



BRITAIN-NEPAL

SOCIETY

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While everything published in the Journal concerns Nepal and is therefore of interest to our members, the balance between historical and contemporary varies from year to year. In this issue the historical takes up more space. But even among the topics of historical interest there is considerable variety. British Envoys to Nepal are discussed in masterly fashion by one who is very well qualified to do so; while the Nepalese Ambassador himself brings past and present together in a comprehensive and very personal survey, ending with some lucid remarks on foreign policy.

No journal of the Society would be complete without a trekking narrative; in this one we have the story of the Stowe School Expeditions and a statement of their imaginative plans for co-operation with their friends and hosts in Nepal.

A matter of particular interest at the present time in Nepal is Nature Conservation and we are happy to have a contribution on this aspect of contemporary preoccupations from Sir Arthur Norman who is directly involved in them. That the Patron of your Society is also Chairman of the King Mahendra Trust gives this important matter a special significance for our members.

Prime Minister Jang Bahadur's pioneering visit to Europe in 1850/51, when he was in his early thirties and Queen Victoria a year or two younger, is all too briefly discussed in the charming and perceptive review, by his great-grand-daughter, of the scholarly and very readable new book by John Whelpton which presents that fascinating document, historically interesting to both Nepal and Great Britain, the Belait-Yatra.

It remains only to thank our contributors and to say that the programme of talks at the Alpine Club planned for the coming season augurs well for Journal No. 9 which will appear in the year (1985) when the Society will be celebrating its Silver Jubilee.

EDITOR

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ADVERTISEMENTS - JOURNAL No. 9 (1985)

Starting with our next (Silver Jubilee) number we intend to include advertisements with a view to providing our growing membership with useful information about travel to Nepal and related matters and to covering part of the cost of publishing an enlarged Journal. Firms and organisations wishing to advertise or donate space are requested to inform the Honorary Secretary or the Editor early in the year. Copy will be called for later. The cost will be £60 per page, £30 half page, £15 quarter page.

NEWSLETTER

As in past years, interest in the Society's activities has continued to increase. The monthly meetings, usually at the Alpine Club, have been well supported, and we should like to thank all those who have given talks during the 1983/84 season.

RECEPTION TO WELCOME THE NEPALESE AMBASSADOR

The season opened with a Reception to welcome H.E. Mr. Ishwari Raj Pandey, at the English Speaking Union, Charles Street, London W.1. on Wednesday, 19th October. On behalf of the Society, the President, Sir George Bishop, warmly welcomed His Excellency and his family on their return to the UK. He very much hoped that Madame Pandey who was unable to attend the Reception would soon recover fully from her illness. His Excellency said he was pleased to be in this country again and referred to his term of office as First Secretary in the Seventies.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society was grateful to H.E. The Ambassador for inviting it to hold the 23rd Annual General Meeting in the Ballroom of the Royal Nepalese Embassy on Tuesday, 6th December. It was a well attended meeting and His Excellency together with members of the Embassy and their wives were present. Sir George Bishop presided and the retiring Chairman, Brigadier A. B. Taggart, conducted the business of the Meeting. Sir George in his closing remarks thanked the Chairman for his leadership and direction of the affairs of the Society during the past five years, and hoped he would continue to support the Society as a Vice-President.

There was an alteration to the list of Officers proposed for election. Owing to heavy business commitments Mr. A. E. E. Wieler, Chairman-elect, was no longer able to take on the additional duties of Chairman of the Society and the Meeting agreed unanimously to appointing Lieutenant Colonel C. J. Scott as Chairman. Mr. A. E. E. Wieler agreed to continue as Vice-Chairman for a further year. The Meeting was followed by an excellent curry supper. A generous gift of wine from the Ambassador added greatly to the pleasure of the evening.

MONTHLY MEETINGS AT THE ALPINE CLUB

On Wednesday, 23rd November, Mr. John Clear, a well known climber and member of the Alpine Club, gave an illustrated talk on "SMALL PEAKS IN NEPAL". Despite a very cold evening there was a good turn out of members and their guests for an illustrated talk by Mr. Roger Potter on "THE STOWE SCHOOLS EXPEDITIONS" (text in this Journal). The talk was held on Wednesday, 25th January.

The film "TIGER TIGER" shot in the Chitawan National Park was shown on Thursday, 15th March. For this special viewing we are grateful to Mr. Colin Willock, Executive Director of Survival Anglia Ltd.

On Wednesday, 11th April, Mr. Alan G. Hatter, the Warden of the Pestalozzi International Children's Village, Sedlescombe, near Battle, Sussex, gave an illustrated talk about this community which was established 25 years ago. Mrs. Lamichane, Housemother of the Nepalese House, spoke about the children in her care. We are grateful to Mr. Hatter and Mrs. Lamichane for taking time off to give us such an interesting talk.

Mr. A. D. Schilling was unfortunately unable to give his talk on Wednesday, 9th May and in its place Mr. David Burlinson of Exodus Expeditions showed an excellent film on Nepal entitled "The Kingdom of the Gods".

Guests are always welcome at the monthly meetings and your Committee would wish that more guests should be brought to these functions. The cost is £1 per guest. Sherry and soft drinks are served before the meetings. Thanks are due to the Committee members who take it in turns to look after the serving of drinks.

ANNUAL NEPALI SUPPER

This popular event was once again held at New Zealand House, Haymarket, on Wednesday, 22nd February, the guest of honour being H.E. Mr. Ishwari Raj Pandey.

There was an excellent turnout of well over 200 members and guests, and as always we were very pleased to welcome members of the Embassy and their wives, representatives of the Inter-Parliamentary Group and many "Yetis". The Society's thanks are due to the Commanding Officer of the 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles for kindly providing the smart and most helpful Gurkha Orderlies and an excellent Piper. Thanks are also due to the Committee members for their help; Mr. Manandhar and his staff for providing delicious food, Mrs. Heather Bond of the BBC Nepali Service for taking care of the microphone and providing the tapes for background music, and last but not least the Royal Nepalese Embassy for providing a substantial amount of the wine.

In June HRH Prince Gyanendra, Patron of the Society, visited London with HRH Princess Komal. The President, Sir George Bishop, presided at a Dinner given by the Society in Their Royal Highnesses' honour at the English Speaking Union on Monday, 4th June. Members of the Royal household, H.E. The Ambassador, members of the Embassy and their wives, Vice-Presidents and Officers of the Society attended the Dinner. Flowers were sent from the Society to HRH Princess Komal on her arrival.

His Royal Highness as Chairman of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation had attended a meeting in Washington prior to his visit to London.

THE YETI ASSOCIATION

In April, the Chairman sent the following circular to UK members only. It is now printed in the Journal for the benefit of our Overseas members.

"In past years, the Britain-Nepal Society has sponsored a Summer Outing for the benefit of the members of the Yeti Association. This had its origins in the time when the Yetis were essentially an association of young Nepalese students to whom the UK was a "foreign" country and who needed help to organise their activities in a strange environment.

Times have changed and so has the composition of the Yeti Association to the extent that the majority of their membership is now older and more at home in the UK - indeed many are permanent residents. The natural consequence of this change is that your Committee feel that the Yeti Association no longer needs the help we have offered up to now and what is perhaps more important, the Yeti Association feel no need for it either. They are grateful for what has been done for them in the past, but in their welcome maturity, are entirely confident of being able to organise their own affairs - indeed they wish to do so.

"This year, therefore, we shall not be running a Summer Outing for the Yeti Association - they are organising their own - but instead we plan an evening function which the Yeti Association members will be invited to attend on an equal basis with members of the Britain-Nepal Society. Indeed that will be the basis of the future relationship between the Britain-Nepal Society and the Yeti Association - equal partners with mutual interests."

Subsequently an evening function was arranged at the Aquarium House at the London Zoon, in June, but this had to be cancelled as there was a poor response for tickets.

The President of the Yeti Association this year is Mr. Khangendra Nepali from the BBC Nepali Service, who is also a member of the Society.

COST OF MEMBERSHIP

Ordinary membership has been increased to £5 per annum as from 1st October 1984. Life membership is still a once and for all payment of £40. Corporate membership is £15. Forms of application for membership are obtainable from the Secretary.

SOCIETY TIE

The price of the Britain-Nepal Society ties has been increased to £5 including postage. Your Secretary holds an adequate stock of these high quality ties.

STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPES

It would be a great help in keeping down costs if members sent a SAE when they write if their letter requires an answer.

MESSAGES

A message of congratulations was sent to His Majesty the King of Nepal on his birthday on 28th December.

A message of congratulations was also sent to our Patron HRH Prince Gyanendra of Nepal on his birthday in July.

FUTURE PROGRAMME

Details of the monthly meetings and functions to be held during the 1984/85 season will be given by the Secretary at the Annual General Meeting which will take place at the Royal Nepalese Embassy (by kind invitation of H.E. The Nepalese Ambassador) on Wednesday, 28th November at 6.15 p.m.

CELIA BROWN
Hon. Secretary
1 Allen Mansions
Allen Street
London W8 6UY

KING MAHENDRA TRUST FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

by Sir Arthur Norman KBE DFC

In 1982 the Nepalese Government approved the King Mahendra Nature Conservation Trust Act which established the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation under the chairmanship of HRH Prince Gyanendra and under the patronage of His Majesty the King. The functions and duties of the Trust, which is an independent non-government organisation, are:

- (a) To conserve, promote and manage wildlife and other natural resources;
- (b) To make necessary arrangements for the development of National Parks and Reserves;
- (c) To undertake scientific studies on, and conduct research in, wildlife and other natural resources.

To achieve these objectives the Trust is empowered to raise funds and to obtain other forms of assistance from national and international sources. Importance is attached to the maintenance of strong links with foreign institutions and international associations which have nature conservation objectives. For this purpose the Board of the Trust will include representatives of international agencies and internationally reputed persons who are active in the field of nature conservation. The Government of Nepal has authorised a significant donation to the Trust in order to enable it to commence operations.

It is the intention of the Chairman of the Trust that committees of the Trust should be established in friendly countries where assistance can be offered to the Trust and in May and June 1984 HRH Prince Gyanendra visited USA and the UK to engender support for the aims of the Trust. With the active leadership of HE the Nepalese Ambassador a small committee has been established in the UK with the following membership:

HE The Nepalese Ambassador
Mr. D. F. Attenborough
Sir George Bishop
Lord Camoys
Major General J. L. Chapple
Lord Hunt of Llanfair Waterdine
Mr. John Lippitt
Lord Montagu of Beaulieu
Lieutenant Colonel C. J. Scott
Mr. T. A. P. Walker
and myself

The Trust has now commenced operations and has recently held its third meeting of the Board of Trustees. Its activities are complementary to the initiatives of His Majesty's Government and are aimed to strengthen the work done by Government departments.

The Secretary of the Trust is Dr. Hemanta R. Mishra, King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, National Parks Building, Babar Mahal, PO Box 3712, Kathmandu, Nepal.

by Susan Elizabeth Roberts

Feelings had not been dampened by the weather, and in spite of rain the Annual Nepali Supper was attended by more members and guests than ever before - not far short of three hundred. The rain was a good 'omen'.

The spontaneous friendliness of members was apparent from the moment one entered New Zealand House. Whilst 'cloakrooming' dripping umbrellas and coats, members' and their guests' voices were already to be heard in cheery tones. As one approached the royal blue carpeted staircase, there were welcoming smiles from two committee members. Up a few steps to collect name stickers and then Sir George and Lady Bishop warmly welcomed us. Further ascent revealed a hearty concourse of people intermingling cheerfully and clearly enjoying what was for many a grand reunion enabling them to renew acquaintance with those seen so fleetingly at a Britain-Nepal Society lecture at the Alpine Club. This was an opportunity to chat with the committee members who organise the Society's events, a time when one could informally meet and speak with His Excellency the Nepalese Ambassador, exchange greetings with many Gurkhas and a host of other people. The common denominator for all this being, to me anyway, the far mountain kingdom of Nepal and her people.

In Nepal, as we are only too well aware, having climbed up we shall sometime have to go down; so at New Zealand House, after pre-supper drinks on the 'mountain top' we gradually descended the winding stairs to the large room below. The admirable tall chandelier one could well imagine to be a jagged ice drop in the Himalayas. Food, glorious food lured us down. Mr. Manandhar's family were in charge of the team, each sporting an attractive Nepalese rhododendron brooch. Spring blossomed forth on each table which was colourfully bedecked with polyanthus.

Strangers became friends during the supper as each recalled tales of trekking, or exchanged notes on visits to Nepal. The food looked good, tasted delicious. Appetites were soon tempted for second helpings of curry, followed by the now extremely popular, mango ice cream - such a light and refreshing dessert.

Beneath the flags of Nepal, Britain and New Zealand our President Sir George Bishop proposed loyal toasts to Her Majesty the Queen and to His Majesty the King of Nepal. In his excellent speech which followed he dwelt on the coming together of twentieth century technology and a walker's paradise.

The evening's guest of honour, His Excellency the Nepalese Ambassador, Mr. Ishwari Raj Pandey, then addressed the gathering. The full text of his speech follows this article.

As usual, after the speeches, out of the wings came the lone Gurkha piper to delight us all.

So - drinks, supper, speeches ended and the bagpipes bade us farewell for another year. However, members and their guests remained seated at the tables, now deep in relaxed conversation - strangers had become friends - and then reluctantly thoughts turned to the weather and the journey home.

THE AMBASSADOR ADDRESSES THE SOCIETY
(NEW ZEALAND HOUSE, LONDON, 22 February 1984)

Mr. President

Members of the Britain-Nepal Society

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel it a unique honour to have been invited to this gathering of distinguished British citizens. When I look around I can see many old friends. It is so nice to be back home. I wish to extend to you my sincere thanks for inviting me here and providing me with the opportunity to come nearer to you and to increase my familiarity with you. It heartens me to see all of you who, by sincere efforts, seek to promote relations between your country and my own. The very name of this organisation suggests the purpose for which it stands. Like its counterpart in Nepal, the Britain-Nepal Society has been trying its best to bolster the long-standing relations of amity and friendship between the two kingdoms. It is in this context natural to assume that this Society should seek to know something about Nepal; for relations between Nepal and Britain have all through remained so good and profound that one should desire to know how the other lived the life of the day and what cultural mores characterised their respective ways of life.

The people of Nepal know about the life and culture of the British people. The Nepalese have come to know about this great country because of the ubiquitous character of the British race, because of their encounter with the latter in the past century, no matter their first encounter had been of a war-like nature, because of their contiguity with British India, and because of the educational system that they have adopted. We in Nepal are aware of the heroic historical event called the Anglo-Nepalese War whose conclusion had brought about a happy relation between our two countries. We are conscious of the British presence in what are today's independent countries in our part of the world like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Burma, who still bear the stamp of your culture and civilization. As students, we had to study British history, geography, political system, economics and philosophy. Most of the British writers are known to every educated Nepali. Added to this, the British Gurkhas also have happened to be a factor rousing our interest in Britain.

Historians like Perceval Landon and Sylvan Levi have spoken of the high attainment achieved by the Nepalese in matters of culture and civilization. Men like John Morris have dealt with various aspects of the life of my war-like Gurkha compatriots. The Swiss geographer, Tony Hagen, has presented a valuable monograph on the picturesque aspects of Nepal and its highlanders. A number of British Army officials belonging to Imperial days and those of these days too, have a dependable knowledge about the way of life of the Gurkhas. Duncan Forbes and Desmond Doig have written complete works on these peoples. Their works have thrown more and better light on the life-style of this segment of my countrymen.

Nepal is a Hindu nation, and Hinduism has its innumerable holy books, like the four Vedas, the eighteen main Puranas, a number of subsidiary Puranas, the epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the Book of Agamas, namely, the eight Tantrik works called Yamalas as well as the works of Buddhism. Each of these sacred books is related to the worship of a particular deity, a female or a male deity, as the case may be.

As a country of the adherents of different off-shoots of the schools of this timeless and immensely rich Vedic religion, it is natural that Nepal should encourage all these modes and ways of worship. So we have innumerable gods and goddesses related to these holy books to whom our ancestors have dedicated temples.

Naturally enough, Hinduism, as Christianity has done in earlier centuries in Europe, has influenced Nepalese art and culture as it has also influenced the day-to-day life of the Hindus of Nepal.

Though constitutionally proclaimed a Hindu Kingdom, Nepal believes and firmly believes in the policy of religious tolerance. The mosques in Kathmandu and in Tarai areas, the church standing near our national Secretariat, and a number of Gurudwaras speak for Nepal's practice of religious tolerance.

In the faith that all religions lead ultimately to the glorious destiny of the one Supreme Being as described in the shining lines of Lord Tennyson:

I quote: "That God which ever lives and loves
 One God, one law, one element
 And one far-off divine event
 To which the whole creation moves."

We do not believe in, and do not permit, under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, any subject of the land to undergo religious conversion.

The Nepalese calender for the year is richer for its days of festivals, and most of these festivals have their direct origin in our religion. It would not be possible here to mention all of these festivals which take place in different seasons of the year.

Even festivals of gaiety and mirth like the "Ghode Yatra" and the "Gai Yatra" derive their origin from religion. "Ghode Yatra" is a kind of carnival, and on the days of this festival the farming community and the community of the businessmen of Kathmandu devote their morning and evening hours to worshipping the female deity of war, the goddess Bhadrakali, whose temple stands near Tundhikhel, which once had remained Asia's largest military parade-ground. This is the day of sumptuous dining and wining for the members of these communities. During the day a horse race, followed by cycle races and acrobatics, is held on the ground of the Tundhikhel. This festival takes place sometime in the month of March. Kathmandu remains full of hub-bub on that day, wearing a real gay look. The festival is also the harbinger of Spring.

The other festival, which is a unique one, is the "Gai Yatra". Apart from the ritual of taking out well-caparisoned cows round the town from the houses of the year's dead, fun loving people come out in fantastic garbs, cracking equally fantastic jokes, jokes even at the cost of the high and mighty of the land. The tricks and tantrums of the British clown, with his bulbous red nose, are no match for their skill in making men roar with laughter. They enjoy their freedom of speech on that particular day of the year, a freedom which even the Hyde Park soap-box orator may well envy.

But the most important of the festivals, which are not local like the ones just mentioned, but which are celebrated on a national scale, and which the Hindus everywhere in the world celebrate with much gusto, zest and fanfare, are the festivals of "Vijaya Dashami" and "Dipawali" besides Kathmandu's exclusive festival of "Indra Yatra".

The "Indra Yatra" is the festival of Indra, the ruler of the Heavens. This is also the occasion for the worship of the living deity Kumari, regarded as the patron-goddess of the Royal Household. The goddess, along with the other deities, Ganesh and Bhairava, are taken round the main thoroughfares of Kathmandu proper in separate chariots. It is a State festival and the chariot procession is watched by the King and Queen, the members of the Royal Family, State dignitaries and members of the diplomatic corps.

It was on this day that King Prithvi Narayan Shah assumed the reins of government in Nepal. The consolidation of the modern State of Nepal out of the congeries of innumerable petty principalities had started on this very day some 175 years ago.

The most important of the year's festivals is the "Vijaya Dashami", the festival of the victory of the Divine forces over the forces of the Devil. It is celebrated with much trumpeting and fanfare. The festival is for the Hindus what Xmas is for the Christian world.

The "Vijaya Dashami" is celebrated for ten consecutive days during which Durga, the Goddess of War, is propitiated and worshipped, the final day being the day of Thanksgiving. On this day the big and the small visit the Royal Palace for receiving the 'Tika' which is a bunch of barley sprouts worshipped for the earlier nine-days, symbolising the benediction of the goddess as well as of the King and the Queen. Men visit also their seniors in age and rank for the same purpose.

"Dipawali" is the other festival of national importance. It begins with the propitiation of the crow, the dog and the cow, which takes place for five days in succession. The Goddess of wealth, Laxmi, is worshipped amidst elaborate rituals. The five-day festival concludes with the worship of the brothers by their sisters. The ritual is known as 'Bhai-Tika'.

Swami Vivekanand of India had once said that every routine work of a Hindu, say even the act of bathing, forms part of his religious rituals. Every festival of Nepal, as I have suggested earlier, has a religious undertone.

As you move around Kathmandu, you will not see much of the modern touch in the design of the city buildings. However, the old township of Kathmandu presents you with a rich spectacle of ancient architecture whose school has been revived of late along with the introduction of today's massive constructs of concrete and cement. An ancient Greek sculptor, a marble-cutter and a stone-mason would have marvelled at the highly symmetrical wooden pillars, and the delicately perforated windows, the doors and balconies elaborately decorated with figurines of animals, human beings, deities and fabled creatures. These works prove the measure of our high artistic and architectural attainment. The Pagoda style, which is found in Burma, Malaya and Singapore, is essentially of Nepalese origin. On the authority of Dr. D. R. Regmi, the acknowledged Historian of Nepal, the Chinese adopted the Pagoda from Nepal.

Speaking of the performing arts, it must be said that Nepal has preserved the school of classical dances to this day while also adopting its modern modes and variety. The dances of Mahakali, the Bhairava and the Dasha Avatara of Lord Vishnu, and of the Devil called "Lakhe", to mention a few of them, are performed on stipulated occasions.

Nepal is famous for its scroll paintings. These depict the stories from the great Hindu epics. The variety of scroll known as Thonka, which is popular in Tibet, is of Nepalese origin. I need hardly tell you, these scrolls have become a favourite with western collectors.

We have not lagged behind in encouraging the modern school of European art, either. Men like Lain Singh Bangdel and Amar Chitrakar have made their mark in the domain of modern art.

What makes me more modest before you is my talking about our literature. England is the land of Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Dickens, Trollope, Shelley, Wordsworth, Shaw and Wells - just to pick up at random some of the English names. Three-fourths of the world's best poems come from the English language.

As regards Nepalese literature, I should leave this topic by making passing reference to different forms of literature coming from men like Lekhnath Paudel, Laxmi Prasad Devkota, Balkrshna Sama, Vijaya Bahadur Mall, Govinda Bahadur "Gothale", Siddhi Charan Shrestha, Madhav Prasad Ghimire, Ratna Shumshere Thapa, Basu Sashi, "Parijat" and Dharanidhar Koirala, to name but a few.

Institutes like the Royal Nepal Academy, the NAFA, and the NASA Khala keep encouraging our writers. Awards also are instituted for works of merit each year. The late King Mahendra was a poet himself with a delectable anthology of poetical works to his credit.

A poetry festival is held once a year. His Majesty the King selects the theme for composition for the occasion; the poems however, are not what in England is called "State Poetry".

Let us now give some thought to the pattern of economy that Nepal has adopted today.

Till thirty years ago ours was a purely agricultural economy. We had only two industries, if industries they are to be called at all - the match factory of Birgunj and the Jute mills of Biratnagar, both located in the Tarai. The country used to import every item of daily necessity as well as some quantum of luxuries. The export list showed only two items, rice and teak-wood, as the supplies to India since the British days.

It was only in 1961 that Nepal genuinely realised the need to industrialise its economy. To begin with, His Majesty's Government helped local entrepreneurs to set up a few small and medium industries, and also created a number of Industrial Estates. Institutions like the Nepal Industrial Development Corporation, the Industrial Inputs Corporation and the Trade Promotion Centre also have remained helpful in giving a boost to the industries as well as to import-export firms as of today.

Apart from the lack of experienced industrialists, Nepal also has a dearth of investment capital and paucity of technologists. Like in matters of capital, we have to depend upon other countries for training technologists.

Added to this, there is no market in the neighbouring countries for whatever goods the few industries produce.

Due to its land-locked geography, Nepal has experienced various difficulties in the transportation of finished products as well as of the import of capital goods.

Despite all this, we have been able to set up a number of industrial plants in different parts of the country.

Nepal seeks foreign collaboration for its industrial development, and some few friendly countries, including Great Britain, have responded favourably to our call for cooperation in this matter. Agencies like the World Bank and its affiliate, the IMF, too, have availed us of some industrial loans for launching some of our development projects.

Nepal also remains no less earnest about receiving friendly cooperation from this country of pioneers of industry and technology.

All that I have said would remain inconclusive, if I did not present a picture of our political system. The most politically gifted people in the world, the British, if I am correct in my assessment, do understand the type of political system the peoples of our region need.

When the party system failed to work after its precarious stay for a decade in Nepal, we replaced it by another system, known as the partyless Panchayat system, whose basic concepts are derived from the time-honoured works of the policy left by our ancient thinkers.

The present political system of Nepal, which has come after making certain needful constitutional amendments, is a rational variation of the original system which was devised in 1961.

As a man of foreign office, I am obliged to explain to you the basic points of Nepal's foreign policy. As a peace-loving country, and as a country seeking the cooperation of all for achieving national development and progress, we prefer to stay as a non-aligned nation in peaceful co-existence with the rest of the world, and in the words of His Majesty's King Birendra, "we have to remain non-aligned even among the non-aligned nations."

And indeed Nepal's 'Zone of Peace' proposal also can be said to be a follow-up of the self-same policy of non-alignment.

Wedged as it is between India and China, Nepal has all through remained conscious of its strategic position, and the country does not want to be pushed around on either of the sides in some possible embattled moments. Peace, moreover, is needful for Nepal's domestic well-being and prosperity.

As Nepal's Ambassador to the Court of St. James, it is my supreme duty to promote my country's relations with yours. We have a high regard for this:

"Land of hope and glory,
Mother of the free",

and I shall always try to keep alive in my people their ingrained impression about England and the English people as their being superlative in quality in all human circumstances.

I have taken much of your time which is proverbially so valuable to the British. But to have indulged so long in so much thinking aloud before you is a privilege that you have yourselves given me in all friendly spirit. I shall remain grateful to you, Ladies and Gentlemen, for this patience you have shown with me. I thank you all for this.

STOWE SCHOOL HIMALAYAN EXPEDITIONS

by Roger M. Potter, Esq.

[Talk given to the Society at the Alpine Club on 25 January 84]

Four days out of Pokhara; the clouds still down; Sering, our porter and guide, setting a cracking pace; our own packs becoming soggy and heavier; ill-fitting shoes troubling blistered feet; the long, long staircase of a climb ahead of us; the faintest murmurings of doubt amongst the four of us.... Then, as so often in the Himalayas, it happened. Far, far above the reach of our untutored imaginations, glistening and gleaming in the mid morning sunshine, the twin peaks of Machhapuchare, framed in an azure tatter in the clouds. It didn't last long that day but a moment's glorious inspiration urged us up the steep climb to Ghorapani, sped us through the orange groves at Tatopani, brought us along the desolate high valley to Jomsom. Some seven or eight days later it was Christmas Eve 1968. We were back at Sikha, bidden by the mission sisters who lived there to spend the next evening with them. We had met no more than two or three other trekkers along the entire route; there were no rest-houses and not a sign of beer or even coca-cola. An unforgettable experience had sown the seeds of an unfaltering wish to return to the mountains of Nepal.

Thirteen years later, the first Stowe expedition to Nepal assembled in London and I set off in charge of a group of eight Stowe boys, the sister of a ninth, four Old Boys, two parents and three other members of the staff. It proved to be an ideal mix. I had had severe doubts about attempting to repeat what is so often described as 'the experience of a lifetime'. In fact four subsequent visits have taught me that each such experience is unique. It seems impossible to tire of Nepal's blend of brave and generous people, physical beauty, isolation and sense of challenge. Each visit to Nepal with its kaleidoscope of companionship, excitement and tranquillity has been a restorative and an inspiring experience.

In recent years there have been three such expeditions from Stowe to the Himalayas - to Nepal in 1981 and 1982, and in 1984 to Kashmir, Ladakh and Zanskar. Plans to visit Bhutan have been shelved for the time being, but we propose to return to Nepal in the Easter holidays of 1985. I don't really know why I didn't do it sooner. Up to a point I had the same reservations as some of the principal doubters. The problem of cost was solved in two ways - firstly by the generosity and imagination of Jim Edwards of Tiger Tops and Mountain Travel, who encouraged us from the start; secondly by putting the matter to the test: so far there has been no lack of support - hardly surprising since, by cutting a few corners, the all-in cost of a round trip of a month need cost no more week for week than a skiing holiday.

The second problem was more serious. There are those who argue that school boys and girls of 16 or 17 are too young to be taken so far so soon - not only in terms of miles but also in the quality of experience. The somewhat puritanical view that the young should be made to wait could, I felt, be easily dismissed

in the light of what they would (and did) all gain from it. More urgent was the increased danger of trekking at heights in excess of 15,000 feet. It was for this reason coupled with the lack of mountaineering experience of the group as a whole that we decided that we should put the organisation into the hands of a highly qualified trekking organisation (in our case Mountain Travel) and that we should be accompanied by a trained medic. Whilst allowing us considerable independence with regard to routes this helped to cover us against the added danger that inexperience would bring. The success of our expeditions and our ability to recognise and quickly cope with the medical problems that occurred amply justified this decision.

In broad outline, the pattern of our three expeditions has been much the same and since the first gave rise to two other projects in which we are now involved in Nepal, it is our trek into the Lamjung Himal in 1981 that I shall describe. After a few days in Kathmandu preparing for the trek and finding time to make the rounds of Swyambunath, Bhadgaon and Pasupatinath, we set off on the bumpy but dramatic bus journey to Pokhara, the starting point of the trek. Two things were immediately apparent - the transformation of Kathmandu after thirteen years, measurable in the volume of cement and exhaust fumes, and the likelihood (later to be confirmed with a vengeance) that the 'new' road would have opened up the trekking routes. In 1968 you walked from Kathmandu or went by plane and, it seemed, very few people did either. Now you are presented only too clearly with the advantages and disadvantages that an inquisitive but intrusive West brings in its wake.

Several hours and much production of trek permits later, we stopped just outside Pokhara to be met by Colonel Jimmy Roberts who was casting ominous glances at what appeared to us to be a clear sky and confirming that the porters had their tarpaulins with them! Here, too, we met Tenzing Gyaltso, who was to be our Sirdar on this and the next year's expedition. Always ready with a cheerful word and an infectious smile he soon had us and our humbly large array of porters in excellent order. Throughout the trek he showed his unassuming authority, directing us wisely, assessing our strengths and weaknesses, dealing with the burden of portage and supplies with an ease that belied its complexities. It was not surprising to learn of his achievements on major climbing expeditions but that he was prepared to give so much of himself to a bunch of incompetents like ourselves gave much food for thought. In no time he had redistributed our own loads, assembled an apparently disorganised crew into a cohesive unit and led us in the afternoon sunshine towards the Lamjung Himal.

We soon settled into the trekking routine of 'bed tea', light breakfast and an early departure, followed by the mid-day break and cook up and finally arrival at the appointed camp-site for the day. For the first few days it seemed to me that history was repeating itself: low cloud and heavy rain. For two hours somewhere below Karpu Hill we were stranded in woods that increasingly resembled a tropical rain forest, suffering a

thorough drenching and then an energetic hour's scrambling up a precipitous slope before arriving at the camp-site, recalling Colonel Roberts's skyward glances of a couple of days before. I clung to the certainty that things would improve but nonetheless spent anxious mornings searching for the first real slimpes of the mountains.

For the first three or four days our path led us through Gurung villages, with their neatly kept small holdings and ochrous houses. But our intention was to leave habitation and the customary trails behind as soon as possible, our target, for what it was worth, being a 19,000 feet trekkers' peak for those who were prepared for a non-technical snow climb. In the upshot everyone got considerably more snow than they had bargained for. However, before we finally left civilisation behind, the seeds were sown for one of the most exciting and permanent products of our expedition. Everyone had been struck by the high incidence of disease and especially blindness amongst the children of the villages through which we were passing. There was also an acute sense of our own privilege exacerbated by all-too-obvious comparisons of local 'income' with pocket money and the cost of this trip. So, what to do about it? Around a campfire at the village of Kalikasthan we hit upon the idea of the Stowe Himalayan Journals. The plan was that each member of the group would contribute a day or two's log and some photographs to a complete record of the expedition. This would then be sold with the proceeds going to some medical project in Nepal. For our second journal the cost of printing was covered by advertising revenue and so the coffers were further swelled. We were fortunate, too, in our patronage: in 1981 The Prince of Wales, who had himself camped at Kalikasthan, and in 1982 Lord Hunt generously contributed Forewords which helped to lend credibility to our efforts. So far we have raised something over £3,000 from the sale of journals, donations and lecture fees and we are confident that the whole sum is being applied directly to the project that we selected. The fund is being administered, under the auspices of the Save the Children Fund, by doctors at the medical post at Baglung, a village a day or so west of Pokhara. A visit to Baglung is one of the requirements of the Stowe Conservation Award (of which more later) and all the evidence is that our money is being put to good use in the orthopaedic wing.

However, all this was in the future as we trekked on, higher certainly, but also into a snow-line several thousand feet lower than expected. A week of camping in snow may have added an element of discomfort but this was more than outweighed by an increasing sense of adventure and evermore spectacular landscapes as vistas of the Annapurnas and the lesser peaks of the Lamjung Himal opened up before us. We trudged up through snow increasingly appreciative of but concerned for the Herculean efforts of the porters..... and in due course they could go no further, ill-equipped for such conditions as they were. So we settled for three nights at Pokrong Alp with a view to climbing Ramprong (16,000 feet plus or minus) - a nearby peak. There were a couple of days exciting climbing. By some happy chance the day when the majority of the party made it to the top of Ramprong provided a peerless morning - a brilliantly

clear sky, hot sun and stunning views in all directions ("Well, it might be Everest"!) and the satisfaction of being (almost) certainly higher than anywhere in Europe. As the clouds swirled up from the valleys below we began our descent and returned to check the downward progress of the permanent cooking fire as it melted its way through the snow. By the time we left it was five feet down and like an inverted igloo, with porters warming themselves around its base, whilst ropes of drying clothes adorned the perimeter of the hole.

Now the time had come for us to retrace our steps. We moved downwards into clearing skies and weather that became hotter and hotter each day. We descended to the Madi Khola for a glorious rest day and in due course trekked back into Pokhara and a deluge of monsoon proportions. The sanctuary of the Annapurna Hotel was followed by three days rafting down the Trisuli River to Tiger Tops, where we spent a further three days. Here another permanent link with Nepal was established and one that, once again, owes much to the generosity and imagination of Jim Edwards. In conjunction with The International Trust for Nature Conservation a Stowe Conservation Scholarship has been set up that allows Stoics to work in Nepal for two or three months on any aspect of conservation. The terms of the award are broad as well as generous. So far seven people have gone to Nepal under its auspices and have worked on projects as various as involvement in the Nepal Bird Census, pollination effects at high altitudes, and the study of lizards. The two pupils to have returned most recently have been studying and recording local music, whilst a member of the teaching staff, Dr. Michael Hornby, has spent a sabbatical term in Nepal helping to take the message of conservation into a number of villages.

One way and another, then, we have had exciting and rewarding times in Nepal with some small sense of achievement as our projects develop. In 1982 we made a longer trek and climbed higher in the Langtang Valley and Helambu, whilst in 1984 we varied both season and location by going in the summer holidays to the western end of the Himalayas. We trekked from Leh in Ladakh into Zaskar and thence to Kashmir and included an exciting crossing of the Lonvilad glacier. From a personal point of view I am deeply grateful that the seed sown in 1968 has flowered in the way it has and I am happy that a number of others have been able to share in that experience. Much gratitude is due to a large number of people and organisations, but to none more than Nepal - the place and its people.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

STOWE SCHOOL JOURNALS 1981 and 1982 are still available from R. M. Potter, Esq., Grenville House, Stowe School, Buckingham (Telephone: Buckingham 813987). There is no charge for these Journals but donations to the BAGLUNG TRUST are welcome.

BRITISH ENVOYS IN NEPAL

(Extracts)

by John B Denson, Esq., CMG, OBE

[Talk given to the Society at the Alpine Club on 20th September 84]

The first permanent Resident, the Honourable Edward Gardner, was appointed in 1816 and was followed by 22 other Residents. In 1920 the designation was changed to British Envoy of whom there were four. In 1934 the appointment was upgraded to Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to coincide with the accreditation of the first Nepalese Envoy to the Court of St. James. Finally, the first Ambassador was appointed in 1944 and he was incidentally the last member of the Indian Political Service to hold the post as India became independent shortly after the end of his tenure. There have been ten other Ambassadors since.

Until its dissolution in 1858 the Resident was responsible to the East India Company presided over by the Governor-General who was in turn responsible to a Board of Control in London. The war between the Company and Nepal from 1814 to 1816 ended with the Treaty of Segowli which was signed in 1816 and provided for the permanent stationing of a Resident in Kathmandu and under it The Rajah of Nepal engaged "never to take or retain in his service any British subject, nor the subject of any European or American state, without the consent of the British Government"... The Treaty despite this restrictive provision ratified Nepal's status as an independent state as regards relations with British India while not prohibiting relations with other Asian and European countries. Relations with China of course already existed.

In 1816 Bhim Sen Thapa became Prime Minister, a post he held for thirty years. He did not accept the Treaty of Segowli as the final word in Nepalese-British relations and tried by every means to expel Gardner even soliciting Chinese assistance, but Edward Gardner was under instructions to pursue a conciliatory policy and Bhim Sen Thapa had to maintain relations with him and his successors though they were somewhat cool and distant. 1820 saw the appointment as Assistant Resident of Brian Houghton Hodgson, rightly described as "the greatest and least thanked" of British Residents. It is about him and his successor, Henry Lawrence, who achieved immortality at the Siege of Lucknow, that I shall have most to say.

A word of two should be said first about the conditions under which the Residents lived. A piece of land which is now the Indian Embassy Compound was granted to the British. It covered about 40 acres and was at that time North of the city. It was regarded as insalubrious, malarial and haunted by evil spirits..... but the environment changed and Perceval Landon in his book published in

1928 said it was then the healthiest spot in Kathmandu with gardens as well tended as those of the Maharajah and some of the most magnificent trees in the Valley. On the other hand he described the residence as Swiss sanatorium style, "a building totally unworthy of our representative...." The Swiss sanatorium was replaced before the Second World War with the present house, which is now the Indian residence. The compound was handed over in 1953 following an agreement at the independence of India (1947) when our present site was acquired freehold and the residence, which had been occupied by the Forestry Adviser to the Nepalese Government, was enlarged. The old compound formerly contained besides that of the Resident houses occupied by the Assistant Resident, the Surgeon, a post office, lines for the Lancer Escort and a bungalow for visitors, of whom incidentally there were very few. Between 1881 and 1925 we estimate that excluding the Residency staff the list of European visitors did not exceed 153 of whom 55 were guests of the Maharajah (that is between three and four a year on average).

The sense of isolation and claustrophobia, since the Resident was confined within the Kathmandu Valley, was great and led to a request for somewhere in Nepal where he could breathe. The Maharajah agreed that a tract of land could be granted near Kakani, where our present bungalow still stands. The site of the original bungalow is not known but is probably on the ridge above the village now called Rani Pauwa - and then known as Koulia and described in the journals of Honoria Lawrence, the wife of the Resident who succeeded Hodgson. The original bungalow was at 6,300 feet and 14 miles from Kathmandu. Honoria Lawrence descants on the beauty of the scenery which has not deteriorated since, but adds the place had one drawback - leeches - they have not changed either.

The date of the transfer of the bungalow to its present site is unknown and we have no Nikolaus Pevsner to identify the stylistic features which could date it, but my guess is that the structure dates from the end of the last century. At one time there was a miniature golf course, and the Resident moved there for a part of the year, maintaining contact with his headquarters at the present Indian Embassy by means of a heliograph, a device with a mirror which caught the rays of the sun by which messages could be flashed in Morse Code to the Residency below - and a device in use during the Great War and beyond. I suspect that its main purpose in those heroic days was to demand extra supplies of gin!

Brian Hodgson was born on 1 February 1800 at Prestbury in Cheshire into a family of prosperous country gentlemen. After his father's bank collapsed the family moved in an attempt to recover their fortunes, his father obtaining the post of Guardian of the Martello Towers in 1814 - these were advance fortifications against an expected French invasion. Through a friend of the family, who was a director of the East India Company, Hodgson obtained a nomination in 1816 passing out successfully from Haileybury, the Company's College. He gained prizes for classics and Bengali and went on to Fort William College in Calcutta where he added Sanskrit and Persian to his linguistic repertoire. Arduous study at this period may

have affected his health which collapsed in 1818 when he was advised to go home or to the hills. He did the latter becoming Assistant Commissioner in Kumaon in 1819, being transferred a year later to Kathmandu as Assistant Resident to Edward Gardner at the age of 20. It then seemed that Gardner might stay for a very long time and Hodgson accepted the post of Deputy Secretary in the Persian Department in Calcutta which might have been the stepping stone to a brilliant administrative career; but again his health collapsed and he returned to Kathmandu in the only post vacant in 1824, that of postmaster. He was appointed Assistant in the following year, was acting Resident from 1829 to 1831 and finally Resident in 1833 after the unexpected retirement of Sir Thomas Maddock. He resigned in 1843 after more than 20 years in Nepal.

Opinions differ sharply about the nature and success of Hodgson's mission, ranging from the encomium of Perceval Landon to the criticism of Nepalese scholars. These differences turn largely on the point of view from which his activities are regarded. Landon was an unabashed admirer of the imperial vision who regarded the preservation of British interests as paramount, while Nepalese historians regard Hodgson as the supreme meddler in Nepalese internal affairs who got what he deserved when Lord Ellenborough finally dismissed him. There is no doubt that Hodgson pursued a policy far more interventionist than his two predecessors Gardner and Maddock whom the Prime Minister Bhim Sen Thapa had kept effectively isolated from the Nepalese Government, the Royal Palace and Nepalese people, in some cases by the physical interposition of troops between the Residency and the town. Hodgson lifted the veil and established wide contacts and his studies of Hindu law enabled him to protect British Indian subjects involved in the Nepalese courts. He made some progress over boundary demarcation, a subject not well understood in Nepal or in other parts of Asia where physical control of area and the collection of taxes were considered more important than lines on maps.

By his involvement in affairs Hodgson incurred the wrath of the senior Queen, Samrajya Laxmi and her favourite Ran Jang Pande who had been responsible for the degrading, imprisonment and final suicide of Hodgson's great adversary Bhim Sen Thapa to whom Hodgson paid this generous tribute in a report to the Governor-General: "Thus has perished the great and able statesman, who for more than thirty years had ruled this country with more than regal sway".....

In 1842 Lord Auckland was replaced as Governor-General by Lord Ellenborough about whom Macaulay said, "We have sometimes sent them (the Indian people) Governors whom they loved, and sometimes Governors whom they feared, but they have never before had a Governor at whom they laughed". Ellenborough's ignorance is said to have been matched only by his vanity. He presided over the Afghan disaster and fell out at once with Hodgson.

Hodgson finally came to grief over the case of a British Indian merchant who was involved in a lawsuit in Nepal. He was within the walls of the Residency and the Nepalese demanded that he be given up. Hodgson refused. He later received instructions to surrender the British subject and deliver a letter to the King. These instructions he disobeyed and the Governor-General was therefore fully entitled to dismiss him.

Whatever we may think of Hodgson's diplomatic achievements, his other talents are indisputable. As an orientalist he was a co-discoverer of Mahayana Buddhism, including the Lama and Tantric Buddhism of Nepal and Tibet and amassed a formidable collection of manuscripts in Sanskrit, Persian and Newari which have gone to the India Office Library and to Paris along with studies of the history, institutions and ethnology of Nepal. In addition, he collected specimens of mammals and birds numbering 10,500 which he presented to the British Museum. He identified 563 different species of birds of which 150 were new to the avifauna of the Indian Empire and he arranged for drawings of them to be made by local artists. Hodgson's Pippit and Hodgson's Redstart and many others remain as testimony of his work. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and this was the only recognition he received from his native country.

In the course of a visit to the India Office Library my wife and I were shown the journal of Honoria Lawrence, the wife of Henry Lawrence. This has since been published by Sir John Lawrence, grandson of Henry. In the Embassy Library I turned up a life of Henry Lawrence by Sir Herbert Edwardes and Herman Merivale, dated 1872, which contained extensive marginal notes which by internal evidence could only have been made by Brian Hodgson who by that time was in his seventies in retirement in England. The likelihood of this being the case was increased by the fact that a collection of Hodgson's books was presented to the Legation, many of which were unfortunately lost or damaged when the move took place from the present Indian Embassy in 1953. My wife collated the marginalia and copies of Hodgson's comments on this rather pious biography were sent to the India Office Library. One day it may be possible to write a new biography of Hodgson to replace that by Sir William Hunter, but a polymath or a team will have to write it.

Hodgson's comments on the Lawrence biography are at times acerbic, and to an extent are an apologia pro vita sua, a justification of Hodgson against Lawrence who was sent to replace him and to reverse his policy of intervention. The issues involved demand too detailed a knowledge of Nepalese history of the period to justify quotation here.....

The theme of isolation is one which is constant in the journals of Hodgson and the Lawrences. Their inner resources were remarkable. Henry Lawrence commented on the Kathmandu Valley, "A more beautiful spot on earth the heart of man could scarce desire". This was the superscription to my despatch of first

impressions on Nepal.... Bacon said "reading maketh the full man, conference the ready man and writing the exact man". The various Residents, in particular Hodgson and Lawrence, were full and exact men. They were ready also in their different ways, but they lacked conversation or rather those with whom to converse. They were forced back on the few people with whom they were obliged to consort like Captain Smith whom Honoria Lawrence described as "bullying, and overbearing". Her journal demonstrates those qualities which were so common yet so remarkable: in one sense a narrow but thorough education, an ability to do practical things, to run a house and control servants, in her case an ability to write and to sketch, a wide reading and a desire to extend her intellectual range, a moral certitude which at worst inhibited an understanding of foreign manners and beliefs but at best produced a charity and sense of fairness which overbore the other. She had a discerning eye and a sly sense of humour. The quality of intellectual and spiritual resilience, a gaiety of the mind; these are what are needed to survive in certain environments and these people had them....

Lawrence was highly critical of his predecessor and in an early despatch attributed more blame for his problems on Hodgson than seems justified. But he was unable to avoid embroilment in Nepalese affairs. As early as February, 1844, a meeting took place in the Residency with the Prime Minister and representatives of the Government to decide whether the King should cede control to the Queen, as advocated by the Nepalese, or to the Crown Prince. The Prime Minister enquired, "If England's King should be mad, would not the Queen take his place?" The Resident replied that an English King (George III) had not long since been insane. The authority then was made over temporarily to his eldest son and not to the Queen....Throughout his comparatively short tenure - Lawrence was transferred in February 1846 - he struggled to avoid involvement and obey the instructions of the Governor-General but his conscience and his intelligence at times overrode his masters.

Lawrence's transfer in 1846 enabled him to avoid the most sanguinary political act of the period, the Kot Massacre, which brought Jang Bahadur Rana to power. After Jang Bahadur's installation relations with Britain were smoother. The visit to England and Nepalese assistance during the Indian Mutiny resulted in the return to Nepal of the remaining territory ceded under the Treaty of Segauli. The voices of Residents of that period were never heard as was the voice of Hodgson, but willy-nilly as the only foreign representatives they were drawn into comment on internal affairs. How they interpreted their instructions on circumspection depended on their personalities. Girdlestone (1872-88) was in the Hodgson mould and believed in taking a strong line in the hope of sorting out internal problems. He was succeeded by Colonel Berkely who saw the succession of the Shumsher Ranas after the assassination of Ranodip Singh by his nephew and the extinction of the direct descendants of Jang Bahadur. All these changes were to be endured if not enjoyed. Colonel Wylie, whose grandson was a distinguished mountaineer and one-time Military Attache at the Embassy in Kathmandu, built up a reputation for understanding and conciliation.

During the Great War, when Colonel Manners-Smith was Resident, the only holder of the Victoria Cross to hold the post, Maharajah Chandra Shumsher greatly assisted the Allied cause, not only by allowing the recruitment of 21 Gurkha battalions (there were 45 in World War II), but by releasing Nepalese troops for garrison duties in India. The difficulties over the restoration of caste after men had been obliged for military reasons to cross the "black water", had by then been solved.

The end of the Great War was made the occasion for change in the nature of British relations with Nepal - The Treaty of Friendship of 1923 on which our present relations subsist. This Treaty was negotiated when Lieutenant Colonel O'Connor was Resident. It removed the prohibitions of the Treaty of Segauli on the employment of British and foreign nationals not approved by the British Government and the prohibitions, attached in a letter to the previous treaty, on the supply of armaments. It was regarded by the Nepalese as a full and unequivocal recognition of the independence of Nepal. Ten years later an Ambassador was appointed to Nepal. The nominee was not particularly acceptable, though he was accepted, and Maharajah Juddha wrote to the then Envoy that "to our great surprise the selection has gone this time not even to a second-class Resident but to a Political Agent (a rank lower than second-class Resident)." He went on to say, "Forgive me when I say that circumstances compel me to remark that for all Your Excellency's Uniform and in spite of your 17-gun salute you are shown and seen to be no better than Resident of the 2nd Class". Despite this low rating the Ambassador showed himself a man of mettle leaving a notice in the bedrooms that breakfast was at 8 a.m. in the dining room and guests should not address His Excellency during the meal. He also emulated the character in Somerset Maugham who unwrapped his copies of The Times chronologically and read them...

The life of a foreign envoy in Nepal is now much more diversified than it was when we were alone in the field. Travel is for the most part free and the aeroplane has transformed communications, though the feet are still the only feasible mode of locomotion in many outlying areas. Social life is also more diversified: there are more than twenty diplomatic and aid missions as well as an increasing number of tourists who are a financial blessing to the country but not always to the environment. Britain has maintained a long and for a time unique relationship with Nepal and that through Gurkhas, mountaineers and other contacts which are deep and continuing. For these reasons a British Ambassador enjoys a rewarding life. My only personal claim to fame is that I stayed in Nepal longer than any Envoy since the Second World War. During that time the King and Queen of Nepal paid a State Visit to Britain and there were visits to Nepal by TRH the Prince of Wales and Princess Anne as well as private visits by other members of the Royal Family. Contacts at this level have set the seal on our relationship. On leaving Nepal I echoed in my valedictory

despatch the words of Henry Lawrence, "A lovelier spot on earth the heart of man could scarce desire". To any British Envoy who has had the privilege and pleasure to serve in Nepal the country will remain forever imprinted on his mind, his imagination, his vision, and perhaps his stomach!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Limitations of space have unfortunately compelled us to omit some passages, for example some fascinating quotations from Honoria Lawrence's journal.

JANG BAHADUR IN EUROPE (The First Nepalese Mission to the West) by John Whelpton with an Introduction by Rishikesh Shaha. Sahayogi Press, Kathmandu.

Reviewed by Mayura Brown

This book is the culmination of much painstaking research; for besides the translation of the interesting "Jang Bahadurko Belait Yatra", the author has given us an extensive background to the events leading to Jang Bahadur's rise to power and his subsequent journey to Europe. He has provided a generous supply of notes and included reports - with some hilariously inaccurate comments - by both the British and French press, as Jang Bahadur's party also visited France. In addition there is a lengthy introduction by Rishikesh Shaha, a former Nepalese Ambassador to the United Nations and a previous Foreign Minister in Nepal.

Both writers have combined to guide us through the tortuous minefield of Nepalese politics in that era which witnessed the ascendancy and decline of one faction after another, the endless intrigues, and the resulting instability in the country's affairs. In the midst of all this chaos, the British Resident, Brian Hodgson, managed to accumulate considerable knowledge of all aspects of Nepalese life, language, laws, the various ethnic groups, Tibetan Buddhism, and the wealth of flora and fauna in the country, all of which were unknown in the West. (At his own expense, Hodgson employed local artists to paint accurate pictures of the plants, animals and birds. These are held in various learned establishments, yet he was never honoured by his own country for all his important contributions. His name is not even included in the Dictionary of National Biography).

Hitherto Western writers have been the main source of information on Nepal. In the "Belait Yatra" we find an early Nepalese view of Britain. It was reputedly written by one of Jang Bahadur's entourage, though there appear to have been

several versions of the "Yatra" which may have included parts of the diary kept by Jang Bahadur himself but which has been lost. The determination of Jang Bahadur to undertake a journey of several thousand miles to an unknown country was courageous since the Nepalese had never even seen the sea (the forbidden 'kala pani') which they would have to cross to reach 'Belait'. Leaving medieval Nepal, the party were to be confronted with the glittering sophistication of London society. It must have been as if they had entered another century, or been transported to another world. And as they were dazzled by the wealth and power of Victorian Britain, so the people of London were enchanted by the clothes and jewels worn by the exotic strangers who enlivened the social scene in that summer of 1850.

Both countries benefited by this visit, and the amity it produced exists to this day. Very briefly the outcome was that Nepal would be relieved of the fear of annexation by the British, and Britain would have a reliable ally on the north eastern frontier of India. (This was proved in 1857 when Jang Bahadur came down at the head of 12,000 Nepalese troops to assist the British. Since then, Nepal has supported Britain with troops in both World Wars.)

As this is not a historical journal I must desist from lengthy pronouncements on points with which I disagree, but I would like to make two small comments. Rishikesh Shaha does not credit the various feats that made Jang Bahadur a folk hero, while John Whelpton believes there is "a core of truth in the anecdotes". Jang Bahadur could not, when he rose to power, fabricate situations which nobody had witnessed. These events took place in public when Jang was holding a very junior post and was obliged to obey the whims of the Heir Apparent, Prince Surendra. At one time Jang was ordered to jump down a well, on another occasion he was commanded to jump into the Trisuli river on horseback (my family version is slightly different), and I have been regaled with various versions, even by complete strangers, of Jang's leap from the Dharara tower!

Both Mr. Whelpton and Mr. Shaha have endeavoured to give a fair description of Jang Bahadur's complex character. Documents cannot furnish the whole picture of a public figure; there is the often concealed private self. My very dear Great-grand-papa had a droll sense of humour, and what was sometimes believed to be an earnest and serious conversation was a glorious leg-pull.

This book is not for the coffee-table. A reader will require to give it unstinted concentration.

OBITUARIES

GENERAL KIRAN SHAMSHER JANG BAHADUR RANA

Our members heard, with great sorrow, of the death of General Kiran Shamsheer J. B. Rana in Kathmandu on the 27th October 1983. He was Nepalese Ambassador to the Court of St. James from 1974-1977, and endeared himself to members of the Society by his old-world courtes his warmth and concern, especially for the older people who had served in Nepal. He treated them more as 'family' than good friends. After he had returned to Nepal with Rani Kiran, members always enquired after them and sent best wishes and remembrances.

A letter of condolence was sent to the Rani and the family in Kathmandu, and we offered our sincere sympathies to his son, Mr. Prabal Rana, in London.

General Kiran, who held the post of Commander-in-Chief in the nineteen fifties, was one of the younger sons of Maharaja Joodha Shamsheer. (Members will recall that it was Maharaja Joodha who gave permission for the Everest Expedition of 1933 to fly over Nepalese territory - the first time this had been permitted.)

A man who served his country loyally as soldier and diplomat, General Kiran, during his final illness and in great pain, still continued his duties as Hon. A.D.C. to His Majesty King Birendra.

M.B.

KENNETH KEYMER

It was very distressing to hear of the death of Mr. Kenneth Keymer in July. He was one of our first members - a very valued one - as his family had been connected with Nepal since 1898. Keymer, Son & Co. Ltd., were responsible for the famous rope-railway that carried goods over the mountains to Kathmandu. In its time it was considered to be one of the most notable pieces of engineering of its kind in the world.

Mr. Keymer's father, Sir Daniel, visited Nepal in 1912 when entry into the country was strictly by invitation. Later Mr. Keymer visited Kathmandu several times.

Members will recall Mr. Keymer's very interesting talk in 1979 when he showed slides of the old days in Nepal. Taken before the advent of colour, those sepia slides brought memories flooding back for those who knew the Valley in the past.

It is very sad indeed to lose a staunch and loyal friend who had such a strong affection for Nepal and who was a strong supporter of the Society. He will be greatly missed.

M.B.

RYDER-CHESHIRE (JORPATI) HOME KATHMANDU NEPAL

by Ann Sparkes

After several years of hard work this Home for the rehabilitation of physically disabled young people has opened. The first residents were accepted in January and more in April. The total capacity will be 30. Most should benefit from good care and treatment and be able to leave much improved with skills acquired after a couple of years.

The Home has been built on land donated by the Nepal Disabled and Blind Association whose own Home is in the same spacious compound. Thus the Residents can intermingle and in fact share the workshops of the NDBA and some rehabilitation equipment. A national Dutch charity funded the actual building. Normally such homes are supported by the local community, but because Nepal is such a comparatively poor country none of the running costs can be raised there and this is my aim.

One of the first residents is a young school teacher but already from his spinal chair he is giving daily classes to a number of the blind and disabled children. I am glad to learn he already finds he can bend from the waist better and is much encouraged.

Leonard Cheshire visited the Home in March which gave a great boost to the hard working Committee who are all people of standing in the country, Dr. Malla being the guiding force. The British Ambassador, Mr. Hurrell, is also deeply interested having spent his career in ODA. Mr. Michael Prossor, the part-time Administrator speaks excellent Nepali which is very helpful. We are now sending out a volunteer trained nurse to take charge of the locally recruited care staff as the right person cannot be found in Kathmandu.

The eventual running costs are likely to be in the region of £10,000 per year. I will send regular Progress Reports to all kind donors and hopefully some photographs as well. Over the past 18 months I have raised £5,000 which is a good start. Please help if you can. Some groups are even collecting their half-pennies up to the end of the year for me. Thus no donation is too small!

This is only an 'interim' report (until I can glean more information as to the actual residents, their background, disabilities, and 'human stories'.)

Two thirds of the people live in the hills where survival seems a miracle even for the fittest let alone for those with disabilities. Our Home may seem a drop in the ocean but with the proven record of successful achievement all over the world by our Founders, we are confident its chances of success are assured and like the grain of mustard seed, it will grow and develop provided the money is forthcoming.

The achievements of our Founders need no explanation - there are now about 200 Cheshire Homes in 39 countries within the Leonard Cheshire Foundation, over 70 of which are in the United Kingdom. The Sue Ryder Homes are mainly in Poland and the United Kingdom but there are other projects as well as these.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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

TWO GENERATIONS by Edmund and Peter Hillary.

Hodder & Stoughton. £10.95 223 pages

Hillary pere is a household name in the world of high altitude climbing. His son, Peter, is less famous, but is doing his best to catch up and not live under his father's shadow. The chapter "Ocean to the Sky", an account of a journey up the Ganges from the Sundabans to Hardwar, is unusual. The distance is 1500 miles from sea-level to 3,000 feet. At 18,000 feet Edmund Hillary was found to be suffering from cerebral oedema.

Peter Hillary's contribution to this book is, in part, a repeat of his "A Sunny Day in the Himalayas" and "First across the roof of the world". The latter was reviewed in Journal No. 7 of 1983.

Like most books from Hodder & Stoughton, this one is well put together, has good maps, plenty of very good photographs in colour and an index.

A MAN AND HIS MOUNTAINS by Norman Croucher

Kaye and Ward. £9.95. 217 pages

Legless in the mountails of Switzerland, Kashmir, China, Argentina and Peru. Sounds more like the fate of an Action Man toy which has suffered at the hands of a small boy. But Croucher had no legs following an accident at the age of 19. He had always had a desire to climb and, as he said after the accident, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent". No hint of self-pity there for this Action Man.

Despite his physical handicap, Croucher has climbed in Switzerland (the Mönch, the Eiger, the Jungfrau). For good measure he has added Kashmir, China, Peru and the Argentine. The best chapter in his story is probably the one which deals with Muztagh Ata (24,757 feet) in China. Croucher's literary style is clear, detailed and comprehensive. Nothing likely to be of interest to the expert, or the layman, has been excluded.

Unlike many books on the subject of mountaineering, this book has a list of contents, a good index and a helpful glossary of climbing terms, plus a few hints on the techniques of climbing. A selection of photographs in colour and some maps round off the story of a legless, but very determined high-altitude climber.

THE HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS by Bob Gibbons and Bob Ashford
Batsford. £9.95. 157 pages

Few publishers will turn down a manuscript which deal with the Himalayas and its peoples. Too many will happily produce something which soon finds itself in the 'remainder' bookshops which have been springing up everywhere. Today the Kathmandu trail is, perhaps, more for serious mountain climbers and trekkers than hippies hunting for hashish. The authors have chosen to write about Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim.

The smallest of these countries is Sikkim, Bhutan somewhat larger. Nepal is easily the biggest and gets the most extensive treatment in regard to history, geography, climate and travel facilities. Sikkim is covered in five pages. Less accessible perhaps? Bhutan takes up 26 pages.

Nepal's natural history, in all its aspects, is given a measure of prominence that it deserves and the National Parks, together with the Wildlife Reserves, are described in some detail.

The book has some maps, a lot of very good photographs (some in colour) and an excellent bibliography. A glossary of Nepali and Tibetan words will be found helpful and there is a very full index.

HEART OF THE JUNGLE by K. K. Gurung
Andre Deutsch. £9.95 197 pages

Thinking of going to India, or trekking in the Himalayas? There are other places to see besides Delhi, Jaipur and Agra. One place you really should not miss is the Royal Chitwan National Park in Nepal. This book - the author of which is a Gurung and manager of "Tiger Tops" in the National Park - is well written and well illustrated. The author has drawn many of the pictures himself and is a mine of information on the flora and fauna of the area. For the expert in everything pertaining to the wild life of the Park, there are the Latin names and an indication as to the degree of rarity of each species. The times to visit, the climate and the daily temperatures are all there. The price is modest enough for the information in the book.

RIDING THE MOUNTAINS DOWN by Bettina Selby
Victor Gollancz £9.95 232 pages

The end papers of this book are a map of the ground covered by Mrs. Selby on a bicycle. A quick look will give you some idea of the size of the adventure, but what the map cannot do is to give you any idea of the problems - physiographical, psychological and human, which she encountered on, or off, the bike between Karachi and Gangtok.

In Pakistan Mrs. Selby's chief problem was one of sex - the fact that she was a female in a male-dominated Muslim society. An older generation, with some experience of India, might be astonished at the antics of some males who tried to molest her. The latter part of her journey, especially in the Nepal Himalayas was a welcome change, although tourists who had preceded her had much to answer for by encouraging young children to beg and their elders to peddle "magic mushrooms".

Mrs. Selby's pen-pictures of the places and people she visited are evidence that she had a sharp eye. She was also possessed of physical stamina of a high order, but was not immune to the intestinal disorders which usually affect Europeans in those places where sanitation is almost less than primitive.

Many people, especially in some isolated Christian communities in Pakistan, had shown her a large measure of kindness. It was in Pokhara that she spent some ten days trying to recuperate from amoebiasis and, for her, Pokhara became "the true and original Shangri-La. After the first day or two I didn't feel ill any more and was able to eat hugely". Kathmandu provided Bettina with her first real glimpse of civilisation since leaving Karachi many weeks before.

In 232 pages Mrs. Selby has packed an exciting account, with some photos in colour, of a journey quite different from that of another lady cyclist, Dervla Murphy. Aged 47 and the mother of three children, she has recorded the details of what must rank as one of the most unusual DIY trips across the Indian sub-continent.

The book ends with the technical details of her bike and a few simple tips on the medicines which might prove useful. So if you should ever be invited by a certain member of Mrs. Thatcher's Government to "get on your bike", you should take a look at "Riding the Mountains Down" before you start.

ROLLS-ROYCE AND RAJAHS

by Mayura Brown

For those interested in the history of this elegant automobile, and who revel in nostalgia as well, "Rolls-Royce and Bentley in Princely India" is a must with more than 1,000 period photographs.

There is a section on Nepal for our members to savour and some will remember, I am sure, how porters had to carry the cars over the steep and narrow mountain paths to Kathmandu. In those days we travelled by horseback or in palinquin from Bhimphedi to the capital. (The narrow-gauge Nepal Government Railway went from the frontier town of Raxaul to Amlekgunge, thence the journey was by car or bus to Bhimphedi. In my Grandfather's time there was an elephant dak from Raxaul to the foot of the hills.)

Pakistan, Afghanistan, Burma and Ceylon are also covered in this book by John Fasal. Publication is not due until the latter part of 1985 but in the meantime John Fasal (18 Daleham Mews, Hampstead, London N.W.2.) would be most grateful to hear from anyone who has knowledge or photographs of Rolls-Royces in Nepal or elsewhere in the Indian sub-continent.

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 in excess of £200,000 for the Welfare Scheme in Nepal, and the major part of this sum will be distributed in the hill areas in the form of welfare payments, pensions to needy families not in receipt of a Government pension, and student grants.

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 (USA) 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 Centres, also known as Outreach Centres, 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 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 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 Criag, whose address is given below:

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

H.C.S.G.

ADDRESSES

The Britain-Nepal Medical Trust
Stafford House, 16 East Street
Tonbridge, Kent.

The Gurkha Museum
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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

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. Next year (1985) it will be celebrating its silver jubilee.

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, businessmen and scholars.

Ordinary members pay a subscription of £5 per annum. Life members - a single payment of £40.

The "Yetis" - Nepalese studying or resident in Britain - are welcome at all functions. They are eligible to join as full members in the usual way. They have a flourishing organisation of their own and publish their own attractive journal.

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 or March.

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 Honorary Members and Corporate Members, is now well over five hundred.

The President of our Society, Sir George Bishop, CB, OBE, has recently been elected President of the Royal Geographical Society.

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

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1 Allen Mansions
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London W8 6UY

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