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THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

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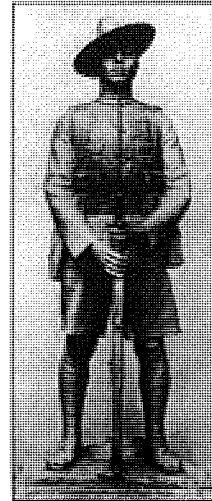
*Journal*

Number 21

1997

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# THE GURKHA STATUE



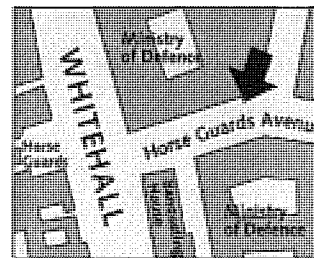
## THE GURKHA SOLDIER

The statue is a copy of that sculpted by Reginald Goulde in 1924, two bronze casts of which were erected as World War One memorials in India. The London statue will use Goulde's original model

and will be cast in bronze under the direction of Philip Jackson, one of the United Kingdom's leading contemporary sculptors.

The figure will be one and a half times life size and will stand on a Portland stone plinth. On the principal face under crossed kukris will be the words:

*Bravest of the brave, most generous of the generous, never had a country more faithful friends than you.*



## THE GURKHA STATUE

The Gurkha Brigade Association Trust, which represents all Gurkha Regiments, both past and present, is erecting the Statue of a Gurkha Soldier in Whitehall as a permanent memorial of Gurkha service to our nation. This project is being sponsored by the Gurkha Brigade Association Trust to ensure that there is no clash between our fund-raising efforts and those of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, whose entire effort is directed at helping those in need in Nepal. One fifth of the cost of this project is being donated by members of the serving Brigade and by Gurkha Regimental Trust Funds.

We are informed that Her Majesty The Queen has graciously agreed to unveil the Statue in December and that she will be accompanied by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, and HRH The Prince of Wales will be present as Colonel in Chief of the Royal Gurkha Rifles.

*Owing to limitations of space, attendance at the unveiling has to be restricted. The following day could be a better one for viewing the statue. We hope to give more information at the AGM.*

Congratulations to all who have helped and in particular to our Vice-President Mayura who helped to initiate the project.

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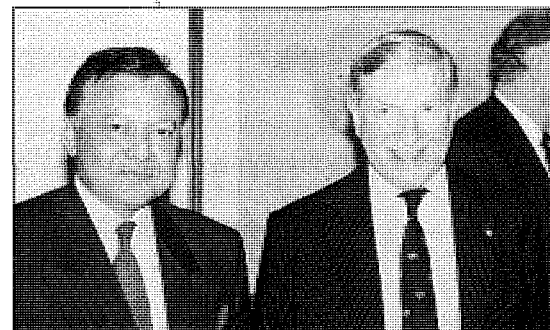
**THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY**

**Journal**

Number 21

1997

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# MSI ELY PLACE INVESTMENTS LIMITED

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Our first duty must be to thank all who have helped with this the 21st number of the Society's Journal and in particular Peter Donaldson for the many excellent photographs he has provided for this as for previous numbers. The production of the Journal has for many years now been undertaken by Glenburn Design and Electronic Publishing who, to say the least, have done us proud.

We are glad to be able in this number to make available to all our members the text of one of the many excellent talks given to members and guests at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly. The talk in question is 'The Water Architecture of the Kathmandu Valley' by Julia A.B. Hegewald. All the talks given were of such high quality and so full of interest that we regret they are not all presented in the Journal. The subjects and speakers are referred to in the first part of 'The Society's News' by Pat Mellor. Notice of future talks will have been received by members.

The Annual Nepali Supper, always well supported, this year attracted what was probably a record attendance, and the absence from this number of the Journal of the usual entertaining report by Mayura Brown of that always enjoyable event is due, as members will know, to the recent very sad death, as notified elsewhere in this number, of Mayura's dear husband Tommy who was himself such a very popular member of the Society.

The usual Summer outing, aimed this year at Syon Park in Brentford, had to

be cancelled, and thoughts are turning to what might be a suitable venue for next year. The Gurkha Museum at Winchester may well commend itself to the Committee as it has now achieved a very high standard and is most attractively situated in that ancient capital city.

We are an active society and the Committee, as will be seen, wishes to attract more 20-35 year old members with a genuine interest in Nepal. The success of this move will be reported in the next Journal. Anyone interested should contact John Brown at the address given in the article contributed by our Vice-Chairman.

A subject of perennial interest to our members is the welfare of our Gurkha ex-Servicemen and we are pleased to include in this number an article entitled 'Welfare in the Hills' which surveys the remarkable progress made by the Welfare Scheme even since our last report headed 'Aid in Nepal' appeared in this Journal three years ago.

As our readers are well aware, we have as a Society always been very generously helped and encouraged by the Royal Nepalese Ambassador. The manner in which our gratitude was expressed to His Excellency and Mrs Surya Prasad Shrestha on completion of their very successful four-year tour in London is reported in 'The Society's News' as is also the enthusiastic welcome accorded to their successors His Excellency Dr. Singha Bahadur Basnyat and Her Royal Highness Princess Jotshana Basnyat.

We hope in our next number to

include trek reports from younger members, especially if the recruitment of more young members referred to above is successful. The present writer was very pleased to find among his papers a short while ago a 'Trekking Permit' issued to him many many years ago in which he was delighted to see his name recorded in the Nepali script by the issuing authority!

It seems only fitting to add that members not acquainted with the

Nepali script will be able to acquaint themselves with it in a monthly publication called 'Parbate' which contains, in both languages, 'News, Views and Information for Gurkha Soldiers and their Families', and is available from 28 Army Education Centre, Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hants G13 ORJ (Tel: 01252 355 733). Our members will be aware that there are now many Gurkha families in the UK.



## THE BRITAIN - NEPAL

medical trust

BNMT has for 29 years aimed to improve the health of people in Nepal by implementing primary health care programmes in Nepal's Eastern region. Currently BNMT operates a TB and leprosy control programme in the hill districts and a TB training programme for frontline health workers. We provide basic essential drugs to remote village health posts and district hospitals. Through our community health and development programme we are running literacy classes for village women, promoting health education and supporting community initiatives.

*To continue this work we need your support.*

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### Winter Lectures

In October 1996, Dr Andrew Hall of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, gave the Society a fascinating talk entitled 'Sacred Mountains, Hidden Valleys: Religion in the Langtang Region' accompanied with beautiful colour slides.

On the 14th March 1997, Mr Neil Weir, of the Britain-Nepal Otolaryngology Service, gave a talk entitled 'More News from the Britain-Nepal Otolaryngology Service - Reporting on progress over the Last Few Years', also with colour slides. This talk illustrated the enthusiasm of the members of the Otolaryngology Service in Nepal and their constant dedication in fighting deafness in the Nepalese population.

On the 11th March 1997 Miss Julia Hegewald from Cambridge gave a talk

entitled 'The Water Architecture of the Kathmandu Valley' illustrated with beautiful slides. This was a truly interesting talk which has generated a great deal of interest and correspondence between members and Julia.

Our grateful thanks to all the speakers who give us their time, knowledge and showed us beautiful slides to enjoy. We look forward to entertaining them at the Annual Nepali Supper in February.

### AGM

The AGM in November 1996 was held at the Royal Nepalese Embassy, by kind permission of His Excellency Mr S P Shrestha, the Ambassador. The meeting was followed by an excellent curry supper once again supplied by Mr



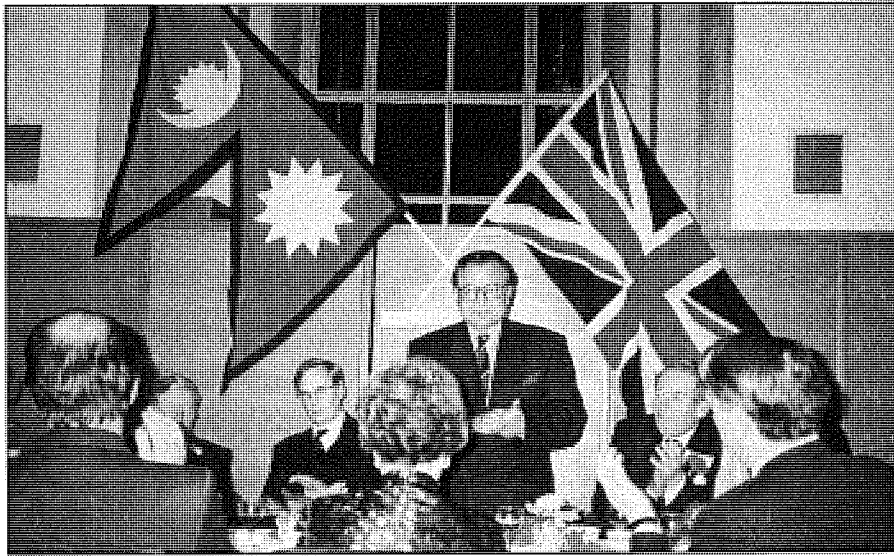
*AGM held at the Nepalese Embassy - 27.11.96*

Ranamagar of the Munal Restaurant 393 Upper Richmond Road in Putney. The Ambassador's secretary Nelia Ranamagar looked after all the members during the supper which was laid out in the Embassy dining room adjoining the meeting room.

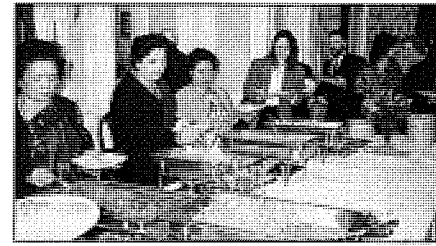
### **The Annual Supper**

This was held earlier than usual on Tuesday, 5th February at St Columba's Hall, Pont Street. The venue is ideal for holding our Annual event so we will probably continue to go there. Our President, His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester, was the Guest of Honour. Many of our Members were able to meet and talk to our President during the evening. Congratulations were sent to His Royal Highness on

having been appointed a Knight of the Garter by Her Majesty the Queen. On behalf of the BNS, the Chairman wrote to our President to congratulate him and in return received a most gracious reply. Also attending was His Excellency The Ambassador of Nepal and Madame Shrestha. Mr Manandhar and his family from the Natraj Restaurant, 93 Charlotte Street provided an excellent Nepalese Supper, which was enjoyed by everyone. This event was extremely well supported by 174 members. After speeches by our President, His Excellency the Nepalese Ambassador and our Chairman, a gracious message of good wishes from Her Majesty the Queen was read out by Sir Neil. In the sad absence of Mrs Mayura Brown, one of our Vice-Presidents, our Chairman



*His Excellency the Royal Nepalese Ambassador addresses Members and Guests at the Annual Supper. On his right H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester*



also read out the Nepal-Britain Society's message of greetings and good wishes to the assembly.

### **Visit of the Nepalese Minister of Education**

At the request of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, a meeting was arranged to enable members of the Society to meet the Nepalese Minister



*House of Commons 26.3.97*

of Education, Mr Govinda Raj Joshi, on his visit to this country. This meeting took place at the House of Commons in the Inter-Parliamentary Union Room, at 6.00pm on Thursday 1st February, to discuss matters of mutual interest.

### **His Excellency the Royal Nepalese Ambassador and Madame Shrestha**

They have returned to Kathmandu after a very successful four year tour at the

Court of St James. A farewell party was held on the 26th March and an engraved silver salver was presented to them to mark their distinguished tour of duty which reflected great credit on Nepal by fostering ever closer friendship and promoting additional commercial and cultural ties.

### **The New Ambassador**

The Society had the pleasure of welcoming the New Nepalese Ambassador Dr Singha Bahadur Basnyat and Her Royal Highness Princess Jotshana Basnyat at a Reception held in the IPU Room of the House of Commons on 23rd July. Approximately one hundred members attended this reception, and much appreciated meeting and talking to His Excellency and Her Royal Highness.



*Welcoming the New Ambassador*

### **General**

Finally, I am pleased to say that Members of the Society have had another eventful and successful year and we all look forward to the months that lie ahead.

RECEPTION IN HONOUR OF DR SINGHA BAHADUR BASNYAT AND HER  
ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS JOTSHANA RAJYA LAXMI BASNYAT

The Chairman of the Society welcomed the new Royal Nepalese Ambassador, His Excellency Dr Singha Bahadur Basnyat, and his wife Her Royal Highness Jotshana Rajya Laxmi Basnyat, a cousin to His Majesty the King, at a reception of welcome held in the Inter Parliamentary Union rooms in the Houses of Parliament on Wednesday 23 July.

Sir Neil expressed pleasure on behalf of the Society that Nepal had sent to us one of their most distinguished diplomats as their representative in London. The Ambassador is an accomplished musician who has graduated in Political Science with a Ph.D. from George Washington University, U.S.A. and has a Master of Arts degree from Tribhuvan University in Nepal. Dr. Basnyat also has an outstanding sporting record having been the Nepalese Head of Mission at the

1976 Olympic Games, the Nepal National Badminton Champion, the National Tennis Champion and the National Mixed Doubles Champion partnered by his wife.

In his welcoming speech our Chairman went on to remind everyone of the close friendship with Nepal over the last 180 years and advised the Ambassador of the special relationship which had grown initially out of contact, as a result of military, diplomatic, teaching or tourist travel and which subsequently developed into an enduring love not only for Nepal but especially for the Nepalese people. This has maintained and supported our Society in its determination to be of service to our friends and to work towards their advancement and the relief of poverty as we approach the twenty-first century.

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BRITAIN NEPAL SOCIETY  
YOUNGER MEMBERS

With an eye on the Society's future well-being, the committee has for some time been considering ways of encouraging more 20-35 year olds with a genuine interest in Nepal to become members. The aim is to expand our membership whilst retaining the society's unique traditions, atmosphere and friendliness.

The Committee's proposals will be presented to the AGM on 20th November for consideration and details of what we have in mind will be circulated to all members well in advance so that everyone will have plenty of time to reflect on our suggestions and to contribute ideas of their own.

In the meantime we are planning to sound out the views of younger

members and potential members. It would be most helpful if you could let John Brown, who is heading a sub-committee on this matter, know of any 20-35 year olds whether or not they are already members who would like to receive an invitation.

Your own views on attracting new members will also be most welcome and John Brown would be delighted to hear from you at any time. He can be contacted at:

Hérons  
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Langton Green  
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Kent TN3 0RA  
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Roger Potter Vice-Chairman, BNS

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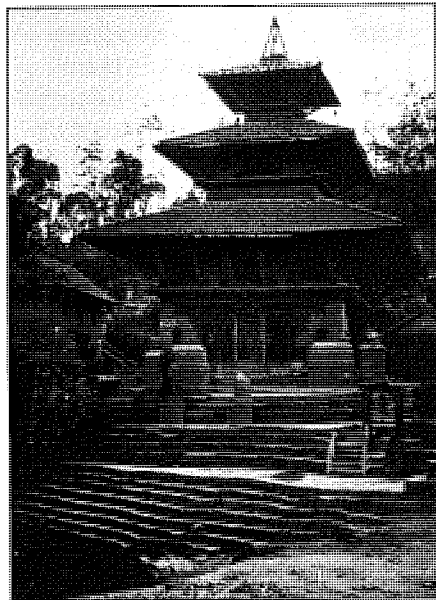
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## THE WATER ARCHITECTURE OF THE KATHMANDU VALLEY

by Julia A.B. Hegewald

A sophisticated urban culture developed in Nepal from about the first millennium BC. The settlements of the Newars were limited to the Kathmandu Valley and located close to the rivers feeding their irrigation channels.

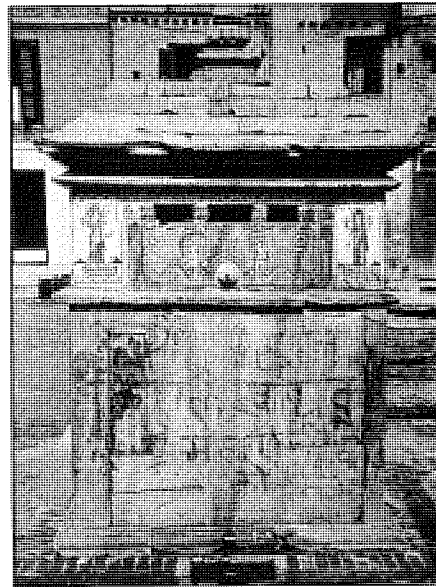


1.) Ghats in front of the Gokarna Mahadeva Temple at Gokarneshvar.

Usually, they were located on hillocks raised above the river plain. Not only did these sites provide security in case of river flooding, but they also preserved the maximum amount of levelled agricultural land within the Valley, and were in a strategically safe position. However, other problems arose from the elevated location of the settlements. The river water was not directly accessible to the people, and

the settlements were located at places where the subsurface water level was very low. As a consequence, an elaborate water system was developed to secure a continuous supply to the inhabitants.

The people of the Kathmandu Valley used the rivers for washing and for watering their animals and fields. In order to stabilise the banks and to provide access to the water at often considerably changing water levels, many of the river banks were firmly constructed in stone and furnished with steps, called *ghats* (fig. 1) *Ghats* facilitate bathing and ritual ablution, and are also used for the cremation of



2.) Painted tute-dhara in Patan, showing depictions of the river goddesses Yamuna and Sarasvati.

the dead and the performance of funerary rites.

Probably from the Licchavi Period (ca. 300-879 AD), deep brick-lined circular wells with high stone copings, called *inara* (Nepali) or *tun* (Newari), existed inside the settlements. The wells provided a supplementary layer of smallscale water sources. Frequently, the top rings of the wells were decorated with friezes or small shrines were set next to them. Because wells penetrate deep into the ground, many were believed to lead to the underworld. There are also remains of Licchavi reservoir fountains, called *tute-dharas* (Nep.) or *Jharu* (New.). They are found in the streets and on the squares of the cities and are reserved for drinking water. Because they have to be replenished via a funnel arrangement in the rear, they are usually found next to a well or deep fountain to facilitate the refilling. The troughs may be plain, painted (fig. 2) or decorated with representations of water divinities.

Large water reservoirs, known as *pokhari* (Nep.) or *pukhul* (New.) are large brick-lined tanks. They were built as civic water supplies and although they are not primarily religious, shrines, central pillars and religious sculptures are commonly associated with them, and many are integrated into the routes of historical processions. The Rani Pokhari (1670 AD) is the largest *pokhari* in the Valley.

Pools which are fed solely by springs, usually referred to in Nepal as *kunda*, are important sacred water

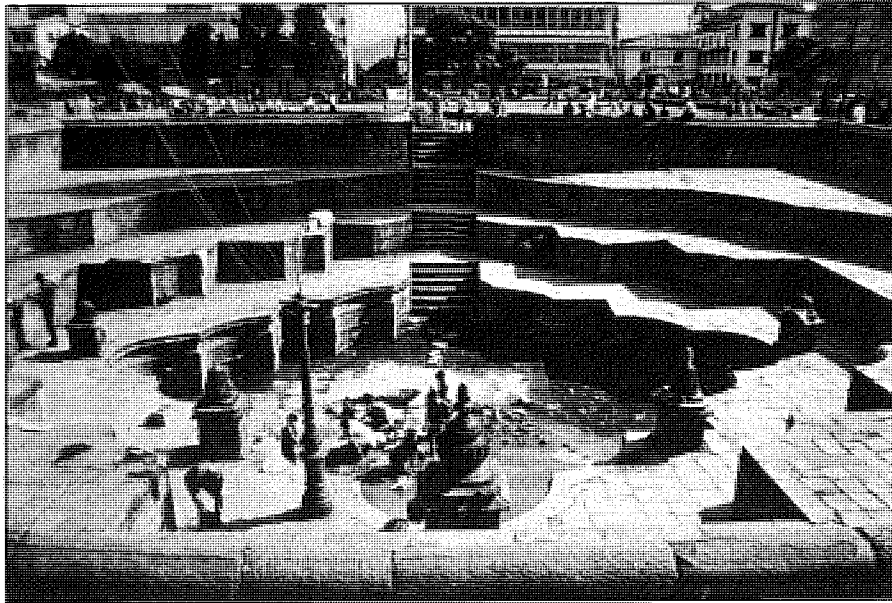
places, and predominantly found on the periphery of the Valley. Many of them, such as the Godavari Kunda and Naudhara at Godavari, the pools at Shesh Narayan, and the stone images in the tanks at Balaju and Budhanilkantha, are sacred to Hindus and Buddhists who worship at a common place. A particularly interesting water sanctuary is the Karunamaya Temple complex at Nala, in the north-east of the Valley. In front of the Karunamaya Pagoda is a tank with a central platform carrying an image of the Buddhist Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara (fig.3).



3.) Karunamaya Temple and tank with central platform at Nala.

The most distinctive type of Nepali water structure, however, is the stepped tanks or deep fountains, called *dhara* (Nep.) or *hiti* (New.). *Dharas* are usually square, contain a series of concentric levels, and have a stairway providing access to the water at the bottom of the pit (fig.4). At ground level, one or more spouts emerge from the lowermost retaining wall, and drains carry off the overflow. The size and





4.) Sundhara in Kathmandu, resembling the shape of a mandala

depth of the stepped basins depend on the level of the water source and its distance from the *dhara*.

*Dharas* play an important role in the lives of the people of the Valley. They provide water for their every-day domestic and personal needs, for washing, the watering of animals, and the irrigation of gardens and fields. They are the places where people gather for social interaction and therefore many proclamations and inscriptions are associated with them. They are also visited for the performance of daily religious rituals or for medical reasons, and several *dharas* have a particular religious or mythological significance. *Dharas* are also places of pilgrimage and ritual bathing, and many are

stations on the routes of the *jatras*, the urban religious festivals.

Although from an architectural and urban perspective, the public water fountains built in the cities of the Valley are the most interesting, in the Malla Period (1200-1769 AD), particularly elaborate examples were built inside the palaces of the Malla kings. Such basins were intended as private baths for the king and his family. Tusha Hiti (1626 AD), in the royal palaces at Patan, provides an example of a particularly lavish ornamentation.

Because of the sanctity of water itself, water places were often turned into open air shrines, and several religious images and symbols are usually associated with them. In the

retaining wall above the spout is the main sacred image of the water structure, which can come from a shaiva, a Vaishnava, or one of the Buddhist sects. In most *dharas* an assemblage of various deities is present (fig.5). Of particular interest are the water spouts, made either of stone or gilded brass and copper, which are

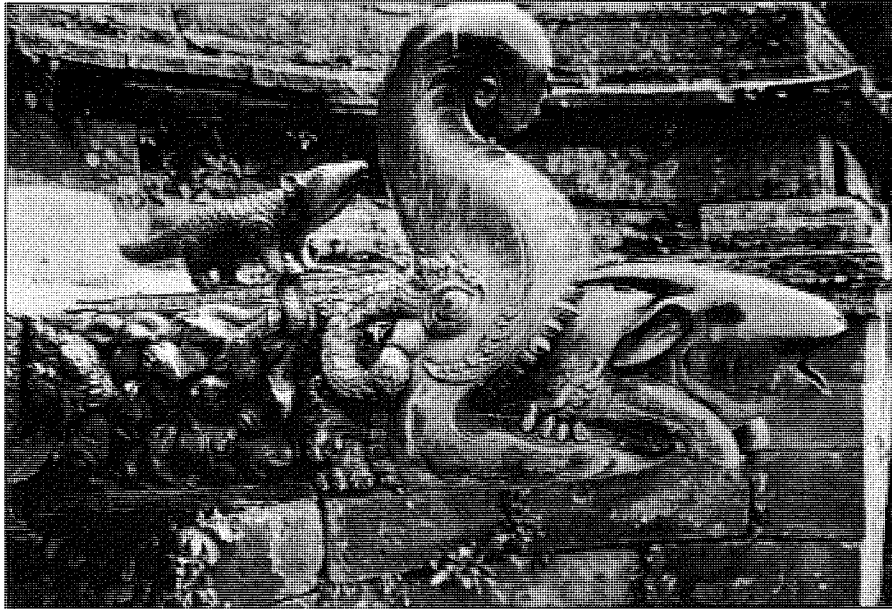


5.) Shrine niches, water spout and image of Bhagiratha in the Sundhara at Patan.

carved or cast in forms of mythical and symbolical creatures. The most common shape for spouts is the *makura*, a mythical water animal, the vehicle of Varuna and the river goddess Ganga. By employing the design of the *makura* in the spouts, the water of the

fountains was equated with the waters of the hold Ganges. Many of the spouts have artistically decorated tops, showing water related animals. Amphibious animals, real or imaginary, signify water and are believed to control it. Frequently, the *makaras* contain a telescoping series of other animals in their mouths, and the neck-end of the spouts, closest to the retaining wall, may depict other animals or divinities of the waters (fig.6). Underneath the spout is usually an image of Bhagiratha, the sage who is credited with bringing down the Ganges from heaven to earth through austere penance. His presence further emphasises the Ganges symbolism, already indicated by the *makara* spouts. Besides iconic representations of the gods and goddesses, religious symbols, such as Buddhist *caityas* (fig.7), and Shiva's *linga* and his trident are often found within the *dharas* or next to fountains.

The religious nature of the water structures in the cities of the Valley is not only evident from their ritual use, their integration into religious festivals, their association with shrines and temples and from the sacred images and aniconic symbols connected with them, but also from their layout. The *dharas* are terraced in geometric and concentric designs which are based on the figures of circle and square, and as such reminiscent of cosmic diagrams such as the *mandala*. A good example for this is the Sundhara (1828 AD) in Kathmandu (fig.4).



6.) Makara spout containing a telescoping series of other animals, in the royal bath at Bhaktapur.

The location of the cities in the Kathmandu valley, on ridges above the rivers, coupled with the importance of bathing and ritual cleanliness and the religious merit obtained by donating public water structures, accounts for the large number and diversity of water structures in the Newar cities. They are linked to other architectural elements and integrated into the squares and public spaces of the cities in the Valley. Although *dharas* are often small, built below ground-level, and situated at the end of squares, water architecture plays an important role in structuring the city space and particularly that of the squares. They belong to the

infrastructure of the town quarters and are adaptable to a series of practical, social and religious uses. Due to the high population density of the Newar settlements, life is very public and oriented towards open collective spaces. Therefore, public areas are rarely reserved for one particular activity, but used in a number of varied ways. This multiple-use guarantees a highly intense and economic use of urban space. For this reason, and also because religion is considered an integral part of life, water architecture in the Kathmandu Valley, and especially the *dharas*, serve both religious and secular activities.



7.) Buddhist caitya in the centre of a dhara in Patan.

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## WELFARE IN THE HILLS - THE GURKHA WELFARE SCHEME

by Colonel E.D.Powell-Jones OBE

The Gurkha Welfare Trust, established in 1969 for the relief of hardship among Gurkha ex-servicemen of the British Crown and their dependants, was the brain-child of the late Major General A G Patterson CB DSO OBE MC, the then Major General Brigade of Gurkhas.

The impetus for the Trust's formation was the realisation that many of the large numbers of Gurkhas who left the British Indian Army after World War II with less than 15 years' service, and therefore without an Army pension, and the additional numbers who left the British Army on Redundancy without a pension in the late 1960's, would be likely to fall on hard times as they grew older and became increasingly unable to support themselves and their dependants. The key difference between those Gurkhas and their British contemporaries, many of whom also received no military pension, is that the British are fortunate to live in a welfare state which provides old age pensions and a national health service. The Gurkhas do not.



*Welfare Pensions being paid out*

The Gurkha Welfare Trust is not a Government organisation. It is a charity registered with the UK Charity Commission. Its accounts are audited annually by Coopers and Lybrand. It has a small office in London employing four full-time staff. Its fourteen trustees, some with first hand and up-to-date knowledge of Gurkhas and the current situation in Nepal and others with investment, accounting and legal expertise, decide the Trust's policy.



*Fire Damage - Hardship Grant*

Today (1997) the Trust derives its income from a variety of sources, primarily in the UK. All Gurkhas and their British officers currently serving in the British Army donate one day's pay a year to the Trust. The UK Ministry of Defence makes an annual grant to cover the administrative costs of the Trust's field arm in Nepal - The Gurkha Welfare Scheme. Other sources of funding include income from investments carefully husbanded over the years, a faithful band of regular supporters, among them both those who have served with, or have family

connections with those who have served with, Gurkhas, and also many who have no previous Gurkha connection. Periodic fundraising appeals are organised and the Trust has a framework of regional supporters' branches in the UK. Various other UK charities and trusts have also helped with donations.

The Trust is generously supported by the Gurkha Welfare Trust Foundation (USA), the Gurkha Welfare Appeal (Canada) and the Hong Kong-based Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association. These three autonomous organisations and the Trust combine to form the Gurkha Welfare Fund which enjoys the patronage of HRH The Prince of Wales. In addition the UK Government's Department for International Development, or DFID (its old title was the ODA) funds water projects in Nepal through the Gurkha Welfare Trust's auspices.

As a result of support from all these various sources the Gurkha Welfare



*Water Project - Donated by The Gurkha Welfare Trust (UK)*

Scheme, the Trust's field arm in Nepal, was able to disburse a total of 2.7 million pounds Sterling in Nepal in 1995/96, the most recent year for which audited accounts are currently available (the Trust's financial year runs from 1st July to 30th June).

The Gurkha Welfare Scheme's headquarters is based at Pokhara in western Nepal and operates through a network of twenty-four area welfare centres spread over the Brigade of Gurkhas' traditional recruiting areas. It provides financial, medical and community aid to alleviate hardship and distress among Gurkha ex-servicemen and their dependants (the latter being wives and children up to the age of 18). The Scheme has a Director who is the senior British Army Officer in Nepal (a colonel) and employs the full time services of two other British Army Officers and some 240 Nepalese, the majority of whom are ex-British Army Gurkhas.

Welfare pensions are by far the largest single category of aid disbursed by the Scheme. Approximately 11,200 such pensions, each worth approximately £10 per month, are currently being paid out. Recipients of welfare pensions are restricted to those who do not already receive an Army pension. In fact the vast majority of current welfare pensioners are World War II veterans and widows. Most of these World War II veterans only served for 2 to 4 years and thus did not qualify for an Army pension.

During 1995/96 the Scheme also made hardship grants averaging about £25 per case to over 4,224 ex-servicemen suffering as a result of such catastrophes as fire, landslides, floods, hailstorms damaging or destroying their dwellings, fields and crops.

Medical aid was provided for 58,489 treatments at an average cost per treatment of approximately £2. The vast majority of these treatments are made at area welfare centres, with the Scheme's medical orderly based at each centre treating the simpler cases. More serious ones are treated by local Nepalese doctors retained by the Scheme who call at each area welfare centre for a few hours each week.

The Gurkha Welfare Scheme also paid education grants to 628 children of

needy Gurkha ex-servicemen and built 9 new school buildings in the hill areas of Nepal in 1995/96. During the same period DFID constructed 20 water projects bringing fresh water to various hill communities in Nepal and also built 9 latrines for schools. The Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association constructed another 29 water projects and 15 latrines and built 14 pedestrian bridges on various mountain paths.

Although the Brigade of Gurkhas is today much smaller than it was ten years ago, and infinitely smaller than its World War II strength, there will be work aplenty for the Gurkha Welfare Trust in looking after the welfare of Britain's Gurkha ex-servicemen and their dependants in Nepal as best it can for many years to come.



*One of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme's 24 Area Welfare Centres*

### **Thomas T. Brown**

Tommy died on December 4th 1996. He, with his wife, Mayura, was one of the founder members of the Britain-Nepal Society and gave it his staunch and active support all through his life. He greatly enjoyed his visit to Kathmandu with Mayura in 1992. During the last three years of his life he was not in good health but managed to attend the Society's events. He was always his cheerful self and gave much pleasure to his friends.

For the major part of the last War he served as an RAF Officer, later being seconded to Special Operations Executive where he was concerned in the design of a portable transmitter and receiver for jungle operations, among other schemes.

After the War he joined Marconi and remained with the Company till his retirement in 1984. In 1979-80 he was sent to join the Mids team for NATO in the Hague, an extremely interesting assignment.

On February 13th 1996 he attended the unveiling of a plaque dedicated to Special Operations Executives by H.M. The Queen Mother at Westminster Abbey.

Tommy was a Fellow of the Institute for Electrical Engineers and a member of FEANI.

### **Lieutenant Colonel G.C.J.L. (Guy) Pearson**

Colonel Pearson, a very popular and helpful member of the Committee of

the Society, died on 21st August at home after a long and courageously fought battle with illness throughout which, and to the very end, he carried out his duties at the Regimental Headquarters of The Brigade of Gurkhas with unflagging efficiency and cheerfulness. His service was mainly with the 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles but he was well known and highly regarded throughout the Gurkha Brigade.

The news of his death was a shock to us and we could but share the grief of his parents, family and many friends. The funeral was held at the Royal Garrison Church of All Saints on Friday 29th August. Need it be said how greatly he is missed by us all.

### **Brigadier Gilbert Hickey OBE, MC**

Members were shocked and grieved to hear of the death on 23rd March of Brigadier Gil, as he was widely known, a very popular supporter of this Society and a most outstanding Officer of the Brigade of Gurkhas where his distinguished career began (in the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles) before the age of 20.

Brigadier Gil was awarded the Military Cross and Bar within three months of each other for exceptional bravery and leadership during the battles forward of Impral. Twice wounded he recovered to fill eventually many more important positions in the Brigade of Gurkhas - as commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion 6th Queen

Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles, Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas, Brigade Commander (Hong Kong), Chief Instructor at Sandhurst, Defence Attache in Kathmandu and Defence Adviser to Malaysia. On retirement he became Executive Director of the China, Hong Kong and Japan Associations and Chairman of the 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles Association.

His knowledge of Gurkhas, their language and their country was unrivalled and he was an exemplary supporter of the Society. He enjoyed attending the annual supper with Helen and their splendid family and would include unaccompanied friends at their table.

He combined a capacity for sustained

hard work with a relaxed and cheerful manner. Need it be said how greatly he has been and will be missed.

The Requiem at St Paul's Church, Dover, was attended by friends and comrades from all over the country.

*As we go to press the sad news reaches us of the death of a very well known and very highly regarded member of our society, Colonel 'George' (John Stacey) Bolton DSO, an outstanding officer of the 9th Gurkha Rifles and the 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles. He and Iris have been popular and active members of the society for many years. A suitable obituary will appear in our next number. Ed.*



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We Mourn the Loss of Our First Patron,  
Sir Laurens van der Post.

The South African-born writer, soldier, conservationist, explorer and co-founder of the Wilderness Trust died at his London flat on 16th December 1996, two days after his 90th Birthday.

So much has been said about this great man and so much has been written about him in the press since he died that we can add little to that. His leadership and strong personality has been an inspiration to all of us who have had the privilege of knowing him. We will miss his keen intellect, his ability to capture the imagination and enthral any audience, his deep understanding of the obligations of friendship, of the human spirit and its restless need for inward and outward journeys. We will miss chiefly his unfailing courtesy and his unfashionable but endearing virtues as a gentleman.

A Service of Thanksgiving for his life was held at the Chapel, the Royal Hospital Chelsea on Tuesday 18th March 1997. For all who attended this service it was a most moving occasion. The Prince of Wales was represented by Sir John Riddell. The President of South Africa was represented by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi who also gave an address. The Rev Tom Hiney officiated and Baroness Thatcher and Mrs Lucia Crichton-Miller read the lessons. Thomas Bedford read two Afrikaans poems and Dr Ian McCallum also read a poem. Dr Ian Player gave an address and Miss Rebecca van der Post

played a violin piece by Olivier Messiaen, accompanied on the piano by Mr Thomas Ades.

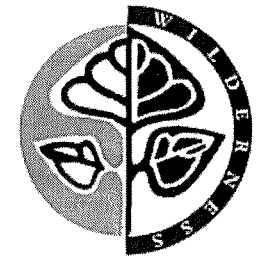
Lucia Crichton-Miller and the van der Post family hosted a reception with refreshments after the service in the London Irish Suite at the Duke of York's Barracks, Chelsea.

#### *The Ferryman*

"At this age it doesn't worry me that the *Ferryman* is about to take me on my last great journey. I have seen a great deal of death in life. All manner of dying, in peace and in war. It doesn't contradict what I feel - that life is imperishable. I think that, through life, we have this tremendous privilege of being in partnership with Creation and Time.

So when I sail with the *Ferryman* it will be, as we used to say in the war, 'Under sealed orders. To be opened only at the destination'."

*Laurens van der Post, in conversation with Vanya Kewley (From the Order of Service.)*



## STORM OVER KATHMANDU

On the night of 19th June 1830 a thunderstorm burst over the capital. What happened then was described in a despatch from the British Resident, Brian Hodgson, to the Governor General in Council at Calcutta.



From: B.H. Hodgson Esq  
officiating Resident, Cathmandoo

To: Mr Secretary Swinton, Chief  
Secretary to Government  
Dated 21st July 1830

Sir,  
I have the honour to acquaint you, for the information and orders of Government, that almost every window and windowframe, venetian blind, and door belonging to the Residency and to the Public offices attached to it, was smashed by the explosion of a powder magazine belonging to the state on the

night before last at half past 10 o'clock PM.

2. In the course of a day or two I shall have the honour to forward to you an estimate of the probable expenses of the repairs - the cost will be very inconsiderable.

3. The magazine was struck by lightning in the midst of a fearful storm. It was a most substantial brick building nesting upon a foundation of huge stones. When struck it contained two thousand rounds or one hundred and sixty thousand pounds of powder; and, as it stood at a distance only 400 yards from the Residency, the consequences to our public and private buildings of its explosion, it may readily be conceived, were sufficiently injurious.

4. They were indeed much less so than could reasonably have been imagined: for, of the tremendous shower of rain that descended close around us not one large fragment touched any of our houses; which therefore only suffered from the concussion of the air - the truly awful concussion! This, in an instant, annihilated every glass thing - in the aspect towards the magazine and also shivered and drove into the rooms the window frames, venetians, and doors - and in the other aspects either knocked them off their hinges, unbroken, on the floors, or split them in one or more places, or tore them half off the hinges and left them dangling obliquely thereby.

5. The Adjutant's and Surgeon's houses suffered almost equally with the

Residency; and the English office, most of the servants houses, and stables, had their tile roofs more or less blown-off - the lines of the Escort and the commanding officer's mansion, from being further off, were little injured.

6. It pleased Providence to spare every one of our lives and limbs; and when I consider the quantity of fragments which fell upon and around our houses and grounds and the prodigious masses of stone in particular that passed over, and alighted within a few yards of the Residency I cannot sufficiently wonder at our perfect escape.

7. It is with great concern that I have to add that of the 21 soldiers present on duty at the magazine when it exploded - not a soul escaped; and that of 8 other men, who held a small guardhouse within 40 yards of the magazine, 6 were destroyed and the 2 survivors miserably mutilated. Not half of the bodies was found at all; and some of those that were so picked up, wanting heads or members, at a distance of a mile from the exploded structure - where the building stood not one stone or brick was left or another - where was the actual magazine, there a pit was formed, deep and wide enough to bury a very large house - and the four containing walls of the Area that enclosed the Powderhouse were carried outwards in four continuous streams of dust and fragments which, taking the four several directions of the outer

walls, swept the fields and dyed their lacerated surfaces red. The whole of the Main Building was driven upwards into the skies, and awful indeed was it to gaze next morning on the immense fragments of its stone foundations which lay scattered around us and many of which had passed directly over the Residency house and fallen within the time limits of our grounds, some of them having in their descent absolutely cut in twain the thanks for large trees.

I have the honour to be, etc,

B.H. Hodgson  
Acting Resident

### Tailpiece

Two days later Hodgson reported that his estimate for the cost of repairs 'made with every regard to economy' amounted to 1,627 Rupees, and asked how he was 'to bring the expenditure to account; else I shall be needlessly perplexed with objections from the Civil Auditors Office'. (Bureaucrats were, it seems, alive and well even in 1830). In reply the Governor General in council authorised the expenditure, the amount actually defrayed to be sent 'in a Contingent Bill to the Office of Audit to pay the same' (thus spiking their guns and saving Hodgson needless perplexity).

*Contributed by Sir Michael Scott  
(with due acknowledgements to the  
India Office Library)*

## *Britain - Nepal Chamber Of Commerce*

*The Chamber encourages two way trade between the United Kingdom  
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*It acts as an interface through a newsletter, meetings, and a membership list, for those  
seeking to develop contacts in this sphere and welcomes new members with similar aims.*

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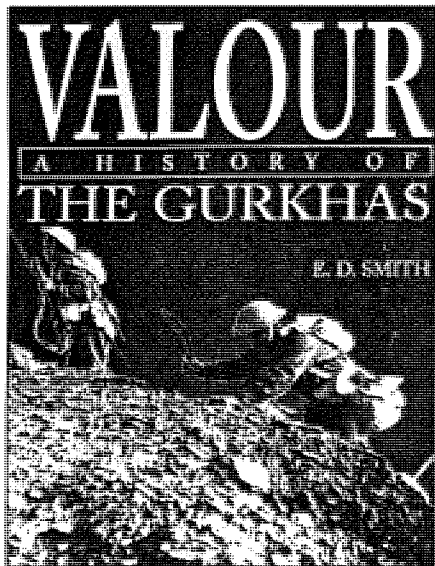
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## A NEW BOOK - VALOUR

A History of the Gurkhas - by Brigadier E.D. Smith CBE DSO



Written by Brigadier (Birdie) Smith, the well-known writer and authority on Gurkha history and a distinguished ex-Gurkha himself, this is the latest and most comprehensive history of the Gurkha regiments from their beginnings in 1815 through to the present day.

Lavishly illustrated with over 100 historic photographs from the Gurkha Museum - many never seen before in print - **Valour** includes the Gurkhas' service during the Indian Mutiny, the Afghan Wars, the North West Frontier, the two World Wars, the post-war 'emergency' in Malaya, the

'Confrontation' with Indonesia in Borneo and subsequently in the UK, Cyprus, on the Sino-Hong Kong border and in the Falklands War of 1982.

**Valour** vividly portrays the many and varied aspects of the Gurkha soldier in war and peace - and also highlights the problems facing the many ex-Gurkhas who volunteered to fight for Britain in World War II, including the invaluable work of the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

Brigadier Smith's first and very successful book entitled "Britain's Brigade of Gurkhas" was published in 1973. It was followed by several other very notable books. His latest book is likely to be regarded as the definitive history of the Gurkhas. The author has an unrivalled knowledge of Nepal and the Gurkhas as a glance through the pages of **VALOUR** with its profusion of excellent illustrations will readily indicate. Ed.

Published April 1997 by Spellmount Publishers, The Old Rectory, Staplehurst, Kent TN12 0AZ  
Tel: 01580 893730  
Fax: 01580 893731  
Priced £24.95

## AN OLD BOOK

History of Nepal by Daniel Wright

Daniel Wright said of this and other pictures in his 'History of Nepal' (1877): 'The illustrations are copies of drawings made for me by a native of Nepal. Though not of much value as works of art, they convey a very fair idea of the places and objects represented'. Could a photograph do so very much better?

Writing in 1875, Daniel Wright, who was Resident Surgeon for ten years in Kathmandu (1873-1883), speaks of the difficulty of getting to know the country which, he says, 'is as much a terra incognita as it was when Colonel Kirkpatrick visited it nearly a hundred years ago'.

Of some aspects of life in Kathmandu Daniel Wright takes a somewhat jaundiced view but he was profoundly interested in the history and culture of the land where he spent some ten happy years, happy despite restrictions ('whenever a European goes out walking he is followed by a Nepalese Soldier), and the major part of his book is a History of Nepal translated from the Parbatya by 'the Mir Munshi' attached to the British Residency assisted by Pandit Shri Gunanand, of Patan, 'whose ancestors, for many generations, have been the compilers of this history'. The narrative abounds with valuable information and is indeed not without charm.



*Square in front of the Palace at Kathmandu  
Unnamed Nepalese artist early 19th century*



## A POEM FROM NEPAL - OUR BEAUTY

by Ruchi Agarwal, Class 10, HVP-Kathmandu

*Our beauty depends on our duty  
Which also makes national unity.*

*Hills and mountains covered with  
flowers  
Birds' songs are heartbeat of ours.  
From each other, we are many a mile  
But we always meet with a sweet smile.*

*Our beauty depends on our duty  
Which also makes national unity.*

*Great Mount Everest with a golden  
sight  
Makes our lives full of powerful light  
Which gives us power to save our  
beauty  
Which feeds our mind and our body.*

*Our beauty depends on our duty  
Which also makes national unity.*

I am indebted to Christine Russell for sending me the Hindu Vidyapeeth Newsletter that contained the above poem. Many GAP volunteers have taught in the HVP schools and give them active support. Pupils are instilled with respect for the religious values, culture and traditions of their own country, and teachers are dedicated. More information about these schools will be given to members at a later date.

**Mayura Brown**

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लागि

सहायता कार्यक्रम

#### लक्ष्यहरू

- \* नेपालका असहाय बालबालिकाहरूलाई शिक्षादीक्षा प्रदान गर्नु ।
- \* यस कार्यक्रमअन्तर्गत बालबालिकाहरूलाई नेपालका सुयोग्य मूल्याङ्कनकर्ताहरूले आवश्यकता र बाल चाखलाई आधार पानी छान्ने छन् ।
- \* यसरी छानिएका बालबालिकाहरूलाई शिक्षण शृङ्ख, खानेबस्ने व्यवस्था, पुस्तक र शिक्षण सामग्री र पोशाकको निः शुल्क सहायताको व्यवस्था गरिनेछ ।

#### \*उद्देश्यहरू

- \* कुनै जातजाति, वर्ग वा लिङ्गको भेदभाव नगरी नेपालमा रहेका यस्ता असहाय बालबालिकाहरूलाई शिक्षा र शीप विकास तालिम दिई उनीहरूको अवस्थाको सुधार गर्ने ।
- \* यस्ता बालबालिकाहरूमा स्वतन्त्रता र आत्मनिर्भरताको भावना जगाउने र उनीहरूमा दृष्टिकोणको व्यापकता अभिवृद्धि गर्न उत्प्रेरित गर्ने जसले गर्दा उनीहरूले नेपाली समाजमा उपयोगी योगदान दिनसक्ने अवसर पाउन सक्न् ।

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### 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 KG, GCVO

Our aim is to promote and foster good relations between the people 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 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 'YETI' Association for Nepali's 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 a 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 KG, GCVO.

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

Mrs E.P. Mellor  
3c Gunnersbury Avenue  
Ealing Common  
London W5 3NH

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## THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

---

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