



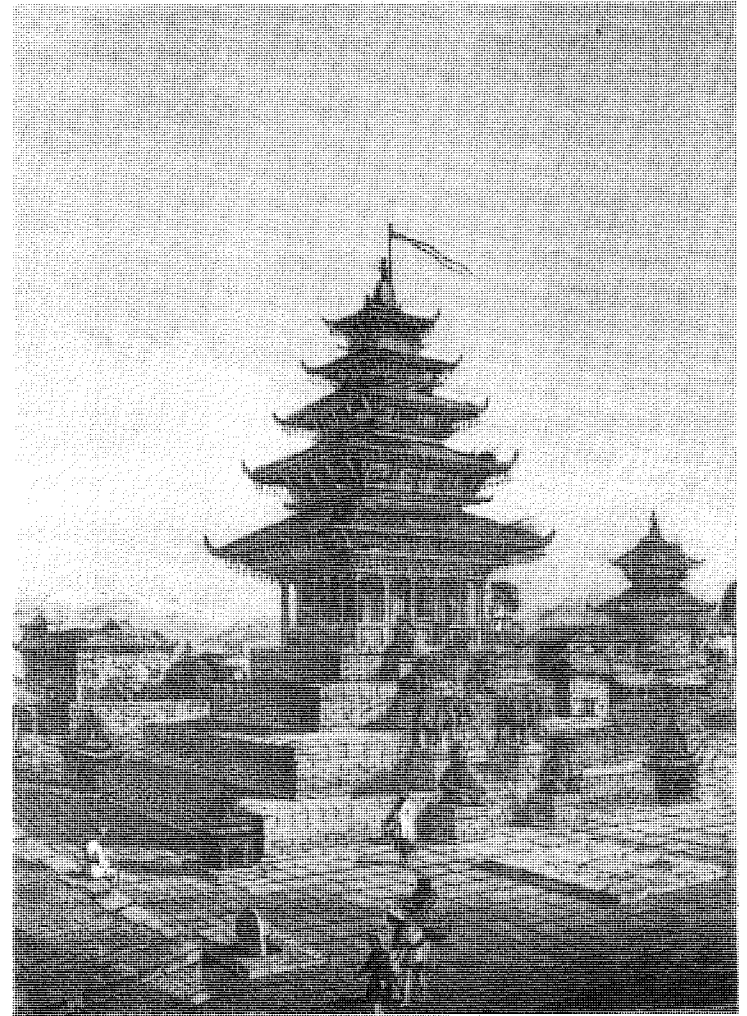
THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

J o u r n a l

Number 14

1990

29/11/90



**Bhupatindra Malla Five-Storey Temple at Bhadgaon (Bhaktapur):
Drawn by an Unnamed Nepalese Artist and Lithographed in
London for Daniel Wright's "History of Nepal" (1877)**

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Journal

Number 14

1990

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EDITORIAL

A Society Active and Strong

The editor gladly avails himself of this space to thank all contributors to the fourteenth number of our Journal and in particular to thank His Excellency the Nepalese Ambassador for his special contribution - the speech to the Society in New Zealand House - which covers in a clear and reassuring manner such a wide range of matters of vital importance, among them foreign policy, the goals and objectives of SAARC, Nepal's aims and achievements in the vital sphere of the national economy and the resolution of the recent difficulties with India. His remarks about the Society itself will give pleasure to many who were not able to be present on that delightful February evening.

The main articles in this issue are, as usual, based on talks given to the Society in London during the season and our members, we feel sure, will appreciate the opportunity to read them even if the magic of the hundreds of colourful illustrations cannot be recaptured.

That we are a strong and active Society comes out clearly in 'The Society's News'. Our members are widely known to be much involved in organisations of growing importance to the country and people whose friendship they value so greatly, such as The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, The Britain-Nepal Medical Trust and the Pestalozzi Children's Village of which our President is Patron. And this must be the best place to express our thanks and appreciation to the Anglo-Nepalese Parliamentary Group who take such a keen interest in the Society and are so helpful to us.

Of memorable events involving the Society two at least must be mentioned here - the reception in the Jubilee Room of the House of Commons in honour of His Royal Highness Prince Dipendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev on 29th June and the visit by a large group of our members to the splendid new Gurkha Museum in Winchester a few days after its official opening in July. It was opened by Field Marshal The Lord Bramall of Bushfield KG, GCB, OBE, MC, JP (a member of the Society) on behalf of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales who was unfortunately unable to come as a result of his polo accident. The former event was all the more enjoyable for the presence of our good friend the late Nepalese Ambassador to the Court of St. James (en route to the U.S.A.) and we were delighted to hear that on the same day his daughter, Miss Amita Pandey, who was also present, had received her Master of Arts Degree from the University of London.

We may conclude with a quote from Perceval Landon who, although he wrote his great book on Nepal some sixty years ago, had things to say which are not without significance now. 'Every Englishman should attempt to understand a little more thoroughly the high position which Nepal holds in the general Southern Asian balance.' And indeed should we not add, in the greater world of today.

Finally a special thank you from the editor to the author of 'Very Special Places' in this issue, sent all the way from Singapore! Bruce Niven's splendid book 'Mountain Kingdom' was reviewed in the Journal last year and is still obtainable

through the Gurkha Welfare Trusts in London and the Gurkha Museum.

■ **Notable Anniversaries** This year marks the 175th anniversary of the raising of the first three Gurkha Regiments:

The 1st King George V's Own Gurkha Rifles, The 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles, The 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles.

Also being celebrated this year is the centenary of the 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles and the 40th anniversary of their affiliation with The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment).



The Lord Hunt of Llanfair Waterdine, KG, CBE, DSO (The Society's News)



HRH The Duke of Gloucester, HE Madame Simha and the Executive Committee of the Britain-Nepal Society at the Annual General Meeting November 1989.

THE SOCIETY'S NEWS

■ **Monthly Meetings.** At last the Society has found a permanent home for its meetings; they will now be held at the Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1 at 6.15 for 6.45 pm.

Since the closure of the Alpine Club the meetings have been held at the Ski Club of Great Britain and the Kensington Town Hall. Lack of a permanent venue did not deter the members from attending four excellent illustrated talks which I list below for the record.

On Wednesday, 25 October, 1989 at the Alpine Club Lt. Col. J.W.A. Fleming gave an illustrated talk on "Events Surrounding the Trek to Gokyo Peak 1989".

On Thursday, 11 January, 1990 Mr. David Sayers gave an illustrated talk on "A Botanical Traveller in Nepal" at the Ski Club of Great Britain.

The next talk was held at the Kensington Town Hall on Thursday, 22 March, 1990. It was "Perspective on Budhanilkantha" by Mr. John Tyson, who was headmaster at the school from 1983 to 1989.

Mr. Ian Machorton spoke on "The Other Nepal" on Thursday, 26 April, 1990 at the Kensington Town Hall.

The Committee would like to thank the speakers who have so kindly given these talks.

■ **The Annual General Meeting.** Last year's AGM was held in November at the Royal Nepalese Embassy and was attended by our President, His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester who addressed the meeting. Members will have the opportunity of reading the minutes when they are distributed with the Agenda for the forthcoming AGM which is to be

held at the Royal Nepalese Embassy on Wednesday, 21 November by kind permission of His Excellency Major General Bharat Keshar Simha. As usual a curry supper will be served after the meeting.

■ **The Annual Nepali Supper.** This event was once again held at New Zealand House on Thursday, 15 February. The Guests of Honour were His Excellency The Nepalese Ambassador and Madame Simha. A description of the evening appears elsewhere in the Journal.

Regrettably, the Society will be unable to hold this annual event at New Zealand House during the next two years as the premises are to be refurbished. Your Committee is looking for a suitable alternative venue and it is planned to hold the supper as usual in February.

■ **A Reception in Honour of His Royal Highness Prince Dipendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev.** A small reception was held for His Royal Highness The Crown Prince of Nepal in the Jubilee Room at the House of Commons on Friday, 29 June, prior to His Royal Highness' return to Kathmandu on completion of his studies at Eton College. His Excellency The Nepalese Ambassador, Madame Simha, the Embassy staff together with their wives, Vice Presidents and Committee members attended this function.

We are grateful to Mr. Neil Thorne MP, Chairman of the Anglo-Nepalese Parliamentary Group for once again sponsoring a Society evening at the House.

■ **The Summer Outing.** This year's outing took the form of a visit to the newly opened Gurkha Museum at the Peninsula Barracks, Winchester, and a curry lunch at the Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Church Crookham.

A group of members and Yeti members travelled by coach to Church Crookham for a curry lunch; the Committee would like to thank Lt. Col. C.N. Fraser, Major J. Burlinson and his helpers, for making this such a memorable visit.

A short coach journey along the motorway to Winchester and a visit to the Gurkha Museum followed later in the afternoon.

The Committee would also like to thank Major J.E.G. Lamond, the Curator, for welcoming us and showing us around the Museum.

The Museum is open Tuesday - Saturday from 10am to 5pm and on bank holidays. (Tel: 0962 842832).

■ **Yeti Nepali Association in the U.K.** A Yeti Nepalese cultural evening was held at the Hammersmith Town Hall on 27 May in the presence of His Royal Highness The Crown Prince of Nepal. Several members of the Society attended this very enjoyable evening.

■ **Messages.** A message of congratulation 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, His Royal Highness Prince Gyanendra of Nepal on his birthday in July.

■ **Birthdays.** Lord Hunt, Vice President of the Society, celebrated his 80th birthday together with Lady Hunt at a party on the Thames-side terrace of the House of Lords on Friday 22 June, given by the Rainer Foundation. Among the many guests were six members of the team that conquered Everest in 1953, including Lt. Col. C.G. Wylie and Mr. George Band, both are members of the Society.

Miss Cynthia Stephenson, my predecessor, also celebrated her 80th birthday recently whilst on one of her travels.

Best wishes to Lord Hunt and Cynthia, and many happy returns of the day from us all in the Society.

■ **The Royal Nepalese Embassy.** Congratulations to Mr. Badri Prasad Khanal who has recently been promoted to the position of Counsellor at the Embassy. Mr. Khanal is an ex-officio member of the Committee.

■ **Subscriptions.** Owing to rising administrative and other costs, your Committee has proposed that, as from 1 October this year the subscription for ordinary members will be increased to £10.

New applications for Life Membership will attract a subscription of £150 and the annual fee for corporate membership will be raised to £25.

■ **Society Tie and Ladies' Scarf.** The price of the Britain-Nepal Society tie and the ladies' scarf is £7 including postage. They may be obtained from the Honorary Secretary

Finally, I would like to end on a personal note. After very nearly 12 years as Honorary Secretary of the Society, I feel it is time I "retired" and accordingly I have informed the Committee that I do not wish to seek re-election for another year.

I am sure the Editor will not mind my taking up valuable space in this Journal to thank members very much for their help and support over the years and to say how much I have enjoyed being their Honorary Secretary.

Celia Brown.
Honorary Secretary

We forgot the difficulties caused by the January gales when we assembled at New Zealand House in February for our annual Nepali Supper. The warmth and friendliness this occasion engenders accounts for its great popularity. After drinks and lively conversations, everyone settled down to the usual excellent meal.

We were delighted to receive a message from our Patron, H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester: "May I send my best wishes, as your President, for a most enjoyable evening and I hope your guests experience hospitality of a truly Nepali warmth, that will demonstrate this Society's ambition to bring our two countries ever closer together."

A message of greetings and good wishes was also received from the President of the Nepal-Britain Society, Mr. Sagar S.J.B. Rana.

Our Guest of Honour, the Nepalese Ambassador, was welcomed by Mr. Paul Broomhall, one of our Vice-Presidents. He said that General and Madame Simha needed no introduction to the members among whom they had many friends from their previous stay in London in the '60s when he was Military Attache. After 33 years in the Nepalese Army, General Simha retired as Chief of the General Staff. He had also commanded a Parachute Brigade. In recognition of all his services he was awarded the Tri Shakti Patta (1st Class), one of Nepal's highest awards. Madame Simha, the daughter of the late General Kiran, a previous much loved Ambassador, had received the Prabala Gorkha Dakshina Bahu (2nd Class). In conclusion, Mr. Broomhall

spoke of the many kindnesses he and his late wife had received in Nepal during their numerous visits there, and recounted an interesting meeting with the courteous General Nara, ADC to H.M. the King.

The Ambassador thanked Mr. Broomhall, saying he was touched by the warm feeling expressed towards Nepal, and was overwhelmed by the presence of so many friends and well-wishers of his country which gave immense pleasure to him and Madame Simha. He also expressed his thanks for the Society's support of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, for the splendid work of the Britain-Nepal Medical Trust and the British-Nepal Otolaryngology Service.

He was grateful for the sympathy and support given by Britain during the economic blockade of Nepal by the previous Government of India which had caused considerable detriment to the Nepalese economy. Fortunately the present Indian Government had shown some understanding of their neighbour's difficulties and it was hoped that all differences would be settled amicably.

General Simha extended hearty congratulations through H.E. Mr. Bryce Harland, High Commissioner of New Zealand, to the people of New Zealand who were celebrating the 150th year of its founding and added his appreciation of the High Commissioner's kind gesture in permitting the use of the beautiful Hall for the Annual Dinner of the Society. This was warmly seconded by the members present.

Finally the Ambassador thanked the Committee for organising such a success-

ful evening, and assured the Society of his co-operation at all times.

As usual our floral decorations were kindly supplied by Mr. Anthony Wieler. For the Gurkha Orderlies and the Piper our sincere thanks go to the Commanding Officer of the Gurkha Battalion stationed at Church Crookham.

Mayura Brown

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SPEECH

by His Excellency The Nepalese Ambassador at the Society's
Annual Nepali Supper in New Zealand House

Mr. Broomhall, Your Excellency, Members of Britain-Nepal Society, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I, at the outset, extend sincere thanks to the President and members of the Britain-Nepal Society for inviting us and also according to me the honour of being the Chief Guest of the evening. I wish also to thank you, Mr. Broomhall, for the warm words of welcome. I am touched by the kind sentiments and warm feelings which you have expressed towards my country, Nepal. While humbly accepting this honour, I am conscious of the fact that I am only a small link in the chain - a chain of friendship, goodwill and understanding which has characterised our relations, formally as well as informally, for nearly two hundred years now and that I am simply carrying on the tradition set by my predecessors.

While looking around the hall, I am literally overwhelmed by the presence of so many of the friends and well-wishers of Nepal. It is indeed a great pleasure for me and my wife to be here amidst this happy gathering. I have personally seen not only the number swelling with each passing year, but also the understanding and appreciation of each other's needs and aspirations growing. This is indeed a healthy sign, a positive factor which has been helpful in forging close ties between our two nations.

At this stage I hope it might be opportune to dwell briefly on the present situation in Nepal and, as good friends of Nepal, you will undoubtedly appreciate this.

Under the wise and far-sighted leadership of His Majesty the King, we have covered enough ground already in some vital sectors of the economy like transportation, communications, health, education, social services. Needless to say, we have a long way to go. We are committed to achieving minimum standards in areas of basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, health, education and security by the turn of the century. HMG is firmly dedicated to fulfilling these objectives with the co-operation of all. We are obliged to those countries who have helped us by their friendly assistance and co-operation. The British assistance in particular has been of great help in building our infrastructure to a great extent. May I also avail myself of this occasion to express my deepest thanks to the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, the Britain-Nepal Medical Trust and the British-Nepal Otolaryngology Service for the wonderful work they are doing to assist Nepal.

In the area of foreign policy, we have succeeded in consolidating ties with our old friends while also forging ties with new ones. We have diplomatic relations with over one hundred countries in the world. The growing number of countries supporting the Zone of Peace proposal has now reached one hundred and fifteen - Turkey being the latest country to do so. We have just successfully completed a two-year stint at the UN's Security Council. Non-alignment and peaceful co-existence remain as usual the corner-stones

of our foreign policy. His Majesty the King led the Nepalese Delegation to the Non-aligned Summit Meeting in Belgrade in September and I had the honour and privilege to conduct two State Visits of Their Majesties the King and Queen of Finland and Denmark respectively in September and October last year.

On the regional level, we are as active as ever in the realisation of the goals and objectives of SAARC - the grouping of countries in the region which includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. We are looking forward to participating in the Summit Meeting in Colombo this year. It is heartening to note that as a result of all these interactions, relations between and among the countries of the region are closer and there is now greater awareness and understanding at both the personal and the official level.

In passing, I wish to dwell briefly on the results over the economy which followed the impasse in our relations with India last year. That this should have happened at all between two neighbouring countries enjoying the best of relations since time immemorial was a great pity. It was still tragic that despite our sincere intentions and readiness for frank talks at all stages, the impasse was allowed to drag on to the considerable detriment of our economy. The unilateral action by India in imposing an economic blockade by closing all but two transit points caused considerable hardships to the common man and delayed economic targets and programmes. The longer term effect was also felt in the sector of forestry and conservation, as people as a matter of necessity had to resort to the cutting down

of trees on a massive scale for the sake of fuel wood in the absence of kerosene; the supply of which was hindered by the Indian blockade. We are grateful to our British friends who have understood our problems and have shown sympathy and given unstinted support during the difficult period which we passed through. I am happy to tell you that the present Government of India has exhibited sympathy and understanding to our problems and has shown positive signs to normalise relations. We are hopeful of a breakthrough in the near future. In fact the first round of talks between the two Foreign Ministers have already taken place and another Nepalese delegation is shortly leaving for New Delhi to sort out the differences and arrive at a mutually amicable settlement. We are looking forward to a constructive and meaningful dialogue which will also take into account our concerns and sensitivities.

I have taken some of your time in telling you our success story and the problems we have encountered. I believe this would help you in understanding us in the correct perspective.

May I also avail myself of this opportunity to extend, through HE Mr. Bryce Harland, High Commissioner of New Zealand, our hearty congratulations to the people of New Zealand who are celebrating 150 years since its founding. His kind gesture in providing this beautiful hall for the Annual Dinner of the Society is much appreciated.

The Britain-Nepal Society has over the least 30 years remained effortful in fostering close ties between our two countries by promoting relations at the personal level. Its sister organisation in

Kathmandu is similarly dedicated to its task. I commend your efforts and assure you of the best of co-operation from my side at all times.

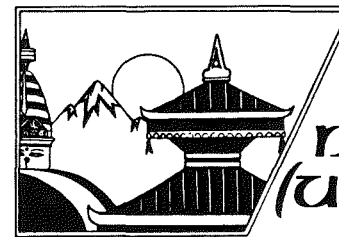
Now allow me to thank The President and the Office Bearers of the Britain-Nepal Society, especially Chairman Colonel Evans and Secretary Mrs. Celia Brown and all the members of the Britain-Nepal Society, for organising this delightful evening.

May the Lord Almighty bless us all and give us guidance to promote goodwill amongst nations to achieve everlasting peace in the world.

May I request you, Ladies and Gentlemen, to join me in proposing a toast to the progress, happiness and prosperity of the Britain-Nepal Society.

Thank you.

The Britain-Nepal Society
Annual Supper
New Zealand House
London
February 15, 1990



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PERSPECTIVE ON BUDHANILKANTHA

by Lieutenant Colonel John Tyson OBE, MC

From a talk to the Britain-Nepal Society on Thursday 22 March, 1990. The Speaker was introduced by Colonel Evans and Mrs. Mayura Brown, and Sir George Bishop wound up the evening in his own inimitable way.

Twenty-six years ago the idea for a British type of boarding school was being batted around Kathmandu. Tony Duff was at the Embassy with George Kinnear as First Secretary, whilst down the road Lynndon Clough was running the British Council as its first Representative in Nepal. It was obvious that education was becoming a key issue in development, and British aid was sought to establish a school for future leaders regardless of caste or wealth. By 1966 ideas were clarifying, and at that stage I was appointed by the British Council as headmaster-designate.

Lynndon Clough had been searching the valley for the ideal place to build, and on my first visit after appointment we went out to a splendid site near Sundarijal on a spur of rich agricultural land on the east bank of the Bagmati. If one had been looking for a remote area within the Kathmandu valley, Sundarijal was indeed the spot. But the cost of building an access road to the site plus a substantial bridge over the Bagmati river would have taken a large part of the available funding. After rejecting a possibility at Sano Thimi, we were all agreed on a new location at Budhanilkantha where the land was acquired the following year.

By this stage, Nepal's 'National Education System Plan' was aiming to provide skilled manpower for the country through education for the largest possible



John Tyson, Headmaster 1983-1988

number. Text-books were being produced, schools were being established, and all education, including university degree courses, was to be in Nepali. To be simultaneously launching a school for an academic 'meritocracy' on the lines of the old Direct Grant Grammar School seemed in certain respects an anachronism, and not surprisingly progress was slow. By the end of 1968 the preliminary planning of the school was complete and as nothing more could be done on that side, with great reluctance I withdrew from the project... wondering if the project papers would ever be signed!

However, by 1970 His Majesty King Mahendra had reiterated to our ambassador, Arthur Kellas, that he wished for such a school, and after three further years, in 1973, the school opened on a partially



1988 winners of the national inter-school football trophy - the Ratna Shield

completed site. The design and construction were by the Guildford architects Norman and Dawbarn, and Peter Wakeman was the headmaster. Some 80 boys for Class 4, aged 9 or 10, had been recruited by a small team of British and Nepalese teachers who had gone out into the Districts sticking notices on trees, visiting village schools and giving tests. These were designed both for scholarship boys and for the fee-payers who joined them from Kathmandu, Pokhara, and the developing towns of the Terai.

In the years that followed, the School developed steadily, and by the time the first boys reached Class 10 with its School Leaving Certificate they astonished educational circles in Nepal by their exceptional results. Laying the foundations for this success was one of Peter Wakeman's

outstanding achievements, and from that year on the School's name was known throughout the country.

By 1982 the National Education System Plan had made its mark: there were now more than 11,000 primary schools across the country with free books for the first three classes, and in spite of a large drop-out in rural areas some 40,000 candidates were taking the National Class 10 exam each year. But Nepal, like some other developing countries, was realising the need to improve the prospects of the brightest students, so the Government planned for 'centres of excellence' to be developed, and for these to be in English medium.

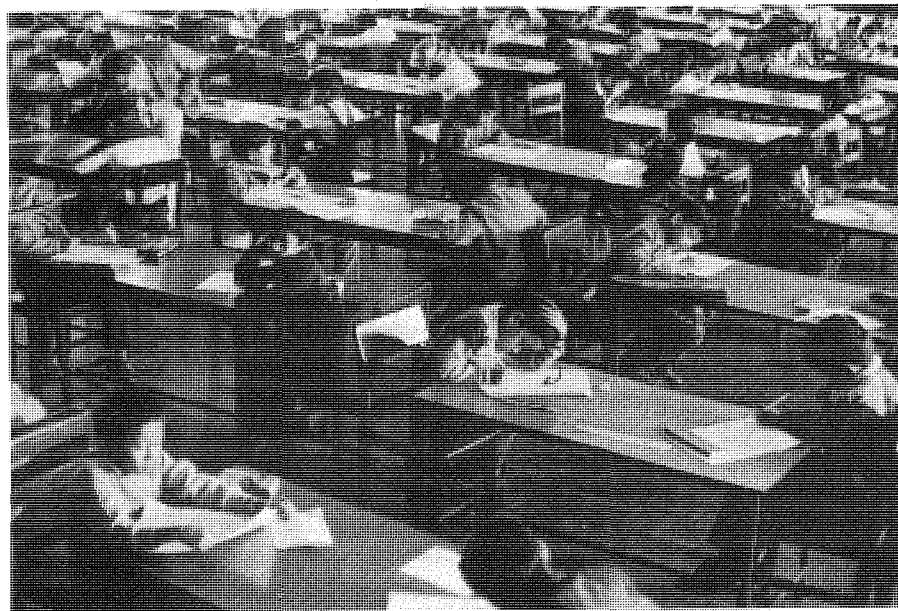
Ken Jones, who had joined the staff of Budhanilkantha as head of science in 1978, followed Peter Wakeman as headmaster;

his departure and my arrival in 1983 coincided with a period of rapid change - with Budhanilkantha, now termed 'The National School', in the vanguard. There was a feeling in the air of higher demands on both staff and pupils. It says much for the resilience of the teaching staff, as well as the 600 boys themselves, that they weath-ered this period of total language change relatively unscathed - although as head-master I must confess to a good many sleepless nights!

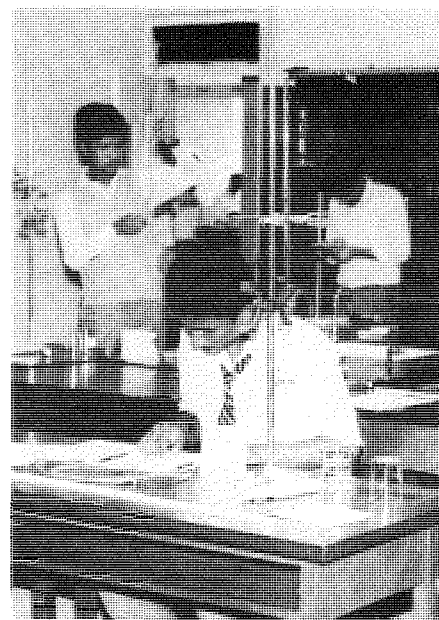
After 1982 it was agreed that selection must take place on a nation-wide basis, and this would involve the entire teaching staff in setting up some 25 testing centres across Nepal. Radio Nepal would broad- cast the list of centres, the dates of the tests and the criteria for entry, and our teachers

would find a crowd awaiting them, each applicant clutching a school letter certifying that he really was under 10, and one of the best three in his class.

Nepal has five Development Regions, and each year two full scholarships and four half-scholarships are awarded to each region. That means that 30 boys a year in schools 'from Mechi to Mahakali' are selected from about 2,000 candidates, and we found no discernible difference in standards at entry between these three categories: although the scholars are selected in a highly competitive manner within their regional quotas, they tend to be less well grounded than the fee-payers, and in many cases come from peasant farming backgrounds with no books in the home and certainly no English.



Entrance tests: some 2,000 applicants are tested annually in Nepali and mathematics in 25 centres across Nepal



In the new laboratories: the first batch of A-level candidates

My main scholastic task was to consolidate the switch to English and then to introduce Cambridge 'O' Level and science 'A' Level - science being the obvious choice for academically able pupils who were not yet strong in English. The higher levels of science necessitated more advanced laboratories, and ODA agreed that if Nepal would build these, Britain would provide the equipment. We were fortunate in our architect for this project: Tribhuvan Tuladhar had been educated first in Calcutta by Jesuits and then for his six architectural years in Moscow - or as he put it 'twice brainwashed and now a good Nepalese' - and his new wing toned well with the existing design.

We have now had five batches through

'O' level and three through 'A' level, and as expected they have shown themselves to be academically very able indeed.

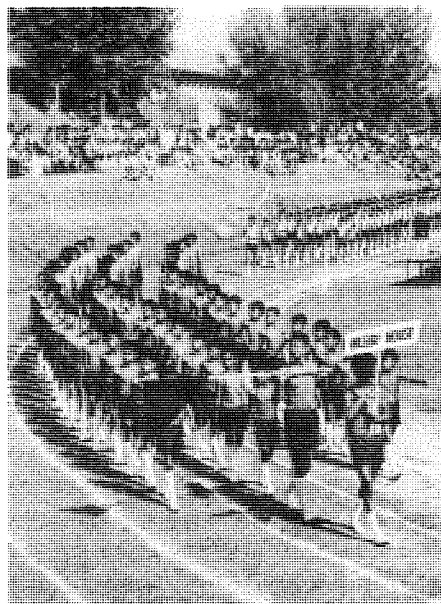
The latest batch, doubtless benefiting from the experience of their predecessors, have won scholarships to Harvard, MIT, Oxford and Cambridge, and by this Autumn 23 will be on scholarships reading first degrees in English universities, eight of them at Oxford. Some of these students have been funded by ODA and 'bonded' by Nepal to teach for five years at Budhanilkantha following their degree and a teacher training year. In fact, the Rt. Hon. Chris Patten paid us a visit as Minister for Overseas Development, and after taking some of the classes, awarded two additional 4-year ODA scholarships - rather better than the traditional half-holiday! Meantime, other ex-pupils continue to be successful at Tribhuvan University and at colleges in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Russia and the USA.

As to the staff, the British have recently been the heads of English, mathematics and physics, while this year an economist has been appointed to establish an arts 'A' Level. The remaining 42 teachers are Nepalese, and there is an ODA-funded programme of staff development which enables 2 or 3 a year to take appropriate further training in Britain. In the event, it is hard to spare even 3 teachers at a time who will miss their classes for a whole year - especially as the year somehow always manages to be 15 months long!

Development is a continuing process within which Budhanilkantha School is playing a crucial exemplary role for Nepal's educational future. Successive

Ambassadors and British Council Representatives have been immensely supportive of the project, which has itself benefited since 1973 from a highly skilled professional input from many people, British and Nepalese. I hope that consideration of past investment in this project along with a concern for Nepal's future will together ensure a degree of support for some years to come.

I'll end by reading an extract from a letter I've just received from a full scholarship boy from the Terai, who says, '....I do not really understand this aid business...but if Budhanilkantha School is to be retained, it will be by the products of the school itself - hence, as I see it, the ODA scholarship scheme, designed to produce teachers, holds the greatest promise for the future of this beautiful red village'.



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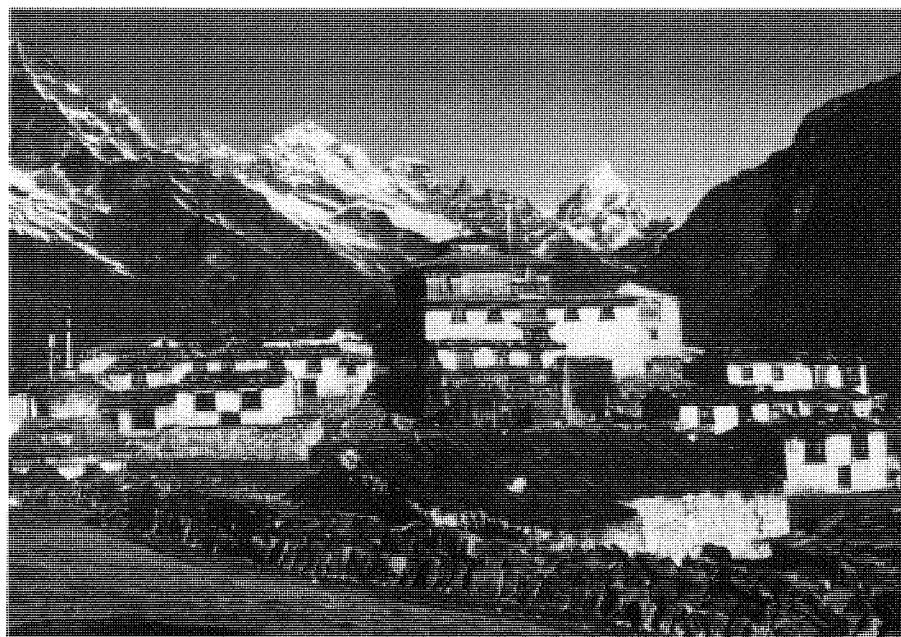
By Colonel B.M. Niven

I have trekked in Nepal on many occasions over the last 30 years and Colonel Gregory, our editor, has asked me to write about one or two of the very special places that I suggest a traveller must visit in the Himalayan region that is the homeland of the people of Nepal.

If, from Jubing in East Nepal, a traveller climbs up the line of the ice-cold, white waters of the Dudh Kosi river, he does so through a Sherpa landscape of fluttering prayer flags, patch potato fields, prayer walls and a thousand incantations deeply etched by devout Buddhist stonemasons into the rock faces and gigantic boulders that line this route towards the famed lamasery at Thyangboche. Thyangboche lies on a flat river terrace

above the turbulent confluence of the Dudh Kosi and Imja rivers. Here, lamas in red and purple coloured robes move about in peaceful dignity in a brilliant landscape, lit by the brilliant mountain sun. The lamasery lies as if in a bowl and wherever the traveller looks he sees great Himalayan peaks. Here rise Tamserku and Kantega, Kwangde and Khumbila and, to the north west of the lamasery, the brilliant white pyramid of Choy Oyo. Directly in front of Thyangboche rises the magnificent head and shoulders of Ama Dablam and, to the north east, conquering all, the great node of Everest, Lhotse and Nuptse.

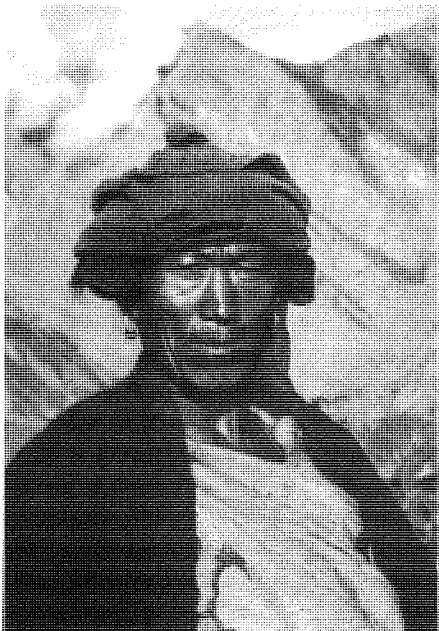
To see these great mountains at dawn and at dusk is to wonder at the sheer



Thyangboche Lamasery with the White Pyramid of Choy Oyo in the distance

beauty of Nature and the great summits are especially awe-inspiring when seen through the clouds after a snowstorm, when the summit snows are high above the sky. So traveller, go to Thyangboche, to find peace, to see scenery second to none in the entire world and perhaps to understand how the wonders of Nature and her beauty have attracted men to form religions and worship in her presence.

Go next, traveller, to the Base Camp used by mountaineers who climb Annapurna I from the north side. To get there, walk the line of the surging Kali Gandaki River from the hot springs at Tatopani, up through the Thakali villages of Dana, Ghasa and Lete. From the coniferous trees of Lete, climb up to the sacred grazing grounds on Thulo Bugin and pause



A man of the mountains north of Topke Gola

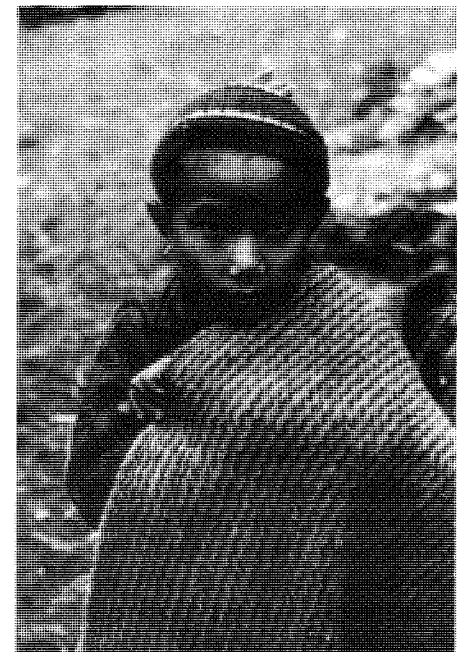
there at the snow patch in the shelter of the moss-covered trees at Shepherd's Camp. Wait at the Camp until dawn and then, in the full glory of the dawn sun, look west across the great chasm of the Kali Gandaki and watch the sun rising on the summit peaks of Dhaulagiri. Once the summit snows are a dazzling, triumphant white in the morning sun, then go on, cross the Thulo Bugin and drop down steeply to the rushing torrent that is the Miristi Khola. Follow the Miristi Khola to where it emerges as a glacial stream from the snout of the Annapurna glacier and then wheel right and climb above the deep, cobalt-blue ice pools on the Annapurna glacier, and high up onto the right hand lateral moraine that flanks the grinding, crushing ice of this mountain glacier. Then, traveller, you are very close to the Base Camp and will see the sangar-type walls that have shielded the cooking fires and tents of many mountaineers as they strove to prepare hot meals and keep warm in the cold winds of the area.

Go that little bit further, down across the ice of the moving glacier and climb to Camp I at some 17,500 feet. There, look in wonder at the vast sickle-shaped glacier that blankets the entire north side of Annapurna I and wonder at the fluted snow ridges, the crevasses, aretes, pressure ridges and the hanging ice-fields and cornices that make up and decorate Annapurna's lofty crown. If you are in luck, traveller, you may also behold an avalanche coming down from the topmost heights of Annapurna and descending through thousands of feet in a great surge of power that is awesome both to hear and to behold. Here then, high on the

flanks of Annapurna I, and on the far side of the Miristi Khola, is a land of snow and ice, ever changing and seldom touched by men, that you should go and see.

Finally, traveller, go to Topke Gola, but go in the winter. Then the place is deserted save for the ghosts of Tibetan people long since dead and for the winds that howl round the place, bringing it as if to life by rattling the shutters of the few wooden houses that are the settlement and by causing the bells at the deserted lamasery to ring. To reach Topke Gola, you must go via Chainpur and Nundhaki and then climb to the top of the Milke Danda. From the snow-bound travellers' hut and the ice spring just through the summit of the Milke Danda you will have the wondrous sight of the entire Kanchenjunga Massif stretched out before you on the horizon. Look in wonder at Kanchenjunga, Khumbhakarna, the Kabrus and the splendid head and shoulders of Jano.

Then, traveller, descend through the silent moss forests of the Milke Danda, the land beneath your feet deeply cracked due to minor earthquakes that rack the region, and go down to the lovely confluence of the Mewa and Maewa rivers. Follow the Mewa due north, past the sacred grove and Limbu sanctuary at the base of the Phung Phung Dem waterfall, and up through all the Bhotiya villages until you reach the gorge of the Mewa Khola, the wooden sanctuary huts and the forests of red, mountain rhododendrons. You will meet snow, traveller, and the snows will bear the tracks of mountain bear. All other humans have fled the area before the onset of winter. They, the few



Fellow traveller and son of Nepal

inhabitants of Topke, have prepared the potato fields and planted them out, closed and barricaded their homes, and fled before the deep snows cut Topke off from the rest of the world.

Climb on and up, ever up, traveller, and you will come out from the trees to a frigid landscape where no trees grow. A steep climb up a convex slope above the Mewa River and you will see before you the scattered dwellings that make up Topke. Separated from the settlement and at a short distance from it, is the lamasery. On a dark, cloudy day, the whole scene is desolate and almost foreboding, and the tall grey-white prayer flags pulling in the wind as if in torment, make a noise out of all proportion to their size and function. When the sun reappears, however, and the

wind drops, the scene is one of great beauty and peace, especially if you climb above the settlement to the pass between it and the head of the Arun River, to look back and down onto Topke. Just beyond the settlement, traveller, is a small sacred lake and the lake has an island temple as part of it.

Here is extreme peace and great beauty and the wind causes the small bells of the sanctuary to yield a holy, mellifluous sound. The area, spiritually, is part of Tibet and the silent lamasery awaits the return of spring, warmer days and the few souls who make up this mountain settlement at the source of the Mewa Khola. Go therefore, traveller, to Topke. You will not be disturbed there in winter and should experience great joy at having trod this way and looked into the clear waters at Topke's sacred lake.

MR. A.D. SCHILLING

In February Tony Schilling, one of our favourite lecturers, received the Victoria Medal of Honour for his distinguished services to horticulture from Mr. Robin Herbert, President of the Royal Horticultural Society. This is the highest accolade that can be given to a British horticulturalist and is richly deserved by Tony Schilling. We send him our warmest congratulations.

Tony Schilling is the Deputy Curator of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, and for the last 23 years he has been in charge of Kew's other garden at Wakehurst Place, Ardingly, Sussex. The Society has visited this garden twice as his guest - both most interesting and very enjoyable occasions. It will be remembered that he founded and designed the Botanical Gardens at Godaveri in Nepal some years ago.



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TREK TO GOKYO PEAK

by Lieutenant Colonel Jon Fleming, OBE

World Challenge Expeditions Ltd is a new business, which specialises in organising expeditions overseas for young school leavers. The Consultant Managing Director is Colonel Tony Streater. This is the third year of World Challenge's operations. In late 1988 I was invited to devise an expedition to Nepal and not having been there before, chose the trek to Gokyo Peak (19,000 feet). The main difference between the concept of World Challenge expeditions and other similar organisations (Exodus for example) is that once the team get to the area of operations the young lead the expedition. Fleming J. was to be what in the services is known as the DS (Directing Staff).

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) are by far the best way to travel to Nepal from the UK these days. They are cheap, reliable, the transit in Karachi is well proven and it works. On the return journey a 3-star hotel is provided (in the air fare) for the night transit - but make sure that you leave Kathmandu on the Thursday flight (via Dhaka) to Karachi; if you leave on the Monday flight the transit time in Karachi is two nights, which means that you have to obtain and pay for a Pakistan visa as well as paying Airport tax.

We left London Heathrow at 21.30 on Sunday, March 19 and arrived in Kathmandu at 17.00 the following day; 'duty free' was obtained in Dubai. The usual formalities of getting trekking permits, porters and their insurance, our Sirdar and all the necessary cash were

speedily and efficiently handled by Dawa. He is the Operations Manager of Rover Treks since Mike Cheney's sad death in 1988. Flights from Lukla at the end of the trek were booked and paid for. The Tuesday's public holiday in Kathmandu did not exactly assist in achieving these aims: all the banks and public offices were closed! They tend to spring these things on one in Nepal. It involved bombs of red dust being thrown at anybody and everybody. The team's young enjoyed it all enthusiastically and returned to 'Base' several shades of red and full of tall stories. The DS reacquainted himself with the back streets - and achieved several shades of red too. Chuldim, our Sirdar, sensible chap, stayed at home.

Two days later we left for Jiri. Now it is a 10 hour bus journey; then it was a six day walk from the start point of Barabhis/Lamosangu. We took a private bus, arranged by Dawa, at a cost of NCR 5,000 (£113.64): £1 = NCR 44. The young spent most of our journey on the roof and all but one got burnt. Well, I did try and tell them.... At Jiri we engaged three porters for the duration of the trek at a cost of NCR 90 each, per day, including food and accommodation. We booked into an hotel. Jiri is transformed from what it was; then, a small but growing hamlet with a dirt track running through it; now, it is a town with a main road, hotels and numerous shops. There is an airstrip too. The food that evening and the amenities generally available in the hotel reflected Jiri's new-found importance as a roadhead.

Having got us thus far it was time for me to devolve leadership. Paul Wilton, alias 'Big Mac' because, as he often mentioned, he worked in Macdonalds in Eastbourne, was appointed leader. Ben Cons volunteered to be the budget man. New 'appointments' would be made at Namche Bazaar. Paul Dawson became our 'medic'; having appointed himself really when Dick Hardie gave us a short medical brief at Easthampstead Park, our RV near Wokingham, the evening before we left for Heathrow. Paul professed to know that Dick was talking about. Despite preliminary briefings it took some time for the three to grasp what their duties entailed. They did not seem to be keen to lead. The initial reaction to a problem or to a posed query, was to turn to the 'Old B'. Then, when he would not react, to Chuldim. He had been briefed too and so was ready to do his duty. Gradually, as we progressed, things improved but sometimes considerable prodding was necessary.

In the morning at 06.30 that first day, Chuldim appeared at our bedsides with 'black tea'. Miraculously he did this every morning as regular as clockwork throughout the trek. After breakfast and paying 'beel', cleaning teeth, etc. we were away. Although too early in the season to enjoy the full profusion of colourful flowers and shrubs along the way, there were some in bloom. The scenery was superb, the weather clear and hot too. Tea shops abounded along the route providing frequent refreshment; liquid parity assumed paramount importance. Stomachs behaved themselves. Omelette, fried rice, "four eggs on one plate (Big Mac),"

mounds of vegetables, chapatti and jam all washed down with black tea or lemon tea formed a substantial lunch at midday. The way was long and steep - up as well as down. We passed huge numbers of voluble porters struggling and sweating under prodigious loads along the 'M6' of Nepal. Heavily laden yaks ambled along the narrow track in a never ending stream bound for remote Base Camps yonder. The evenings were spent in low, smoke filled rooms. The meal was substantially the same fare as lunch. The lady of the house patiently cooked: never a cross word, seldom flustered, always knowing exactly what to do and exactly where everything was even in dimly lit recesses, such composure was invariably to be marvelled at. World Challenge had thoughtfully provided lots of Cup-a-Soup (very popular to prevent dehydration), mixed herbs, bovril drink and wine gums - wine gums!! - the latter being consumed only 'in extremis'. Most were left in Namche. After the meal it was Walkman time. Young eyes would open wide with pleasure, old teak coloured faces would crease with astonishment as the earphones shrieked their messages into ears not used to the wonders of modern science. Miraculously we never ran out of batteries. And so to bed - but not necessarily to sleep. Heat, smoke, constant babble, stomach upsets often prevented it. In any case 10 hours is too long for a night.

At Thodung, three of us went up to visit the cheese factory, originally started by the Swiss but now taken over by the Nepalese, to buy some yak cheese. We toured the whole place and were suitably impressed, given the primitive surround-

ings. Two huge and ferocious dogs provided adequate security against vandalism - even here. Luckily for us the chains were strong. At Shivalaya, three of the team went on a REWR (river expedition without raft). It was cold. Going over the Lamjura Pass (12,000 feet) we met snow for the first time. Where it had melted the conditions were muddy, slippery and unpleasant. At Junbesi, it was so cold in the evening that we needed a fire - a most ingenious wood burning stove was produced. The next morning it rained: we posted our second batch of mail. At Ringmo, we sampled excellent apple pie for lunch - home made from the locally grown apples. Just below Nuntale, where we crossed the turbulent Dudh Khosi, Paul Dawson did not trust the sturdy bridge. He rigged up his own tyrolean instead, much to the surprise of the local 'pantehnicons'. At Lukla, we enjoyed the luxury and super food of Nima Norbu's Sherpa Co-operative Hotel: we measured the length of the airstrip. In the morning we watched in wonder as Pilatus Porter aircraft bounced up and down the rugged runway on landing and taking off. Just below Namche Bazaar, during the final 2,000 feet slog ever upwards, we got our first and never to be forgotten view of Everest, Lhotse and Nuptse - forty miles away, dazzling like mighty jewels in an azure sky. On April Fool's Day we got to Namche Bazaar (day nine) just as the famous Saturday Market was closing down, though there were still enough people doing business to make it highly interesting for the photographers.

The next day we had a rest day to aid acclimatisation. We stayed in the lodge of

Lhakpa Sonam Sherpa, son of Sonam Girme and the magnificent Mingma. Sonam had been sirdar to AMA Expeditions on Annapurna (1970), Nuptse (1875) and Everest (1976). Sadly we did not see him as he was in Kathmandu. Electricity has now 'hit' Namche. It is switched on from 18.00 to 22.00 every evening - assuming that those who operate the generator remain sober! Lhakpa gave an interesting slide show of 'Scenes of the Sherpas'. He does this every week to locals and visitors alike. At the end of 1989 he showed the slides to audiences in Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, France and the UK.

After this welcome break and having changed 'appointments' we pressed on to Gokyo Peak, the climax of the expedition. But, unfortunately, without Ben Cons, who did not acclimatise and so had to be left in Namche. It is an easy plod to Gokyo village. It takes three days and is nowhere very steep. The scenery is stunning. A huge, dazzling, shapely mountain fills the end of the valley - Cho Oyo. There was quite a bit of snow about too and the lakes at Gokyo were still frozen over. At Machharmo the medic and Big mac, adorned in serious, trendy mountaineering gear, attacked with vigorous panache a steep snow slope, which as far as the rest of us could see didn't lead anywhere. It took them all afternoon to get up it. They won that round but later on during the night Paul suffered a horrible and noisy vomiting session. Altitude, as it so often does to the unwary, had the last say.

On 6th April after a sleepless night, for most of us, in a hot, crowded hut we left early for the top of Gokyo Peak. The

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altitude told upon our performance. There was no technical difficulty whatsoever - just one weary foot in front of the other, breathing hard. One by one, to the east, the mighty peaks began to appear: first Makalu, then all of a sudden Everest, Nuptse and Lhotse all at once and very, very near. A smattering of rock scrambling brought us breathlessly to the top. Amazingly we were on our own and were so for a full hour. The view was indescribably magnificent, much more so, in my opinion, than from Kala Pattar in the Khumbu. We could see everything from Cho Oyo round in a wide arc to Makalu; the first, fourth, fifth and ninth highest peaks in the world. What a feast. After about half an hour of really busy photography by everyone Mary asked, in all innocence, 'Which one is Everest?!'

We hastened back to Gokyo passing, on the way up, a Canadian party who were using this climb as a warm up for an ascent of Nuptse later on. Back in our smoky hut we packed quickly, had some lunch and began the long journey home. We crossed to the east side of the valley underneath the terminal moraine of a glacier. All the next day we wound our way along the spectacularly exposed, thin track we had espied on the walk in, from the other side of the valley. It was a long day and ended with a very steep, slippery climb up to Thyangboche Monastery.

Here we saw at first hand the catastrophic results of the appalling fire which burnt out the inner core of the famous religious colony on 13th January last year. Recently electricity had come to Thyangboche too. A lama wanting to divert the heat of an electric fire away

from his legs pointed the heated filament towards the floor. This was made of wood. Naturally a fire started and burnt the place to a cinder. Fire appliances do not exist in Thyangboche. All the old and valuable artefacts, handcrafted prayer manuals, paintings, thankas, etc. were totally destroyed. Only a very few were salvaged. 1989 is said to be a 'Black Year' for the Sherpas. This disaster amply demonstrated the fact. An English architect is now responsible for planning the rebuild of the Monastery. Work has begun already to put up new living quarters for the incumbents. Last year the British Scout Movement, in the 'Everest 88' campaign, raised £180,000 for the Sherpas of Nepal. £30,000 of this is being used to rebuild this most holy building.

Saddened by what we had seen and shocked by the increase in the number of drug addicts, who now frequent Thyangboche, we returned to Namche Bazaar. After a day of rest there we bade a fond adieu to Lhakpa, Mingma and their delighted family for the day's walk - our final day's walk - to Lukla Airstrip. The next day, with help from the good Nima Norbu, who owns and runs the Sherpa Co-Operative Hotel, we flew back to the bustle and heat of Kathmandu taking forty minutes instead of the nine days it had taken on the way in. Two days later the whole team less Paul Dawson and Mary, who had longer holidays, left by PIA for Dhaka, Karachi and home.

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SUMMER OUTING

Queen Elizabeth Barracks Church Crookham and the Gurkha Museum Winchester
by John Ackroyd

Saturday 21st July was a perfect summer's day and members of the Society and Yetis began to forgather outside the Royal Nepalese Embassy to await the coach to Church Crookham. The atmosphere was already relaxed as members chatted and renewed friendships. The departure time was soon upon us and then we were on our way via the M3 to complete the first stage of our journey by just after midday. Smartly uniformed sentries of the 1st Bn 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles were at the camp entrance to receive us and after brief security formalities the coach driver was directed to the parking area where we were met by Major John Lamond. Our Chairman then greeted us and we all joined together for a refreshing drink under the shade of some ideally sited trees adding to the pleasant and tranquil surroundings of this important base.

There must have been many reminiscences taking place by members of the Society who served with the Gurkhas, when the air was filled with exciting anticipation as the Pipes and Drums of the 10th Gurkhas prepared to play. Resplendent in their uniforms the band paraded to the sound of pipes and drums for several minutes before taking leave of the parade from Colonel Evans. We were all grateful and proud to be associated with these fine soldiers.

Our attention was then drawn to the curry lunch which was expertly prepared and laid out by the regimental chefs and their attentive assistants who instantly replenished any empty serving dishes with

seemingly inexhaustible supplies as we served ourselves. Several members remarked that it was the best curry they had ever eaten. After lunch, which ended with a delicious fruit salad and coffee, members said farewells and thanks to our hosts and reluctantly made for the coach.

Next stop was the newly opened Gurkha Museum in the Peninsula Barracks at Winchester. Arranged on two floors and fully air conditioned, the museum provided a fitting and worthy climax to a memorable day. Aided by well scripted display panels, dioramas with expertly produced models, life-sized tableaux, sound effects and numerous photographs, the museum took us from the Gurkha and his homeland through many campaigns including the Nepal War of 1814-1816 from which the British connection with the Gurkhas arose, the Second World War and the confrontation with Indonesia in the 1960s and finished by showing the Gurkhas in a peacetime setting. The museum is a marvellous tribute to the 'bravest of the brave' and provides a detailed record of their association with our country since 1815. We were most impressed and much credit goes to the planners, craftsmen and indeed everyone involved in the enterprise.

After purchases in the museum shop, it was back out into the hot sunshine and to the coach with a tinge of sadness in our hearts that the day was coming to an end. Our Chairman waved us off and then it was back to London in the hands of our capable driver. It had been a unique day and one that will always be remembered. Dare we say it? Could we do it again?

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From Sir Arthur Norman KBE, DFC (Chairman of the Trust)

The Trust has moved its office to 26 Little Chester Street, London SW1X 7AP (telephone: 071-823 2545) where Mrs. Jane Lee is handling all enquiries.

Sir John Nott has been appointed a Trustee and close contact has been maintained with the parent Trust in Kathmandu during the period of strained relations with India and, more recently, while political changes have been taking place. Five of the UK Trust's six trustees have visited Nepal during the last six months and Major Dudley Spain has spent several weeks in Kathmandu very recently. Despite inevitable difficulties and deprivations the work of the Trust has progressed with little interruption and the

Annapurna Project, in particular, has felt the benefit of the return of several trainees from the UK and New Zealand who are now deployed in new teams operating in new areas in the mountain region. 'Business as Usual' is the motto adopted by Chandra Gurung who leads the ACAP team and the UK Trust has recently remitted £25,000 for expansion into new areas and for small hydro-electric schemes which are aimed, in the longer run, to lessen the pressure on the forests and to bring new benefits to the local inhabitants. The Trust warmly welcomes the invaluable support which it continues to receive from many members of the Britain-Nepal Society.

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NEPALI AND HIMALAYAN STUDIES
at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London

London University's School of Oriental and African Studies has a long tradition of scholarship in the field of Nepali language and literature, and in various other aspects of Himalayan culture. The language tradition dates back to the pioneering work of Sir Ralph Lilley Turner whose Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali Language, a masterpiece published in 1931 and recently reprinted, is still the best Nepali-English dictionary available. Subsequently, Dr. T.W. Clark produced his Introduction to Nepali (1963, 1977) which remained the standard work of reference for foreign learners until superseded by Dr. David Matthews's A Course in Nepali (1984). Dr. Michael Hutt's Nepali: a National Language and its Literature (1988) and Himalayan Voices (forthcoming 1991) have pioneered the academic study of Nepali literature in the West. Anthropologists from SOAS (notably Professor Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf and Professor Lionel Caplan) and SOAS Tibetologists such as Professor David Snellgrove have also made contributions of inestimable value to our understanding of Nepal and the Himalayan region in general.

For many years the responsibility for teaching and supervising research in Nepali at SOAS was borne solely by Dr. David Matthews, who also teaches Urdu. Since SOAS is the only institution at which Nepali can be studied at university level in Britain, the demand for courses in Nepali has been constant. In recognition of this, the amount of time devoted to work on Nepal and Nepali has recently

been increased. In 1987, Dr. Michael Hutt was granted a fellowship by the British Academy to conduct research into Nepali language and literature at SOAS, and to share the teaching load. During the past three years, therefore, the amount of staff time devoted to work on Nepal has trebled, and this has had important and far-reaching consequences. Dr. Hutt's presence at SOAS will be maintained beyond the expiry of his fellowship this October, and he will be responsible for several new projects. Members of the Society are most welcome to attend the following programmes:

The Himalayan Forum. From Autumn 1990 to Summer 1991 there will be a regular service of lectures at SOAS on contemporary Himalayan topics such as the environment, political change, literature, religion, etc. . A programme will be available later this Summer.

Diploma Course in Nepali Language and Culture. A new one-year course in Nepali language and culture will be available at SOAS from October 1991 onwards. This will combine a fairly intensive year of language training with a series of seminars on Nepali history, culture and society.

Members of the Society who would like to be on our mailing list for programmes and further information should contact:

Dr. Michael Hutt, The School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG
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THE OTHER NEPAL

by Ian Machorton

Talk given to the Society in London

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The Time: Dawn

The small man crossed over to the foot of my bed and gabbled some words at me in a language that was completely unintelligible: 'I thought you would understand Kachin as well as Gurkhali,' he said, in Nepalese. 'I am the Thugyi.'

My heart bounded at the sound of the language of the Gurkhas. This village Headman (as he had introduced himself by saying that he was the Thugyi) must have recognised my battered Gurkha hat, and from recognising it had deduced that I spoke Gurkhali. Surely this knowledge of Gurkha troops and of their British officers could only promise well for me?

I examined him closely. He was small and slender of build and was dressed in a white lungyi (an ankle-length, skirt-like garment worn by Burmese men) and a spotless white shirt. His hair was straight and white and was cut in European style. He had a high forehead and oval shaped faced and his skin was the colour of dark tan. His slanted eyes, as dark as ebony, were bright with friendship as they looked into mine. They were set in deep sockets accentuated by his high and widely spaced Mongolian cheekbones. The nose was thin and highly-bridged ending in sharp, sensitive nostrils. The prominent jaw bones which gave his chin a chiselled firmness spoke of strong character.

'I am honoured by your presence Sahib,' he said. 'I am delighted to see that you have recovered from your fever. You must be very hungry now.'

The Thugyi sat down on the end of my charpoy and motioned me to eat. I opened the basket which he had brought with him and discovered in it a heavy metal platter piled high with curried chicken and rice. At that moment there was nothing in the world I wanted more than curried chicken! Kneading the sticky rice into balls with my fingers, and dipping it into the highly spiced sauce, I began to eat ravenously. And while I was eating my first full meal for what seemed like an eternity the Thugyi told me more of how I came to be there.

Graphically, in his rapid Gurkhali, he filled in for me the missing hours from my life since that moment when I had collapsed unconscious through wounds and loss of blood. I had been found in the forest by two local charcoal burners and was carried to the village. The villagers had dressed my wounds and cleaned me.

'And now bring the Sahib his clothes!' he called, in the voice of a man about to produce the piece de resistance. A villager brought my khaki drill shirt and slacks. They had been washed and pressed as neatly as though they had just returned from the cleaners in a more civilised land, and the rents and gashes had been repaired. It was hard to realise that these now immaculate looking clothes had been stained and filthy with blood and sweat, sliced by jagged mortar splinters, and ripped by jungle thorns. 'Now come and see our village', invited the Headman when I had dressed.

With assistance I climbed stiffly up the steps and followed the Thugyi through the deep, cool shadows inside the pagoda. The tap of my crutch echoed through the long cool passage we followed as we made our way up from the subterranean cell. We emerged suddenly into the full, dazzling brightness of the morning. Once my eyes were acclimatised to the brilliance of the day I appraised the village and was overwhelmed by the beauty of it. It nestled at the top of a long sloping valley (about 6,000 feet above sea level) and straight up behind it rose two towering thickly forested mountains sloping steeply down to each other to intersect immediately behind the village.

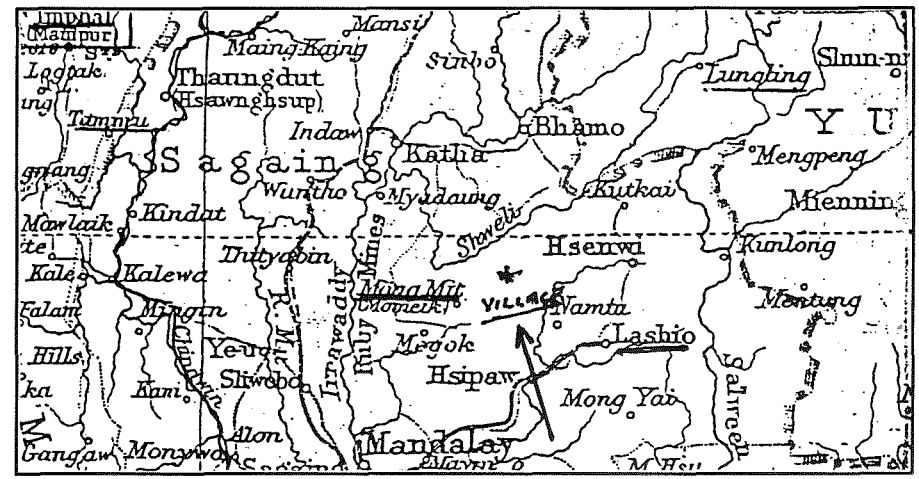
Along the full length of the valley on each side of it an almost vertical strip had been cleared of forest and carved out beautifully into terraces. On these terraces were grown the vital rice which was the staple diet of the people. As my eyes travelled onwards from the beauty of this valley they took in next the grandeur of the vast, glorious stretch of the Shan states. The glistening emerald undulations of tens of thousands of acres of forests and jungle dropped gently away to merge into the blue, shimmering heat-haze that lay along the lower foothills of the next range of blue-green mountains. Beyond them rose fantastically the snow-covered peaks of the Yunnan range, the sparkling spectrum of dancing sunbeams softened by haze in the distance to a rainbow glow in which the white peaks seemed to float in ghostly majesty.

Not a leaf stirred anywhere. It was all the most perfect peace. The smoke from many villages rose in faintly brushed wisps straight up against the azure sky. Indi-

vidual sounds, both from close-by villages and more distant jungle, seemed blended naturally into one happy murmur.

In the village itself the long, deep brown houses of teak stood on short piles. All were within the high shelter of the huge pallisade which completely encompassed the habitations. The main gateway at the lower end of the pallisade was adorned by great carved wooden Chinthes, mythical beasts associated with China which serve the dual purpose of keeping out evil spirits and discouraging warring tribesmen from attempting to enter the stronghold. The same Chinthes (the word means 'Lord Protector of the Pagodas') that Orde Wingate had chosen as insignia of his Chindits.

Mentally intoxicated by the sheer beauty of the vista before me I turned to see what lay behind. There right before me was the pagoda standing on a small hill in the centre of the village. Its bulbous base was cleft by the shadowy cave of the main entrance and its tall, slim, gold-painted spire gleamed and glistened like a thing apart from the rich green of its jungle background. Two enormous elaborately carved and coloured stone Chinthes protected the doorway at the top of a flight of wide stone steps. Their bared teeth and bulging eyes gave them the full ferocity of both the Griffon and the Lion, their traditional parents. In the silent and breath-taking beauty of this scene the distant chatter and yapping of monkeys was the only touch of reality, and a coucal crooned interminably somewhere unseen. Otherwise it might have been a painted fairyland against a painted ocean of jungle green.



Indeed, a man could be at peace here. The very atmosphere had the quality of eternity.

'Yes, we are proud of our village,' said the Headman softly, obviously pleased at my enraptured appreciation of the beauty of his homeland. 'My people came here a century and a half ago and now rank as one of the most important communities in the Shan states.'

'Where did you come from then?' I asked. I had always imagined these people had lived in North-eastern Burma since that land first became known.

'We came from the Gorkha valley, west of Kathmandu. There was much war at the time and the famous Ranjit Singh attacked Nepal in the West. Many Nepalese moved eastwards into Bhutan and Northern Burma. There are many Nepalese villages in the Shan states, an area very similar to our homeland. We still retain the name Gorkha (which means sheep and goat herders) and many of our young men join Gurkha Regiments or the Burma Police. We have inter-married with

the Kachins and Shans, but still retain our own religions of Hinduism or Buddhism and our customs.

Much of the time that I now spent in the Shan hill village I slept stretched out luxuriously on the wide veranda of the Thugyi's house. I lay on a thick durrie rug which had been woven by women of the village. It was of deep pile work into which had been woven a sumptuous scene depicting an Eastern hunt. It was beautiful and strangely virile carried out in may gorgeous colours. The faces of the hunters were all pale-complexioned and were depicted full face, in spite of the most awkward contortions this demanded of their bodies.

Food arrived regularly. It consisted of a huge main meal of curry at sundown, and various delicious fruits and melons at intervals during the day. Breakfast was in the Chinese fashion - a cup of hot water and fruit. Cups of tea appeared in never-ending succession throughout the day. The cups themselves were sheer delight. So exquisite, in fact, that I often lay back

admiring the beauty of the jade of which they were made. Some were hand-painted with the most intricate and colourful designs. The saucers matched the cups in their gay and fragile beauty. These cups had no handles and were wide and shallow, the tea served in them being always steaming hot and a delicate shade of translucent green.

From where I lay on the Thugyi's coolly-shaded veranda I could gaze down on nearly the whole of the village. His house was built at the foot of the pagoda hill and, as befitted the headman of the community, it commanded the most magnificent view in the village. All through the heat of the day I could, from the cool shadows of my little place of peace and security, hear the tinkling temple bells.

Below me in the streets the villagers passed to and fro, going about their work in cheerful contentment. Beyond on the rice terraces men were at work, bending their backs effortlessly beneath the hot sun and working with smooth, unhurried efficiency. The women, in the way of village women the world over, mostly busied themselves in the houses or gathered at the well, ostensibly to collect water in heavy brass vases, but in reality to chatter animatedly among themselves.

The men were dressed in brightly coloured lungyis, favouring mostly vivid purples and glowing reds. Some wore shirts which were not tucked in European fashion but hung outside, while others wore a type of cloth waistcoat. The majority, however, went about bare chested, covered only from the waist down by their lungyis. The women also wore a version of the lungyi secured above the

breast and flowing in graceful folds to their calves. Some of them wore a belt of twisted leather or woven beads. The women's hair, which was long and black and in deep, curly waves, flowed to their shoulders and was held in place by ribbons. Most of them wore a beautiful tree orchid above one ear or on top of the head like a small hat, which accentuated in many cases the bright-eyed dusky beauty of the woman herself.

The sounds of the village drifted up to me as in a lovely dream scattered with the tinkling of the pagoda bells and drenched with a benevolent sunshine. All day long there came, muted and delightful in its friendliness, the chatter and laughter of children punctuated by the merry yapping of their dogs. Every one of these villagers, from the oldest men to the youngest tots, seemed full of real joy and contentment.

As I lay there alternately sleeping and waking, I was inescapably drawn into the exquisite peace. A voice inside me began to whisper that if I stayed here I could attain that simplicity and peace of mind which seemed to be common to everyone, but another voice told me that I must move on. But which way? Eastwards to China or Westwards to India - but always alone.

Editor's note: Shortly after the above article was received we heard the sad news of the death of the author. He had never fully recovered from his wounds. Ian Machorton served in the 8th Gurkha Rifles and was with the Wingate Expedition in Burma. The article we have had the honour to publish is a small but fitting memorial. But read the full story in Ian Machorton's book 'Safer Than a Known Way'

Miss Dorothy Ross

We were deeply grieved at the death of Miss Dorothy Ross last October in her 85th year. The Society has lost an enthusiastic supporter and a trusted friend. She had an impressive nursing career being Matron in a mission hospital in India for 16 years, and later Matron of an Indian Army Hospital caring for ex-prisoners of the Japanese. After that she held the post of Matron in hospitals in Egypt and Australia. The World Health Organisation recommended her to the Government of Nepal to create their first training school for Nepalese nurses in Kathmandu. She served in Nepal for ten years from 1953 to 1963.

In carrying out the Nepalese Government's request for a British style of nursing care with students to be taught in the English language, Miss Ross took the opportunity of visiting schools and contacting families whose daughters' English was sufficiently advanced to attend the courses. Thus she brought into the nursing profession in Nepal a superior type of girl, and set the foundation of the Nepalese General Nursing Council and the Nepalese Nurses Association. She ensured that the senior Nepalese nurses were able to take over administrative and teaching posts, and the nursing school became part of the new University of Nepal. A new Maternity Hospital was built during her stay in the country.

This is only a brief outline of her work. Young Nepalese Doctors referred to her as 'The Mother of Nursing'.

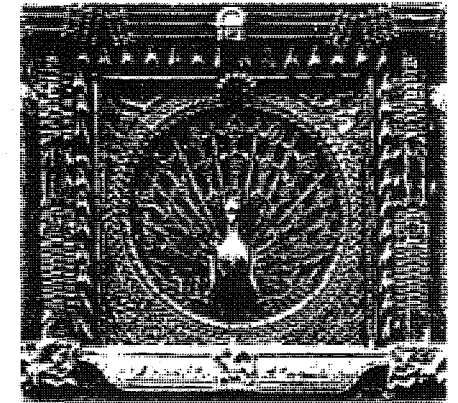
Dorothy came to know not just the Nepalese city dwellers but the hill people as well, and all through her life she carried a deep affection for Nepal and its people. *Mayura Brown.*

Countess Dorothea Gravina

The Society has lost a loyal friend and supporter by the recent sad death of the Countess Gravina whose regular and cheerful presence at meetings in London will be missed very much.

Chris Gravina wrote to our Chairman Colonel Evans on 15th July: 'I am writing to let you know the sad news that my mother Dorothea Gravina, a member of the Britain-Nepal Society, died last week after suffering a stroke last March. Needless to say she was cheerful and happy to the end.'

To all of us you knew her that last sentence rings very true. We hope to include a fuller obituary in our next number.





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BOOK REVIEWS

by Lieutenant Colonel T.M. Lowe

High Asia by Jill Neate.

Unwin Hyman. £25. 213 pages.

For, perhaps, the first time we have a book in which the approaches to the mountain peaks in Asia (all over 7,000 metres) have been gathered together in one place and which, at the same time, is a book in which each peak is examined from the point of view of its climbability, so to speak. The whole spectrum is arranged neatly into areas in which the Seven Thousanders are to be found e.g. the Eastern Himalayas, Kumaon and Garhwal, the Hindu Kush, China and Tibet.

Each of the areas is examined in geographical and historical detail, so that the time spent in extensive research is reduced to the minimum. Each main area has its own bibliography at the end of the book.

A 'Peak Index' and a 'People Index' will give you some idea of the sort of people who went climbing in Asia and the nationalities which they represented. This does something to dispel the belief that it was only the so-called 'pukha sahibs' who had an interest in climbing the highest peaks in Asia. You might wonder why certain well known figures in the world of high altitude climbing are not mentioned, but they were not what the author describes as 'summiters' i.e. first on the summit.

The price of this book is well above average, but so too is the quality of the book - style, photographs, the layout and the presentation. The end papers show the geographical locations of the Seven

Thousanders at a glance. The publishers are to be congratulated on the production of a thoroughly useful book of reference.

Mountain Photography by David Higgs. Daidem Books (Hodder & Stoughton). £9.95 (paperback). 110 pages.

A large number of books is devoted to the subject of photography in general. Some are good (those are intended for skilled amateurs), some for beginners and don't help much.

This book which is written in a style that leaves no doubt about what the author has to say, is something of a new departure. It offers you sound and practical advice about everything to do with photography in mountain areas of the world from the high Himalayas to the more gentle slopes of the European alps.

Apart from the more obvious tips which you might expect to find in a book on mountain photography, there is a host of information including a chapter on how to care for your photos. Few things are more boring than looking at other people's photograph albums and slides. Chapter 7 will tell you how to keep your friends.

A glossary of the more useful terms used in photography is included in the book and the index will save you time. The price is modest by today's standards and the weight is unlikely to make much difference to the pack on your back.

The Trekking Peaks of Nepal by Bill O'Connor. Crowood Press. £14.95. 224 pages.

By any standard this book is a winner. You can compare it with many of the Himalayan books which have been written over the years and you will find that it is easily one of the best. A lot of day-to-day trekking is marked out for you and, if you should fall down a crevice and not return, it won't be the fault of the author. He has excluded virtually nothing in the way of advice which is written clearly and supported by maps and drawings. You would do well to read it carefully before you set off and you will feel happy if it is in your baggage whilst you are in the country.

In a foreword, Jimmy Roberts, once an officer in the 1st Gurkhas and who now has his own agency for trekkers, reminds you that the book will permit a quieter and more personal way for those who have no wish to establish climbing records in the Nepal Himalayas.

The Kathmandu Valley by John Sanday. Collins. £8.95. 200 pages. Paperback.

This is a small (200 x 130cm) light, high quality book. Take it with you, but read it carefully before you set off. The photos (all in colour) are good. Facts for the traveller are clearly laid out and there is a host of information on the history of the valley and the city itself. The author hasn't omitted anything which could be of help. There are maps of the valley, the city and some other places. The book will cost you less than a bottle of whisky, last a lot longer and won't weigh you down as you walk around the city and the valley.

Trekking - Great Walks of the World by John Cleare. Unwin Hyman. £14.95. 216 pages.

This book includes a number of walks which are likely to be of academic interest only to members of the Society. There are, however, two which will almost certainly be of something more than passing interest; they are the 'Annapurna Circuit' and 'To the Source of the Ganges'.

Unlike so many books which have dealt at length with the mountains of Nepal and the source of the Ganges, these two chapters deal with their areas in a crisp fashion. You are unlikely to find a problem in either of those areas which is not catered for in the Fact Sheets in each of the relevant chapters. The sketch maps might dismay you, but the Fact Sheet will tell you exactly the sort of maps you will need. Stanfords in London will get you any you require. The photographs, mostly in colour, are good. A list of suitable books is included in the Fact Sheet.

John Cleare is a highly experienced mountaineer and a Himalayan veteran.

BOOK REVIEWS

by Mayura Brown

The Coinage of Nepal. From the earliest times until 1911. N.G. Rhodes, K. Gabrisch & C. Valdetaro. (Royal Numismatic Society special publication No. 21, @50 pages, 1 map, 51 places) Price £50.

When Nicholas Rhodes was our Hon. Treasurer in 1969 we were aware of his interest in coins, but we did not know that it had started when he was 8 years old. Now his collection of Nepalese coins rivals that of the British Museum.

Though this is a book especially for numismatists it is an important one for historians as well. It is the first comprehensive catalogue of Nepalese coins ever attempted, and information about a very large number of coins is published here for the first time, while many aspects of the coinage are discussed. The classifications commence with the Lichhavi Dynasty (c. 576-800), through the medieval period (c. 1100-1560), and on to the silver coins struck by the Malla rulers of the Kathmandu Valley (1560-1768). By the end of 1769 Prithvi Narayan Shah, King of Gorkha, had conquered the valley kingdoms, displaced the Mallas and made himself ruler of Nepal.

At that time Nepal consisted of little more than the Kathmandu Valley, but over the next forty years he and successive kings of the Shah Dynasty extended their rule far to the east and west. Two chapters deal with coins of the Shah Dynasty, the first covering coins struck in Kathmandu, while the second describes coins with Arabic inscriptions struck in a number of different mints in the hills.

Copies of this book have been presented to His Majesty King Birendra, to

the Royal Nepalese Academy, and to the library of the Centre for Nepalese and Asian Studies at Tribhuvan University.

Beyond Bokhara: The Life of William Moorcroft - Asian Explorer and Pioneer Veterinary Surgeon by Garry Alder. Century Publishing Co. Ltd.

The name of William Moorcroft might have faded into oblivion with the passing of time. It is to the credit of Dr. Alder that he has revived interest in this astounding character.

Moorcroft would have had a very successful career as a surgeon but seemed to prefer horses to humans and decided to change to veterinary work. He arrived in India in 1808 to take charge of the East India Company's stud at Pusa, became fascinated by the vast grandeur of the Himalayas, and embarked on audacious excursions into unknown and often hostile regions finally going over the Hindu Kush to Kabul, Bokhara and beyond.

In 1812 Moorcroft wanted to take a journey which would require travelling through areas conquered by the Gurkhas and would require their consent. He did not bother to contact them or inform his employers of his plan, but took as his travelling companion Captain Hyder Hearsey who was acquainted with the terrain. Previously, Hearsey and two companions, Capt. Raper and Lieut. Webb, had attempted to find the source of the River Ganges. This expedition in 1808 was official, and the British had received permission from the Nepalese to cross their territories in the hills of Kumaon and Garhwal. Moorcroft and Hearsey decided

to travel disguised as Hindu pilgrims to circumvent any inquiries. However, Hearsey was recognised by the Gurkhas who felt he had returned to spy on them and both men were taken prisoner. They were released eventually, but this journey had provided a valuable source of information about the area which proved very useful to Governor-General Lord Hastings during the Anglo-Nepalese War.

Moorcroft has not received the recognition he deserves, not only as a pioneer explorer but also for his interest in Himalayan flora. Dr. Alder's scholarly and carefully researched book should alter this omission.

Some Other Books of Interest (Contributed by Colonel T.M. Lowe)

Nepal: The Mountain of Heaven by D. Paterson Hamish Hamilton. £30. October 1990

Adventure Treks: Nepal by Bill O'Connor. Crowood Press. £9.95 (Large paperback)

Exploring the Hidden Himalayas by S. Mehta & H. Kapadia. Hodder. £20

Against a Peacock Sky by Monica Connell. Viking. £14.99. January 1991

The Sun in the Morning by Mollie Kaye Viking. £14.99

The Great Game-On Secret Service in High Asia by Peter Hopkirk Murray. £19.95

The High Mountains of the Alps by H. Dumler & W. Burkhardt Hodder. £25. February 1991

Free Spirit: A Climber's Life by Reinhold Messner Hodder. £16.95. February 1991

Apples in the Snow by Geoffrey Moarhouse. Hodder. £12.95

Mountains of Heaven: Travel in the Tien Shan Mountains 1913 by C. Howard-Bury. Hodder. £12.95

At Home in the Himalayas by Christine Noble. Collins. £16.95. January 1991

Lawrence of Lucknow* by John Lawrence. Hodder. £20

** He was resident in Nepal 1943-45 and a chapter covers this period.*

Uphill all the Way by John Hawkrige Joseph. £14.99. January 1991

NOTES ON THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

Patron: H.R.H. PRINCE GYANENDRA OF NEPAL
President: H.R.H. THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, GCVO

Our aim is to promote and foster good relations between the peoples of the United Kingdom and Nepal. The Society was founded in 1960, under the patronage of His late Majesty King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva of Nepal during his State Visit to London: Lord Hunt became the first President.

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

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

Ordinary members pay a subscription of £10 per annum. Life members - a single payment of £150 and corporate members £25. The Journal is sent free to all members.

The "Yetis" - a 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 from October to May in London; a Spring or Summer outing to a place

of interest; 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 well attended, provide an excellent opportunity for members and their guests to get together. Our membership, not counting Honorary Members and Corporate Members, is now well over five hundred.

The President of our Society is His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester, GCVO.

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

Mrs. C. Brown
1 Allen Mansions
Allen Street
London W8 6UY

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