



---

THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

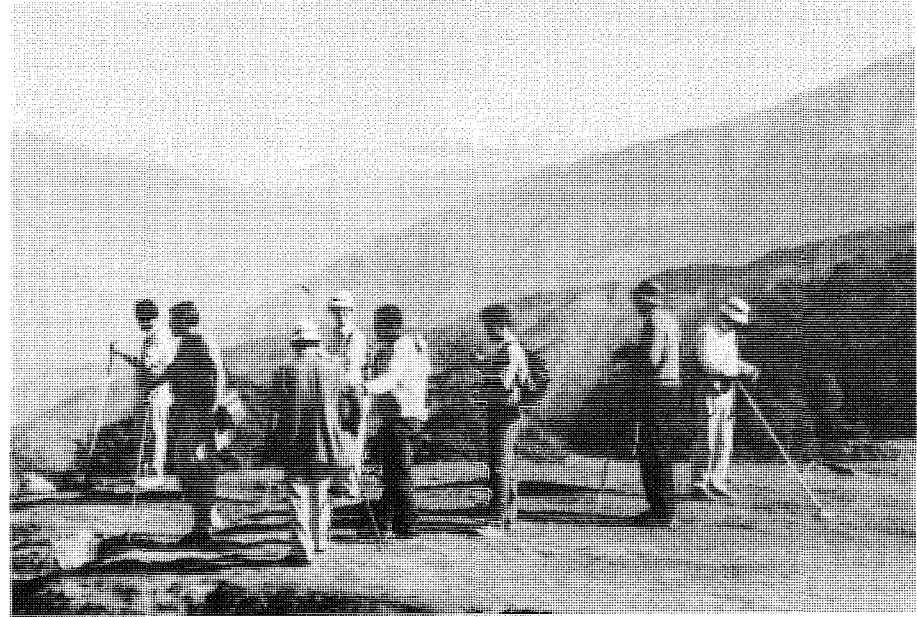
---

*J o u r n a l*

Number 15

1991

---



Preparing to descend to Taplejung from “the spectacular ridge top” of Suketar airstrip in East Nepal: see article “Off the Beaten Track”

---

*Hataka maila sunaka thaila  
ke garnu dhanale  
Saga ra sisnu kaeko besa  
anandi manale*

*(for translation and comment see page 11)*

WE'VE TAKEN TIME OFF  
FROM OUR  
INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES  
TO INVEST IN THIS ONE.



BARCLAYS de ZOETE WEDD

THE INVESTMENT BANKING ARM OF THE BARCLAYS GROUP

---

THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

---

## Journal

Number 15  
1991

---

### CONTENTS

- 5 • Editorial
- 7 • The Society's News by Joanna Thomas
- 9 • Nepali Literature - An Introduction  
by Michael Hutt
- 14 • Nepali Studies at SOAS: an Update
- 15 • An Evening in the Chelsea Physic Garden  
by Iris Perowne Bolton
- 17 • Nepal at the Redbridge Library  
by Mayura Brown
- 18 • Bhutan - Land of the Fire Dragon
- 21 • Trees of Nepal
- 22 • The Britain-Nepal Medical Trust  
by Charles Wylie
- 27 • A 100 Year Family Connection With Nepal
- 28 • The Britain-Nepal Otology Service  
by Neil Weir
- 30 • Obituaries
- 32 • Off the Beaten Track by Charles Wylie
- 37 • The Society's Annual Nepali Supper  
by Mayura Brown
- 38 • Book Reviews
- 44 • Notes on the Britain-Nepal Society



## Public Health

*— worldwide expertise at your service*

ICI Public Health offers a range of products and expertise for the control of the world's major nuisance and vector pests including mosquitoes which spread malaria.

The major products are 'Actellic' (pirimiphos-methyl) - a broad spectrum organophosphorus insecticide and 'Icon' (lambdacyhalothrin) - a highly active broad spectrum synthetic pyrethroid.

For further information about ICI's Public Health products please contact:

ICI Public Health  
Fernhurst, Haslemere  
Surrey, GU27 3JE  
United Kingdom  
Tel: (0428) 654061  
Fax: (0428) 655439  
Telex: 858270 ICI PPF G

Before using pesticides always read and understand the product label.

## EDITORIAL

Looking Back and Ahead

The fifteenth number of our Journal appears in a world very different from that to which our first number was offered only such a short time ago. But the Society continues to flourish and to make an increasingly worthwhile contribution as the contents of this number clearly indicate.

When the first number was published, containing memorable articles by John Sanday ("The Conservation of the Hanuman Dhoka Palace"), Tony Schilling ("The Road to Everest"), Terry White ("Some Birds of the Himalayas"), Jon Fleming ("Incidents on Everest"), the President of the Society was Arthur Kellas, the Chairman was Paul Broomhall and the Honorary Secretary Cynthia Stephenson.

Cynthia handed over to Celia Brown shortly after and Celia, as we all know, then embarked upon her twelve-year strenuous tour of duty during which she accomplished so much, as Lord Hunt reminded the AGM (if indeed those present needed reminding) at the Nepalese Embassy last November when thanking her on behalf of the Society and making a suitable presentation.

The aim of our Society is still as stated in that first number — "to promote and foster good relations between the peoples of the United Kingdom and Nepal". Nothing could be clearer.

Some back numbers of the Journal are probably still available and members wanting them should apply to our present Honorary Secretary, Joanna Thomas. Certainly copies of last year's Journal are still available.

We regretted not being able to entertain Major-General and Mrs. Ganesh Prasad Mahara during their recent but all too short visit to this country. We had hoped to see them on the 6th August at the Chelsea Physic Garden where many of us enjoyed a delightful evening but that very day they were at the Passing Out Parade at Sandhurst where their son, Sudhir Mahara, was awarded the Cane of Honour as the Outstanding Overseas Cadet. General Mahara was formerly Liaison Officer with the Brigade of Gurkhas.

In referring to the Botanical Gardens at Godavari in Nepal, in last year's Journal (page 22), our distinguished contributor omitted to mention the part played by Dr. F.A.C. Herklots CBE, VMH, in establishing them and our attention has been drawn to the omission by Mr. Richard Willan whose letter we gratefully acknowledge. This number contains a contribution from Tony Schilling who was also so closely involved at Godavari in the early sixties and indeed with Nepal and the Himalayas ever since. Readers will see that he intends to retire shortly after 28 years at Wakehurst Place and 32 years in all with Kew. Our congratulations to him and our thanks for the happy suggestion that our members should pay another visit to Wakehurst soon.

There has been much talk about the future of the Gurkhas in the British Army now being restructured. It is probably too early to say anything very definite except that a future seems assured. Certain it is that whatever eventually is arranged the close and friendly relationship between

our two countries will continue well into the future. (See article "Off the Beaten Track".)

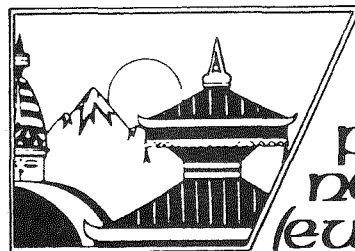
It remains only to thank His Excellency the Nepalese Ambassador and Madame Simha for all the help and encouragement enjoyed by the Society during the year and to add a special word of thanks to Mr. Badri Prasad Khanal, Counsellor at the Embassy, for the keen interest he has taken in the Society throughout his tour of duty in London. (See article "An Evening in the Chelsea Physic Garden".)



#### THE GURKHA WELFARE TRUSTS

Archway North  
Old Admiralty Building  
Spring Gardens  
London SW1A 2BE

Tel: 071-218 4395



AJAY SIMHA  
DIRECTOR

promotion  
nepal  
(europe) Ltd.

TRAVEL CONSULTANTS TO NEPAL & BEYOND

3rd FLOOR,  
3 WELLINGTON TERRACE,  
BAYSWATER ROAD, LONDON W2 4LW  
TEL: 071-229 3528 & FAX: 071-243 0321

#### THE SOCIETY'S NEWS

After nearly twelve years Celia Brown "retired" as Honorary Secretary. She was only the seventh secretary of the Society and served longer than anyone else. I agreed to take over as Secretary for an interim period.

Although I served on the Committee when Colonel Eric Mercer was Secretary some years ago, I have recently been more remote from the affairs of the Society; so I have had a lot to learn both about current events in Nepal and about the many facets of being Secretary to the Society.

In the past year two traditions have changed. The Winter and Spring meetings are now held at the Society of Antiquaries and the Nepali Supper is no longer being held at New Zealand House, due to its no longer being available. Instead the Supper was very successfully held at the Kensington Town Hall.

■ **Monthly Meetings.** On Monday 22nd October, 1990, "Water from the Hills" by Mr. Chris Walters and Mr. Roger Brown from Binnie & Partners who are corporate members.

On Tuesday 8th January, 1991 Mr. Tony Schilling talked on "Bhutan: The Land of the Fire Dragon" about his recent botanical trek to Bhutan.

On Wednesday 6th March, 1991 Dr. Michael Hutt from the School of Oriental and African Studies talked about "Nepali Writers I Have Known". Dr. Hutt had worked in Nepal for some time when studying for his PhD.

On Tuesday 30th April, 1991 Mr. Neil Weir spoke on Ear Surgery Camps —

these he had developed following a trekking holiday in Nepal and provided relief and treatment for a large number of people with ear problems.

The Committee would like to thank all the speakers who have kindly given time to give the talks to the Society.

■ **The Annual Nepali Supper.** This was held at the Kensington Town Hall (just off Kensington High Street) on 11th March, 1991 — this was the only available date. Though attendance was down on the previous years, it was a very successful evening for those who came. The Duke of Gloucester, our President, was the Guest of Honour and impromptu Nepali dancing completed the evening. A report appears elsewhere in the Journal.

■ **The Summer Event.** This year the outing took the form of a visit and reception at the Chelsea Physic Garden where a farewell was given for Mr. B.P. Khanal, Counsellor at the Royal Nepalese Embassy, who returns to Kathmandu.

■ **Yeti Association of the UK.** So that the two Societies can work together more closely, an informal supper took place at the Natraj Restaurant in June 1991. It was a successful evening, and it was agreed to meet again in another six months.

Yeti Association  
(Nepali Association in U.K.)  
Dr. Raghav Dhital,  
48 Cheyne Avenue,  
South Woodford,  
London E18 2DR

■ **Ties and Scarves.** These are available either at meetings or on application to the Secretary. The cost is £7.00 including postage and packing.

■ **The Annual General Meeting.** Last year's AGM was held in November 1990 at the Royal Nepalese Embassy, and the Minutes will as usual be circulated with the AGM Notices. This year the AGM will be held at the Embassy on 21st November, 1991 by kind permission of His Excellency Major-General Bharat Keshar Simha.

The membership of the Society is now over 500. In reviewing the work of the Secretary, the Committee decided it was prudent to have a member of the Committee responsible for membership and Mr. Peter Roberts OBE agreed to take this on.

I should like to thank all the members of the Committee and Society for the help and support during my first year as Secretary. In particular I would like to thank Colonel Jimmy Evans, Chairman, for his advice and support.

Joanna Thomas  
Honorary Secretary

# NATURE TREK

## WALKING WILDLIFE HOLIDAYS

DEvised BY HIMALAYAN WILDLIFE EXPERT DAVID MILLS

The wildlife found in the world's most beautiful mountain regions is often as spectacular as the scenery itself. We walk at a leisurely pace, and enjoy the two together, taking rest days to discover the birds, mammals and flowers in off-trail forests and side valleys, under the guidance of an expert naturalist. We have time to photograph, sketch and note what we see and to take advantage of all the cultural aspects of each trek.

**RARA LAKE** – the wildlife of W. Nepal – with David Mills

**LANGTANG** – the best of a Nepalese Spring – with Paul Jepson

**BHUTAN** – birds & flowers of the last Shangri-la – with David Mills & Jim Gardiner

**TIBET** – the botanical paradise of Namche Barwa – with Tony Schilling

PLUS OTHER NATURAL HISTORY TREKS & TOURS IN

**KASHMIR · LADAKH · ZANSKAR**

**SOUTH INDIA · NEW ZEALAND**

**AUSTRALIA · KENYA · ZAMBIA**

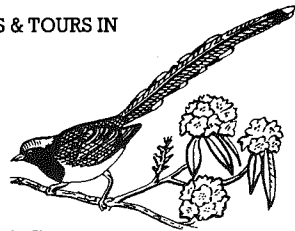
**ETHIOPIA · MOROCCO · BOTSWANA**

**INDONESIA · GALAPAGOS · EASTERN TURKEY**

For our brochure please contact David Mills

Chautara, Bighton, Nr. Alresford, Hampshire SO24 9RB, England

Tel: (0962) 733051 Fax: (0962) 733368



## NEPALI LITERATURE: AN INTRODUCTION

by Dr. Michael Hutt

In March 1991 I was kindly invited to a meeting of the Britain- Nepal Society, where I spoke on the subject of poets and poetry in Nepal. I was subsequently asked to write something along these lines for the Society's Journal, but I fear it would be difficult to reproduce on paper the combination of readings of poetry and pictures of Nepali life and landscapes I presented on that occasion. On the other hand, it may be that readers will be interested to know a little more about the history of literature in Nepali: few of the 300,000 foreigners who visit Nepal each year are even aware of its existence, after all. And as a friend of Nepal, it seems appropriate for the Society to draw attention to the richness and sophistication of its modern literary culture.

The fact that Nepali is Nepal's national language, the mother-tongue of 60% of its people, and a vital lingua-franca for the remainder, ensures that it is also the language of the bulk of the country's literature. But this literature is not ancient: in western Nepal some inscriptions have been found which date back to the fourteenth century, and a small number of genealogies, translations of Hindu scripture, royal pronouncements and poems survive from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but the first major literary achievement dates from the mid-nineteenth century.

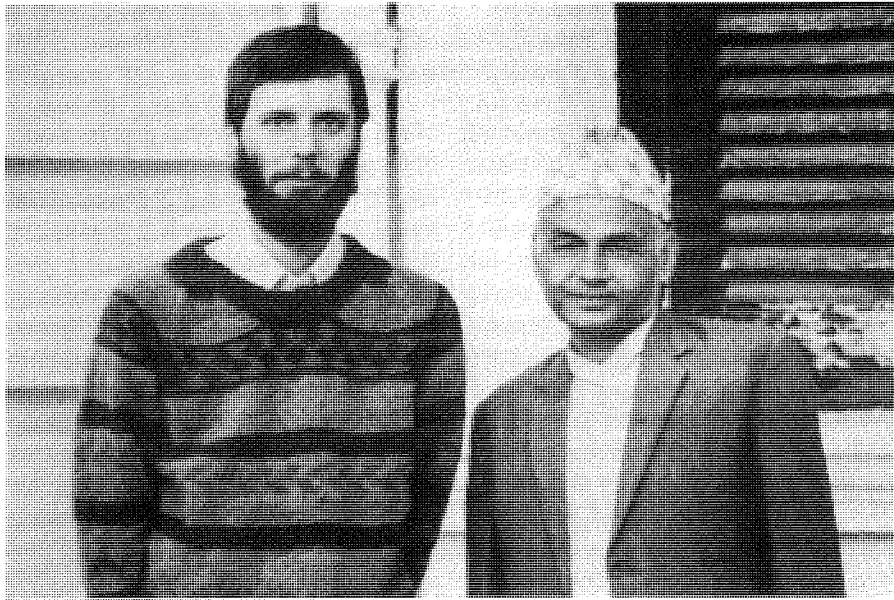
This was a Nepali adaptation in rhyming metrical verse of the Ramayana legend and its author was a Brahmin named Bhanubhakta Acharya (1814-68). Bhanubhakta's Nepali Ramayana remains one

of the most important and popular works of Nepali literature: innumerable editions have been published, and it is memorised and sung at celebrations and religious feasts throughout the kingdom.

The works of Bhanubhakta Acharya were first brought to light by Motiram Bhatta, who published the Ramayana in 1877, and a biography of its author in 1891. In the biography, Bhatta relates the popular but historically improbable tale of Bhanubhakta being inspired to write his Ramayana by a chance meeting with a grass-cutter:

*He'd devoted his life to the cutting of  
grass,  
And now he is a wealthy man,  
He'd wondered what to leave to  
posterity,  
And then he commissioned a well.  
The grass-cutter comes from a home  
which is poor,  
But his wisdom's beyond compare,  
While I, Bhanubhakta, am richer  
than he,  
But no works of charity can I claim:  
My wealth and belongings are all  
inside my house.  
Such a great lesson he taught me today:  
Accursed my life without fame or  
renown!*

Because of the censorious attitude towards literature of some previous administrations, its development within Nepal was retarded during the early twentieth century, and the most important innovations owed much to Nepalis resident in



*Dr. Michael Hutt with the Nepali poet Mohan Koirala  
in Kathmandu in December 1987*

Indian towns such as Darjeeling and Benares. The most notable poet to emerge in Nepal was Lekhnath Paudyal whose poetry represented a kind of bridge between the classical traditions of Sanskrit verse and the new school of simplification. Most of Lekhnath's poems were devotional and philosophical, and they combined a profundity of thought with a formal clarity of expression that was unprecedented in Nepali:

*She plays the lute of the tender soul,  
Plucking a thousand sweet sounds  
With the mind's gentle nails  
As she sits upon the heart's opened  
lotus:  
May I never forget, for the whole of  
my life,  
The goddess Saraswati.*

His Majesty King Tribhuvan invested Lekhnath Paudyal with the title Kavi Shiromani, "Crest-Jewel Poet", which is often translated as 'Poet Laureate'. But Lekhnath's inspiration sprang from time-honoured traditions, and he is not considered authentically modern. Many writers who came after him were strongly influenced by English literature, and during the 1930s the urge to modernise — to catch up with the world outside — became clearly apparent. Balkrishna Sama, a member of the ruling Shamsher family, penned rather Shakespearian plays which dealt with contemporary social issues and are still among the classics of Nepali theatre. Many of Sama's poems put forward humanistic views which were radical for their time:

*I too believe in God, holy man,  
I too believe in God,  
But between your God and mine  
There is the difference of earth and sky,  
Him you see when you close your eyes  
In clouds of silent contemplation,  
Him I see with my eyes wide open,  
In the dear sight of every man.*

The short story was established by writers like Guru Prasad Koirala, whose moralistic tales of Nepali village life remain popular today, and Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala, Nepal's first elected Prime Minister, who drew on sources as diverse as Freud, Maupassant and Tagore to produce several works of superb fiction.

Towering over all his contemporaries was Nepal's first great modern poet, Lakshmiprasad Devkota (1909-59). Devkota's mastery of English was excellent, and his love for the English Romantic poets — particularly Wordsworth — was a formative influence. Towards the end of his life, his egalitarian instincts made him a political exile, and his intellectual curiosity drew him into experiments with Greek mythology. Devkota was extraordinarily prolific: though chiefly renowned for dozens of volumes of poetry, he also wrote essays, stories and novels. His best-loved work was a forty-page poem entitled *Muna and Madan*, published during the 1930s but still Nepal's best-selling book: over 7,000 copies are bought every year, even now.

The poem tells the story of a young man from Kathmandu who travels to Tibet to seek his fortune: many Nepalis know the following lines, spoken by Muna, the young man's wife, as she begs him not

leave her. They have become a kind of proverb:

*hataka maila sunaka thaila ke garnu  
dhanale  
saga ra sisnu khaeko besa anandi  
manale*

*Purses of gold are like the dirt on your  
hands;  
What can be done with wealth?  
Better to eat only nettles and greens  
With happiness in your heart.*

Nepal emerged with great suddenness into the wider world outside, and this is reflected by the speed at which the country and its literature have changed. During the twilight years of the Rana regime, an important group of writers centred on the Kathmandu journal *Sharada*, and the *Sharada* era represents a kind of explosion into modernity.

With the advent of public education, the number of Nepali writers grew rapidly and poetry remained the most important and popular form of literature. Unfortunately, the Nepali poetry of the 1960s was often extremely obscure: as liberals and intellectuals, many poets were disturbed by His Majesty King Mahendra's dismissal of the Congress government in 1960, and felt the need for an opaque code in which to express their feelings. Nevertheless, 'Dimensionalist' poets such as Bairagi Kainla and Ishwar Ballabh — both now members of the Royal Nepal Academy — published intricate, powerful poems which are still famous today, and the abstracted, poetic stories of Indra Bahadur Rai are evidence of a distinguished talent.

Other than these, the most influential



poets have been Mohan Koirala (b. 1926) and Bhupi Sherchan (1936-89). Koirala's dense, symbolic poems have been appearing for over forty years and they represent a unique view of the world as seen from the streets of Kathmandu. He can hardly be called Devkota's successor, because their poetry differs immensely, but the poetry of Mohan Koirala, if properly translated, would be Nepal's second great contribution to the world of modern literature.

*The sweet wind whispers,  
Unobstructed, trouble-free,  
In the place where I drew warm breath  
And a child was filled with laughter.  
In this corner of the world  
Is the courtyard where I once crawled,  
Here are the cold stones, the warm  
graves  
Of my loved ones who have died.  
So, numbed by the chill gusts and white  
frosts,  
By the cold, the sorrow, the shame,  
death and famine,  
To this hearth that warms me  
I offer my kiss of love.*

Bhupi Sherchan is known chiefly for a collection of poems entitled *A Blind Man in a Revolving Chair*, published in 1969, and his poetry is much simpler and more widely popular than Koirala's. Most poems are grand and ironic satires of contemporary Nepali society, and are justly famous:

*Every day,  
Dawn comes secretly like a thief,  
And it squeezes me a little.  
I am woken by the touch of sunbeams,*

*I see the bright white teeth of the east,  
Scrubbed regularly clean;  
There falls upon some corner of my  
heart  
A light but penetrating blow:  
Ah, my life is going towards its end;  
A certain amount passes each day,  
Squeezed out like toothpaste.*

Great advances have been made in Nepali fiction. The short story is increasingly popular and sophisticated, and after a shaky, clichéd start the novel is well-established. One of the most interesting novelists is Parijat, whose first novel *Blue Mimosa* was published some years ago in English translation. Nepali drama has suffered from the enormous popularity of Indian cinema, but plays are staged regularly and theatre is also used as a means of education in areas where low literacy levels prevail. Nevertheless, poetry remains the most important genre of Nepali literature, and recent years have seen the emergence of a new generation of highly talented poets who seek to write in simple language for a mass readership.

The recent changes in Nepal can only benefit Nepali literature, which will no doubt continue to 'fruit and flower' (as the Nepali saying goes) in its homeland. It richly deserves to be better-known beyond the hills, and I hope the following book-list will be of use to Society members who wish to acquaint themselves better with this little-known aspect of a land for which they have such affection.

**Banira Giri: *From the Other End***  
(Translated poems). New Delhi: Nirala Publishers, 1987

Michael J. Hutt: ***Nepali: A National Language and its Literature***. New Delhi and London. Sterling Publishers/School of Oriental and African Studies, 1988

Michael J. Hutt: ***Himalayan Voices: An Introduction to Modern Nepali Literature***. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991

Shankar Koirala: ***Khairini Ghat***  
(Novel translated by Larry Hartsell). Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1984

Parijat: ***Blue Mimosa*** (Novel translated by Acharya and Zeidenstein). Kathmandu, 1972

Kumar Pradhan: ***A History of Nepali Literature***. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1984

Diamond Shamsheer Rana: ***Wake of the White Tiger*** (Novel translated by Greta Rana). Kathmandu: Balika Rana, 1984

Royal Nepal Academy: ***Modern Nepali Poems***. Kathmandu, 1972

David Rubin: ***Nepali Visions, Nepali Dreams: The Poetry of Laxmiprasad Devkota***. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980

Shailendra Kumar Singh: ***Contemporary Nepali Poetry***. Kathmandu, 1989

Abhi Subedi: ***Nepali Literature, Background and History***. Kathmandu: Sajha, 1978

# NATRAJ

The First Restaurant to Introduce  
Nepalese Food to London

OPEN DAILY 12 to 3 & 6 to 12  
93 Charlotte Street  
LONDON W1P 1LB

Telephone: 071-637 0050 or 071-636 4995

For reservations contact ISHWAR MANANDHAR



## NEPALI STUDIES AT SOAS: AN UPDATE

Dr. Michael Hutt

The previous issue of this Journal contained a brief report on Nepali and Himalayan Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London. During the past year a great deal has been achieved to ensure that the recent expansion of the subject at SOAS will be maintained in the longer term. Members of the Society may like to know the current position (as of July 1991).

The fact that our endeavours are bearing fruit owes much to the kind and generous support provided by His Excellency the Royal Nepalese Ambassador Major-General Bharat Keshar Simha, and to the interest shown by members of the Britain-Nepal Society. His Excellency very kindly hosted a Reception at the Embassy on 27th June, 1991 which gave representatives of SOAS, including the Director, Mr. Michael McWilliam, a valuable opportunity to meet a wide variety of people who have strong links with Nepal.

In general, our aim is to establish Nepali studies on a sounder and more permanent basis at SOAS by increasing the numbers of students attracted to the subject as a part of a degree course, and also by providing a greater variety of educational services to the wider community. Suggestions received at the Reception included cultural briefing sessions for aid-workers, a summer-school for younger members of the Nepali community in Bri-

tain, the establishment of links with the tourist industry and so on. We hope to establish a Scholarships Fund which will enable us to invite scholars from Nepal to spend time at SOAS for research purposes, and members of the Society expressed considerable interest in the idea of recording and preserving the Nepali folk-songs so beloved of Gurkha soldiers.

We do need guidance and advice from members of the Britain-Nepal Society to bring these plans to fruition, and we will be approaching individuals who have expressed an interest during the months to come. Meanwhile, I hope that members will continue to support our work as they have in the past, and will feel free to contact us at SOAS if they would like further information. Our mailing-list for seminar programmes etc. will, I hope, continue to grow and grow!

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

Tel: 071-323 6240  
Fax: 071-637 2388 x 2440

## AN EVENING IN THE CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN

Summer Event and Visit - 6th August, 1991

An evening visit was arranged for us this year to that wonderful secret oasis that lies between the rushing traffic of the Embankment and Royal Hospital Road. Astonishment and delight registered on every face as members and their guests were ushered through the insignificant little door in the high brick wall to find themselves in the lush and peaceful green world of the Chelsea Physic Garden.

As the forecast had been for dull and showery weather the initial proceedings, with wine and 'small eats', had been arranged to take place indoors. The Curator of the Garden, Sue Minter, began by welcoming us to the second oldest botanical garden in England (only Oxford is older) which was founded in 1673 by and for the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries of London so that their members and apprentices could study botany and learn what disorders each plant could cure: for at that time botany was still part of medicine. The Garden had been deliberately sited by the river so that the apothecaries could row up in barges from Blackfriars.

Miss Minter drew our attention to the Historical Walk down the western side of the Garden where we would find of interest the Robert Fortune planting; he was Curator from 1846-48 and introduced many plants to Britain from the Himalayas, as well as tea from China to India. Medicinal research continues in the Garden to this day; Glaxo works there screening plants for new drugs.

Our special guest for the evening was Mr. B.P. Khanal, Counsellor at the Royal Nepalese Embassy, who, with his wife and

family, is leaving shortly to return to Kathmandu. Our Chairman, Colonel Jimmy Evans, spoke to us about him, recalling his arrival in 1987 shortly before the stock market crash and the Great Storm. (Nothing to do with him, protested Mr. Khanal.) He also reminded us that Mr. Khanal had been a lecturer in English Literature before he became a diplomat and was posted in succession to New Delhi, Moscow and London. He praised his work for the Society including his unfailing attendance at committee meetings and, on behalf of the Society, presented Mr. Khanal with a cut-glass "ship's" decanter, adorned with a silver wine label inscribed:

*Mr. B.P. Khanal  
Britain Nepal Society  
August 1991*

Mr. Khanal then spoke, expressing thanks for the decanter and his regrets at leaving London. He exhorted members to visit Nepal and while there, him and his family also.

Those of us who met here were also glad to welcome Eleanor Kinnear's guest, Natasha Karpovich, a member of the Russian-Nepal Society in Moscow and a one-time lecturer there in Nepali studies. The two were meeting again for the first time since 1970 when they were both in Kathmandu, Natasha studying Nepali and Eleanor working as a physiotherapist at the hospital.

The formal part of the evening being over, members and their guests (ninety-five in all) then drifted off in small groups

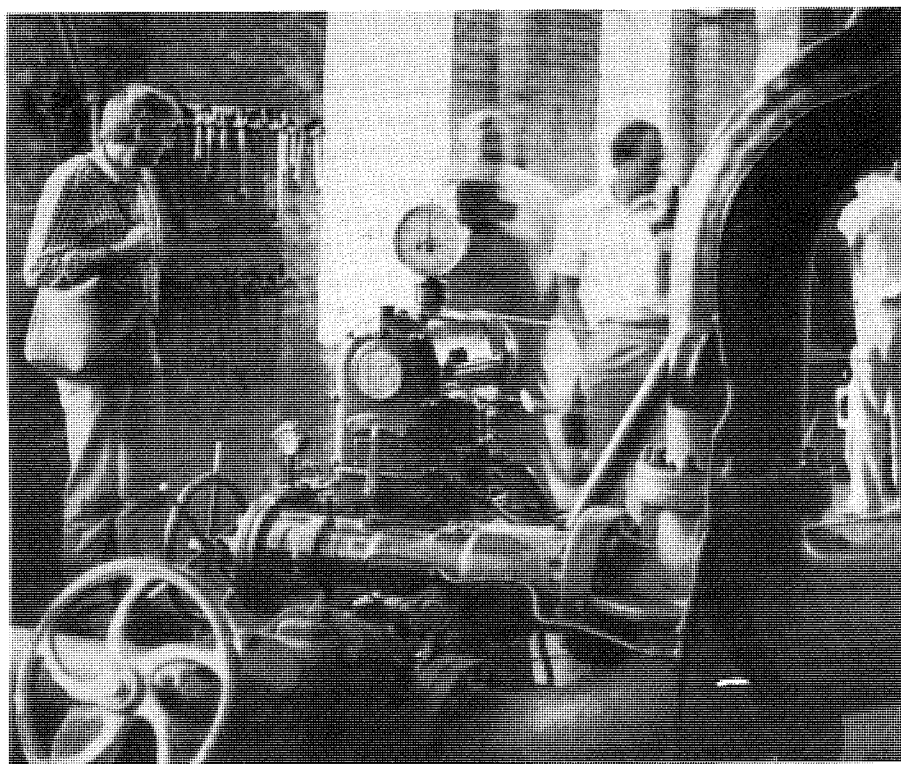
to take a closer look at all the fascinating things in the Physic Garden. Fortune smiled on us and forecast notwithstanding, we had a dry and bright evening to do our own bit of medicinal plant study. Altogether a delightful evening and indeed one to remember.

**Note:** For those who missed this most enjoyable evening visit, the Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HS, telephone 071-352

5646, is open to the public on Wednesdays and Sundays 2-5 pm 17th March to 20th October.

The freehold of the Physic Garden was presented to the Society of Apothecaries by Sir Hans Sloane (after whom Sloane Square is named) when he purchased the manor of Chelsea (1721). He was President of the Royal College of Physicians 1719-35.

Iris Perowne Bolton



*London Electricity Engineers in a small Hydro Electric Power Station in the Kathmandu Valley (see article opposite)*

## NEPAL AT THE REDBRIDGE LIBRARY, ILFORD

by Mayura Brown

The Exhibition, which took place last year (13th November - 19th December) stemmed from an idea of Mr. Neil Thorne, MP for Ilford South and Chairman of the Britain-Nepal all Party Parliamentary Group. He wanted to interest the local school children in Nepal, its religion, culture and history, and with examples of recent development programmes in electricity and water in which local businesses have participated. This undertaking, sponsored by London Electricity, was co-ordinated by Mr. Mike Dodwell, Engineering Manager at their local office.

His Excellency the Nepalese Ambassador opened the Exhibition and warmly thanked all those whose efforts had made it possible. On show, beside the London Electricity's display, were photographs of Nepal, various artefacts, national dress, books about Nepal, and the combat dress of the legendary Gurkha soldier.

The many guests included the Mayor of Redbridge, Mrs. Julia Roberts, officials from Redbridge Borough Council, representatives of local businesses, and head teachers of the schools in the area.

Mr. Thorne was presented with a medal by the World Development Movement (Value for People Pledge), for his untiring work for the people in the Third World. This organisation is a cross-party pressure group campaigning for the world's poor on aid, trade, debt and the environment. Mr. Thorne is to be congratulated, and it was encouraging to see his endeavours recognised.

During an excellent lunch provided by London Electricity, we were able to talk to

their members, including an engineer who had just returned from an eighteen month secondment in Nepal. Their display focussed on the development programme in electricity in Nepal, and highlighted the difference between electrical systems in Britain and Nepal, and the work being done by their engineers. Mr. Dodwell said: "London Electricity is committed to supporting development projects in Nepal, transferring expertise and technology used in the U.K."

The accompanying photograph shows the Sundarijal station which was constructed in the early 1930s and was the second power station in Nepal. Although well over 50 years old the machinery (made by the English Electric Co.) still operates daily. From its installation it was in the charge of the late Mr. R.G. Kilburne, OBE, MIEE, who was appointed successively to the 3rd and 2nd Class Order of the Prabala Gorkha Dakshina Bahu by His Majesty King Tribhuvan. These honours were bestowed for his devoted and efficient services during his period of duty in Nepal as Chief Electrical and Ropeway Engineer.



## BHUTAN: LAND OF THE FIRE DRAGON

On Tuesday 8th January, 1991 Mr. A.D. Schilling, M.Arb., F.L.S., F.R.G.S., F.I. Hort., V.M.H., Deputy Curator of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and Wakehurst Place, gave an illustrated talk entitled "Bhutan: Land of the Fire Dragon". This took a large audience at Burlington House (Society of Antiquaries) from the tea plantations south of Darjeeling north-eastwards over the border of Bhutan to the town of Phuntsholing and thence up steeply through the foothills via warm temperate forests and spectacular scenery to the town of Paro.

After viewing the incredible Tigers Nest Monastery set above sheer mountain



*Masked Dancer in Timpa, C. Bhutan*

cliffs of immense stature the journey led eastwards by road over three dramatic passes covered in dense cool-temperate forests ablaze with many different species of rhododendrons, magnolia and many other attractive trees and shrubs, the most exciting of these being the recently re-discovered Rhododendron Kesangiae which is named in honour of the Queen Mother in Bhutan.

The journey eastwards terminated in the Bumtang Valley at the town of Jakhar. From here the party carried out a one week trek in the superb pine-clad forests of central Bhutan returning to Bumtang via the Tang Chu Valley.

The journey home was by more or less the same route with stop-overs in the lowland town of Wangdiphodrang and Bhutan's capital Thimpu. The highlights of the experience were too many to itemise but one was left with an overall picture of the intense beauty of this virtually unspoilt and remote Buddhist Himalayan Kingdom. It was very apparent that the King of Bhutan's sensitive and wise control of tourism has so far safely guarded the cultural values and natural resources of this lovely country from exploitation and all who shared the evening at Burlington House will hope that this will continue to be the case.

Tony Schilling writes:

"As you know I have decided to take early retirement from Kew after 25 years at Wakehurst Place (32 years Kew service in all including 2 years seconded to HMG Nepal in order to develop the RBG Godavari).

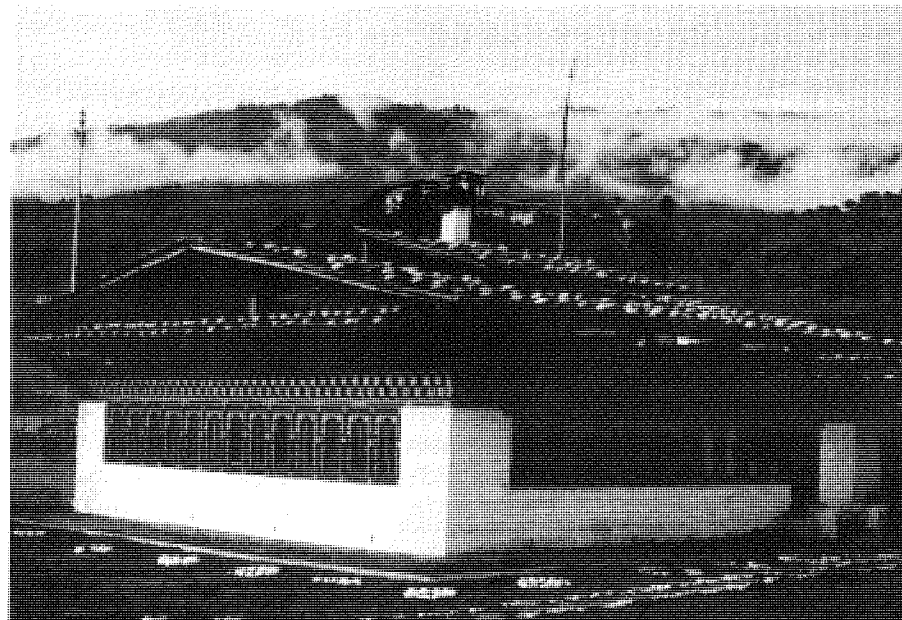
"The Asian Valley (Westwood Valley) at Wakehurst Place (which includes the Himalayan Glade) had been seen by Britain-Nepal Society members on their various visits, but an entirely new venture — The three acre Trans-Asian Heath Garden - which has been created following the devastation of the great storm of October 1987, includes a large section in which will be grown the dwarf rhododendrons of the Himalayan regions.

"Many other Asian plants in other parts of the gardens (Winter Garden, Walled Gardens, Water Gardens etc.) reflect my intense interest in the Himalayan flora over the years I have been here and I hope

the Britain-Nepal Society will re-visit Wakehurst again in the very near future in order to enjoy a little bit of "Nepal in Sussex".

"My only real regret is that the long-hoped-for Himalayan bridge which is planned for Westwood Valley has not yet become a reality. We have, however, built a stone Chautara (backed by a weeping juniper which will serve as a shade tree) sited at the edge of the Himalayan Glade and adding character to the feature."

Our best wishes and congratulations and we look forward to visiting Wakehurst again to enjoy that little bit of "Nepal in Sussex". Ed.



*Jakat Tourist Lodge with Jakat Dyong beyond.  
Bhumtang Valley, C. Bhutan*



# ALBERT E SHARP

Britain's leading independent Stockbrokers  
and Financial Advisors

Based in the Midlands close to the industrial  
heartlands with offices in Birmingham, London  
and Bristol

Founders with British Telecom of "Sharelink"

Providers of development finance through SUMIT

Leading PEP scheme manager (with over £70m  
subscribed by clients)

Private client funds under management of over  
£2 billion

Albert E Sharp & Co  
Edmund House, 12 Newhall Street, Birmingham B3 3ER  
Telephone 021-200 2244 Contact: Peter M Reynolds

Davies House, 1 Sun Street, London EC2A 2EP  
Telephone 071-638 7275 Contact: John Magney

Spectrum, Bond Street, Bristol BS1 3DE  
Telephone 0272 260051 Contact: Nicholas Hutchen

*Member of the London Stock Exchange and of  
The Securities and Futures Authority*

## TREES OF NEPAL

In a contribution to last year's Journal Sir Arthur Norman, Chairman of the King Mahendra U.K. Trust for Nature Conservation, referred to the promotion of "small hydro-electric schemes" aimed at lessening the pressure on the forests of Nepal. The problems arising from deforestation are of course well known to our readers, many of whom are active and generous supporters of the King Mahendra Trust. The following extract from a description of the trees of Nepal, although written over sixty years ago by J.V. Collier of the world-renowned Indian Forest Service (for Perceval London's "Nepal"), is of more than merely academic interest today. Mr. Collier was in charge of various projects affecting Nepal in his time.

"While it is the quality of her Gurkha soldiers", wrote Mr. Collier, "that has made the name of Nepal famous throughout the world, yet Nepal is almost equally renowned for the extent and quality of her forests."

Mr. Collier continues: "... the Nepal forests can be roughly classified into three main altitude zones: 1) the tropical zone, up to about 4,000 ft; 2) the temperate zone, from 4,000 to 10,000 ft; and 3) the Alpine zone, from 10,000 ft to the limit of tree level at about 16,000 ft.

1) The Tropical Zone... "begins with a belt of forest stretching out into the Tarai plains, and consisting of four very distinct types of forest, which are:

- forests of Sal (*Shorea robusta*), the most important timber tree of the country;
- riverain forests of Shisham (*Dalbergia*

Sissoo) and Khair (*Acacia Catechu*) and other less important species;

- mixed deciduous forests in which the predominant or important trees are the Asna (*Terminalia tomentosa*), the Semal (*Bombax malabaricum*), the Toon (*Cedrela Toona*); and
- moist savannah forests, largely consisting of areas of tall grasses, the haunt of rhinoceros and tiger.

2) The Temperate Zone may be divided into two zones:

- a belt between 4,000 and 8,500 ft, containing the Oaks, Maples and Pines; and
- the forest above 8,500 ft in which the Spruces, Firs, Cypresses and Larches are the chief species. Although this temperate zone is of comparatively little commercial importance, it fulfils a purpose even more important to Nepal than that of a source of revenue, by supplying the dense population of these middle altitude tracts with their fuel, timber and grazing requirements.

3) The Alpine Zone, above 10,000 ft ... Its characteristic trees are Rhododendrons and Junipers."

The address in London of the King Mahendra U.K. Trust for Nature Conservation remains unchanged. It is:

26 Little Chester Street  
London. SW1X 7AP  
Telephone: 071-823 2545



## THE BRITAIN-NEPAL MEDICAL TRUST

by Lieutenant Colonel C.G. Wylie

The Editor has asked me to write about the Trust as it is some time since the Society heard about it. Now in its 23rd year the Trust (BNMT for short) has changed a lot since the late Dr. John Cunningham and his original team drove overland to Nepal and offered their services to the Nepalese Government. After helping and training staff at the Regional Hospital in Biratnagar, they received permission to set up a TB and Leprosy clinic in Dhankuta. This was the first of the eight clinics we now operate in the hill districts of the Eastern Region of Ilam, Phidim, Taplejung, Tehrathum, Khandbari, Bhojpur and Diktel, as well as Dhankuta.

At first the Trust was very much an amateur organisation, depending heavily on the enthusiasm, pioneering spirit and initiative of the team members. Today we are much more professional. Aims and objectives are carefully defined, monitored and evaluated. Health data and statistics are recorded, computerised and disseminated to interested organisations world wide. We have been described by a WHO expert as the most effective NGO (non-government organisation) he has seen in any developing country.

From the beginning our expatriate staff (not all are British: we have employed Americans, Canadians, New Zealanders, Dutch and Norwegians too) have lived under the same conditions as the local people, eschewing status or privilege. They are thus in the best position to assess the people's health needs, to suggest solutions and plans to the local Nepal authorities, and to implement them.

In this way our work has extended beyond TB and Leprosy treatment and we now operate three other major programmes: drug supply, community health education and health training, all in close and happy co-operation with the Nepal authorities.

### Drug Supply

This programme aims to make essential drugs available to all at affordable prices throughout the year. The Government can only afford to provide hospitals and health posts with a limited quota. BNMT supplements the Government supply to ensure year-round availability. To make this programme financially viable BNMT introduced, with the full agreement of both patients and local authorities, a system whereby the patient pays a small fixed charge for each prescription. This money is then used for buying more drugs. A pilot project was started in Bhojpur, and the "bugs" were ironed out. BNMT now runs further projects in Taplejung and Panchthar Districts, while in Khotang a similar scheme is being run from the start by the District Public Health Officer with only supervision from BNMT. Much interest has been shown in these schemes both by the Department of Health and local health authorities. They could become the pattern throughout the country.

BNMT also runs some 26 drug shops throughout the region where simple medicines such as aspirins can be bought at cost price, plus a small percentage for the retailer. Portage charges are paid by BNMT.



*Dr. Bob Fryatt instructing in the Bhojpur drug scheme seminar outside the BNMT clinic*

### Community Health

This programme has evolved over the past ten years in conjunction with similar programmes operated by the Government and other NGOs. The Government has recently set a target of one female Community Health Volunteer (CHV) in every ward by the year 2000. A CHV has to know the basic principles of health and hygiene. He or she has a small first aid box with which to deal with minor problems. The village has to raise the funds to replenish the box. The CHV's main job, however, is to persuade the sick to visit the nearest Government hospital or health post. This is not so easy as it sounds. BNMT recently conducted a focus study of health post usage in Taplejung District which showed that the great majority of local people, for a number of reasons,

went to jhankiris, or traditional healers, or else remained at home hoping to recover. The CHV has to show that the methods used by Government health staff and by BNMT are more effective. This requires a considerable knowledge of basic medical principles which we in the west take for granted. The problems are immense. To begin with virtually all volunteers attend BNMT literacy classes. Pupils walk huge distances after work each day for evening classes, poring over their books on the floor by the light of a candle or hurricane lamp. We aim to make 1800 women literate this year.

The next problem is to teach the principles of basic health and hygiene, not only to CHV's but through them, via Women's Groups, to the villagers. Deep-rooted misconceptions of the causes of



disease have to be eradicated and replaced by new concepts which many find difficult to grasp. Most villages covered by the BNMT CH programme now boast about 80% of households with charpis (deep latrines) in use, many even more. The same applies to smokeless 'chulos' (cooking places), another simple but effective health aid introduced by BNMT.

Our excellent team of twelve Nepali CH trainers also train Government health post staff, including village health workers. They also operate a "street theatre" performing playlets to put over simple messages on TB and the treatment available. These shows, given to schools and at weekly "hat bazaars", are popular and effective.

The CH programme is also tackling the problem of how to increase contact and understanding between the very large numbers of traditional healers and the formal health care system. We hope to increase referrals of TB patients by traditional healers to our clinics and to Government health posts. A Norwegian anthropologist seconded to BNMT has been studying this problem for the last two years and the results of her work together with similar studies outside BNMT are now being worked out.

All this has resulted in a greatly increased demand for training, not only of our own staff (eight expatriates and ten Nepalese) and that of other NGOs, but also of Government health workers and even of District Public Health Officers. To meet this demand we have set up a Training Unit in Biratnagar, complete with modern training aids and staffed by experienced instructors, headed by an ex Peace Corps Volunteer.



*Taplejung clinic-in-charge B.B. Gurung examining sputum slide*

### **TB and Leprosy**

The programme continues to be as necessary as ever. Despite curing some 600-700 patients a year and rendering the sputum of as many lung patients non-infectious, TB will not be eradicated, as it has been in the west, until economic conditions in Nepal improve radically since the disease thrives on malnutrition. Leprosy is a lesser problem and there are a lot fewer patients. Nevertheless BNMT cures about 700 Leprosy patients annually.

All our eight clinics are now run efficiently by Nepali staff, trained by BNMT and with many years of experience. The standard TB treatment regimen involves daily injections for two months at the

BNMT hostel, followed by ten months taking tablets at home. However, as the patient gets better he or she often stops taking the tablets. This causes a relapse and further treatment is much more difficult since the patient is then resistant to normal treatment. BNMT had to employ full time defaulter chasers to visit patients' homes to check that they were taking their tablets.

BNMT hope to improve the present system by adopting a shorter regimen using different drugs. This does not involve injections; so patients do not have to be admitted to our hostels. Last year we began a four year operational trial of this shorter, six months, regimen at four of our clinics. Results will be compared with those at the four other clinics which are still using the standard regimen. Hopefully the new system will be one which the Government can more readily use in other areas.

### **Patrons**

BNMT is greatly honoured to enjoy the Royal patronage of HRH the Prince of Wales, whose affection for Nepal is well known, and of HRH Princess Helen of Nepal who takes an active interest in BNMT operations in Nepal. Other patrons includes Sir John Crofton, the world renowned authority on TB in developing countries, Lord Hunt and Chris Bonnington.

### **Management**

Overall management is exercised by a Board of Trustees in the United Kingdom. Numbering sixteen at present, the majority of Trustees are ex Directors or ex members of the team in Nepal. They are responsible for policy decisions, fund

raising and the recruitment of expatriate staff. There are a number of technical committees, and a small executive office in Tonbridge.

Operational management is entirely the responsibility of the Director in Nepal. Each of the three major programmes is co-ordinated by one of the expatriate team members, who keep in close touch with the relevant technical trustees committee in the UK. Once a year the Director attends the Trustees conference in the UK where plans for the following year are discussed and agreed. Six months later one of the Trustees visits the team in Nepal and reports back to the Trustees in the UK. This solves much of the inevitable difficulty of communications, co-ordination and control. Telex and fax have also greatly helped.

An important step forward was taken last year by the formation of a Nepali staff management committee. This committee is now responsible for all matters concerning our 100 Nepali staff and for making recommendations to the Director. A member of the committee recently qualified at a Diploma course in Health Management at Manchester University.

### **Funding**

BNMT now has an annual budget approaching £500,000. We are fortunate to have the support not only of many generous individual donors, many from the Society, but also of a number of major agencies such as Oxfam, Christian Aid, ICCO of Holland and LHL of Norway. ICCO recently commissioned an evaluation of BNMT by an independent team of experts. Chaired by a German, this team spent three weeks with BNMT in Nepal.

Their comprehensive report, happily favourable, should help us to raise further funds in future.

#### Earthquake reconstruction

Society members will remember contributing to the Nepal Government fund for relief following the disastrous earthquake of 1988 which covered almost exactly the same area as BNMT. The Trust itself managed to raise nearly £60,000, enough to rebuild its own clinics and hostels and also to build new quarters for the staff of two government hostels in Panchthar District. We are most grateful to all who contributed.

What of the future? There is now a new Government in Nepal and much will depend on their policy towards NGO's. Visiting Nepal recently it was obvious that the country was more than ever heavily dependent on foreign aid. It would cer-

tainly seem that there is a clear need for BNMT for some time to come. Our role has changed from purely curative medicine to one mainly of supervision, training and support for Government Health Services. This role will continue to change as national and local circumstances change, but there is still a long way to go and BNMT with its long experience can, I believe, still contribute a great deal to the health and well being of our good friends the stalwart people of Nepal.

The Britain-Nepal Medical Trust  
office address is:

16 East Street  
Tonbridge  
Kent. TN9 1HG  
Tel: 0732 360 284

**B I N N I E & P A R T N E R S**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

**WORKING IN NEPAL SINCE 1971**

More than 100 years' experience of  
improving the life of people throughout the world

- Rural & Urban Development
- Institutional Strengthening
- Hydropower
- Irrigation
- Water Resources
- Water Supply
- Sanitation
- Training

Head Office: Grosvenor House • 69 London Road • Redhill • Surrey RH1 1LQ • UK

## A SPECIAL CENTENARY

### A 100 Year Family Connection with Nepal

Exactly a hundred years ago (1891), Major-General H. Wylie, C.S.I., C.I.E became British Resident in Kathmandu and I have the permission of his grandson, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Wylie, Vice-President of our Society, to record the fact for our readers. Charles Wylie's father, who spent his early years at the Residency and got to know the young Ranas very well, was selected to be the conducting officer to the Maharajah and Prime Minister Sir Chandra Shamsher J.B. Rana and his entourage of fifteen, including all his sons, on what amounted to a State Visit to King Edward VII in 1908. He accompanied the distinguished party by sea both ways. He was of course by this time a serving officer. Originally 4th Gurkhas, he later commanded 2/1 GR (1925-30) and from 1930-34 was Chief Recruiting Officer for Gurkhas. At Gorakhpur he built the pensioners' lines (quarters), did much for their welfare and was given the Star of Nepal by the Maharajah and Prime Minister Sir Joodha Shamsher J.B. Rana. He was, like his father, C.I.E.

All three generations were invited on tiger shoots - grandpa and father by Rana Prime Ministers and Colonel Charles by the King — a unique record indeed! One of the other guests on the shoot with grandpa was the Archduke Franz Joseph of the Austro-Hungarian Empire whose murder in Sarajevo in 1914 sparked off

World War I. Colonel Charles has a hunting dagger presented by the Archduke to his grandfather.

As resident, Major-General Wylie had an escort of 70 Indian sepoy's (the smallest unit in the Indian Army). Their "lines" in Kathmandu were known as Line Chaur. No longer in existence, the name now describes the area of Kathmandu close to the site of the old Residency.

Colonel Charles himself served with both the 1st and the 10th Gurkha Rifles and was Military Attache in Kathmandu, as many of our members are well aware. We feel very privileged to record this remarkable century-long connection of the Wylie family with Nepal. Ed.

THE GURKHA MUSEUM  
at  
PENINSULAR BARRACKS  
WINCHESTER

has been open to the public  
for about 18 months and  
has had nearly 20,000 visitors.

Open Tuesdays to Saturdays  
and Public Holiday Mondays.  
10 am to 5 pm

Tel: 0962 842832



## THE BRITAIN-NEPAL OTOLOGY SERVICE (BRINOS)

by Mr. Neil Weir of BRINOS

At the end of April this year I had the privilege of talking to the Britain-Nepal Society about the work of BRINOS, which I founded together with a fellow Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeon, Stephen Metcalfe in 1988. I first visited Nepal on holiday in 1987 and met Dr. Lakshmi Prasad, lately Senior ENT Surgeon to the Bir Hospital, Kathmandu and Royal Ear Surgeon. He told me of the vast numbers of people suffering from ear disease who were unable to receive primary care and who in the majority of cases were equally unable to seek hospital treatment unless they were able to make the journey to Kathmandu. I returned the following year with Stephen Metcalfe and whilst on a trek in the Lantang Valley we worked out how we could help the Nepalese ENT surgeons in their daunting task. By the end of 1988, BRINOS, a registered charity, had been formed with the following objectives:

To assist Nepalese ENT surgeons in providing expert treatment to those people suffering from ear disease living outside the reach of the ENT departments in Kathmandu.

To help in the training of young Nepalese doctors making a career in ENT surgery.

To raise funds for instruments and to send highly qualified people to take part in ear surgery operating camps until such time as there are sufficient Nepalese surgeons to staff the Regional and Zonal Hospitals.

To help organise and execute a nationwide survey of the prevalence of deafness and ear disease in Nepal. The results of

such a survey will enable BRINOS to assist in the planning of primary health care for ear disease.

The current population of Nepal is approximately 18 million. The survey has shown a high prevalence of hearing impairment (6.9% of the population, or 1.24 million people) and chronic otitis media (8% or 1.44 million people). A large proportion of deafness, particularly in the younger age groups (55% in the school age or 682,000 children), is associated with otitis media. 61% of individuals aware of ear disease (428,220 people) have never attended a health post and of those who have, 66% were unsuccessful in their treatment.

From these statistics it can be seen that the problem is indeed huge and that if a significant proportion of deafness in Nepal is to be prevented, particularly in the school age group, the effective recognition and treatment of otitis media has to be introduced by the training of health workers in ear disease.

BRINOS is now keen to support a pilot scheme to train some existing health workers in ear disease and to study their effect in six villages (total population about 15,000 people). Other services such as teachers of the deaf and the provision of hearing aids, will also be introduced together with a visiting fortnightly ENT outpatient service.

For those people with established chronic ear disease BRINOS has been able to assist with three operating camps held in Pokhara, Biratnagar and Dharan. Two British surgeons, theatre nurses and

an anaesthetist joined a Nepali team and operated for twelve days. On average about seventy major ear operations were performed together with minor operations. Between 1,200 and 2,000 outpatients were also seen and treated. During these camps every opportunity was taken to teach young Nepali surgeons.

BRINOS has been very fortunate so far in the donations it has received in order to purchase the expensive equipment required to perform micro ear surgery. In order to continue this work and to introduce new projects a 'fighting fund' of £100,000 is urgently needed.

If anyone wishes to learn more of the activities of the Britain-Nepal Otology Service and would like either to make a contribution or receive a colour brochure, please write to me at:

BRINOS,  
2 West Road,  
Guildford GU1 1AU.

### Coromandel

Individually tailored travel to Nepal and throughout the subcontinent.

### David Sayers Travel

Escorted natural history tours. 1991 programme includes 'Nepal the Easy Way' and Gorkha Himal Spring Trek.

### West Himalayan Holidays

Group and individual trekking in the Kulu Valley, Lahoul and Zanskar.

Brochures on all these from

**Andrew Brock Travel Ltd**  
10 Barley Mow Passage  
London W4 4PH  
Tel: 081-995 3642 (24hrs)  
Telex: 9419369  
Fax: 081-742 1066

## OBITUARIES

### Madame Bhuban Singha

The sudden death of Madame Bhuban Singha on 9th September last year was a great shock to her many friends. She came to London as a young girl when her father was Nepalese Ambassador during the last War, and all through her life she retained a great affection for Britain.

Bhuban was the principal founder of the Britain-Nepal Society, and organised its inaugural Reception at the Dorchester Hotel when His late Majesty, King Mahendra, paid a State Visit to Britain in 1960. She became our first Chairman, a post she held for a year before returning home. As a Life Member of the Society she maintained a keen interest in its progress and achievements.

Our newer members will remember her as a very charming hostess when her husband, Sri Jharendra Singha, was Nepalese Ambassador in London from 1978-83. To him we have sent our deepest sympathies. Bhuban will be sadly missed.

Mayura Brown

### Countess Dorothea Gravina

Dorothea Gravina died in July 1990 at the age of 85, as briefly recorded in last year's Journal. Her unquenchable enjoyment of mountains and adventurous travel was in the mould of those other great women solo travellers, Freya Stark and Ella Maillart. Had she lived in an earlier age and had she been inclined to talk or write of her exploits, she might have been as well known.

She began climbing when she was four, on the roof of her home in Yorkshire. Her mountain apprenticeship, however, began in the '30s, ski-ing and ski mountaineering with her husband in his native Italian Tyrol. But it was not until she was 50 that she took up climbing seriously. With her son Chris she climbed regularly in Britain and the Alps, including ascents on the Matterhorn, the traverse of the Weissshorn and the Peuteret ridge of Mount Blanc.

Younger members of the Ladies' Alpine Club were impressed by her fast and competent climbing when she led the North ridge of the Weissmies, racing ahead of other parties. Those who drove with her found her fast driving more frightening than any climb, but it never led to disaster.

Her first expedition to Nepal was as Deputy Leader of the ill-fated Women's International Expedition to Cho Oyu, the sixth highest mountain in the world. When the French leader and three others were killed in avalanches, Dorothea took over leadership and climbed to 24,000 feet on a rescue attempt.

Three years later, aged 57, she led an all women's expedition in Kanjiroba (22,450 feet) in Western Nepal. Although she failed to reach the top through temporary illness, she made the first ascents of all three summits of Kagmora.

Her travels took her first to Africa in the '20s, where she climbed Kilimanjaro, perhaps the first ascent by a woman. She always preferred an adventurous mode of travel. When President of the Pinnacle Club she rode out to their Alpine meet on

a moped. At the age of 66 she took a bus from Clapham Common to Agra - "so much more amusing than flying". Going to Nepal she trekked to Everest base camps and round the Annapurna circuit climbing Dambush, nearly 20,000 feet. She was back in Europe to join a meet from the LAC during which she traversed all five summits of the Fünffingerspitze.

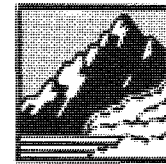
She was still climbing and camping at 71. At 84 she attended her last Alpine meet. At 85 she bullied her doctor into

giving her a certificate of fitness for a cruise to the Antarctic, but died before she could go.

Dorothea was a regular attendant at meetings of the Society and her zest for life, her refusal to bow to old age, her unflinching cheerfulness and good humour are sadly missed.

Charles Wylie

## HIMALAYAN TREKKING



Fully supported treks throughout the Himalayas from Pakistan and Ladakh to Nepal and Bhutan.

Whether your goal is a cultural journey or gentle walk on a first time visit to the world's greatest mountain chain, a view of Everest or an attempt at scaling a trekking mountain such as Mera Peak (21,288 ft), we have the right trip for you.

Our free full colour brochure is packed with exciting opportunities for those with the spirit of adventure. Have you got your copy yet?

Exodus Expeditions (dept. BN), 9 Weir Road, London SW12 0LT  
**081-675 5550 (days) 081-673 0859 (24 hrs)**

## ...CALL THE EXPERTS

Exodus

## OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

### Centenary Celebrations in East Nepal

The banner on the triumphal arch read "Welcome to the Centenary Celebrations of the 10th PMO Gurkha Rifles". The arch had been erected over the entrance to the Gurkha Welfare Centre at Rumjetar as part of the regiment's centenary plan for regimental pensioners in Nepal.

Other centenary events had already been held in Brunei where the battalion was on the actual birthday, 1st May, with the Sultan of Brunei taking the salute at the centenary parade, and in the U.K. for members of the Regimental Association, with the Princess Royal present at a Beating of Retreat by the Regimental Pipes and Drums and those of the Royal Scots, our affiliated regiment.

The plan for the Nepal celebrations was to make a five day whistle-stop tour of the Eastern Hills, so that the maximum number of pensioners could take part. The first gathering was in Kathmandu on 29th October where quite a number of pensioners are now employed. This was a formal evening party, a collar and tie occasion, with all the trimmings. There were about a hundred ex-servicemen present. Beer flowed, 'bhat' was consumed and the air was thick with reminiscences as old friends met again. Here as at all other centres, the Colonel of the Regiment, Lieutenant General Sir Garry Johnson, made an excellent speech in Gurkhali, and a regimental piper played the regimental



*Limbu ex-servicemen doing the chiebrung nach at the Phurse Welfare Centre*



*A 93 year old pensioner of the regiment, who made the long journey to the Phurse celebrations:  
Rifleman Dhanjit Rai*

march and a lament for the fallen.

After a few short hours' sleep we took off in a Nepalese Army light plane piloted by a Lt. Colonel in the Nepal Army, whose father had served in the Gurkha Brigade. It was a brilliant crystal clear morning, the skies swept clean and fresh after the rains — Nepal at its very best. Our party consisted of General Garry, the C.O. and the Gurkha Major of the battalion, two British Officers who had served with the regiment during and after the last war, the Piper, and me.

An eagle's eye view of trim terraced hillsides and toy-like villages strung pre-

cariously along the ridges below the majestic gleaming frieze of the Himalayan range, and we were touching down on the tiny airstrip at Rumjetar. After the smog, noise of traffic and hustle of Kathmandu it was like stepping out into a new world.

A world of smiling faces, flowers and neat fields amid a stillness broken only by the beat of a Madal (drum) in the distance and the laughter of girls working in the fields. We were in the Hills again.

A short walk brought us to the Area Gurkha Welfare Centre. A large crowd of pensioners lined the path and we were festooned with marigold 'phulmalas' until we could hardly see. Tankards were pressed into our hands and we were off! So began the first of four similar celebrations on consecutive days at four welfare centres. At each centre there seemed to be more pensioners than at the last. At Phurse, near Dharan, there were no less than seven hundred. Altogether we met about eighteen hundred.

The parties began in the morning and continued without a break until the evening when the beer ran out. Old friends met again and laughed as old times were recalled. Madals and the old familiar songs wafted over the hills as old limbs creaked into action in uninhibited dance. Many had travelled far in spite of age or disability, often helped by their comrades. One such, 93 year old Rifleman Dhanjit Rai, had been carried to Tumlintar airstrip and given a free ticket for the flight to Phurse.

As the last pensioners left to begin the long walk back to their homes, us weaklings from the U.K. would be glad to sit down and have a break. We were not always successful. In Rumjetar, the

Gurkha Major (Himraj Gurung, whom members of the Society will have met during his tour in the U.K. as Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officer) announced that this was his village and we were all invited to his house. There his extended family, thirty-two in all, were assembled. We were garlanded, 'tikka-ed', and plied with 'rakshi' and rice beer by, it seemed, everyone there. It was real Gurkha hospitality and we were not allowed to get off lightly.

As we tottered back by torchlight the G.M. said we were passing his brother-in-law's house and we must just pop in to greet him. Here again hospitality was un-

bounded, though fortunately the family was not quite so large. This proved to be only the second of four similar carefully planned "ambushes" on our way back to the Centre. We slept well during the few remaining hours of night!

Next morning our pilot announced that instead of the short, half-hour flight to Bhojpur, he would fly us up to Everest. This was an unforgettable experience for us all and particularly interesting to me. The flight was over all too soon.

After another splendid day at Bhojpur we flew on next morning to the spectacular ridge-top airstrip of Suketar, high above Taplejung, with magnificent views

of Kanchenjunga. From the airstrip we descended some 1,500 feet to the Welfare Centre, to enjoy our fourth day with pensioners, this time virtually all Limbus. In the morning we had, of course, to make the long pull back up to the airstrip. As we had been "ambushed" the evening before by Tibetans and lured into sampling their delicious but lethal 'tongbas' of 'chang', it was a somewhat weary, but very happy, party that boarded the plane for our final flight back to the plains.

Here at the Phusre Welfare Centre we were joined by the ladies. The Hills trip had been judged too strenuous for them.

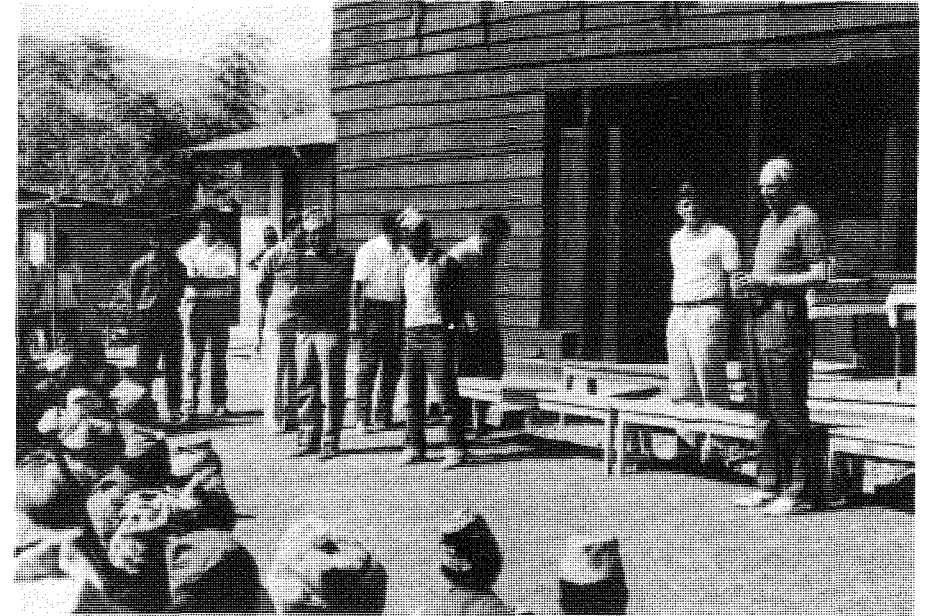
We were glad to have them at this last party where there were more pensioners than at any other. Many of the regiment's senior Gurkha officers had settled in or near Dharan and they kindly laid on a special buffet supper for the U.K. party. Every detail was meticulously observed and we might have been back in the Gurkha Officer's Mess twenty years before.

As we left Phusre the banner at the gate read "See you at the next centenary". Alas this was before defence cuts.

Charles Wylie



*Pensioners at the Bhojpur celebrations*



*Old friends meet at the Rumjetar Welfare Centre (East Nepal) and welcome the Colonel of the Regiment*



**EXOTIC MEALS IN A  
ROMANTIC ATMOSPHERE**



For **Authentic Nepalese Food**  
come to **Johnnie Gurkha's**  
where the friendly staff will Welcome you,  
and the Nepalese Surroundings  
will ensure your Comfort.



Please remember -  
**Johnnie Gurkha's**  
at **Down-Town area,**  
**Victoria Road,**  
**Aldershot, Hampshire.**



Telephone: Aldershot (0252) 28773/23191



Please visit once - then always!  
We Open 7 days a Week for Luncheons and Dinners.  
We cater for large Parties, Functions and Banqueting.  
I wish you all a Sincere Season's Greetings.



**Johnnie Gurkha's**  
NEPALESE CUISINE



**THE ANNUAL NEPALI SUPPER**

Mayura Brown

This year we had to find a new venue for our Nepali Supper as New Zealand House is undergoing repairs. We decided on the Great Hall of the Kensington Town Hall, and discovered an advantage - the extensive car-park underneath with a lift bringing us up to the entrance of the Hall.

Despite the 'Desert Storm' in the Gulf and the attendant worries about terrorism, we found the usual cheerful gathering with many members coming from far afield to attend. We had the special honour of having our President, H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester, as most welcome and principal guest. He was greeted on his arrival by the Vice-Presidents and later met many of our members and guests. The two Nepalese House-mothers from the Pestalozzi Village were also presented to His Royal Highness.

Supper time is the occasion for lively conversations and the exchange of news before the speeches and the toasts that are drunk to both Their Majesties, in Britain and Nepal. Our President read out a gracious message from Her Majesty The Queen and said how pleased he was to be among us, a sentiment warmly reciprocated. H.E. The Nepalese Ambassador, General Simha, also spoke and mentioned the Elections that were to take place in Nepal for a new Government. We were very sorry that Madame Simha was unable to be present. A message of fraternal greetings was received from Mr. Sagar S.J.B. Rana, President of the Nepal-Britain Society.

An interesting innovation provided us with a delightful experience. Little Alka

Nepali, daughter of Khagendra Nepali of the B.B.C. Overseas Service, enchanted us with a most graceful and beautifully executed Nepali dance, Sabash!

When these dinners are over, one comes away with the feeling that whatever upheavals take place in the world, no matter what happens in political circles, the friendship between the peoples of Nepal and Britain will endure always.

**ADDRESSES**

	page
The Gurkha Welfare Trusts	6
Yeti Association	7
The School of Oriental and African Studies	14
The King Mahendra U.K. Trust for Nature Conservation	21
The Britain-Nepal Medical Trust	26
The Gurkha Museum	27
The Britain-Nepal Otolaryngology Service	28
Honorary Secretary The Britain-Nepal Society	43



## BOOK REVIEWS

by Lieutenant-Colonel T.M. Lowe

### **Adventure Treks - Nepal** by

Bill O'Connor, Crowood £9.95 160 pages (paperback)

This is a companion volume to O'Connor's 'Trekking Peaks of Nepal'. It deals with what O'Connor says are the ten best treks. Each trek is sketched out on a day-to-day basis. Particular problems are highlighted and the logistics involved are fully explained. The maps which you would require are mentioned. A final chapter is excellent and includes just about everything you will want to know before you set off on an adventure trek.

The author is a very experienced British trekker and also a mountaineer who runs his own Adventure Travel Company.

### **Nepal - The Mountains of Heaven** by

David Paterson, Hamish Hamilton £30.00 176 pages

A very large book full of superb photos all in colour, not only of the mountains of Nepal, but also of people of both sexes and all ages. Separate chapters cover particular areas such as the Annapurna Sanctuary and Makalu. A helpful introduction to the book has been provided by Sir Edmund Hilary who ends with the words 'the great Himalayan summits could be surrounded by desert, unless massive efforts are made to control the population and to protect and enlarge the forest areas'.

### **Against a Peacock Sky** by Monica

Connell, Viking £14.99 212 pages

A number of somewhat similar books have been reviewed in the Journal. Miss Connell has found some difficulty in

trying to understand the Nepalese villagers where she spent two years. It is clear that she made efforts to establish a rapport, but as a social anthropologist from Oxford University she didn't find it easy.

'A Window on to Annapurna' by Joy Stephens was reviewed in the B-NS Journal No.12 of 1988; it was a more perceptive piece of writing.

**Lawrence of Lucknow** by Sir John Lawrence, Hodder & Stoughton £20.00 275 pages

The author is a great-grandson of Lawrence of Lucknow and, in the tradition of the Lawrence family, a writer of some distinction. Not all the Lawrences were soldiers, but Henry, the subject of this biography, was trained as an artilleryman. In due course, however, he became a most distinguished administrator.

The Punjab was that part of the sub-continent where Henry's best work was done, for he was a man with a first class brain, a great capacity for hard work and the ability to get people to work with, and for, him. Henry's brother, John (who later became Governor General) and Henry didn't always see eye to eye. The author puts that into perspective.

It was in 1843 that Henry found himself in Nepal as Resident whose public work according to Herbert Edwardes "consisted of studiously doing nothing but observing everything!" Henry's health recovered during his time in Kathmandu. This was just as well because "war drums were beating and eight strenuous years of con-

flict, military and political, lay ahead".

In January 1857 Henry Lawrence was summoned by the then Governor General (Lord Canning) to be Chief Commissioner at Lucknow. It was not a long posting. Henry died during the siege, as the result of a wound from an exploding shell.

Anyone who has served in India would do well to read this book and learn something about the high quality of the sort of men who served in the Indian Empire.

### **The Great Game** by Peter Hopkirk

John Murray £19.95 562 pages

Peter Hopkirk cannot be accused of having visited the lands of the Great Game for just a few hours and then returned to write up his story and pass judgement on what he has seen. What Hopkirk has to say about the Great Game is based on personal and extensive visits to the landscapes in which the Great Game was played out.

The principal players were Britain and Russia, but it was Afghanistan which was always in the middle of what went on. Many of the players in the Great Game became well known, many were fairly young and not a few were soldiers of the British and Indian Armies. The time they spent taking part in the Game afforded them some relief from the more monotonous lives they might have had to spend in garrisons in India.

Those places where the Great Game was played can now be visited, some on package deals, when even the Russians have to tread warily. The Chinese and the Indians have also joined in the Game, but for them the Game lacks a certain style which characterised encounters in the past.

Gurkhas, too, got involved in the Game and it was Grant of the 8th Gurkhas who won the VC in Tibet in 1904.

Hopkirk's book is large and heavy, but it is an interesting read and full of entertaining anecdotes about things that happened whilst the Great Game was being played.

---

**Tales of the Gurkhas** by Harold James  
The Book Guild £10.95

This entertaining and well-written book consists of stories dealing with a fictitious Gurkha Regiment from the later years of the last century to the Second World War in this one. It will revive many memories among those who served with the Gurkhas and should introduce a new generation to the courage, loyalty and great sense of humour which distinguishes these brave men.

The descriptions of the various areas in which the incidents take place, and the characters involved, are so skilfully presented that one can believe it all really happened. It was a surprise to read about a Gurkha soldier who joined the French Maquis but such a person did exist. Major James, however, has provided an imaginary episode for his Gurkha hero.

One finds in this book a tribute to the fidelity of Gurkha soldiers, many of whom have given their lives for the British Crown. Let us hope that time will not erase the memory of their unswerving gallantry, and that their legendary prowess will be remembered always.

Mayura Brown

## SOME OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST

(Contributed by Colonel T.M. Lowe)

**The Himalayas** by Bob Gibbons  
Batsford £14.95

**The Pyrenees** by Bob Gibbons and  
Paul Davies Batsford £14.95

**The Alps** by Bob Gibbons and S. Lee  
Batsford £14.95

**Stubai** by John White  
Crowood Press £9.99

**Forgotten Land - a rediscovery of  
Burma** by H. O'Brien Joseph £15.99

**The Honourable Company - a history  
of the English East India Company**  
by J. Keay Harper Collins £20.00

**Younghusband and the Great Game**  
by A. Verrier Cape £18.00

**Hill Stations of India** by G. Wright  
The Guide Book Company c/o Hodder

**The Endless Knot** by K. Diemberger  
Grafton £25.00

WITH COMPLIMENTS

# BRITORION

BRITORION LIMITED

ALEXANDER HOUSE  
STATION ROAD  
ALDERSHOT  
HAMPSHIRE GU11 1BQ

Tel: (0252) 344454  
Fax: (0252) 23417



## LIGHT OF NEPAL

TANDOORI AND CURRY  
RESTAURANT  
(Fully Air Conditioned)

Private room available for  
up to 40 persons.  
Parties catered for

268 KING STREET, HAMMERSMITH  
LONDON W6 0SP  
TELEPHONE: 081-748 3586, 081-741 2057



# Explore Nepal

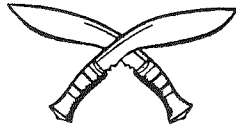


## VICTORIA TRAVELS & TOURS P. LTD.

Contacting Address in the U.K.

Hari B. Karki,  
118E Horatio Court, Kingston Road,  
Wimbledon, London, SW19 1LY  
Tel: 081-543 4113





## THE GURKHA MUSEUM

Is now open at

Peninsula Barracks  
Romsey Road  
Winchester

From Tuesdays to Saturdays  
and on Public Holiday Mondays

10 am to 5 pm  
(Last entry at 4.30 pm)

Telephone: 0962 842832

## NOTES ON THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

Patron: H.R.H. Prince Gyanendra B.B. Shah 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.

Members of the "Yetis" Association for Nepalis resident or staying 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 or events from October to May in London;

- a Spring or Summer outing to a place of interest;
- receptions and hospitality for visitors from Nepal;
- the 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, GVCVO.

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

Mrs. Joanna Thomas  
24 Carthew Villas  
London. W6 0BS

---

## THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

---

*President:* His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester, GCVO

*Vice-Presidents*

His Excellency the Nepalese Ambassador  
The Lord Hunt of Llanfair Waterdine, KG, CBE, DSO, DCL  
Major-General J.A.R. Robertson, CB, CBE, DSO, DL

Mrs. T.T. Brown

Lieutenant Colonel C.G. Wylie

Paul Broomhall Esq.

A.R.H. Kellas Esq., CMG

Brigadier A.B. Taggart, MC

Sir George Bishop, CB, OBE

Lieutenant Colonel H.C.S. Gregory, OBE, KSG

*Chairman:* Colonel J.M. Evans, MC

*Vice-Chairman:* B.W.E. Smith Esq.

*Honorary Secretary:* Mrs. Joanna Thomas

*Honorary Treasurer:* A.C. Durston Esq.

*Committee Members:*

Badri Prasad Khanal Esq. (Counsellor Royal Nepalese Embassy)

J.L. Ackroyd Esq.

Mrs. Iris Bolton

Miss M. Gurung

H.B. Karki Esq.

I. Manandhar Esq. (Co-opted)

Roger Potter Esq.

Mrs. S.M. Rana

Peter Roberts Esq., OBE

Lieutenant Colonel C.N. Fraser (ex officio)

*Editor of Journal:* Lieutenant Colonel H.C.S. Gregory, OBE, KSG

*Produced by Glenburn Services*