



BRITAIN-NEPAL

SOCIETY

JOURNAL

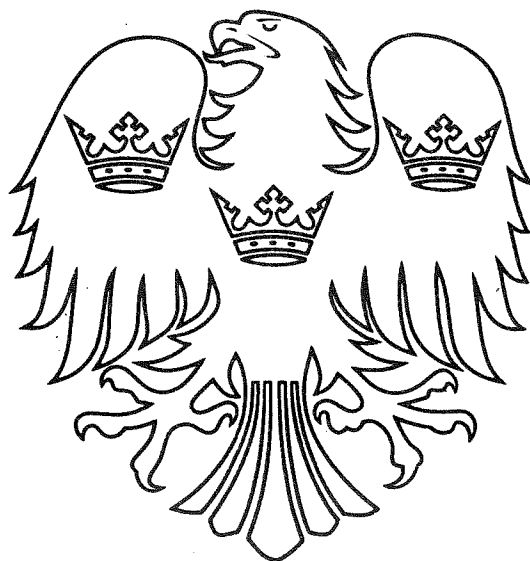
NO. 9

1985

SILVER JUBILEE

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The first number of our Journal came out in the Silver Jubilee year of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's accession: since then the Journal has prospered and this number comes out in the year of our own Silver Jubilee as a Society.

The importance of the Journal is that it provides for the many members of our country-wide Society who are not able to attend meetings in London a record of the lectures arranged for members at the Alpine Club and elsewhere in the capital. The colourful slides that usually accompany the lectures cannot be reflected in the Journal but the talks do stand very well by themselves and are appreciated both within and outside the Society as growing interest in the Journal has shown.

The contents of this the Silver Jubilee number are varied as usual and if a common theme can be said to run through them it must be the subject that has come very much to the fore since the setting up of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation. The Trust already has strong support within the Society. Nature Conservation is a matter of world-wide concern but it has a special significance in Nepal where the flora and fauna are of such very great interest and of such obvious importance to the economy in that they attract visitors from all over the world. That they are also of incalculable value in the lives of the people needs no emphasis.

Another matter of great concern is the one to which attention was drawn forcefully in the President's speech on the occasion of the annual gathering in New Zealand House, a slightly shortened version of which appears in the Journal. That matter is British aid to Nepal - a matter close to the hearts of all members of this flourishing and very active Society.

A special contribution from H.E. The Nepalese Ambassador will be found at page 33.

Editor

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ADVERTISEMENTS

NEWSLETTER

The Alpine Club has been the venue for another season of interesting talks which were well attended by members and their guests. We should like to thank the speakers who gave their time so generously, and in some instances travelled long distances.

The following talks were given during the 1984/85 season:

Thursday, 20th September

Mr. J. B. Denson (formerly British Ambassador to Nepal) - "British Envoys in Nepal" - illustrated with slides. (See Journal No. 8)

Wednesday 31st October

Sir George Bishop - "Mountaineering and Trekking in Nepal over Sixteen Years" - illustrated with slides.

Thursday, 17th January - Dr. G. M. Hornby - "Conservation Education in Nepal" - illustrated with slides. (Article in this Journal).

Wednesday, 13th February

Mr. A. D. Schilling (Deputy Curator Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew). "Nepal - a Plantsman's Paradise - In the Footsteps of Sir Joseph Hooker" - illustrated with slides. (Article in this Journal - "In the Footsteps of Joseph Hooker")

Thursday, 18th April

Mr. John Sanday - "Building Conservation in Asia" - illustrated with slides. (Article in this Journal)

Wednesday, 15th May

Mrs. Carol Inskipp - "The Changing Pattern of Bird Distribution in Nepal" - illustrated with slides. (Article in this Journal).

Over the years the Society has been able to organise its monthly meetings free of charge to members and with a cost of £1 per guest. Expenses for these evenings, however, have risen rapidly recently and in view of this your Committee have considered and agreed reluctantly to propose at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting, that members and their guests pay £1 at future monthly meetings, and that this should take effect from January 1986. The cost will include sherry and soft drinks before the meetings.

Annual General Meeting

HE Mr. Ishwari Raj Pandey kindly invited the Society to hold its Twenty-fourth Annual General Meeting in the ballroom of the Royal Nepalese Embassy on Wednesday, 28th November. There was a good attendance of members and the meeting was followed by a curry supper.

Annual Nepali Supper

Our thanks are due to the President, Sir George Bishop, for once again arranging for the Society to hold its Annual Supper at New Zealand House on Thursday, 21st March.

There were well over 200 members and their guests present, and we were very pleased to welcome Sir John Nott as Guest of Honour, the Nepalese Ambassador, members of the Embassy staff, representatives of the Inter-Parliamentary group, the President of the Yeti Association and its members.

As in past years our thanks are due to the Committee members for their invaluable help, the Commanding Officer of the 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles for providing the Gurkha Orderlies and the Piper, the Nepalese Embassy for their generous contribution of wine, and the Manandhar family for an excellent curry supper.

Boat Trip

As part of the Society's 25th Anniversary celebrations, the Committee organised an evening Boat trip from Westminster to the Thames Barrier on Tuesday, 2nd July with a curry supper on board. A raffle in aid of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation raised £106.20 and the excellent prizes were presented to the lucky winners by Lord Hunt. Many thanks are due to the members who so kindly donated the prizes.

Articles about the talks and the Society's other activities appear elsewhere in this Journal.

Cost of Membership

Ordinary membership is £5 per annum. Life membership is 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 tie is £5 including postage. Your Secretary holds a large stock of these high quality ties which have been specially made for the Society by the old-established firm of Messrs. Thresher and Glenny.

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 1985/86 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 HE The Ambassador) on Wednesday, 20th November 1985.

The late Mr. C. J. Sykes

This Newsletter cannot be concluded without mentioning the sad loss which the Society suffered in the death of Clem Sykes, of the British Council and formerly 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, in January. Clem had been closely involved in the Society for 16 years and on the Committee most of that time. As Brigadier Taggart expressed it in a letter to Clem's widow, Pat, who has also taken a keen interest in the Society, "Clem has picked up his tent and moved on."

Royal Academy Success

Congratulations to Sheila Kimber, member of the Society, for having her portrait of Sir Hugh Casson accepted for hanging at the Academy Summer Show this year.

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

BUILDING CONSERVATION IN ASIA WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON NEPAL

[Talk given to the Society at The Alpine Club on 18 April 1985 by Mr. John Sanday, ARIBA, introduced by Mrs. Anne Mitchell]

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: and old friends from Nepal.

Firstly my thanks to Mrs. Anne Mitchell for such a monumental introduction! It is a pleasure to return and talk to the Society again. Since my last visit, it surprises me somewhat to see how much we, the Conservation Movement in Nepal, have achieved since my first talk to the Society in the mid Seventies. However, it is a struggle to keep ahead of the increasing threats to the Kathmandu Valley's fragile environment. But the Nepalese Government are now well armed with their Masterplans and potential conservation projects in the Kathmandu Valley; in Lumbini; and in the Himalaya to maintain their priceless culture, as long as they act fast and do not lose the momentum they have gained over the last decade. Recently a non governmental organisation - The Nepal Heritage Society - has been formed to develop local interests in conservation of both nature and culture and to promote the cultural heritage of Nepal.

Tonight I propose to take you on a "Retrospective Exhibition" of my team's and my work in the Kathmandu Valley as well as giving you an insight into what is to come. Before I proceed further however, I must make you all realise the sort of problems that we are up against, as most people tend to see Nepal only as a place of beauty. Having shocked you into the realisation of what we are faced with, I will then highlight some of the work that is being or has been undertaken during the last decade, starting off with the Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Project which was the subject of an earlier talk I gave.

The Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Project is well known to most of you as being the flagship of the conservation movement in the Kathmandu Valley and indeed in Nepal. It was started in 1973 under the sponsorship of UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organisation) to assist the Nepalese Government in the development of appropriate building conservation technology and to establish on-site training as well as a training programme abroad for technicians. The project became well known because it was to serve as the physical backdrop for the Coronation of His Majesty King Birendra Bikram Shah Dev in February 1975. It was in the Hanuman Dhoka that all the conservation techniques were tried out and developed, later to be used on all other projects of repair and conservation in the Kathmandu Valley. It was on this project that the skills of the carvers were given a rebirth as slowly new members of the carving guilds joined our team under the chief carver - Tulsi Kumar Silpakar from Bhaktapur - to regain their skills and confidence and in fact to return to carving as their main occupation. Most of the craftsmen had long put away their carving tools to concentrate on more lucrative activities or return to farming. Because of our need for replacing many of the traditional Malla 'Telia' or oil face bricks, we were faced with the daunting task of having to rediscover the traditional methods of making this specially glazed and cut brick as I was certain that if I advertised for secondhand bricks several important family dwellings in the cities would be torn down in response to this demand. Other specialist traditional crafts were called upon during this interesting project, such as the bell makers and the copper smiths. The eaves of the majority of important buildings within the Durbar Squares are decorated with hundreds of wind bells - small bells with a large leaf of copper attached to the clapper which is activated by the wind. In our project we had to make over 3,000 bells to replace those which had originally hung from the eaves of the palace buildings. They were made using the wax loss process, where each bell was formed on a lathe

in bees wax and then coated in several layers of clay - starting with a fine layer of special clay mixed with cow dung to establish the more detailed patterns in the mould and finally being encased in a thick layer of clay mixed with rice husk. Once dried the wax was melted out of the clay mould and was replaced with bell metal - an alloy of often five different metals. The clay mould is then broken open to reveal the cast bell. The process is the same for each bell, thus making each one a unique work of art.

The Kirtipur Tower, one of the more challenging elements in the project is a copper-roofed structure with a domelike roof profile. Its origin was at first hard for me to locate, as it is unique in Nepal. However, once I had started working in Bangladesh, I soon found this roof to be very common on all their historic structures and was to learn that they were derived from the humble bamboo and straw dwelling of the Bengalis. However, they were not copper clad as was the Kirtipur Tower. The craftsmen of the former roof did not appreciate the application of a copper sheet roof and this accounts for the dilapidation. The copper sheeting had also generated considerable heat beneath it creating ideal conditions for fungal and beetle growth. With the help of our coppersmiths and using modern technology - as well as a felt underlay from the local carpet shop - we have replaced the old copper sheets with new, the only material to be imported from abroad. It was a highly complicated process as every copper sheet was of a different shape and had to be especially cut to fit with its neighbour. We were unable to gild the new copper to match the original as to do so, the cost of the gold alone would amount to the total cost of the project itself!

Many people have enquired what has been going on at Swayambhu since the threatening landslide of August 1978. I will try and summarise the problems, the diagnosis and the remedial works as succinctly as possible. In August 1978, as the culmination of a series of disturbances in the south eastern corner of Swayambhu Hill, a portion of the hill directly below the 17th Century Pratapur Shikhara style temple slipped down the hill, dropping about one metre vertically. This was the result of an especially heavy monsoon storm in the Kathmandu Valley. There was a great cause for alarm recalling me from England at a few days notice and the appointment of the first series of consultants to save this important religious and architectural site from destruction. An analysis of the site and of past movements in this specific area exposed an endemic problem that had been producing warning signals of pending disaster over the last decade. I remember back in 1970 being asked to look at a small Pathi (Resthouse) which was perched precariously on the edge of the slope at this point. It was in a sorry state due mostly to neglect. On my return to Nepal about six months later the structure had disappeared because of the 'effects of the monsoon'. Later, just prior to the Coronation, part of the old retaining wall was 'washed away' and plans by the Physical Planning Department were drawn up and implemented to construct a massive retaining wall and to extend the viewing platform as this part of Swayambhu Hill offers the most spectacular views over the Valley and the Himalaya beyond. Within a couple of years the southern half of this retaining wall had visibly moved in an outward direction. Realising that the wall was unstable, the Physical Planning Department decided to add what best may be described as "flying buttresses" which were installed up the steep south eastern slope and built against the wall. Sadly in neither case did either of these structures have foundations that reached the bedrock beneath the topsoil and as we shall see later this was one of the main contributory causes for the landslide. Each of the previous failures had been the result of storm water, a fact that had gone almost unnoticed, as in neither repair had any consideration been given to the disposal of the vast amount of rainfall that fell on Swayambhu, most of which was collected in a sump in the south eastern corner and disposed of down the slope in a large cast iron drainpipe.

During the various settlements and movements this pipe fractured and all the collected water percolated through the top soil until it reached the solid bedrock. After continual saturation during the monsoon the soil became 'buoyant' at the point where it met the bedrock and slippery. With all the extra weight of buttresses and the wall itself a downward thrust was created and on the now slippery surface created between the bedrock and topsoil, there was this apparent sudden slip in this area. Panic for fear that the Swayambhu Stupa itself was also threatened caused the Nepalese Government to have a row of houses along the southern edge of the hilltop removed and shortly after a major programme of investigation was got under way. Detailed analysis has now proved that the main cause for the slip was lack of proper drainage caused by a series of additions and alterations to the top of the slope. Work was immediately got under way to put matters right and the combined efforts of the Departments of Archaeology, Mining and Topographical Survey has led to the stabilising of what could have become a chronic situation of landslip on this south eastern corner of the Swayambhu Hill. The Department of Mines worked day and night drilling 2" diameter holes to a depth of 60 feet under the Stupa to provide information of the geology of the hill as well as to provide drainage outlets from the bedrock, whilst a team of workmen from the Department of Archaeology greatly reduced the dead weight from the top of the slip by lowering the platform by at least 6'-0" and by removing the top section of the wall and the "Flying Buttresses" and reusing the stone to build gabions around the hill. The excavated channels left from the buttresses were used as surface water drainage channels and were backfilled with gravel and grassed over. During the excavations to the trenches on the platform a large black stone which mercifully was not smashed to pieces by the labourer wielding the pick axe who discovered it, was a priceless stone carving of Padmapani Avaloketeswar dating from the 5th-6th Century A.D. Why it was in the trench face downwards, at a depth of 8'-0" is a mystery. Our investigations around and under Swayambhu produced the reassuring evidence that the Stupa is set firmly on an outcrop of rock with the surrounding platform being natural soil deposit or made up ground - it was interesting to find that the Pratapur Sikhara had a sound brick foundation to a depth of 24'-0" directly onto the bedrock and that the platform was most likely extended around the structure at that date. Work is still being carried out on the hill top. Each monsoon the Department of Survey carry out a resurvey of all the 80 odd fixed survey points that were established five years ago to record any movement on the slopes and also to see that the recent stabilisation programme is in fact stable. Measurements are taken to the nearest millimetre and so the slightest disturbance is evident when compared to the earlier surveys. There is no evidence of movement in the stabilised area but there are warning signs that other areas on the hill are potential danger spots and must be carefully watched.

We now turn to another very interesting conservation project which has been running for the last five years and is being funded by the erstwhile International Fund for Monuments now renamed World Monuments Fund. The project known as the Gokarna Conservation Project centres around the temple complex of the little village of Gokarna to the east of the Kathmandu Valley. The complex consists of the main Shiva Temple dedicated to Mahadev, a prayer hall dedicated to Vishnu and the priests' rest houses all serenely located along the west banks of the Bagmati River shortly after it enters the plains of the Valley. The problems of renovating and conserving this group have not been all that complicated apart from the difficulties that were encountered in removing the encrusted $\frac{1}{2}$ " layer of engine oil that had been painted over the exquisite carved frames to the doors on each elevation. The main element of success lay in the way the project was undertaken as this was the culmination of all the efforts put into the Hanuman Dhoka so many years before. The administration and execution of the whole project was carried out by staff and craftsmen who were trained

under the UNESCO programme with minimal input from myself. I was called in when major structural problems were encountered; otherwise the work was carried out "...like in Hanuman Dhoka". What was even more satisfying was that the local villagers were participating in the work as the few craftsmen from Hanuman Dhoka took on local tradesmen and, themselves, trained up the newcomers to carry out the work according to the Hanuman Dhoka principles. The activities and the happenings that took place on this project are too numerous to recount here as they range from my being chased by an irate Sadhu armed with a trident around the temple to the use of the compound as a backdrop for a TV commercial which provided extra funds for the restoration. However I would certainly recommend anyone who has the chance to make the journey to Gokarna to see the work and enjoy the beauty of this unique temple complex.

In passing I should also mention the work going on in the Patan Durbar Square funded by the Austrian Government. The Keshab Narayan Chowk at the Northern end of the Durbar Square was the Patan Museum until this ambitious programme for its conservation and rehabilitation was undertaken. The first stage of a three stage programme has now been completed with the complete reconstruction of the roofs to match the original silhouette based on early photographs. The original roof, as was most of the Patan Durbar Square, was severely damaged by the earthquake of 1934. We have recently heard that the Austrian Government have agreed to finance the next stage to the tune of about 80,000 dollars US and, with the agreed contribution of 25% from the Nepalese, this will go a long way to completing this worthwhile project. It is hoped eventually to extend the museum throughout the whole of the courtyard as opposed to the west wing alone.

Other projects anticipated in the future are somewhat limited. However there is a proposal to undertake an important study of the Tengboche Monastery complex as the Rinpoche is very concerned with the rapid and uncontrolled development that is taking place there due to the pressures from trekking and tourism as well as the great expansion of the monastery from the intake of new novices. Each new entrant is responsible for the construction of his own cell and this has led to the haphazard development of the monastery compound.

Activities in the Kathmandu Valley will hopefully grow with the expansion of the present activities in Swayambhu, Gokarna, Patan and also with the addition of a new project sponsored by the Nepal Heritage Society.

It is also hoped that the Nepalese Government will take up UNESCO's offer of assistance in the Government's own activities in Lumbini - the birth place of Lord Buddha - where there is some concern about the development activities conflicting with the archaeological site and at Gorkha, the Royal Palace from whence the Shah Dynasty came. His Majesty has shown great interest in the repair and conservation of this important site, which sadly is threatened by landslides similar to those experienced in Swayambhu.

There is no denying and I am the first to admit it, that the Cultural Heritage of Nepal is threatened. We must look to the future for ways of combatting the ever increasing traffic in works of art that is slowly draining the Kathmandu Valley of its priceless statues and artefacts. This can only be achieved by creating an example to the people of Nepal by showing them the importance of their cultural heritage as something that they should maintain and not discard for the sake of a few rupees. Our efforts to this end have been to establish the importance of their priceless buildings and their traditions. The craftsmen and labourers are now the first to defend their monuments and I am now proud to see the possessive attitude adopted by the people of Gokarna to their temple complex. Everyone who loves Nepal, whether a foreigner or Nepalese, can therefore contribute to the saving of this priceless heritage by example and by encouragement and, if nothing else, I hope this talk has fired you with enthusiasm again towards Nepal and all she has offered us expatriates in the past and will offer, hopefully, in the future.

A NOTE ON JOSEPH HOOKER'S FAMOUS TREK IN EAST NEPAL AND SIKKIM

Tony Schilling's stimulating talk to the Society at the Alpine Club on 13th February (see following article) caused some of us to read or re-read that fascinating classic "The Himalayan Journals" of Joseph Hooker (later Sir Joseph Hooker OM etc), Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, for twenty years from 1865, in succession to his father Sir William Hooker.

Joseph Hooker's visit to Nepal and Sikkim belongs to the golden age of botanical exploration, just before the coming of railways and photography. Having taken part as a young man, a medical graduate from Glasgow University, in an Antarctic Expedition, as assistant surgeon, he went out to India in November 1847 and had the good fortune to travel in the same ship as Lord Dalhousie, the new Governor-General of India (both men in their thirties), who took an interest in him and helped him in Calcutta where arrangements were made for his journey to the Himalayas.

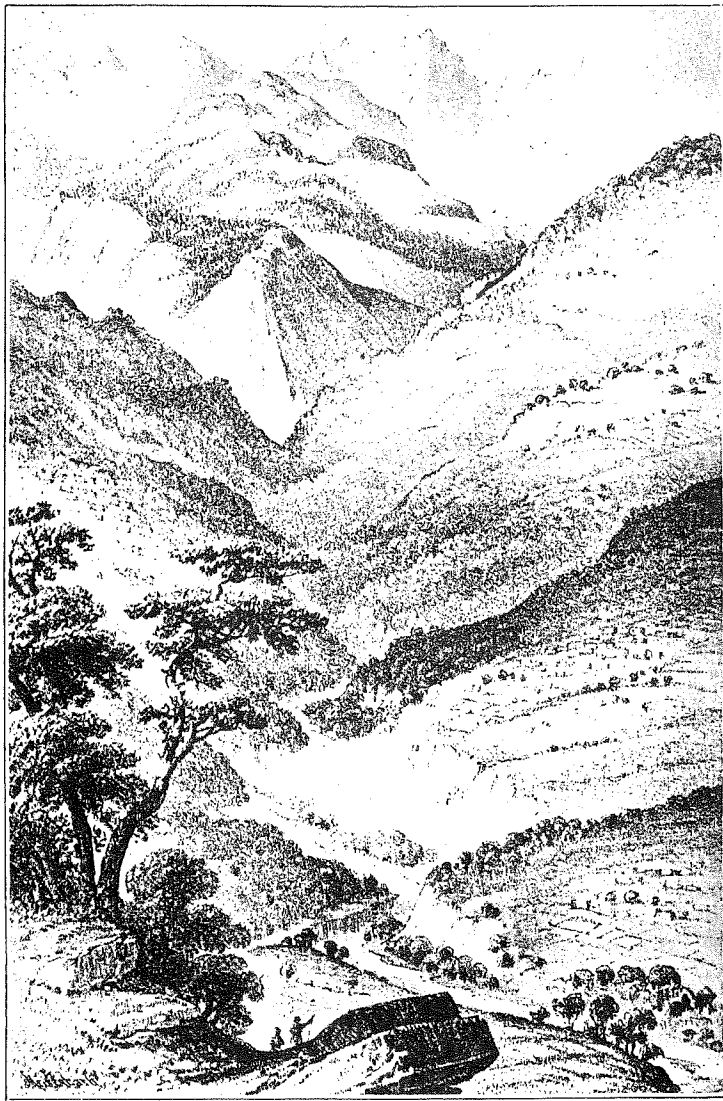
The President of the Asiatic Society (Sir James Colville) provided him with a completely equipped "polkee", a covered palanquin, almost a portable cabin, carried by a team of twelve men in relays, travelling usually at night. The polkee contained "everything a traveller could desire....often en route I mentally thanked him when I saw other "polkees" breaking down". When not in the polkee Hooker was on horseback or on an elephant and thus he journeyed from Calcutta to Mirzapore on the Ganges, thence down river via Benares and Patna to the important and attractive East India Company station of Bhagwalpur where he admired the Horticultural Gardens, and near where his 'dawk' (polkee again) awaited him to carry him to Siliguri and Darjeeling (about 150 miles).

At Darjeeling he enjoyed the hospitality of Brian Hodgson for three rainy seasons. ("The view from his windows is one quite unparalleled"). He was helped a great deal throughout his stay by Dr. Campbell, the Superintendent of the recently established hill station, who among other things was experimenting with the growing of tea. (Dr. Campbell's tea garden was in later years well known as Kambal Kaman). He thus had the best possible advice and assistance in organising his trek to Kangchenjunga, then believed to be the highest mountain in the world.

The aim was "to visit the Tibetan passes, west of Kinchinjunga", returning through Sikkim to Darjeeling. "I decided upon following up the Tambur (Tamura), a branch of the Arun river, and exploring the two easternmost of the Nepalese passes into Tibet (Wallanchoon and Kanglachim)".

The party of 56 persons included "a guard of six Nepalese soldiers and two officers (NCOs) (through the kindness of Colonel Thoresby the Resident and the influence of Jang Bahadoor)"...Mr. Hodgson's bird and animal shooter, collector and stuffer... three Lepcha lads to climb trees and change the plantpapers... seven men to carry papers for drying plants, cooks, porters laden with food. "I carried myself a small barometer, a large knife and digger for plants, note-book, telescope, compass and other instruments while two or three Lepcha lads who accompanied me as satellites carried a botanising box, thermometers, sextant and artificial horizon, measuring-tape, azimuth compass and stand, geological hammer, bottles and boxes for insects, sketch-book etc arranged in compartments of strong canvas bags. The Nepal officer (of the rank of Serjeant I believe) always kept near me with one of his men, rendering innumerable little services. Other sepoy were distributed amongst the remainder of the party; one went ahead to prepare the camping-ground and one brought up the rear."

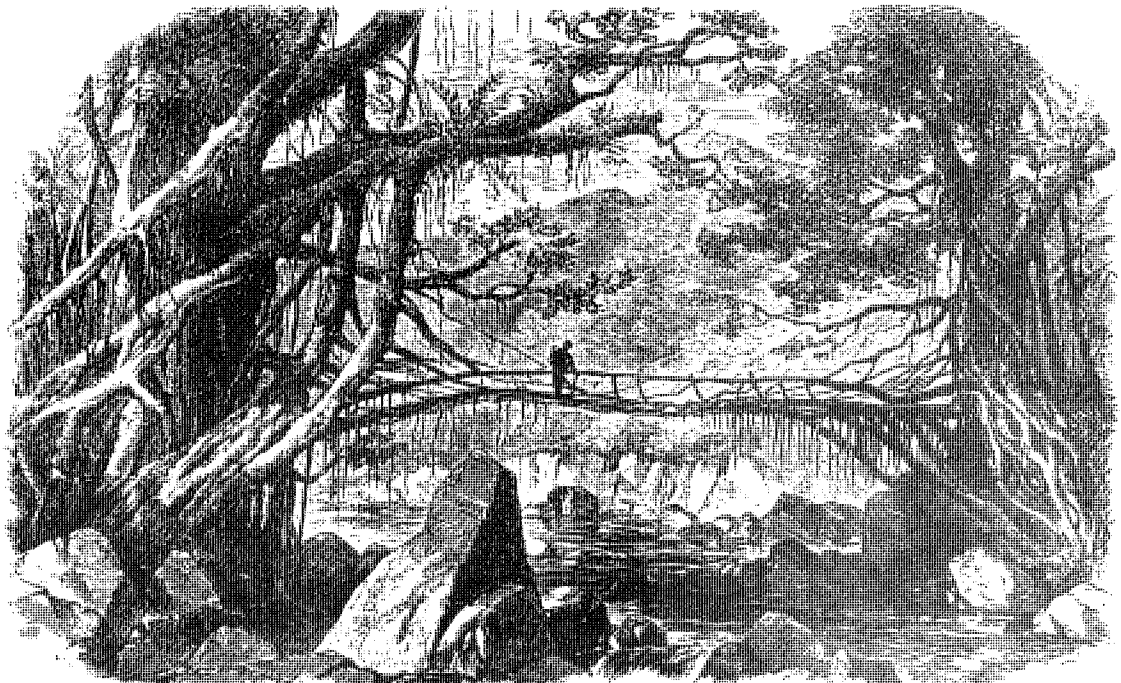
"I left Darjeeling at noon, on 27th October (1848) accompanied by Dr. Campbell who saw me fairly off..." They moved westwards towards Ilam, sighted "Dunkotah"



TAMBUR RIVER AND VALLEY (EAST NEPAL) FROM CHINGTAM (ELEVATION 5,000 FT.)
LOOKING NORTH.



TAMBUR RIVER AT THE LOWER LIMIT OF PINES.



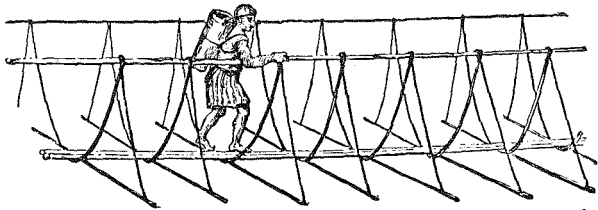
"LIVING BRIDGE," FORMED OF THE AERIAL ROOTS OF THE INDIA-RUBBER AND OTHER KINDS OF FIGS.



PEMIONGCHI GOOMPA AND CHAITS.

Pemiongchi was once the capital of Sikkim, and called the Sikkim Durbar

When properly and strongly made, with good fastenings, and a floor of bamboos laid *transversely*, these



bridges are easy to cross.

The canes are procured from a species of *Calamus*; they are as thick as the finger, and twenty or thirty yards long, knotted together, and the other pieces are fastened to them by strips of the same plant. A Lepcha, carrying one hundred and forty pounds on his back, crosses without hesitation, slowly but steadily, and with perfect confidence.



WALLANCHOON VILLAGE.

I arrived at the village of Wallanchoon on the 23rd of November. It is elevated 10,385 feet, and situated in a fine open part of the Tambur valley



LAMTENG VILLAGE.

The village stands on a grassy and bush flat, around which the pine-clad mountains rise steeply to the snowy peaks and black cliffs which tower above.

some 25 miles away ("famous for its manufacture of paper of the Daphne") and so began an eventful 85 day trek which took them up to above 16,700 feet. The passes were duly explored and quantities of plants packed and despatched to Dr. Falconer of the Calcutta Botanic Gardens, who sent them on to Kew. The daily routine was to "collect" during the early morning and march from about 10 am to 4 pm or later. The following note occurs at one point in the narrative: "Beyond Junoo, one of the Western peaks of Kinchinjunga, no continuous snowy chain was visible: the Himalaya seemed suddenly to decline into black and rugged peaks, till in the far northwest it rose again in a white mountain mass of stupendous elevation at 80 miles distance called by my Nepal people 'Tsungau'." (Later known as Mount Everest).

They returned to Darjeeling on a "dismal" January day and to Joseph Hooker the place seemed deserted - "Mr. Hodgson having gone down on a shooting excursion in the Terai and Dr. Campbell being on duty on the Bhotan frontier". But there were compensations. "The delight of my Lepcha attendants at finding themselves safely at home again knew no bounds; and their parents waited on me with presents".

The greater part of 1849 was taken up with treks in the Terai, the Teesta valley, Sikkim and Tibet where Hooker reached a height of nearly 20,000 feet, never before achieved by a European. (Altitude measured by the boiling point of water and barometric pressure).

In the following year (1850) he was in Calcutta when "Minister Jang Bahadoor" passed through on his way "as envoy" to England. Hooker took advantage of a meeting with Prime Minister Jangbahadur to request permission to trek from Darjeeling to Kathmandu but was diplomatically and not unkindly told "to wait until his return from England, as he could not be answerable for my personal safety when travelling during his absence".

Instead of trekking from Darjeeling to Kathmandu he had to be content with exploring the hills of Assam and Manipore and at last, after an absence of over three years, he arrived back in England on 25th March 1851, to the welcome of his family and a long-suffering fiancée.

Editor

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JOSEPH HOOKER

[Talk with coloured slides, given by Mr. A. D. Schilling, the Deputy Director, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, to the Society at the Alpine Club, on 13th February 1985]

This article has already appeared in "The Garden", the Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society, Vol. 108, Parts 2 and 3, 1983.

On the morning of 27 October, 1848, Joseph Hooker mustered a party of 55 men, including a personal servant and eight members of the Nepalese army, departed from Darjeeling and headed westwards into Nepal. What he accomplished there has since become a classical part of botanic history.

During the three months of his arduous expedition, Hooker followed the course of the mighty Tamur (Tambur) river returning via the high wild passes on the flanks of Kangchenjunga and over the lush forest ridges of western Sikkim. These adventures and achievements he later recorded in Volume I of his "Himalayan Journals".

He was the first European to tread the mountain wilderness of east Nepal and the trip was therefore very much a pioneering one. Today, the words Hooker and Himalaya are in many ways complimentary for the results of his efforts in that corner of Asia have had an immense and lasting impact.

Among the many trees and shrubs he recorded and introduced were *Larix griffithii* and *Juniperus wallichiana* (*J. indica*). However, he will be best remembered for the many new rhododendrons which he sent back to England from Sikkim and Nepal, to flourish and act like a painter's palette for the enthusiastic hybridists of the day. He was the very first of the really great rhododendron collectors and during his Himalayan journeys of 1848 and 1849 he collected, sketched and described no fewer than 36 species, 28 of which were new. *Rhododendron hookeri* was named in his honour, but ironically was not one of his own, having been introduced from Assam by T. J. Booth in 1849.

Before Hooker's input of new rhododendron blood, only 33 species were available to western gardeners and his introductions, therefore, more than doubled the number in cultivation.

At the end of his Nepal expedition which finished in January 1849, he despatched 80 loads of plant material to Calcutta by coolie cart and by river. Today's collectors are rightfully less liberal in their actions, but in the heyday of the British Raj the needs for conservation were not really appreciated. Even now it is difficult for us to accept that the vast forests of the greatest range of mountains on earth are actually under immense danger from the axe of man.

In the autumn of 1981 my wife and I were privileged to lead a trek, on behalf of Exodus Expeditions Limited, across the Tamur Valley and up on to the southwestern flanks of Kangchenjunga. Part of our month-long journey covered the trails that Hooker trod and it was deeply satisfying to pick up some of the threads of his travels and to find many of the plants he had seen and enjoyed 133 years before.

Unfortunately, we were somewhat restricted in our goal for we were declined permission to enter the currently politically sensitive regions of the upper Tamur. We therefore settled for the areas of the Karbeli valley and the Yallung (Yalloon) ridge. Frustrating though this was, we still managed to penetrate high into the subalpine zones and found much to satisfy our botanical appetites. Our journey really started when we were left hot and dusty at Dharan below the eastern foothills after a tiring two days drive from Kathmandu in a specially converted Bedford truck. This tedious journey was made memorably worthwhile by the excitement of seeing great waterfalls of the purple-flowering orchid, *Pleione praecox*, cascading down the cliffs close to the 8,500 ft summit of Daman on the Rajpath (2590m). This tarmac strip writhes like a tortured snake for over 60 miles (95km) through the rugged and unstable Mahabharat hills eventually to link Nepal to India.

The first eight days of our expedition involved the inevitable alternating ascent and descent of trekking through what is generally termed Midland Nepal. They were hot but beautiful days with infinite terraced hillsides of rice, sugar cane and millet, amidst gaily painted Limbu farmhouses with their attractively carved wooden balconies. Cheering us on our way were flowering wayside exotics inc-

cluding frangipani, poinsettia, the Rangoon creeper (*Quisqualis indica*), and bougainvillea growing cheek by jowl with the equally floriferous native *Bauhinia purpurea*, *B. bicolor*, *Prunus cerasoides* and *Luculia gratissima*. A truly remarkable deep dusty-red flowering form of the fragrant *Nerium indicum* (*N. odorum*) was also commonly planted.

On the eighth day, following a long descent from the Milke Danda ridge, we met Hooker's trail in the sub-tropical depths of the Tamur valley. We crossed this great river one at a time by way of an 80 yards long (73m) shaky and badly listing wire and plank bridge, the whole operation taking the best part of an hour. After some discussion it was generally decided that this exciting aerial structure had been designed by an idiot, constructed by a drunkard and was obviously maintained by the gods.

The Tamur river was just as Hooker had described it, "a pale sea green muddy colour and flowing rapidly with a strong ripple, but no foam". Along the banks were the tropical tree species of the terai and north Indian plains including sal (*Shorea robusta*), and peepal (*Ficus religiosa*), as well as handsome specimens of *Lagerstroemia parviflora* which produces a timber of high value. Its main trunk displays a very attractively patterned bark which "plates-off" in similar fashion to the London plane.

The next few days took us north-eastwards along the demanding trails of the Karbeli valley via the Limbu villages of Tellok and Mamankhe. In this warm temperate valley we saw screw pines (*Pandanus nepalensis*) tree-like in proportion with the female specimens bearing pineapple-shaped fruits, but the cliffs on which they grew were wet and inaccessible. Another small lowland tree which we assumed was *Erythrina arborescens* boasted large scarlet pea-shaped flowers in the spring, but was now bedecked with pendulous, reddish pods, over 8 inches long (20 cm).

The semi-scandent shrub *Holmskioldia coccinea* was common, an exotic-looking member of the Verbenaceae family, but in fact a native of these hills, and also that ubiquitous and tedious pan-tropical weed *Lantana camara* which has sadly trespassed far from its American home to run amuck in gross abundance.

Little original forest remains in this intensively cultivated zone, but as we drew nearer to the village of Yamphudin (probably Hooker's Yankutang), scattered forest of the three-needled *Pinus roxburghii* occurred. This was replaced a little higher up the valley by a mixed open forest which included low altitude forms of *Rhododendron arboreum*, the small white-flowered *Camellia kissi*, *Quercus lanata* (*Lanuginosa*) and the elegant *Albizia mollis*.

The exposed rocky track was hot and narrow and required great care. In places it was little more than a foot or so wide, with airy views down abrupt precipices to the river far below. Side valleys were frequent, as also were the sensational bridges by which we crossed their hurrying rivers.

Hereabouts in steep open grassland we saw sprawling plants of the golden-haired *Clematis grevilleana*. This is a sun-worshipping species with dusty yellow autumn-borne blossoms and is rarely, if ever, seen in cultivation. It occurs widely throughout the warm hills of the Himalayas, from Kumaun to north Burma, but is an unhappy species in British gardens where it yearns for the dry warmth of a homeland winter.

Hooker had been impressed by the 12,000 ft high (3658 m) peak named Sidingbah which dominates the north side of the Karbeli valley describing it as "crested with rock and ragged black forest". Likewise it held our awe and spurred us

on towards the high country beyond. We reached the scattered village of Yamphudin in the early afternoon of our twelfth day and made early camp, for politics were in evidence and we were obliged to await permission from the local government official before proceeding further into the mountains.

This spare time created by enforced delay was used for local exploration and revealed a wide selection of non-flowering epiphytic orchids including the common but universally popular *Coelogyne crisata*, as well as *C. ochracea*, *Denrobium heteocarpum*, *D. densiflorum* and various *Pholidota* and *Erica* species. The rich magenta flowers of the shrubby *Oxyspora paniculata* were at their best on the open banks amidst a tangle of *Elaeagnus* species and 10 ft. high shrubs (3 m) of the yellow blossomed *Edgeworthia gardneri*. The latter species is a near relative of *Daphne* and the bark is much used by the villagers for paper manufacture as well as for making thongs and straps. It is interesting to note the wide utilisation of the daphne family (*Thymelaeaceae*), for instance the Red Indian tribes of the north-eastern United States used the leatherwood, *Dirca palustris* for ropemaking and the country craft of basket-making from that species thrives there even today. The following morning, the complications having been cleared, we moved on up steep hillsides, passed trees of the pink-flowered paulownia-like *Wightia speciosissima*, hastened by the knowledge that the high mountain country was at last attainable.

That night found us encamped in a dirty glade in the depressing depths of a damp and fern-choked forest gorge. A huge *Cymbidium* species was in bud on a camp-side tree and a 40 ft (12 m) tall black-fruited cherry tree hung out over the river bank; but our thoughts and interest were already beyond such immediate things, anticipating the more rewarding forests ahead.

The next morning (7 October) dawned clear and bright. Soon we were climbing very steeply out of the oppressive gorge and up into the buoyant and interesting country to the north. Within minutes we were clambering amidst mixed forest which included *Acer sterculiaceum*, *Decaisnea insignis*, *Leycesteria formosa*, *Hydrangea anomala*, the climbing ragwort *Senecio scandens* and the silver-leaved wands of *Rubus lineatus*. It suddenly occurred to me that we were actually treading on Hooker's toes rather than his heels for this was his route of departure from the high mountain in 1848. He referred in his *Himalayan Journal* to "the gloomy gorges" and described his descent as being "very steep in some places almost precipitous, first through dense woods of silver fir with *Rhododendron falconeri* and *R. hodgsonii*, then through *Abies brunoniana*" (known today as *Tsuga dumosa*) "with yew... to the region of magnolias and *Rhododendron barbatum* and *arbor-eum*... Here also appeared the great oak with lamellated acorns" (this is *Quercus lamellosa*) "with many other Dorjiling trees and shrubs. A heavy mist clung to the rank luxuriant foliage tantalising from its obscuring all the view... I groped my way along devious paths in wooded valleys... always clouded before noon, and clothed with heavy forest."

Whereas Hooker found his journey to have a depressing effect, we in contrast, thanks to the brilliance of the day and in spite of heavy rucksacks, found ourselves passing through the forest with seemingly effortless tread and with our spirits soaring.

The startling 30 ft tall trees (9 m) of the multi-stemmed scarlet *Enkianthus deflexus* in autumn garb was only matched by the silver leaves of *Sorbus cuspidata* and the gleaming golds of *Acer campbellii*, *Lindera cercidifolia* and *Populus jacquemontiana* var. *glauca*. The attractive pink catkins of the grey-stemmed autumn-flowering spiny hazel *Corylus ferox* also caught our eye. A 1978 collection of mine (S.2338) has withstood severe frosts (-10°C:15°F) at Wakehurst Place in Sussex and promises to become established in cultivation; if hopes are fulfilled

it should prove to be an interesting addition to the various other Asian species already available to gardeners.

As well as the rhododendrons which Hooker mentioned in his Journals we also saw several 20 ft tall (6 m) examples of *Rhododendron grande* which, like *R. falconeri*, is clinging on here almost at the very edge of its western limit.

The dwarf and narrow-leaved *Euonymus theifolius* was fruiting daintily in the shady forest, plants of *Vaccinium glauco-album* were displaying their white-bloomed purple-black fruits on sheltered knolls and amazing 30 ft tall trees (9 m) of the evergreen black-fruited *Skimmia laureola* var. *multinervia* were a frequent sight.

Lower down we had seen and admired the glaucous-leaved yellow flowering "laurel" *Lindera neesiana*, but now we were higher that fascinating, and largely horticulturally unsung family Lauraceae was represented by the more quietly attractive *Dodecadenia grandiflora* its black fruits plentiful amidst the glossy dark green foliage. This is a species which is proving to be at least moderately hardy in the more sheltered corners of south-east England, but bearing in mind the possible benefits to be obtained from a wider gene-pool I collected more seeds.

The steep climb continued. Gradually the cool-temperate theme blended into a more sub-alpine one with a predominance of *Rhododendron hodgsonii* and *R. barbatum* mixed with huge overshadowing trees of the east Himalayan silver fir, *Abies densa*. Ericaceous epiphytes smothered the trees and included 5 feet tall (1.5m) specimens of *Rhododendron camelliiflorum* a species which is subtle rather than obvious in its flowering merit and is sometimes politely referred to as "a plant for the connoisseur".

I had found and collected *R. hodgsonii* before, south of Everest and also further east along the Milke Danda, but never had I dreamed of seeing it in such wild abundance and of such great stature. Its forest stretched away in all directions flanking and cresting the Yallung ridge which we had now at last attained, the cinnamon-coloured flaking bark of this magnificent species lifting the darkness created by its bold evergreen umbrella-like canopy.

Among this great dominating swathe stood 50 ft tall (15m) trees of the deciduous *Pentapanax leschenaultii*, a far cry from its relative the ivy which we had passed in the lower forests. *Hydrangea heteromalla* was also present as well as the peeling-barked *Acer papilio*, its leaves all fallen and the bright scarlet winter buds showing vividly. In some parts of Nepal *Betula utilis* forms extensive monocultures, but here on the south-western flanks of Kangchenjunga it has to struggle for the light it demands amidst a sub-alpine chaos of rhododendron forest.

We camped at 10,500 ft (3,200m) in a hollow on the ridge in an idyllic glade and within actual sight of the great obelisk-like peak of Jannu. Fortunately, the weather held fair, and in spite of misty afternoons we spent two intensively active days exploring onwards along the great Yallung ridge which rolled persistently upwards in the direction of the third highest peak on earth.

I will never forget the sheer joy of the morning of 8 November - what a place it was for that Sunday morning walk! In the guiding company of our happy Sherpas we worked our way upwards along the crest of the seemingly untrodden wooded ridge collecting as we went. Into the packets went the scarlet fruits of a very fine form of the dwarf sub-evergreen *Cotoneaster distichus*, as well as large quantities of the red-winged pendulous keys of *Acer pectinatum*. This lovely tree, which here was bedecked with Clematis and attained a stature

of 25 ft or more (7.5m), bears three-lobed leaves on bright scarlet petioles and is to my mind one of the most beautiful of the Himalayan maples.

The Asian spring of 1981 was obviously a generally poor one for the genus *Rhododendron*, as very little seed was to be found on many of the species. Although plentiful on *R. hodgsonii* and *R. barbatum*, we could find absolutely none on any of the trees of *R. arboreum*. At first I could not believe the fact, but after failing to gain any, even after offering substantial prize money to the sharp-eyed sherpas, we gave up the quest. *Rhododendron thomsonii* was more fruitful as also was *R. fulgens*, but both were scarce plants here and we really had to hunt them down. *Rhododendron campanulatum* which is usually a common species at this altitude (11,500 ft 3,505m) was entirely absent.

Gradually as we continued to ascend, the vegetation altered as *R. cinnabarinum* and *R. campylocarpum* took over as co-dominants. What a magnificent sight they must make in the spring, but of that vision we could only dream and gained consolation from the immediate seeds of autumn.

Viburnum nervosum (*V. cordifolium*) was frequent but unproductive. No doubt the birds had beaten us to it, but no matter, for I have collections from an earlier day and as it is shy to flower in cultivation a few will probably go a long way. Scattered trees of what seemed to be *Sorbus insignis* were there and after a lot of searching a limited amount of seed was won. Higher, we "bagged" a pink-fruited species - probably *S. microphylla* - but these rowans are a complicated lot which even cause the specialists to tear their hair in their efforts towards precise recognition.

Another deciduous highlight of the day was the amber-brown polished barked *Prunus rufa* forma *tricantha*, a cherry which is currently showing great promise in cultivation since its recent re-introduction (see *RHS Journal*, *The Garden* Vol.102, pp. 353/4). Collections by Beer, Lancaster and Morris (BLM 107) in 1971 and by Beer (B445) in 1975, as well as by myself (S 2256) in 1977 are succeeding well in several British gardens and will perhaps one day vie for the place at present held in the ornamental nursery trade by the Tibetan *Prunus serrula*. On the forest floor grew dense prostrate evergreen colonies of the superb *Gaultheria pyroloides* and the dwarf stoloniferous holly *Ilex intricata*. To the best of my knowledge this rare holly is not in cultivation and unfortunately the rooted stolons which I brought home have perished. Perhaps the seeds which we also collected in some quantity will give more positive results, for this is a plant of great potential as ground cover in the shade.

We passed several rosette-forming *Primula* species all budded-up, farinose and tantalizingly beautiful as they sat on the sides of steep mossy banks poised for the spring season. Further on, on more gently falling slopes grew *Primula obliqua* which has a reputation for non-persistence in cultivation. The seed capsules were still full and we lost no opportunity in securing some.

Erratic small wind-blasted trees of *Juniperus recurva* were in evidence. Laurie Gough of the Polytechnic of the South Bank, London, states that this collection appears to key out biochemically to match *J. recurva* var. *coxii* which is generally considered to be the form native to the far eastern Himalayas. Its original introducer, Reginald Farrer, described the Burmese trees as coming from a region "where the summer is wet and sunless, the winters of Alpine cold, and the springs late, ungenial and chilly". Small wonder it succeeds in the British climate! The Chinese revere this tree for its immortal qualities and I was therefore all the more interested to observe our devout Buddhist Sherpas collecting its foliage, plus that of its neighbouring cohabitant *Rhododendron anthopogon*, for the compilation of an "incense pot-pourri" which they termed "Doopi".

At the 12,000 ft (3,650m) contour the forest changed character yet again and another rhododendron gained dominance. Although I believe we were enjoying the sight of *R. wightii* it bore limited resemblance to the form in cultivation. Smaller in leaf, the multi-stemmed 10 ft tall (3m) shrubs displayed shining reddish brown vegetative buds which were distinctly sticky to the touch. Again we had a frustratingly long search for seed, but were eventually rewarded by a small handful of capsules and as an additional prize we also lifted out three seedlings from the leaf-mould at their feet.

Time dictated that our exploration came to an end for we were committed to reach the distant tea plantations of Ilam in just ten days time; such are the aggravations of strict itineraries. Far below to our left we could see the glint and hear the distant muffled roar of the Simbua Khola as it drained the melting snows of Kangchenjunga. This great peak now rose bold and clear before us blocking the sky of the east. Far to the north ranged row after row of wild black ridges leading on to the blunt-fanged Jannu. Hooker had trodden their crests but we could only guess at the secrets they hid.

We retraced our steps along the ridge, the morning sun now melting the dense rim of frost from the ground vegetation. We paused to collect a few rooted layers of the seldom cultivated *Vaccinium sikkimense* before hastening back down to our camp for a late and more than welcome lunch.

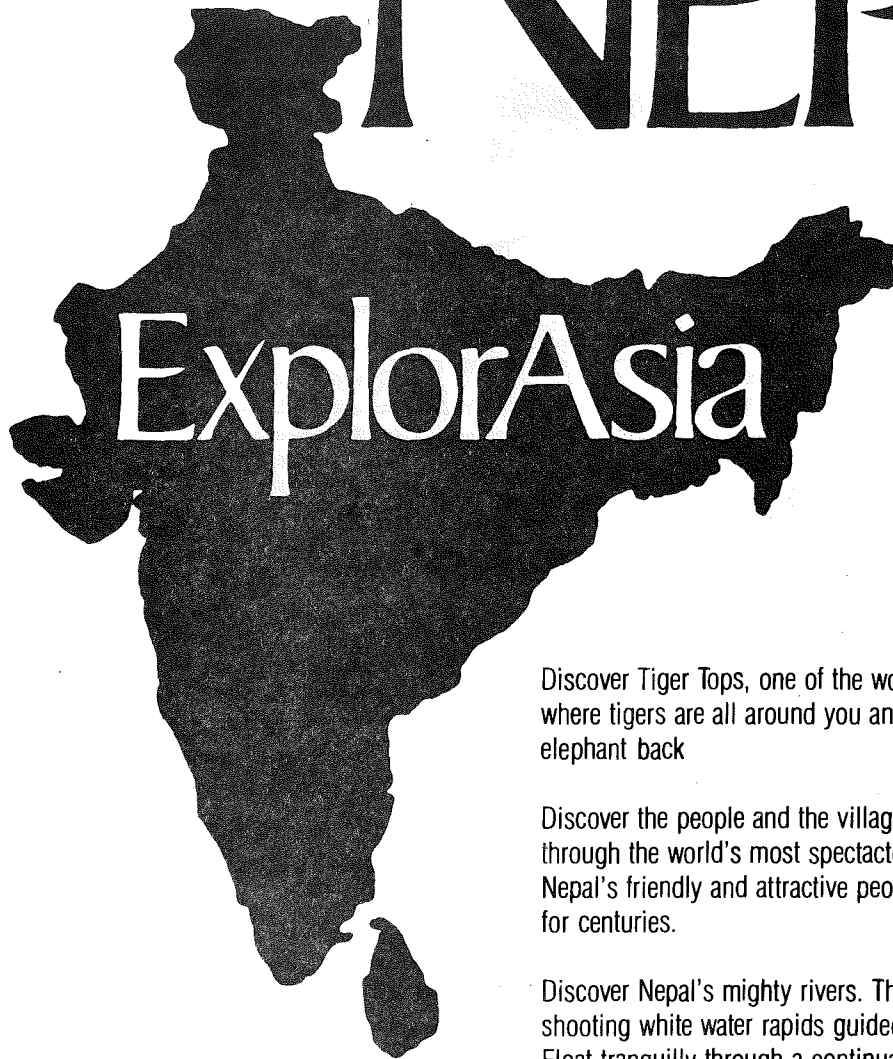
That afternoon brought sleet, with snow on the ridges immediately above, but we had achieved our objective and therefore had no complaint. Later the skies cleared, and after dark the moon rose full and bright into a star-studded sky; an intense frost gripped our mountain world. It was without doubt one of the most perfect nights I had ever seen; for a moment time stood still.

The morning of 9 November found us descending hurriedly back down the way we had come. We paused briefly in the sunlit forest to glean fruits of *Sorbus cuspidata* from the deep leaf litter, and later again to lift out carefully a seedling or two of *Rhododendron falconeri*. The russet-coloured indumentum on the undersurface of their leaves was soft and pleasant to the touch and, appropriate to the moment, a line of Wordsworth's came suddenly to mind: "With gentle hand touch, for there is a spirit in the woods". Perhaps it was the spirit of Hooker which haunted our presence there. If it was, he would doubtless have been amused to see a twentieth century Kewite clumsily attempting to re-enact a little of the past.

On the trail to Ilam we saw *Cornus capitata* still in flower, found *Gaultheria semiinfera* heavy with duck-egg blue fruits and collected seed from a strange dustyred form of *Colquhounia coccinea*.

As we dropped southwards over the last big ridge we reluctantly severed our communion with some of the finest scenery on earth. I now understood a little of what Hooker must have felt when he wrote: "It is always interesting to roam with a mountain people through their thinly inhabited valleys, over their great mountains, and to dwell... with them in their gloomy and forbidding forests; and no thinking man can do so without learning much..."

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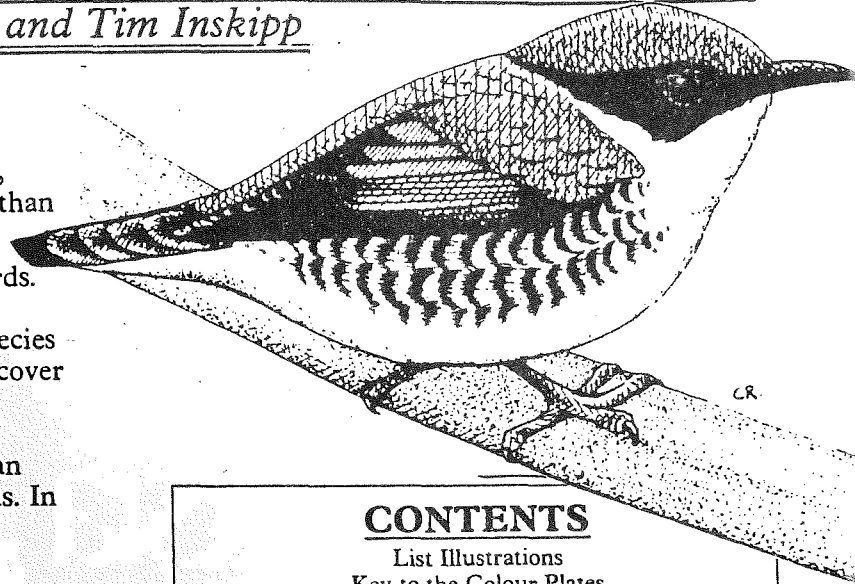
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CHANGES IN THE NEPALESE AVIFAUNA

[Talk given to the Society, with slides, by Mrs. Carol Inskipp, at the Alpine Club, 15th May 1985]

Nepal has an exceptionally diverse avifauna. A total of approximately 837 bird species have been recorded, more for its size than any other country with the possible exception of Costa Rica.

This is partly a result of the dramatic changes of altitude within the country, from the lowlands, only 75m above sea level, to the high peaks of Khumbu, culminating in Mt. Everest, only 145km distant. Species diversity decreases with increase in altitude. The richest areas for Nepalese birdlife lie in the tropical lowlands below 300m where 589 species occur. In sharp contrast only 77 species have been recorded above 4270m in the alpine zone.

It is also partly a result of Nepal's geographical position lying in an overlap region between the Palaearctic realm to the north and the Oriental realm to the south.

The other major factor affecting species diversity is the amount of rainfall. Nepal can be conveniently divided into eastern and western sections at the Kali Gandaki valley. It is an important divide for bird species especially babblers. The apparent ranges of 103 Nepalese bird species lie east of the valley including 36 Himalayan species which reach the western limit of their ranges either in the valley or its watershed. These latter species include the Golden-throated Barbet Megalaima franklinii, Golden Babbler Stachyris chrysaea, Brown Parrotbill Paradoxornis unicolor and Black-faced Laughing-thrush Tarrulax affinis.

Approximately 584 bird species have been found in the drier west and 774 species in the east. Even allowing for the fact that most of the western section of the country is under-recorded, the east is still much richer. The diversity of bird species is directly related to the vegetation pattern. The drier west has a lower number of plant species than the east. The damp temperate oak forest, dominated by Quercus lamellosa occurs almost entirely on the eastern side of the Kali Gandaki valley and eastwards in Nepal. It is replaced by dry oak forest, mainly Q.lanata in the west.

Bird numbers and the pattern of species are undergoing accelerating changes throughout Nepal. The main reason for this is the increasing rate of deforestation taking place in the country despite recent afforestation projects. About 65% of Nepalese breeding birds utilise forests. According to government estimates (1)* in 1983 less than one third of Nepal remained under forest. Large areas of central and eastern Nepal have now suffered serious deforestation and soil destruction. Areas most affected lie between 1000m and 2000m. Extensive forests still remain in the west but large numbers of hill people have recently settled in the western lowlands so it is likely these forests will also become depleted. Little direct evidence exists of declines in bird numbers and diversity since last century except in the Kathmandu Valley. Observations made by visitors to Nepal were then limited to the Valley and the route there from the plains. There is also a shortage of historical information as most ornithological studies have been carried out since 1984. A number of forest birds have not been recorded since the early half of last century including the Imperial Heron Ardea imperialis, Rufous-necked Hornbill Aceros nipalensis and Green Cochoa Cochoa viridis. Presumably species which inhabit the lower hills of central and eastern areas particularly those which require dense or mature forests have been most affected. They include the Sultan Tit Melanochlora sultanea, Silver-eared Mesia Leiothrix argenteauris Long-tailed Broadbill Psarismus dalhousiae and Redheaded Trogon

Harpectes erythrocephalus for which there are very few recent records.

A number of species are now localised but were probably once more widespread. This is particularly evident in the central and eastern lowlands, where the Ruby-cheeked Sunbird Anthrepetes singalensis, Little Spider Arachnothera longirostra and Asian Fairy Bluebird Irena puella are now found in only two or three areas, but previously may well have occurred throughout the region.

Many remaining forests must have a reduced avifauna due to over-exploitation. Forests are being opened up by selective felling, removal of foliage and lopping of branches. Loss or reduction of the understorey must have drastically affected species such as babblers, warblers, bush robins and thrushes. During a study of a seemingly healthy forest in the Arun valley in 1972-3 Cronin (2)*

was surprised at the lack of certain bird species. He found villagers had selectively felled oak. As a result Castanopsis trees had become dominant producing a drier forest with a lower variety of plants and birds. In contrast species which prefer open forests such as flycatchers have probably increased. They also survive in protected temple groves, often just small clumps of trees, which are sometimes the only remains of the original vegetation in the lower hills. The understorey of these groves is cut but the trees are regarded as sacred. A few species which frequent scrub and secondary growth such as the White-cheeked Bulbul Pycnonotus leucogenys, Red-vented Bulbul P. cafer, Grey Bushchat Saxicola ferrea and Striated Prinia Prinia criniger must also presumably have increased in recent years.

It is hard to be optimistic about the future of Nepal's forests and its birds. The vast majority of the increasing Nepalese population rely on forest resources for fuel, fodder for their animals and building materials, as alternative sources are too expensive or unavailable.

If possible, remaining forests areas which are species rich should be protected. From an analysis of bird distribution on records (3)* such forests include those in the upper Mai and upper Arun valleys, the south-eastern lowlands especially north of Sunischare, Kathmandu Valley particularly Phulchowki, south of Annapurna including the Modi Khola valley and Ghorepani - Ghandrun area. These forests presumably also support a rich variety of other wildlife other than birds. Of course the Nepalese government has already set aside a relatively large proportion of its land area, well over 4%, for national parks and reserves. Recently Shey Dolpo National Park in the trans-Himalayas and Khaptad Wildlife Reserve in the far west have been gazetted.

The total area of lowland grassland in Nepal has been reduced during recent years due to the spread of cultivation. Aerial photographs show that remaining grasslands lie almost entirely within the protected forest areas. Grassland species including the Bengal Florican Houbaropsis bengalensis, a magnificent bustard species, have declined as a result.

On a more cheerful note, although small areas of marshes and pools have recently been drained throughout the lowlands, a superb wetland was created in 1958-64 with the building of Kosi Barrage in far eastern Nepal. It now comprises large expanses of water, mud, sandbanks and extensive marshes. It is by far the most important wetland in Nepal and is of international importance as a staging area for migrating birds. No less than 13 species have been recorded here and nowhere else in the country. Wildfowl passage mainly occurs in February and March when more than 50,000 ducks have been estimated.

Notes

1. Anon. 1983 National Conservation Strategy for Nepal: a Prospectus H.M.G. of Nepal I.U.C.N. Gland.
2. Cronin, E.W. Jr., 1979. The Arun. A Natural History of the World's Deepest Valley. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.
3. Inskipp, C. and Inskipp, T. 1985. A Guide to the Birds of Nepal. Croom Helm. London.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION IN NEPAL

[Talk given to the Society at the Alpine Club on 17th January 1985
by Dr. G. M. Hornby]

I will begin by telling you something about the impressions of the country and wildlife of Nepal that I gained during Stowe School's expeditions of 1981 and 1982. I will go on to describe the Wildlife scholarships, sponsored by the International Trust for Nature Conservation (ITNC), which have allowed seven Stoics and one member of staff to visit Nepal for Conservation Projects over the last three years. As the lucky member of staff I can tell you about the work on Conservation Education which I carried out for a couple of months in spring 1984. Finally I will show you the Slideshow that I put together and took round schools in Chitwan and elsewhere.

Meanwhile back on top of a little mountain in the Helambu in Spring 1982 with Bergfuhrer Potter and Tensing Gyaltsso, our sirdar for that trek. Late snow prevented us from getting very high, and the Sherpas assured us that the locals brought their cattle up here in summer. Quite how the animals got over this rocky impasse they did not say. Certainly for me, as an amateur mountaineer, the little mountains were great fun and the views of the bigger ones quite breathtaking. As a Naturalist I was overwhelmed by the variety of habitat and the wealth of flora and fauna. Not that we saw many of the latter, apart from birds, in the hills because of the disturbance caused by the huge cavalcade of a trek. On the move we concentrated on the next hill, the next rickety bridge and the wayside shrines. The flowers did not move as fast as birds; so I was able to get some photographs. Moving rapidly from 9,000 feet to 400 feet I remember particularly the rhododendrons, Nepalese paper plant, an orchid in the rainforest, Rose of Sharon by the river and two hedgerow plants in Chitwan. Birds were easier to see when we were rafting down the river, but I still have to thank others for the slides. We saw egrets everywhere. Kingfishers, both white-breasted and eurasion, stayed still long enough for a good look.

At Tigertops we were taken in hand by professional Nepali Naturalists such as K. K. Gurung, the present manager. We saw most of Chitwan's larger mammals in a couple of days by going out on elephant safari or on foot. I keep chickens at home, so it was reassuring to hear familiar cockerel noises in the jungle. At shrub level we were enchanted by the Paradise Flycatcher. In the treetops

Roseringed parakeets fed noisily on the old kapoc flowers. By the water's edge on the oxbow lakes one can see the white breasted waterhen, a relative of our own moorhen. By these oxbows marsh crocodiles lie out which makes bathing unsafe. The Tigertops staff directed us to a 'safe' bit of the Narayani, opposite their Tented Camp, for swimming and we were alarmed to find baby gharial in our shallows. These fish-eating crocodiles, with their tags, had been released into the river by Sir Peter Scott only a few weeks earlier.

My two visits to Nepal left me with a deep impression of the beauty of the country and the variety of its wildlife. A more sombre impression was the feeling of pressure on the countryside, on the jungle particularly. Pollarded trees were common: signs of people collecting too much fodder and firewood, from the high hills down to the Terai. There were landslides in the hills, small and large. As we floated down the Narayani river through Chitwan we were conscious of the erosion of the riverbanks and overgrazing of the grassland, which was in stark contrast to the lush vegetation within the Royal Chitwan National Park.

At this point I would like to pay tribute to the organisation of Mountain Travel and Tigertops, which allowed us to see so much in so little time, and to their London agents ExplorAsia who handled the UK end of the trips. Two holidays of a lifetime in two years! I thought I had seen the temples of Nepal for the last time, swapping them for the beautiful but rather different temples of Stowe. But behind the scenes Roger Potter and Jim Edwards, with Belinda-then-Fuchs, had been arranging for Stowe to participate in the Wildlife Scholarship Programme, sponsored by ITNC and Tigertops, which has allowed schoolchildren from Jersey to undertake field projects in Nepal since 1977. ITNC is an International Trust, based in Switzerland and the United Kingdom, which was formed in 1977 to channel energy and resources into Conservation projects, initially in Nepal, India and Sri Lanka, which might not otherwise attract the attention of the larger International organisations. Key features of the work of the Trust have been (1) the raising of funds for specific projects, (2) careful liaison with local government and wildlife organisations and (3) training and employment of local staff.

Thanks to ITNC several boys from Stowe School, or Stoics as we call them, have been able to spend a couple of months in Nepal, supported locally by the Mountain Travel and Tigertops organisations. In one sense this has been Conservation Education in Nepal. They have all learnt a great deal as well as completing worthwhile projects.

One pair went high in the Helambu during the monsoon to study pollination in some alpine plants. Another pair disappeared into far east Nepal to fill in empty squares for the World Bird Atlas. Another boy has studied lizards, and an enterprising couple have trekked round hill villages collecting local folk music on tape before it is displaced by transistorised Indian Pop.

Two years ago I asked tentatively if it would be possible for a member of the Stowe staff to take up one of the ITNC Wildlife Scholarships. It was and my brief was to revive a Conservation Education Programme that had been started a few years before. I was to find a way of educating villagers, living almost in the shade of a National Park (the Royal Chitwan National Park) in the value of the Park to them as its neighbours. Its value as a large tract of jungle suitable for the Greater One Horned Rhinoceros and Royal Bengal Tiger seems obvious to Westerners, who do not have to live with the consequences.

I had a fruitless argument with an American 5 star general at Tigertops. He was very keen on conservation in Nepal, and equally keen that the few remaining

wolves in his home state should be shot because they took the odd domestic animal. As I set out I was painfully aware of the treeless state of many parts of the UK, and of my own aggressive attitude towards the fox which occasionally preys on my chickens.

Let me summarise some of the disadvantages of a National Park from local farmers' point of view. They cannot collect fodder in the Park or graze their animals there. They are effectively excluded. They have to put up with the attentions of herbivores like deer and rhino which trample and eat their crops by night. Often they have to sit up all night in rickety machans to scare the animals away. In some areas near the Park farmers estimate that they lose 80% of their crops, without compensation. They also have to cope with attacks by carnivores, such as leopard and tiger, which take their livestock. Finally the Park represents a national resource from which they derive little income.

I felt I had to try to communicate (a) the idea of the Park and its wildlife as part of Nepal's national heritage, (b) the benefits of the Park to villagers and (c) the necessity of planting trees and conserving jungle if Nepal is to survive without the disasters that have hit other less developed countries which have allowed de-afforestation. After many discussions with the Wildlife Department in Kathmandu and with K. K. Gurung and Chuck McDougal at Tigertops, I decided on a slide/tape presentation for schools. I chose schools for several reasons:

1. When the original much shorter slide/tape show had been shown at Meghauli village one evening, over a thousand villagers turned up. They had a whale of a time, but hardly heard the commentary. I thought a smaller disciplined audience would be more receptive.
2. Teachers are aware of the problems of de-afforestation and could be expected to reinforce the message. I arranged much of the content to coincide with the conservation part of the S.L.C. Biology syllabus.
3. Slides require relatively unsophisticated equipment compared with film, and it is possible to alter content as better slides become available.

So I put a 65-slide package together, which has now expanded to 80. My short commentary was translated into Nepali and recorded at Radio Nepal. Although I showed the slides in Kathmandu and Pokhara, I based myself at Tigertops and went into the villages each day. Some of the time I stayed at the Tharu Village near Sirganj outside the park. Not only was this convenient for a number of schools but also it had the hottest showers.

The equipment consisted of a generator, screen and Pandamatic. The last of these is a silvery suitcase containing a Carousel Projector and a surprisingly sophisticated sound system. I travelled most frequently by landrover, occasionally by boat, and memorably by buffalo cart. Those who have used these carts will know that they give one an excellent feel for the countryside as they bump over bridges and potholes. I remember with embarrassment how I said a polite goodbye to the entire school and staff of Gothara Primary School before jumping on the back of the cart. I had forgotten that it was not attached to the buffaloes at the front so the whole thing tripped up and threw me out. It made their day.

Coming from a school with extensive resources I was very impressed by the way Nepali teachers cope with nothing more than a few benches, some textbooks and a blackboard. I was even more impressed by the welcome I received. To begin with we visited schools a day or two in advance to fix a time for the show.

Every Headmaster said "Why can't you do it now?" So we got into the habit of turning up on spec and doing it now. The largest room would be cleared and I would set up, with the generator outside. Then the children poured in. I never won the battle with the Headmaster to restrict the audience to a hundred, preferably from Classes 9 and 10 only, except at the independent Shree Kamal Devi English Boarding School where all sat in neat rows. I don't know how much sank in. Perhaps we were just a diversion from the morning's Maths.

Shardanagar High School impressed me particularly and we visited it twice. They are lucky in having a plot of land around the school, on which the children grow trees and crops of wheat. The best kind of practical biology. After the shows I would usually get a cup of tea, before we made our way home to supper and sunset.

[Dr. Hornby then showed the final version of the slide package accompanied by the English version of the commentary, deliberately brief to allow the children time just to absorb the pictures. The commentary - alas without the slides - follows.]

A Place for People and Animals

Nepal is a place for people and animals. Our country is a land of beautiful mountains. Many people live in the middle hills and in the rich farmland of the Terai. Everywhere there is river and forest. People use the forest for timber, fuel and fodder. Timber is used for building and firewood is needed for cooking. Villagers collect leaves for their animals. Many wild animals find food and shelter in the forest. (Picture of deer in a clearing.) In many places people have cut too much wood and the land is no longer suitable for wild animals. To provide and conserve suitable habitat for some of our animals His Majesty's Government has created National Parks. (This map shows where the National parks are located in Nepal.) There are parks in the Khumbu and Langtang, and around Lake Rasa as well as here in Chitwan. This forest and river is typical of the Royal Chitwan National Park, which was created in 1973.

The one-horned Rhinoceros is a typical animal of the grassland and riverine forest. At one time it could be found in suitable places all the way from Pakistan to Assam. But now it lives in only a few places in India and Nepal. Chitwan is a vital refuge for this unusual water-loving creature. Being an endangered species it needs the protection of National Parks if it is to survive. Many soldiers guard Chitwan and poaching is now unusual.

Another animal needing protection is the gharial, which can only live in fast flowing rivers like the Narayani. Since 1978 there has been a breeding programme for the gharial at the Wildlife Department's Headquarters at Kasara. Many young gharial have been reared successfully and released into the river. The Royal Bengal Tiger is another protected animal, whose numbers in the world have dropped dangerously low because of the destruction of the jungle in which they live. The tiger's natural food includes hogdeer, an animal of the water's edge. The leopard will also eat wildpig, but can only catch the Langur monkey when it comes down to the ground. The park has a wealth of birdlife from the Hornbill in the treetops to the Peacock in the grassland. After the spring burning, the gaur comes down from the hills in search of fresh grass. It is the world's largest cattle.

But the Park does not only benefit animals. Villagers are allowed to cut the tall grass in the National Park for two weeks every year. The grass is used for thatch and the reeds, which are collected after the burning, are important building

materials. The tall grassland also provides a strong barrier against the eroding power of the monsoon floods. All the birds and animals in the National Park attract foreign tourists. The tourists are an important source of money for our country. The money can be used to build new schools, roads and hospitals.

What would happen to the forest in Chitwan if there were no National Park? Imagine a stretch of river and forest untouched by man. If the protection of the Park were not there man would settle the land. He would destroy the tall grassland and forest to make fields. For a while life would be good. But removal of trees leads to the loss of fertile soil by erosion. There is nothing to stop the soil being washed away by the rains. The rivers become silted up by the soil which has been washed down. This leads to more damaging floods in the monsoon. The floods destroy more farmland and the riverbanks, where these banks are not protected by trees or tall grassland. Erosion leaves the land without fertile soil. Tree roots help the land to retain water in the dry season. If there are no trees the water quickly evaporates in the hot sun. If there are no trees the earth becomes cracked and barren. Eventually nothing would be left. The land would become a desert and the animals would die because of the lack of food and water.

How then can one answer the question, "Where can I get my firewood?" The answer is to save trees and plant trees. Trees are a valuable crop. New varieties grow quickly, but like any other crops they need looking after. They are not just a valuable crop; they are essential if our farmland is to retain its soil, moisture and fertility. Already at Jagatpur, near Kasara, the village has unilaterally raised a plantation of valuable sisoo trees. Says Pradhan Pancha Indra Lal Shrestha: "If the Park could protect trees and grassland, we felt we could do the same across the river for the benefit of our own people."

Footnote by Dr. Hornby

After the lecture I heard the good news that ITNC is devoting more funds to the project, that His Majesty's Government is keen to see wider dissemination of the Slideshow in schools, and that Tigertops intend to employ a Nepali to carry on the work. But the best news was that two of the villages I visited have come forward and asked for help in planting trees.

ANNUAL NEPALI SUPPER IN NEW ZEALAND HOUSE

By Susan Elizabeth Roberts

Our annual gathering this year, when the Society is twenty-five years of age (a milestone in its history), was arranged for the first day of Spring. It was a day which bestowed sunshine - a sharp contrast to last year's deluge of rain.

A cheerful melee of 232 members and guests gathered at New Zealand House where one had the feeling it was a sort of school reunion - Nepal cur school.

For centuries this little mountain kingdom had been hidden from the world but now, like a precious gem, it shines out amidst the Asian countries.

Sir George Bishop, our President, and Lady Bishop warmly welcomed each "old pupil" after he or she had collected a name sticker - such a welcome help if one remembers the face but embarrassingly forgets the name.

Aperitifs were handed out by the smiling-faced and ever courteous Gurkhas who had travelled up from Church Crookham where they were stationed with the 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles.

Once again, the tables had been attractively decorated with flowers adding colour for the "reunion" supper. Enjoying Mr. Manandhar's Nepalese curry brought back the nostalgic flavours of his land, cooled by the now popular and delicious mango ice cream. Presently chairs were eased back a little from tables and people directed their attention towards the "high" table.

Our President, Sir George Bishop, introduced the evening's guest of honour, Sir John Nott, who spoke fondly of Nepal, a country he has known since his days as a young officer in the 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha (or 'Goorkha' as they prefer) Rifles. It was a pleasure for us to welcome again the Nepalese Ambassador, Mr. Ishwari Raj Pandey and members of the Embassy staff with their ladies.

Captain Rambahadur Limbu, VC, MVO, the last serving Victoria Cross holder was sorry he would not be with us next year. A few days after the supper he was returning home to Nepal to his wife and family. I am sure he takes with him many fond memories of his time in Britain and we all wish him a very happy retirement.

Chitter chatter continued long after the speeches. The annual supper provides an opportunity for all of us to perceive other facets of Nepal, simply by intermingling informally with each other and exchanging impressions or memories of that much loved country.

A Gurkha piper, on duty in uniform but also a guest of the Society, drew the evening to a close as his slow march drowned the chatter, and minds drifted away on a musical air to the land where this young Gurkha was born, as indeed our Society also. Namaste.

[It was impossible to capture all the humour and nuances of meaning of the two largely extempore speeches which followed but they are recorded here as completely as possible and with apologies for any shortcomings in the record. Ed.]

Welcoming the many distinguished guests of the Society and the large attendance of members and their friends, Sir George Bishop remarked that the Society continued to fulfil its purpose which was to promote and foster good relations between Great Britain and Nepal. The warm relationship between the two countries owed much to the strong support of His Excellency the Nepalese Ambassador and his predecessors. He thanked the Ambassador for attending in spite of a particularly busy schedule that day which included an important meeting in the City concerning oil discovery in Nepal. It was, he said, a great delight to come together again in New Zealand House and to have among the Society's distinguished guests the Deputy High Commissioner for New Zealand and his wife, Mr and

Mrs. Bruce Brown. Also at the high table and in fact at the head of the table on his right was Captain Rambahadur Limbu VC, MVO, who had won his VC in Sarawak on 21 November 1965, was the last serving VC holder in the British Army and was due shortly to retire to his home in Nepal. The Society's very best wishes went with him for a long, happy and contented retirement.

A notable gap in the attendance was the absence of someone very well known to most members, Clem Sykes, who had died a few weeks previously following many years of distinguished service with the British Council and many years of active help to the Society and to Nepal. He was greatly missed by his many friends in the Society. The British Council had achieved an impressive presence in Nepal especially in the field of Education. This could be seen in the excellent library in Kathmandu University, in the Administrative Staff College and also in the new Staff College which was to be opened soon in a former palace. He and Lady Bishop had been very impressed by all these things during a recent visit to Nepal and he hoped British aid would continue to be applied to such good effect. He had no doubt that the members of the Inter Parliamentary Group who were present among the guests at the high table would press for this in the right places. British aid was particularly needed in agriculture and the development of the road system where there was still much to be done.

Sir George then introduced the principal guest, Sir John Nott, whose remarkable career had begun as an officer of the 2nd Goorkhas and taken a new direction on his election to Parliament in 1966. As everyone knew, he had held the great and awesome responsibility of Secretary of State for Defence at the regaining of the Falkland Islands. Few jobs could be more full of interest and challenge than to be head of a major department of State but he had had the courage to give that up and enter the business world as Chairman of Lazard Brothers. It was good of him to attend at a very busy time.

Sir George then proposed the usual toasts and invited Sir John to address the Society.

Sir John said he was delighted to be present at such a happy gathering. Reading the papers one would not think such friendly gatherings still took place where there were no problems and most people knew one another. As well as being a guest he was a member of the Society although not that evening wearing the Society's tie which was one he admired and liked very much. Sir George Bishop had remarked that he felt diffident about speaking before a former Secretary of State. He himself did not speak at all if he could help it. He had not been able to attend the Society's meetings while in the Defence Department and he wondered at this as all he had had to do there was to follow the good advice the Staff gave him. Now that he was a busy business man he was glad to find he was able to come.

He was delighted to see so many familiar faces including that of a lady he had not seen for thirty years. She had practically saved his life when as a subaltern he was sent by his C.O. to be a General's A.D.C. - a difficult assignment as among other things it meant living as a member of the family. The lady in question had given him the help and guidance he needed. She was the General's daughter.

Sir John recalled his first visit to Nepal in 1953. Lady Nott had not been with him then and did not have the opportunity to see Nepal until she visited with him when he was Defence Secretary. She would have loved to be present but they had a farm in Penzance and it was a particularly busy time of year on the farm.

He told a farming story - Nepal being a farming country and he himself a farmer. He wanted to buy two "silky bantam hens" at an auction in Cornwall. The bidding rose from 20 pence to 30, then to 40 and 50 pence and he gave up in disgust. As he walked away his daughter came up to him and said, "Daddy, terribly exciting! Mummy has just bought two silky bantam hens".

Referring again to his first visit to Nepal in 1953, Sir John said he was then in his early twenties and received a very strong impression of the beauty of the Kathmandu Valley, the skills of the people and the religious heritage. The visit came about as a result of a message he had received in Johore when he returned to his camp with the Gurkhas. The message was from the signals officer, one 2/Lt John Chapple, and informed him rather abruptly that the C-in-C was visiting Nepal for six weeks and he was to accompany him. So they set off in a rather rickety 'plane - no jets in those days. Their host was General Sir Kaiser Shumshere Jang Bahadur Rana who had been Ambassador in London during the war. At a cocktail party given by their host he was astonished to see the politicians who had newly come to power talking to prominent members of the Rana family in a most friendly manner. General Kaiser's home had since become the Ministry of Culture. It contained one of the finest libraries in Asia. General Kaiser was a widely read man and seemed to know the tragedies of Shakespeare by heart.

Little did he (Sir John) know then that some 30 years later he would be Defence Secretary, the heir to the British throne would be the Colonel in Chief of his Regiment and the Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Edwin Bramall, the Colonel of the Regiment. Or that he would be so closely involved in the decision to send Gurkhas to the Falkland Islands. He then referred to a conversation between the C.G.S. and himself which resulted in the decision. (This like one or two other amusing stories is perhaps best regarded as "off the record".)

One of the things that gave him the greatest pleasure when he was Defence Secretary was becoming involved in Gurkha pensions. He had received a letter from Prince Charles, who had been visiting Nepal, in which HRH had said he was unhappy about Gurkha pensions. As a result it had been possible to arrange for the pensions to be increased quite a bit. He was very glad to think that that extra money was going into the Hills. This was not aid but entitlement. Regarding aid to Nepal, British aid had been concentrated on the East of Nepal whereas he knew the West better. However, the Gurkha Welfare Trusts to which most people present had doubtless contributed had done much good and so had Sir Horace Kadoorie with his own marvellous scheme for helping ex-Servicemen in Nepal.

Sir John then referred to a Heritage Conservation Conference which had been organised in November 1983 by the Pacific Area Travel Association in a palace in Kathmandu. He had been invited to address the conference and had been particularly impressed by the splendour of the occasion, with the Royal Family present, Band, Pipes and Drums and the extremely efficient arrangements. It reflected the remarkable success achieved in the field of tourism in Nepal where large numbers of people had been channelled into activities that did not damage the country and the restoration of ancient buildings had been carried out in the most praiseworthy manner and every effort made to conserve the environment and wild life. People could visit Nepal for culture, history and environment and not just to enjoy the sun.

However he had noticed while flying over the Terai by helicopter recently how the forests had diminished as a result of the demand for timber and firewood, and he had been very glad to accept an invitation from Sir Arthur Norman to join his Committee in the UK to raise funds for conservation work in Nepal by

the King Mahendra Trust.

He then told how two of his Cornish constituents had been visiting the Niagara Falls where a Canadian had asked them if they had anything like that in England and one of them had said they hadn't but he knew of a couple of good plumbers who could put it right.

Sir John referred to the question on many people's minds concerning the future of the Brigade of Gurkhas. He gave an assurance which he said he would even describe as a "political pronouncement" that when the time came the Brigade would not be without influential friends who would look after its future. He did not think a close association which had lasted so long could just end when 1997 came along. He felt sure the Brigade would survive even if it might have to be smaller.

The Chairman, Lieutenant Colonel Scott, thanked Sir John for his very sincere, amusing and interesting talk. Few men could claim to have had a more varied career which even included the cultivation of daffodils. He thanked Sir John for "sharing your experience with us" and also thanked all those who had responded so generously to his appeal for contributions to the King Mahendra Trust for Conservation in Nepal. He said anyone who had forgotten would find a box near the exit where contributions might conveniently be placed.

The Chairman informed the gathering that the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Society would be celebrated by a Reception in the Banqueting House, Whitehall Palace, on 2nd October 1982. The Patron of the Society, H.R.H. Prince Gyanendra of Nepal, had been pleased to accept the Society's invitation to honour the occasion with his presence.

THAMES RIVER TRIP

WESTMINSTER TO GREENWICH AND THE THAMES BARRIER

As part of the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of our Society, the Committee decided to arrange an outing somewhat different from the usual, and perhaps putting more than normal emphasis on the "Britain" in our title. This outing took the form of an evening cruise down the River Thames to Greenwich, and beyond, to see the Thames Barrier. A curry supper, served on board, was also to be featured.

Accordingly, on the appointed evening, Tuesday 2nd July 1985, no less than 131 members and guests boarded the cruise boat "Valulla" (owned and operated by Catermaran Cruises Ltd) at Westminster Pier. Regrettably, a further 25 applicants had had to be excluded, being in excess of the capacity of the vessel. At 6.30 pm boarding was complete and in perfect weather conditions the good ship Valulla cast off and was soon in mid-stream. The vessel was ideal for sight-seeing, having two large covered lounge-decks with wide windows, and an open deck aft.

His Excellency the Nepalese Ambassador, together with his staff and their families, with the exception of the Defence Attache who was Embassy Duty Officer, were the principal guests. Among the large company were Lord Hunt, several of

our Vice-Presidents, Major General Robertson, Mrs. Mayura Brown, Colonel Wylie, Brigadier Taggart, and many Nepalese friends.

The boat's master (who had started his career in sailing barges) soon had her steaming upstream so that passing under Westminster Bridge, we ran close to the Houses of Parliament and had a good view of the crowded riverside terrace of the Palace of Westminster, colourful with its variegated awnings. From this point onwards, throughout the cruise, the master gave us a commentary on the principal features of interest on either shore, which greatly added to the enjoyment of the trip.

Having had a good view of St. Thomas' Hospital and Lambeth Palace, official residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, both on the South shore, we turned round just above Lambeth Bridge, and began the journey down-river.

Immediately after emerging from Westminster Bridge, the great mass of County Hall, abode of the Greater London Council, and the Royal Festival Hall with its satellite buildings, held our attention on the South Bank. The Royal Festival Hall, built for the Festival of Britain in 1951, is now acknowledged to be one of the finest concert halls in the world. County Hall, on the other hand, first opened in 1922, faces an uncertain future.

On the North bank, the dominant feature seemed to be Shell-Mex House with its huge clock face, said to be the second largest in existence. On the Embankment itself, interest was shown in Cleopatra's Needle, the ancient Egyptian obelisk presented to Britain in 1819, by the Turkish Viceroy of Egypt, not erected in London until 1878 but now one of the capital's best-known landmarks.

Directly ahead lay the fine span of Waterloo Bridge, and just beyond it on the South Bank, the grey squat shape of the National Theatre. On the North bank, attention focussed on the much more gracious frontage of Somerset House, once the home of the Probate Registry and soon, it is hoped, to house the Courtauld Art Collection.

Points of interest then appeared and receded in quick succession, heads turning to right and left like spectators at Wimbledon! London Bridge, a fairly recent structure replacing its predecessor opened by King William IV, with Southwark Cathedral near its southern end, the view of the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, the golden ball on the top of the Monument (which marks the ignition-point of the Great Fire of London in 1666) were all duly admired. We passed under London Bridge, and into the Pool of London; here HMS Belfast dominated the South side, being permanently moored there. Unusually, a destroyer, HMS Birmingham, was also in the Pool, anchored alongside HMS Belfast.

Ahead was Tower Bridge (which many Americans imagine to be London Bridge), the famous bascules closed in the roadway position. They must have been opened earlier to allow HMS Birmingham to pass through into her anchorage. A triumph of late Victorian engineering, Tower Bridge contains immensely complicated machinery for operating the bascules, which is concealed by the Gothic superstructure. The elevated walkway between the two towers, now open to the public, is well worth a visit.

On the North side, the White Tower of the Tower of London could be clearly seen, as could the menacing portal of Traitor's Gate, entry point for so many doomed occupants of quarters in the Tower. King William the Conqueror built the White Tower and laid out the main fortifications, between 1078 and 1097,

to hold down the turbulent citizens of his newly-acquired capital city.

By this time we had already passed, on the North bank, the huge new hotel and St. Katharine's Dock, now used as a yachting-marina, display area for historic ships and smaller craft, up-market shopping area, and tourist attraction. The huge early 19th century warehouses are now prestigious flats. Beyond Tower Bridge, the famous inn "The Prospect of Whitby", once patronized by Mr. Samuel Pepys, was pointed out. A little earlier, we passed on the South Bank the small house where Sir Christopher Wren lived while supervising the building of St. Paul's Cathedral.

All this time, the weather remained perfect, with only a slight breeze to cool those on the open deck but not enough to ruffle the water. Almost before we realized it, we were approaching Greenwich, five miles downstream from Westminster. Here were treasures indeed! We had a magnificent view of the whole river frontage of the Royal Naval College, designed by Sir Christopher Wren, completed by Hawksmoor and Vanbrugh by about 1745, and dominated by the twin cupolas of the Painted Hall and the chapel, famous for Sir William Thornhill's decorations. In the open grassy space between the two wings of the College is the site of the Old Royal Palace of Placentia, birthplace of King Henry VIII and his daughters, Queens Mary I and Elizabeth I.

Further inland, and directly in the centre of the two wings, stands The Queen's House, built by Inigo Jones in the years after 1616 for James I's Queen, Anne of Denmark, and considered one of the most important and perfect classical buildings in England. It stands on the site of the old road to Dover, at the spot where Sir Walter Raleigh is said to have spread his cloak in the mud for Queen Elizabeth I to step on! This building is now incorporated in the National Maritime Museum. The Royal Naval College buildings were used as a Royal Hospital for retired seamen of the Royal Navy, until 1873 when it became the Royal Naval College. The famous painted hall is now the College Mess Hall.

Beyond the splendid vista of these elegant buildings, could be seen on the summit of the hill sloping up to Greenwich Park, the old Royal Observatory, founded by Charles II, through which passes the zero meridian of longitude. Also visible on the sky line was the statue of Major-General James Wolfe, victor of the Battle of Quebec, in 1757.

What we were seeing is, in fact, the identical view which Canaletto saw and depicted in his famous painting, over two hundred years ago. Recent additions on the same South side include the famous tea and wool clipper "Cutty Sark" in dry dock, her masts and yards seeming to rake the sky, and, nearby, Sir Francis Chichester's yacht "Gypsy Moth IV" also in a small dry dock and like "Cutty Sark", open to the public.

On the opposite shore, attention was drawn to the Isle of Dogs, accessible from Greenwich by a pedestrian tunnel under the Thames, and in the process of being developed into a desirable residential area for city-based executives. No doubt the future occupants of the newly-completed blocks of flats we could see, will have to pay handsomely for their view of Royal Greenwich! (Every monarch since William and Mary has trodden the landing stairs at the riverside walk just in front of the Royal Naval College railings: this is where the Royal Barge sets down its passengers.)

At this stage in our outward journey, supper was announced, and there was a dignified but determined movement towards the upper lounge where a truly out-

standing Nepali curry with all the appropriate side-dishes was provided by Mr. Manandhar, his family and staff. The curry, to which full justice was done, was followed by a delicious Nepali pudding, and coffee - all served on, or in, fine china crockery - no plastic cups!

Some two miles downstream from Greenwich, we had our first sight of the impressive and highly distinctive stainless steel covers on the piers of the great Thames Barrier - a truly majestic apparition in the rays of the sun now sinking behind us. There are nine concrete piers, of which the seven centre ones have the hood-shaped stainless steel covers, and between them are supported, and pivoted, the ten separate moveable gates which, when all raised, would effectively dam the Thames during a tidal surge. At other times, the gates lie horizontally, deep in the river bed, each recessed in a pre-cast concrete sill, the largest of which is half the size of a football pitch. When the gates are submerged, shipping is able to navigate the Thames normally, through the openings between the piers - as our ship "Valulla" then proceeded to do, all on board a close view of the piers. We were also fortunate to see one of the gates in the raised position, and were thus able to appreciate the formidable obstacle that would be presented to the force of the inrushing water, in a tidal surge, so preventing the inundation of a large part of London.

Flooding on a large scale has been a constant threat to London since Anglo-Saxon times, and its full menace was manifested as recently as 1928, when fourteen people were drowned in basements in Hammersmith and Westminster, and immense damage caused. At risk were forty-five square miles of London, one and a quarter million people, and a quarter of a million houses, offices and factories. A severe flood in London would have been the greatest natural disaster the country had probably ever experienced, and a catastrophe for the capital commensurate with the Great Fire of London in 1666. Now, this marvel of British engineering, the largest and most comprehensive flood defence scheme, and the longest moveable flood barrier, in the world, has averted that threat.

The barrier, sited in Woolwich Reach, spans a third of a mile across the Thames. The four main gates, when raised, each stand as high as a five-storey building, and are as wide as the opening of Tower Bridge. The raising and lowering mechanism is a system of reverse hydraulic rams. The Thames Barrier has justifiably been called the Eighth Wonder of the World, and we were indeed fortunate to be able to see it under such favourable conditions, and indeed to pass through it and travel further into Woolwich Reach, and beyond, up to Galleons Reach.

We had a good view of Woolwich, on the South side of the river, including the location of King Henry VIII's old Dockyard, the ancient parish church, and on the high ground behind the town, Shooters' Hill. We passed close to one of the Woolwich free ferries, crossing to the North Shore with a full load of vehicles. Our ship's master pointed out, some distance ahead, the many towering chimneys of Ford's Dagenham works, and, close at hand, the proposed site of the projected new Thames bridge. At this latter point, he turned the vessel and our return journey began. Passing Silvertown, the huge Tate and Lyle sugar factory was an impressive sight.

Towards the end of our journey back upstream, a curious and dramatic sight was the setting sun, a huge red ball, appearing to rest for a moment on the top of the Houses of Parliament Clock Tower which contains Big Ben. There were many comments from those watching from the open deck, as we approached Westminster, that the Thameside complex of Whitehall Court, the Royal Horse Guards Hotel and the National Liberal Club which together with the buildings

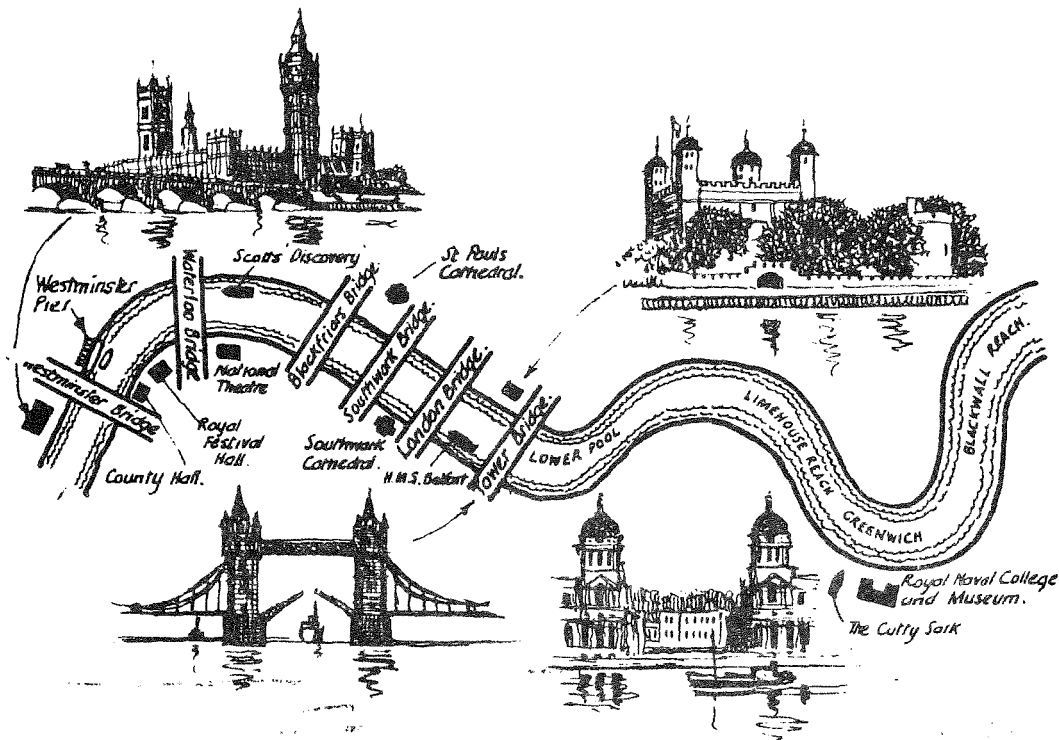
Northumberland Avenue, the Ministry of Defence, and the roof and cupolas of the Old War Office building, presented a roofline sprinkled with turrets, domes and cupolas, fleetingly resembled a Near Eastern city or a scene from the Arabian Nights, rather than its normal prosaic daytime appearance!

Before reaching our return destination, the raffle prizes were drawn, and the six prizes presented by Lord Hunt. These ranged from a case of wine, and a dinner for two, with wine, at the Natraj Restaurant, to single bottles of excellent sherry.

Our ship berthed at Westminster Pier just before ten o'clock pm: a round trip of three and a half hours and, perhaps, 17 miles. Disembarkation was accomplished smoothly, and so ended a most enjoyable and memorable trip. Great credit is due to our Hon. Secretary for having organized the event so efficiently.

I was left with only one regret, that the magnificent highway the Thames, London's natural main traffic artery, seems to be so little used. River shipping traffic was very light, and I think only one container ship and two other deep-sea merchant ships were observed.

A.E.E.M.



NEPAL'S FOREIGN POLICY

H.E. Ishwari Raj Pandey, Royal Nepalese Ambassador

Nepal is a non-aligned country and has proposed that she be declared a Zone of Peace. These two factors are the two sides of the same coin and are the basic tenets of Nepal's foreign policy.

A country's foreign policy, as Robert Walpole said in the 18th century, is the reflection of its home policy. In other words, the foreign policy of a country finds its genesis, first, in its sense of national security. A nation embarks upon the course of war when it perceives danger to it from external sources.

On the other hand, a country also seeks peace with the same sources if such a course ensures its national security. War and peace, mutually contradictory though the terms should appear, are devices for achieving a country's safety and security, although the recourse to war, in this thermonuclear age, is simply a mad, suicidal measure. To be precise, war in our times is an out-moded method

of securing national safety, to say the least about it.

For a nation the recourse to have peace with other nations has always stood guarantee for its security, unless the other nations are not bellicose towards it. Nepal, for example, has all through its history sought to remain in peace with its neighbours. It was only when conditions of peace had been threatened by neighbours that she raised arms in self-defence. She fought a war with Tibet in the 19th century when the latter forced it to go to war. Nepal, again, had to fight a war with British forces in India when she had to safeguard her very entity. Luckily enough for Nepal, it entered into peace with Britain after the conclusion of the Anglo-Nepal war, as she had also negotiated peace with Tibet.

Secondly, economic factors come into the making of a nation's foreign policy. In the past centuries, when territorial expansion benefitted a country in acquiring cultivable land, mining stretches, fishery waters, and extending the market for the homeland, many countries of Europe, including England, adopted their expansionist policy which, in another political term, now much debased, is known as 'Imperialism'. A foreign policy rooted in such economic self-interest has now become out of date as it is also impossible to pursue it in this era of resurgence among nations.

The third source of a country's foreign policy lies in its aspiration of national glorification. In former times such glorification lay in the glorification of the ruling King of a country. In our own century the European Axis Powers twice sought for such a glorification, first Germany, under Wilhelm Kaiser, in 1914-1918, for a greater Germany and, again, under the Nazis - in 1939-45, for glorification of the so-called German Aryan race.

This third factor, contributing to the building of a country's foreign policy, has appeared in a new form today, namely, the glorification of two mutually conflicting political ideologies - the ideology of western democracy, on the one hand, the Marxist ideology of the Soviet Union, on the other. Indeed, the ideological approach of the foreign policy of these two Power blocs is compounded by the two ingredients of policy-making in it, namely, the need to guarantee one's safety against the other, (both holding destructive weapons in its national armoury), on the one hand, and the multi-coloured economic prospects of the common man, on the other. It is for this very fact that the lesser powers and smaller nations have fear of, and attraction for, one or the other of the power blocs. Both blocs, to be specific, have not hesitated to advance their pace into the territory of countries having their native people divided against themselves to their sides. Vietnam, Afghanistan and Kampuchea provide examples of this.

Nepal is fully aware of this bedevilled situation in which the world finds itself caught today. Under this realisation, the country has adopted the policy of non-alignment, as many countries entertaining similar hopes and fears also have done.

Nepal believes that Marxism may immensely suit Russia and China. Westminster type of democracy, as the term connotes, may again wholly agree with the political temperament of the peoples of Western Europe and North America. Nepal, however, does not believe that these systems, though they are admissible into the soil of the countries of their adoption, should also fit into the mental frame of the peoples of other lands. A people, after all, has its own habits and traits, its own particular weaknesses and strength, its own genius, its own oddities and eccentricities. That is how nature determines their character. Like the act of transmitting blood of a wrong group to another body, an exotic, rather an alien system, when unsuitable, may harm a nation. Nepal's experiment with party democracy has amply proved this point.

The two ideologically hostile powers have been jockeying for supremacy in almost all lands round the orbit of the globe. Their media blare out, day in and day

out, barrages of propaganda against each other. Radios, newspapers and books tell of the glory and greatness of their own way of life while disparaging, in most unreserved terms, those of the other side. Their intelligence network keeps incessantly busy not only in their own land but in the lands of their opponents and, particularly, in the lands of the weaker and the handicapped peoples. It is called ideological warfare. In their mutual suspicion, they embark upon what is known as the Cold War. Their armoury is replete with horrendous weapons which are capable of letting loose on the surface of this planet the destruction and havoc which would spare no future Tacitus or Thucydides to relate the tragic episode to those surviving, if any. If these ideological hostilities send them really in to kill, the Peloponnesian war would read like an account of some warfare in Children's Fairy Tales.

It is in fear of this not wholly impossible inhuman, infernal onward tragic destiny of the human race that Nepal, along with other non-aligned countries, has been raising its voice in protest against ideological interference, military intervention, economic expansionism, and armaments hoarding by both the power blocs. This is the sheet-anchor of the country's foreign policy. This is what is called the objectives behind the five principles of peaceful co-existence. This policy is born of the nation's aspirations for peace, peace in this world, as is conceived in its worldly wisdom, and peace in the inner world of men's minds, as Nepal found it in the eternal messages of its great sages onward from King Janaka down to Gautama the Buddha.

This aspiration for peace in our day found its articulation through the late King Mahendra, who pronounced it, first, in the Bandung Conference and then in other subsequent conferences of non-aligned nations. In the past century King Prithvi Narayan Shah, too, warned the nation against its turning bellicose towards either of its neighbours. His epigrammatic description of Nepal as positioned like a yam between two boulders (China and British India) is pregnant with this very suggestion.

Preserving this policy inviolate, Nepal, under King Birendra today, has been working towards the success of the ideals of peace - peace for its very existence, and peace for its economic growth as well as for social progress. Addressing the 7th Non-aligned Summit, the Sovereign summed up the principles of non-alignment, and said:

"Peaceful co-existence, non-interference in internal affairs, and rejection of force in international relations are time-tested principles of non-alignment. To be sure, there could be no better means of guaranteeing international security other than adherence to these principles. No nation, however powerful, should have the right to impinge upon the sovereign integrity of another country or peoples. We hold the right of a country to choose its own system sacred and inviolable for all time. It was this trust that led us to ask the people of Nepal the polity they considered best for the country."

(Reference to 1980 National Referendum of Nepal)

Recalling Nepal's ageless tradition of peace, the Monarch again said:

"In Nepal, we have lived a life of seclusion and peace through the ages. Among the mountains, on the river banks or under the groves of trees close by a forest, our sages and seers have brought us to seek peace over two-thousand five hundred years ago, it was from Nepal that Prince Siddhartha Gautam, who later became known as the 'Buddha', set out looking for ways to peace and ultimate deliverance of Man.

Since then his ideals have found an echo in the hearts of people throughout the world. In an age when the culture of arms is threatening the very survival of man, the foundation of peace can be laid step by step, brick by brick. This consideration has prompted us to welcome and support the initiatives to have different parts of the world established as Zones of Peace. It was along this road that we proposed Nepal to be declared as a Zone of Peace."

I have copiously quoted from His Majesty the King. These statements throw ample light on Nepal's objectives of progress and peace. I need not further enlarge upon them.

While the ideals and policy of non-alignment have been understood in varying degrees by even the power blocs, Nepal's own "Zone of Peace" proposal has been made to appear as a hazy notion, at least, by certain peoples and countries. However, there is nothing foggy about the "Peace Zone" proposal, if one genuinely tries to understand it. As the King made it clear himself while proclaiming the proposal for the first time during his Coronation in 1975, the concept did not originate from Nepal's fear from any quarter.

The proposal has been endorsed by 63 countries of Europe (including the United Kingdom), Asia, Africa and the Americas. Nearer home, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka also have done so. With its U.S. recognition during the King's State Visit there, Nepal has made one more solid gain in its foreign policy. Other friendly countries, near and far, cannot defer their recognition of it, if they value their friendship with Nepal, as the proposal has already been made part of the directive principles of the country's Constitution.

In what I have said so far, I have tried to explain in broad outlines the cardinal tenets of the foreign policy of my government. I shall now present before you some other main objectives of Nepal's foreign policy and try to explain how we have been pursuing this policy of promoting relations with the countries of the world.

Till today we have established diplomatic relations with eighty-four countries, Zimbabwe being the one with whom we opened such relations most recently, and we seek to open such relations with others also. True to the ideal of non-alignment and peace, Nepal has made no difference in matters of friendship between the countries of divergent political systems, say between the Socialist countries like the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, on the one side, and democracies like the U.S.A. and the U.K., on the other. As suggested earlier, it is our belief that a country is within its legitimate right to choose its own system, while it does not have any right to force the same system upon others.

As it happens in this imperfect world, several nations have their own problems with neighbours, and in such eventualities, Nepal has always been judging the issues purely on merit basis, when it feels itself called upon to do so. To cite one instance, it has justified the creation of Israel as a nation, yet Nepal protests against the act of Israel in occupying part of the territories of Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian homeland.

Since ancient times Nepal had friendly relations with China. Kathmandu used to send its emissaries to Nankin every five years. China's civil war and its war with Japan interrupted this practice. However, Nepal resumed it at the tail-end of the Kuomintang government in 1949, when it sent a mission to Nankin headed by Lt. General Krishna Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana. In 1956, Nepal and the People's Republic of China exchanged Ambassadors, and both have the

best of bilateral relations since then, following their signing the Treaty of Peace and Friendship, based on the five principles of peaceful co-existence.

China has helped us in our development efforts like the building of the famous Kathmandu-Kodari Highway and setting up a bricks and tiles factory.

Nepal's relations with India date back to the periods of the epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharat, as the records of Rama's marrying Sita of Janakpur, now a well-known town in the plains of western Nepal, show. During the Mahabharata war, Lord Krishna himself was said to have gone to Nepal on some important diplomatic errand. The name of King Vikramaditya of Ujjain is well-known in Nepal. Emperor Ashoka sent his sister Charumati to Kathmandu on a religious mission.

However, since the advent of Mohammed of Ghazanavi on the Indian scene, history does not have any record about Nepal and India having had any rapport worth the mention. Being an orthodox Hindu land, Nepal must have cut itself off from the vast Indian land mass which had come under the subjugation of various Muslim ruling dynasties at different periods of its one thousand years of turbulent history. Yet the Nepalese made pilgrimage to the famous Hindu religious centres known as Chaar Dham - the four centres of pilgrimage, and also to other centres like Prayaag and Varanasi.

An apocryphal story has it that King Jayapied of Kashmir undertook military adventures into Nepal only to be driven back, with a bad dressing down. Chronological records show that Ghiasuddin Tughlak of Delhi and Shamsuddin of Bengal also embarked upon similar adventures. They also suffered ignominious discomfiture, the major part of their army being stricken with plague.

It was only during the reign of Emperor Humayun that King Mahendra Malla of Nepal sent his emissary to Delhi on a fact-finding mission. The Moghul highly appreciated this friendly gesture, and received the Nepalese envoys to his court with full honours.

I have earlier mentioned about the Anglo-Nepal war. Subsequent to this event Nepal came to have good relations with British India. Besides this, the family members of the ruling Ranas had matrimonial relations with the princes of a number of Indian States, which also reminds one of at least one of Nepal's early rulers having similar relations with Tibet with his daughter Princess Bhrikuti getting married to a Tibetan potentate.

Nepal's relations with India are extensive. Social and cultural relations aside, the two countries have good opportunities to collaborate with each other in economic fields. Nepal's big rivers, which were once the rivers of sorrow for Bihar, have turned into the sources of prosperity for that Indian State. Nepal can, in turn, change the trends of trade for the best if it is given adequate overland route facilities for transacting its international trade.

Nepal is having trade deficit problems with India. The Kingdom buys more than 75 percent of its consumer goods from the latter. This trade imbalance can be off-set only by selling Nepalese products to India. This is also an issue in Indo Nepalese relations.

The Second World War had, among so many other things, brought a radical change in international relations. European colonies, mainly in Asia and Africa, were

emerging as independent nations. India and Pakistan became independent in 1947. Ceylon, today's Sri Lanka, and Burma had gained their independence even before that year. On the other side of the Himalayas, China emerged as a new force to reckon with following the defeat of Chiang Kai Shek.

The nationalist upheaval also changed the political map of Africa. Thus emerged many new nations in its trail.

Aware of this fresh historical trend, Nepal felt the need to re-assert its position in the comity of nations. It sensed the urgency to open its relations with the various countries of the world. With the U.K. and France it already had diplomatic relations. In course of time the Kingdom entered into such relations with the United States and Independent India. Gradually, Nepal went ahead with establishing friendship with several countries, including the Soviet Union as well as the Scandanavian countries and Germany and Japan.

It was with Britain that Nepal had established its first diplomatic relations in the modern sense of the term. The Royal Nepalese Embassy in London is the oldest of our missions abroad. The two countries have remained steadfast and trusted friends of each other. Nepalese soldiers fought side by side with the British armed forces during the two world wars. The Gorkha soldiers are still in Her Britannic Majesty's Service, and it hardly needs mention how they fought on the battle grounds of the Falkland Islands.

Nepal is grateful to Great Britain for her cooperation in its development efforts. The cooperation and assistance has considerably helped our bilateral relations. I hope that friendship between them will keep growing. The impending State Visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh in February next year will be another significant landmark in the Nepal-Britain relationship.

Nepal, as a member of the United Nations, subscribes to the ideals of the world body. Besides giving its deliberations on the issues coming before the United Nations, the country has cooperated with it in its peace-keeping efforts by sending an armed contingent as in the case of Lebanon. It has remained unsparing in condemning South African policy of Apartheid which, it feels, directly violates the ideals of Human Rights.

Nepal has thus developed a foreign policy oriented to the objectives of progress and peace. Foreign dignitaries, including Heads of State and Government, have frequently spoken in its appreciation. We are gratified at this.

We in Nepal feel that nations should come closer to one another, and put their heads together to find solutions to the human problems of hunger, disease and poverty. No nation is morally great or small as compared to others. The stage of progress among nations may vary in degree. But with the spread of knowledge and skill every nation is sure to attain development by using its own peculiar talent. Science and the Humanities have helped transform the destiny of yesterday's backward nations, including most European nations of today. It is for these reasons that we, like other LDCs and the members of the Third World, intercede with the advanced countries to increase the quantum of aid and to transfer suitable modern technology to us.

Itself a least developed country, Nepal believes that the world-wide problems of poverty, hunger and disease can be stamped out only by evolving a new world economic order, and that the developed countries should exhibit a strong will to create such an order.

Cooperation among its regional countries, likewise, forms one important feature of Nepal's foreign policy. The South Asia Region comprises many of the poorest countries of the world. Having many common problems, mainly economic, among them, it is natural that these countries should be interested in one another's well-being, and be included to participate in the common effort towards their individual and mutual well-being. As an active member of the South Asia Forum, Nepal has been trying its best to be helpful in their mutual development efforts.

"Peace in Our Time - Peace with Honour", the well-intentioned Neville Chamberlain announced to the expectant, if incredulous, world after his having signed the Munich Pact. But Adolf Hitler duped the naive British Prime Minister. The Hitler-Stalin Pact also was torn down exactly a week after it had been signed. Then came the armageddon of our time.

It is said that the Second World War would not have taken place had the 28 leading European statesmen of the '30s been truly aware of the intentions behind Hitler's Mein Kampf. The nations of the world today cannot afford to ignore the ominous signs appearing across the horizon.

A century ago, Queen Victoria's colourful Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, said: "England has no permanent friends - England has only her permanent interests". How statesman-like he might have sounded then! But times have changed beyond recognition since his days. Nations today cannot afford to think only of their exclusive interest ideological or material. For in these turbulent times a nation should have permanent friends if it is to safeguard its permanent interests.

It is in this conviction that Nepal wants to have its lasting interest promoted by having sincere friends around the world.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

by

Mayura Brown

The State Visit of Their Majesties King Mahendra and Queen Ratna of Nepal in November 1960 was the inspiration for the founding of the Britain-Nepal Society. His late Majesty, King Mahendra, not only honoured us by becoming our Patron, but also donated £500 to start the Society.

Bhuban and Jharendra Singha, General Shanker Shamsher J. B. Rana, with Pashupati Rana and Prabal Rana (now First Secretary at the Embassy) were the prime movers in the formation of the Society with enthusiastic support from many British friends. A Committee was hurriedly assembled, and the obvious choice for President was Sir John Hunt of Mount Everest fame.

An Inaugural Reception was held at the Dorchester Hotel for Their Majesties, the Royal entourage, and a glittering collection of guests.

The first year was spent in consolidating the Society. The Nepalese students

then in Britain already had their own Association, the 'Yetis', and preferred to remain a separate organization but were of course eligible to join as individuals.

Bhuban was our first Chairman, with Lieutenant Colonel Sir Geoffrey Beetham (British Resident in Nepal from 1938-1943) as Vice-Chairman.

The first Annual General Meeting was held at the Nepalese Embassy on the 20th October 1961 by invitation of the new Ambassador, Sri Kali Prasad Upadhyay. There were several changes in the Committee. Bhuban was returning home, so Sir Christopher Summerhayes (British Ambassador in Nepal from 1951-54) was approached to take her place. Both Sir Geoffrey and the Hon. Francis Stonor (Hon. Treasurer) resigned for reasons of health, and Mr. T. Lovell-Garner (Hon. Secretary) due to pressure of work. Lady Wheeler became Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Ruth Rhodes Hon. Secretary, and I the Hon. Treasurer.

We had to make plans for the coming season, and it was decided that our meetings should consist of lectures on every aspect of Nepalese life and culture. The Society was to be strictly non-political.

It was not easy to contemplate a programme for the year with greatly diminished finances, and the Dorchester Hotel Reception had left us fairly impoverished. We were spared the cost of hiring a hall, as the Ambassador very kindly offered us the Embassy Ballroom for our meetings. But we had to calculate the expense of hiring chairs, the postage and stationery required, printing of notices, and a four-page Newsletter I would write for those members unable to attend meetings. The cost was beyond us. I mentioned this to the late Lord Nelson of Stafford, one of our Vice-Presidents, who promised immediately to have our notices and Newsletters copied at his English Electric offices in the Strand, as well as our annual statements. I still remember Lord Nelson's generosity with gratitude as we needed such help to put the Society really on its feet. Mrs. Rhodes and I managed the secretarial work between us. We must have addressed hundreds of envelopes and stuck on endless stamps in those early years of the Society. Another saving was achieved by Ruth preparing the snacks for the meetings. We would pack the sausage-rolls, sandwiches, etc., into boxes and go off in her little Fiat to wherever the meeting was being held.

It was most auspicious that our very first lecture-meeting on January 24th (1962) was honoured by the presence of H.R.H. Crown Prince Birendra, then a pupil at Eton, and H.R.H. Prince Gyanendra. The Minister for National Guidance, Planning and Education, Bishwabanda Thapa, was also present. The well-known anthropologist, Professor von Fürer Haimendorf of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, introduced us to the "Sherpas of Eastern Nepal" with a beautifully photographed film of Khumjung and neighbouring villages. About 70 members attended our first cultural effort which was most encouraging.

This set the pattern of the Society's yearly activities. An Annual General Meeting in the autumn, spring and winter lecture-meetings, and a Birthday telegram sent to our Patron, H.M. King Mahendra every June.

In 1963 Mrs. Rhodes felt we should add a summer outing to our annual programme. She arranged a coach ride through the Cotswolds, a picnic lunch en route, and a visit to Stanway Hall by courtesy of Mr. Guy and Lady Violet Benson - a privilege as this house was not open to the public.

Each year we have found different venues. Gardens, Stately Homes (we enjoyed the Polo Match at Cowdray Park), various boat trips down the Thames including

"Son et Lumiere" at the Tower of London, and our recent enjoyable excursion when we ate our curry supper while passing the impressive Thames barriers. In 1976 General and the Rani Kiran went with us to the Gurkha Museum at Church Crookham, and we have enjoyed the hospitality of many friends including Lord and Lady Hunt, the Earl and Countess of Limerick, Lord Camoys, Sir Gilbert and Lady Inglefield, Mr. Anthony Wieler, and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Broomhall. In 1972 after a picnic lunch in the Broomhall garden, we visited the battlefield at Hastings where we had a lecture explaining how William of Normandy's troops defeated King Harold's army. Some Gurkha cadets from Sandhurst were with us. One of them said: "The English would NEVER have lost if we Gurkhas had been here with them."

A Reception at the House of Lords in honour of H.R.H. Crown Prince Birendra was held on 6th April 1964. Our sponsor was Field Marshal Viscount Slim, a Vice-President of the Society. We were able to express to His Royal Highness our appreciation of his interest in the Society and to wish him every success in his studies.

I was very fortunate to receive the sum of £450 from the Rani Jagadamba Kumari Devi, widow of General Madan Shamsher J. B. Rana, to be used by the Society for furthering interest in Nepal. We decided to mount a photographic exhibition with photographs contributed by members. The Kodak Company gave us a great deal of help by reducing their price for enlargements and mountings, and Quantas Airways allowed us the free use of their exhibition gallery in Piccadilly. "The Kingdom of Nepal" exhibition was launched with a Cocktail Party on November 23rd 1966 and was open to the general public from November 24th to December 8th.

It was transferred to the Royal Geographical Society and remained there from December 1966 to June 1967 and was seen by a large number of people. On April 17th a Reception was held at the R.G.S. for H.R.H. the Princess Sharada and the Kumar Khadga Bickram Shah when they were able to view the photographs.

We tried unsuccessfully to find other locations for this very interesting exhibition but the expense of transportation, insurance, etc., defeated us.

The Nepali Suppers at New Zealand House did not start until February 1968. We borrowed Mohun Sing and his son Puran from Mr. Anthony Wieler to cook the meal with the help of the ladies of the Committee. Miss Jacqueline Cheney (Mrs. C. N. C. Mitchell) was the organiser, and in those days the Committee also washed up the dishes! As the number of diners increased it became difficult for amateurs to cope, and we were glad to find Mr. Manandhar to do the catering. These Suppers have become a popular feature of our winter programme. At the 1984 Supper Captain Rambahadur Limbu, VC, asked me if I remembered his son. When Rambahadur came to London in 1966 to receive his decoration there was a small party for him at the Embassy. The late Mrs. Aimee Huban (her son, Captain John Huban, 1/5 Royal Gurkhas, was killed in Italy fighting with his men) brought toys for Rambahadur's children and I gave them to him. It was good to hear that little Bhaktabahadur had grown up and joined his father's regiment, the 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles.

Apart from important guests who attended our Nepali Suppers, several receptions took place for visitors from Nepal, among them the Reception on May 17th 1966 at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, in conjunction with the Gurkha Brigade Association, for the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Nepalese Army, General Surendra Bahadur Shah and the Rani Surendra. In May 1969, the Reception at the Army and Navy Club, Pall Mall, was for the Rani Kaiser, widow of Field Marshal Kaiser Shamsher J. B. Rana, a Life Member of our Society and founder the Nepal-Britain

Society. She was accompanied by the Rani Surendra, the Field Marshal's daughter.

Receptions have been held as well at the House of Lords, Royal Overseas League, the Alpine Club, and the English Speaking Union for the Nepalese Ambassadors and the British Ambassadors to Nepal. Encouragement and help have been given to us by Ambassadors of both countries and Embassy officials for which we offer sincere thanks.

After General and the Rani Kiran returned to Nepal, the next Ambassador was Sri Jharendra N. Singha who had been First Secretary in London at the birth of the Society. He and Bhuban found our growth and success "most gratifying". The present Ambassador, Sri Ishwari Raj Pandey, first visited London in 1963 as Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Planning, and returned as First Secretary in July 1968 until September 1972. We welcomed him back in July 1983 with his courageous wife, Gita, who manages to fulfill her commitments from a wheel-chair.

Lack of space allows for just a few names, but all those who have served the Society must accept our warmest appreciation. Our Presidents: Lord Hunt, Mr. Arthur Kellas, and Sir George Bishop. Chairmen: Mde. Bhuban Singha, Sir Christopher Summerhayes, Sir Antony Duff, Colonel Charles Wylie, Mr. Paul Broomhall, Brigadier Taggart, and Colonel Colin Scott. Our dedicated and hardworking Secretaries: The late Ruth Rhodes, Lord Camoys, Mr. Christopher Cox, Colonel Eric Mercer, Miss Cynthia Stephenson and our indefatigable Celia. Vice-Chairmen and Treasurers: Lady Wheeler, the Earl of Limerick, Mrs. Helen Lawrence, Mr. Nicholas Rhodes, Mr. Anthony Wieler, Colonel Gregory and Mr. Rodney Turk. Hon. Auditors: Mr. A. E. Leach, Mr. J. K. King and Lord Chorley.

It was a great shock to learn that our Patron had died on 31st January 1972. I had attended Their Majesties' departure from London Airport on the 20th November 1968 when the King had been here for medical treatment, but His Majesty was very well and cheerful when I had an Audience on the 28th October 1971 at the Embassy. (Some of our members will remember being presented to our Royal Patron in October 1966). We were all greatly saddened by our loss, and a letter of condolence was sent to H.R.H. Prince Birendra.

In February 1975 H.E. General Kiran took our Coronation gift with him to Kathmandu, and we celebrated with a pre-Coronation Nepali Supper on February 19th. (The Coronation took place on February 24th).

Their Royal Highnesses Prince Gyanendra and the Princess Komal were our guests at a Reception at the Royal Overseas League on the 28th September 1973. The Prince was to be our new Patron. T.R.H. were our guests again at a dinner at the League on the 30th July 1981. Also present was H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester, an Hon. Life Member of the Society. In 1984 a dinner was held at the English Speaking Union for our Patron and H.R.H. Princess Komal. The Prince explained the aims of the King Mahendra Wild Life Trust for Nature Conservation in Nepal. He is Chairman of this important and very necessary foundation.

One cannot but regret that some of our founder-members are no longer with us. Sir Geoffrey Beetham, Mr. Kenneth Keymer (his father built the famous rope-railway to Kathmandu) and General Shanker Shamsher J. B. Rana who died in June 1976. Nepalese Ambassador in London from 1949 to 1954, and one of our VicePresidents, he and Ranisahiba often entertained the British Ambassadors to Nepal and our Committee members in appreciation of their work and help to the Society. He also supported the Gurkha Welfare Appeal. Colonel Ronnie Duncan (5th Royal Gurkhas, P.F.F.) a founder member who died in 1963 is well

remembered. His widow Brenda, now aged 90, regularly attends our meetings. What greater loyalty can we expect! Also much missed is Clem Sykes of the British Council who died recently. He was an active member for 16 years and a Committee member for most of that period.

Lecture-meetings are the foundation on which our Society has flourished, and we have treated our members to well over a hundred so far. From earliest times they have attracted 120 or more members and guests, and their educational value and the cultural information derived increases one's understanding of Nepal.

It would require a large volume to describe all these talks fully. I hope our Lecturers, who gave so generously of their time, will accept our warmest thanks and forgive the omission of some names.

Most people think of Nepal in terms of mountains and spectacular views. Lord Hunt, Sir Edmund Hillary, Colonel Charles Wylie and a host of mountaineers have taken us to heights few of us could hope to attain. We sit comfortably, warm and untired, and our eyes undertake the hazardous task of climbing.

On expeditions that do not attempt the great peaks, we are able to acquaint ourselves more intimately with the inhabitants of the high hills. Many Nepalese have seen in these illustrated talks parts of their homeland they have never witnessed.

In 1962 John Tyson, now Headmaster of the Bura Nil Kanta Boys' School, showed us his expedition to map the Jagdula Lekh, Sisne Himal and the Kanjiroba Himal. In 1966 we saw his journey to Tukche and Dolpo, and in 1971 a trip through the gorge of the Langhu river. In 1966 Professor Haimendorf showed us "The Bhotias of West Nepal", in 1967 anthropological field work in Nepal, and in Humla (1973), and the training societies in Nepal (1978). In 1966 we saw Dr. David Snellgrove's "Cultural Survey in Nepal" and the life of a Sherpa in 1980. Nancy Noël's subject in 1982 was "Less Well Known Aspects of Nepal" and Mr. P. S. J. B. Rana, FRCS spoke on "Evolution of Modern Medicine in Nepal".

The various expeditions and treks, including some notable films by Sir George Bishop, emphasise the difficulty of transport and journeys, especially for the sick. Several doctors related their experiences but Dr. Peter Steele managed to bring some fun into medical life.

Projects for the 1962 Three Year Plan were shown by Mr. Andrew Shearer after our A.G.M. in 1963. The English Electric Company had re-equipped the (1911) hydro-electric station at Pharphing. Equipment was supplied for the Sundarijul and Thara Khola stations, as well as the Kathmandu 11000 volt ring main system. In 1965 Major Tom Spring-Smyth told us about the Karnali Project in West Nepal.

Quite in contrast was a film shown in 1974 by the late Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark which filled older members with nostalgia. This was Kathmandu in 1951 when Buddhist relics were brought to the city. T.R.H. the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were at this meeting. Our young members had a chance to see "Nepal of the Past" when the late Mr. Kenneth Keymer showed black and white slides from a vintage magic lantern. Those slides should be kept in archives somewhere for they gave a historical picture of Nepal as it was in the early part of this century.

Films on the flora of Nepal by both Adam Stainton and Tony Schilling are extremely popular. Their knowledge of Himalayan flowers, trees, and shrubs is authoritative and their films a delight. We owe a debt to these plant collectors

for many of the beautiful Himalayan plants that grace our gardens today. Much useful work has been undertaken by the British Museum (Natural History) in the field of zoology, botany and entomology. Mr. K. Hyatt, one of our members, has shown films of their findings (1963 and 1972), and the Green Jackets also undertook high altitude research on these subjects for the Natural History Museum. (Film of 1972). Birds and Butterflies have not been neglected and we have had two splendid films on the wild life of Nepal. (1981 and 1984).

It is fortunate that John Sanday is restoring the ancient and unique monuments in Nepal. The work is vital and he continues to do it with great care and understanding of the materials and methods used by the original craftsmen and builders. In 1977 the Society donated £100 towards the restoration of the Surjya window in the Hanuman Dhoka. His films on the architecture of the Nepal valley are always a revelation, and he is to be congratulated on reviving the old national crafts. His first talk to the Society was published in the first number of our now popular Journal (1977).

A very successful special meeting was held on May 23rd 1983 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first flight over Everest by the Marquis of Clydesdale and Flight Lieutenant David MacIntyre in 1933. This splendid achievement by British pilots and aircraft should have been celebrated nationally. It is to the honour of our Society that we paid tribute to these brave men. Once again I must thank Dr. William Brown (Celia's husband) for finding the film of the flight for us to show at our meeting.

Over a period of twenty-five years a very large number of people have given their services generously as Vice-Presidents and ordinary members of the Committee. They deserve appreciation and thanks for their contribution to the success of the Society.

BOOK REVIEWS

By Lieutenant Colonel T. M. Lowe

Himalaya - Encounters with Eternity by Ashvin Mehta and Maurice Herzog. Thames & Hudson. £20.00. 231 pages plus 76 pages of photographs.

Mehta is not a mountaineer in the accepted sense. In this book he has sought to capture 'the inner fibre of a people nurtured by the greatest mountains on the face of our planet'. For Mehta the photographs are 'a record of my celebration and my encounter with eternity'. The photographic equipment used by Mehta is mentioned briefly.

The introduction to this book is by Maurice Herzog one time Minister in de Gaulle's government in 1958 and, in 1950, leader of an expedition in which Annapurna was climbed. 'The West is becoming a soulless place. Its people are suffering progressively from the effects of frustration and restlessness'. How right he is.

Herzog's introduction is the story of the Himalayas - spiritual, geographical

and historical. 'The vast mountain chain', we are told, 'never acted as a barrier between peoples. On the contrary, it was the source from which they all originated'. In a few pages Herzog has given us a very clear and interesting account of the geography of the Himalayas and the effect that it has had on the people and their development.

Herzog touches on the untapped potential for hydro-electric power of the first magnitude. Coal and oil are finite resources, whereas the rivers are a renewable source of power. Herzog considers it 'baffling to see thousands of millions of human beings living and dying in extreme destitution when all round them is wealth for the taking'.

Himalayan exploration is said to be drawing to its close and is now more comparable to Alpinism with one major difference - there are still unattempted climbs everywhere.

The photographs cover everything - mountains, valleys, rivers and the people of the Himalayas. They are divided into five areas: Kashmir and Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Garhwal and Almora, Nepal and, finally, Sikkim and Darjeeling. By any standards the photographs are superb. The Sikkim group includes a colour photograph of a painting in the second oldest monastery in Pemyangtse. Anyone who believes that the erotic and the pornographic were an invention of the Nineteen Sixties should visit that monastery in Sikkim and refresh his memory.

At £20.00 and 12 inches by 10 inches the book is large and not cheap, but it is well produced. It has something in common with Charles Allen's "A Mountain in Tibet" which was reviewed in Journal No. 7 of 1983.

Magic of Mont Blanc by Walter Bonatti.

Victor Gollancz. £29.95 207 pages

The Himalayas, of course, have the edge as regards the height of the major peaks and the geography of what travel writers describe as "far off places". Mont Blanc is not a far off place, nor it is much more than half the height of Everest. It does, however, lack nothing in majesty, grandeur and sheer mountain magic.

Bonatti is a photographic journalist who has a very thorough knowledge of his business. He has climbed Gasherbrum IV and K2 in the Himalayas. The photographs in this book include just about everything you are likely to see on or near Mont Blanc. That they are photos of the highest quality, there is no doubt. They are accompanied by Bonatti's own account of what he has seen around the mountain massif. He says that his pictures are intended to bring out the soul and not just the technical, or historical, aspects of the mountain.

The size (13 x 9 inches), the weight (5 pounds) and the price of the book might frighten you, but it is a first class piece of publishing. If you are too old to lift it, or can't afford a mortgage, then think up some other way to see a copy.

Annapurna. A Woman's Place by Arlene Blum.

Granada £6.95 258 pages

First published in 1980, it is now issued in paperback. Maurice Herzog who led the French Expedition which made the first ascent of Annapurna in 1950 held the view that the fame acquired by the All Woman expedition described by Arlene Blum was not something they acquired because they were females. For Herzog 'any act of courage and sacrifice performed with passion, or in the

service of a great cause, commands respect and admiration'. It was Miss Blum, leader of the American Women's Himalayan Expedition described in this book, who stated that 'women do have the strength and endurance to climb the highest mountains'. The T shirt designed for the expedition bore the logo "a woman's place is on top" and two of them got to the top of Annapurna.

Like so many other expeditions to the Himalayas this one led by Miss Blum didn't achieve success without tragedy, because two of its number fell to their death.

It is significant that Miss Blum had at an early stage considered adopting the Alpine style of climbing, i.e. no camps, carrying their own food (in the style favoured by Reinhold Messner), but thought it prudent to adopt the more orthodox approach of many other Himalayan expeditions.

The book is well produced, has lots of photographs, good maps, including a panoramic sketch of the final ascent, and a comprehensive bibliography.

Finally, a last word from Miss Blum - 'Women and men have complementary abilities, and they can and should climb their "Annapurnas" as equals, with mutual respect.' And why not!

Running the Himalayas by Richard and Adrian Crane.

New English Library £10.95 129 pages.

Two intelligent young brothers (one has a Ph.D, the other is a computer consultant) are the heroes of the exciting story which is to be found in the pages of this book. To set the scene you should look at the end papers which trace the route of the journey from East to West, and then read the Foreword by Lord Hunt. But what was the motivation for the adventure? They wanted to raise funds for the Charity "Intermediate Technology" to join the race against poverty.

From Darjeeling the brothers covered Nepal in fifty days. They each kept diaries in which were recorded details of almost everything that happened, what they saw and how they felt. Sadly, news of the death of their mother reached them in Nepal, but they continued their self-imposed task, because that, they felt, was what their mother would have wished.

Exhausting, exciting, painful at times, the journey was all these and more at different times. In Nepal the brothers spoke to a Gurkha who had served in India, Burma and England. He just couldn't believe that they had no baggage train behind them. What, no Quartermaster?

After the Nepal interlude the journey proved no less exhausting, but they had grown accustomed to hardship. At one stage Adrian in his diary recorded, 'Before the trip we had joked that we might find some religious truths and return as different men. Now I can understand why others have travelled to far off places and returned changed'.

The great Himalayas run ended in Pakistan with all the rather shallow publicity associated with TV and the news media.

How much in the way of clothes did the brothers require? Before you set off on your next holiday, have a look at the Postscript on page 129.

The diaries are very readable and the connecting narrative by Marshall Lee

well put together. The photos are excellent, the book well produced, but it would have been even better for an index.

Today, too many older people deplore the shortcomings of young people. If they read this book, they will have to think again.

The Shishapangma Expedition by D. Scott and A. MacIntyre.
Granada. £12.95 332 pages.

The first reconnaissance of the 8,000 metre Shishapangma was carried out in 1921 by an Everest expedition. The mountain was first climbed in 1964 by the Chinese and by others later. This book is the story of the 1982 successful ascent by the South West couloir and SW Ridge using the Alpine style of climbing, i.e. quick up and down with the minimum of impedimenta.

Scott and MacIntyre were experienced climbers who would qualify for a place in any First Eleven of top class mountaineers.

The book follows broadly the pattern of accounts written by high-altitude Himalayan climbers. Scott is responsible for much of the book, though MacIntyre isn't far behind. Other members of the expedition have also contributed.

Two of the chapters are of special interest. The first deals with the chronology of climbing around Shishapangma, the other, "Expedition Medicine", is one which climbers of all ages would do well to read. It deals largely with the psychological problems which confront climbers.

Numerous photographs, good maps including panoramic pictures, increase the usefulness of the book to those who aspire to climb in the Himalayas.

It is sad that MacIntyre who had such a distinguished climbing career should have died at the age of 28 attempting the south face of Annapurna only five months after his success on Shishapangma.

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 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
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,
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The Gurkha Museum
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Queen Elizabeth Barracks,
Church Crookham,
Aldershot, Hants GU13 0RJ

Society of Subscribers to the Gurkha Museum,
(Major J. E. G. Lamond, MBE, Secretary)
c/o Gurkha Museum, Queen Elizabeth Barracks
Church Crookham, Aldershot, Hants GU13 0RJ

FROM MRS MAYURA BROWN CONCERNING SIR RALPH TURNER
WHO DIED 22 APRIL 1983 (See Obituary, Journal No. 7, page 30)

The Sir Ralph Turner Memorial Lecture, "The Evolution of Historical Linguistics", was given by Professor R. H. Robins in the presence of H.E. The Nepalese Ambassador at the Royal Asiatic Society on May 9th. Among his numerous high honours and awards Sir Ralph had an Honorary Degree of D.Litt. from the Tribhuvan University of Kathmandu and Life Membership of the Linguistic Society of Nepal. He received the Prabala Gorkha Dakshina Bahu from His late Majesty King Mahendra, so it was most fitting that H.E. Mr. Ishwari Raj Pandey should present a book of poems by King Mahendra to the Society for their Library. A Reception followed when we were able to speak to members who remembered Sir Ralph's great affection for the Gurkhas. I cannot refrain from repeating the words he wrote in the Preface of his Nepali Dictionary.

"As I write these last words, my thought return to you who were my comrades, the stubborn and indomitable peasants of Nepal. Once more I hear the laughter with which you greeted every hardship. Once more I see you in your bivouacs or about your fires, on forced march or in the trenches, now shivering with cold, now scorched by a burning and pitiless sun. Uncomplaining you endure hunger and thirst and wounds; and at the last your unwavering lines disappear into the smoke and wrath of battle. Bravest of the brave, most generous of the generous, never had a country more faithful friends than you."

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. This year it celebrates 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:

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

BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

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