt. Col. A. A. Mains, Hon. Secretary)
c/o Gurkha Museum, Queen Elizabeth Barracks
Church Crookham, Aldershot, Hants GU13 ORJ

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(February 1984)

