
THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

Journal

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ACORN Nepal Trust

बन्धु, काठमाडौं - १४

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HRH Princess Jotshana Rajya Laxmi Devi Basnyat and HE Dr Basnyat

 EDITORIAL

Once again the last year has not been a happy one for Nepal and her people with the continuing Maoist insurgency. The clouds of war over South Asia have not cleared even if the details are not, at the time of writing, in the every day press and media. The problems in the Middle East look to become worse if there is a war in Iraq. All these factors bear on Nepal, particularly on the tourist industry. This has, as members know, a great impact on the economic situation in Nepal which is so reliant upon tourism. The report by the small group of members who visited in the autumn of 2001 highlights the problem at that time which has not subsequently improved. However one must guard against too much pessimism, people are still travelling to Nepal and as His Excellency the Royal Nepalese Ambassador stated at the AGM, visitors should take account of good local advice as to where to go and what to see. The FCO advisory notices concerning travel should of course be noted by all potential travellers. Experience of similar situations in other countries around the world indicates that there are rarely any quick economic or political 'fixes' to be had and this must be true for Nepal at this time. The government has to seek the support of the people and win 'the hearts and minds' battle that is vital in these situations. That this is firmly understood is reflected in the extract of the speech made by His Majesty King Gyanendra during a visit to Biratnagar on 3 January 2003, published elsewhere in the journal. The Society wishes His Majesty every success in his

efforts to overcome the present problems.

It is reported that the work of the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) has not so far been seriously affected, due to the hard work and dedication of the staff on the ground at the welfare centres. The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) too is continuing to work through the difficulties although it cannot be easy for the field workers. Sir John Chapple had a good meeting with the staff of KMTNC in December 2002. HRH Prince Paras is now Chairman of the Trust and has visited projects in the field. Plans, involving the office DFID in Kathmandu about future programmes, were discussed and it is hoped that progress can continue. Some programmes nevertheless will inevitably have to go onto hold in areas that are more difficult to access. Support for Nepal at this time is even more important. The Society continues to demonstrate this by its financial support of the GWT and the work of its joint committee, formed from the Society and the UK chapter of the KMTNC, in the successful fund raising event held in London on 1st May 2002. Details of the work of UK chapter of the KMTNC and how members can support their work are enclosed with this edition. The Society made a financial contribution to the flood victims as a result of the last heavy monsoon and the Chairman was able to give this in person to the Nepal Red Cross on a recent visit. Members continue their support in many ways, an example of this is the work of Mrs Amita Sen with her pupils at her Hendon school

linking to staff and pupils at a school in Kathmandu. There is something too of a theme of remembrance in this edition. Eton College have planted a grove of trees in remembrance of His Late Majesty King Birendra and the Memorial Gates on Constitution Hill, London, to those of the Commonwealth and the Kingdom of Nepal who died in World War Two have been completed. Society members were involved in both these projects, Sir Jeremy Bage and Sir Neil Thorne respectively.

Sadly the Society has lost some distinguished and long standing members during the year; Maj Scott Leathart, soldier, colonial policeman, forester ornithologist and author; The Earl of Limerick, merchant banker, junior minister, skier and mountaineer; Mrs Mayura Brown, founder member of the Society, actress, writer and historian of Nepal. Full obituaries are elsewhere in the journal. Mayura Brown's piece on the treasures of Nepal (sadly too late for inclusion in the last edition) is supplemented by one of her previously published reviews for the journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, relevant to her interest and concern for the art of Nepal.

Other articles have a definite environmental slant to them. The Society was honoured to receive a lecture from Dr Buddha Basnyat on the impact of tourism and also included is a short piece

on biodiversity by Dr KK Shrestha. Dr Jacques Flamand's article on the veterinary programme in Chitwan, an area known to many members, continues the theme. The Gurkha connection is represented by two articles, one on the origins of the Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers and the review article on the latest book by Lt Col John Cross.

I have left the best wine until last. The news that HRH Princess Jotshana has succeeded His Majesty King Gyanendra as our patron has been the most welcome news of the year for the Society. Her appointment was formally announced at the King Mahendra UK Trust event on 1st May 2002. We are grateful that His Majesty who was of course unable to continue as Patron, for having made such a wise choice and to Her Royal Highness for so graciously accepting the appointment. We all wish her a long and happy association with the Society.

And finally I must thank the contributors without whom there would be no journal, and those firms who, despite the less healthy financial climate, have continued to support the journal with their advertisements. I also wish to acknowledge the work of the Society's own amateur photographer, Mr Peter Donaldson, for his continuing efforts at the Society's events. I regret that cost and space limit the amount of photographs that can be included.

With All Good Wishes

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EXTRACT FROM THE ADDRESS GIVEN BY HM KING GYANENDRA
AT A CIVIC RECEPTION IN BIRATNAGAR ON 3RD JANUARY 2003

We all love our motherland. We must, therefore, unite in promoting the glorious culture and civilisation, which our nation has been endowed with since ages. Political, economic, social and human resource development must be pursued within the framework of the multiparty democratic policy and our people made prosperous soon if we are to ensure a place of pride for our motherland among the comity of nations. When we speak of multiparty policy, we should not forget the need for political conduct and way of life to comply with democratic norms and values. Similarly, development activities must give due emphasis to economic prosperity and social harmony. Upholding nationalism, multiparty democracy and social justice has, therefore, been our top priority.

We are, at present, at a very difficult and complex crossroad, with many challenges ahead of us. It is our desire that instead of indulging in mutual recrimination, all patriots should work in unison towards the nation's welfare, Nationalism, democracy and prosperous complement each other. All of us must work together in the creation of a dynamic and prosperous new Nepal with Constitutional Monarchy and multiparty democracy as its cornerstones.

Rising above class, regional and party interests in the greater good of the country, all Nepalese should continuously strive for the all round development of the nation and people. The international agenda of the day-market economy, good governance, transparency and corruption-free practices must be incorporated into our national agenda too. There is no time to spare. The country's future and the people's security cannot be held hostage to serve over ambitions and desires. Personal issues or technicalities should not be the cause for impediments in the exercise of multiparty democracy. All of us are at a juncture where history will judge us. Those who cannot do justice to Nepal, those who cannot believe in the sound judgement of the people and those who cannot align themselves in favour of peace will stand condemned by the motherland. It is, therefore, our wish that all of us walk together on the path of harmony and not let petty issues divide us. Above all, the Nepalese people aspire for law and order in the country, harmony in the society and improvement in their living standards. It is on our shoulders that the grave responsibility of the fulfilling these aspirations lies.



Royal Palace
Kathmandu, Nepal.

April 3, 2002

Mr P.A. Leggatt
Chairman
The Britain-Nepal Society
Wrotham Place, Wrotham
Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 7AE
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Mr Leggatt,

I write in connection with your inquiry relating to the patronage of the Britain-Nepal Society. I am sure you will understand that, much as he would have wished, His Majesty the King would not be able to continue as Patron of the Society in the present circumstances. His Majesty has, however, commanded me to propose for consideration Her Royal Highness Princess Jotshana Rajya Laxmi Devi Basnyat as Patron of the Society.

His Majesty hopes that the Society will continue to play a pivotal role in promoting friendship between Nepal and the United Kingdom and also sends you and other members of the society his best wishes.

Sincerely,

Mohan Bahadur Panday
Press Secretary to H.M. the King

THE SOCIETY'S NEWS

by Pat Mellor
Honorary Secretary

Before I start on my report of the Society's various events, I must first express all our members' extreme happiness on receiving the announcement that Her Royal Highness Princess Jotshana Rajya Laxmi Devi Basnyat had accepted His Majesty King Gyanendra's recommendation and the Society's invitation that her Royal Highness should be the Patron of our Society. We all heartily welcome her and wish her many happy years as our Patron.

Lectures

In 2002 the Society was able to hold four lectures at the Society of Antiquaries, and one at the Royal Nepalese Embassy.

On Tuesday, 29th January, Major Murray Jones gave a talk about the 'mini' Society holiday that took place in November 2001. With support from Mr Peter Donaldson, members were given an outline of how the holiday went. It was great fun and we did enjoy it all.

Unfortunately there were hardly any other tourists and the hotels were very quiet, all due to the tragic events of 11th September. The photos that Murray and Peter took were very reminiscent for those who had recently made the trip but I think everyone was able to join in the pleasure that we had.

Tuesday, 27th March Mr George Band gave a fascinating lecture about the climbing of Everest and the Edmund Hillary Schools that are helped by the Himalayan Trust's Projects in Phaphlu. Mr George Band is certainly an enthusiast and the many members that attended enjoyed his talk with such marvellous slides.

Dr Bill Gould gave us the next lecture

on the 25th June about the United Mission to Nepal Hospitals' Trust. The UMN is an international and interdenominational Christian mission working in Nepal. The title of Bill's lecture was 'The challenge of health care in Nepal'. The Mission has four major hospitals which target the most impoverished communities, and it was good to learn how the dedicated staff has helped the local people. As usual the slides were beautiful, but also showed that practical help is what is required.



Dr Weir, Dr Dhital and Mr Hari K Shrestha, Minister Counsellor at the Embassy, enjoy a drink at the AGM.

In April HE The Royal Nepalese Ambassador kindly made the Embassy available for his cousin, Dr Buddha Basnyat, to give a fascinating lecture on the impact of tourism in Nepal. This lecture was well attended, and we were most grateful to both the Ambassador and Dr Basnyat for taking the interest and trouble to outline to members this difficult but most important and interesting subject. *(The text of this lecture is elsewhere in the journal. Ed)*

In September the Society supported the Charity 'Need in Nepal' by circulating

information about a lecture by Chris Moon held at the Royal Geographical Society entitled 'One step beyond our Limits'. Chris Moon is a survivor of a Khmer Rouge abduction and lost his lower right arm and leg in a mined area in Mozambique. Less than a year after leaving hospital he completed the Flora London Marathon whilst working tirelessly for charities helping the disabled. His lecture was inspirational.



The Chairman, Mr Peter Leggatt and the Patron, HRH Princess Jotshana at the AGM.

Finally, on 1st October, Claire Waring gave us a lecture on the honey hunters of Nepal. This was an interesting lecture, again with lovely slides. Claire's keen interest in promoting beekeeping in Nepal and her enthusiasm in explaining about the honey hunters and their work kept her audience enthralled. This event was also well attended despite the tube strike, which made it difficult for many of us.

Our grateful thanks go to all of these excellent speakers who gave us their time, shared their knowledge and showed such excellent slides. We look forward to meeting them again and thanking them personally at the Annual Nepali Supper on 20th February 2003.

We now look forward to our programme for 2003. The current plans are:

Tuesday, 14th January 2003 - Dr Subedi of the University of Middlesex - 'The Significance of the 1923 Peace and Friendship Treaty between Britain and Nepal'.

Tuesday, 25th March 2003 - Major Rick Beven - 'When Gurkhas go home'

Tuesday, 6th May 2003 - Mrs Carol Inskipp will be speaking at the Zoological Society of London, on the outstanding paintings of birds and mammals by Brian Houghton Hodgson

Tuesday, 3rd June 2003 - Chris Chadwell on 'Plant Hunting in the Lumbasumba Himal, East Nepal'

Tuesday, 7th October 2003 - Major Kelvin Kent - 'The British attempt on the Southwest Face of Everest in autumn 1972'

All these lectures, except for one on the 6th May at the Zoological Society of London, are taking place at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly. I do hope to see many members supporting these lectures and our distinguished speakers.

Annual Nepali Supper

As usual, the Supper was held at St Columba's Church of Scotland Hall in Pont Street in February and Lord Camoys was our guest of honour. Approximately 150 people attended the supper, which once again was excellently prepared by the Munal Restaurant in Putney, and was greatly enjoyed by all who attended. HE The Royal Nepalese Ambassador and HRH Princess Jotshana joined members for the evening. Lord Camoys gave an excellent and witty after dinner speech,



Lord Camoys with the Ambassador and the Chairman at the Supper.

and guests were entertained by a piper from the Queen's Gurkha Engineers who played during the supper. We also have to thank the Regiment for providing the bar orderlies who so efficiently looked after the bar. We were very happy to welcome the two Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers to the supper as guests of the Society.

This was a happy and successful evening.

The 2003 Supper is to be on Thursday, 20th February 2003, and the Committee very much hope that our President will be able to attend.

Summer Outing

The Summer Outing this year was to Whipsnade Wild Animal Park. My prayers were answered when the day dawned brilliantly sunny with a light breeze. This was important as a picnic



The Patron, the Ambassador, the Secretary and the Chairman at Whipsnade.



Mr Harish Karki with friends and family at the Whipsnade picnic.

had been arranged and there was no shelter except for some trees! Almost 70 members joined us at the chosen picnic spot, near the enclosures of the Nepalese provided one-horned rhinos and the Bengal tigers. After Kem Ranamagar, of Munal Restaurant, had served us all a most delicious Nepali picnic, everyone wandered off to spend the rest of the day animal watching, taking rides in buses and/or the little train, and generally enjoying themselves. It was a pity that the Yeti Association was not able to be with us, but they have promised to join us next year.



The Royal Nepalese Army Cadets (training at the RMA Sandhurst) at the Whipsnade picnic.

The date for the Summer Outing next year is Sunday, 15th June 2003, and we are hoping to arrange a trip down the River Thames.



One of the Nepalese one-horned rhinos at Whipsnade.

Other Events

The Chairman, whilst in Nepal in December 2001, was honoured by an audience with HM King Gyanendra of Nepal, when His Majesty particularly sent his best wishes to all the members of the Britain-Nepal Society. Peter Donaldson, the Vice-Chairman, together with his wife Marion, and I were privileged to be invited to the Royal Nepalese Embassy in May for an audience with HM Queen Komal and HRH The Crown Prince and Princess. HRH The Crown Princess has since given birth to a son, and on behalf of the Society, the Chairman sent a letter of congratulation to her and The Crown Prince.

THE KING MAHENDRA UK TRUST FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (KMUKT)

On the 1st May, the King Mahendra UK Trust for Nature Conservation in conjunction with your Society, held a fundraising dinner at the Kensington Town Hall. A joint committee from both the Society and the KMUKT was formed to coordinate this event, the chair being taken by Peter Leggatt. Field Marshal Sir John Chapple and Mrs Amita Pandey Sen worked very hard to make it the success it undoubtedly was. The Band of the

Brigade of Gurkhas added a high degree of panache to the occasion, and thanks to the endeavours of Mrs Amita Pandey Sen a fine cultural programme was enjoyed by all. About 300 people attended, and HRH The Duke of Gloucester together with HE The Royal Nepalese Ambassador and HRH Princess Jotshana were the guests of honour. Dr Maskey of the Nepalese Department of National Parks and Conservation and Mr Arup Rajouria from the King Mahendra Trust in Nepal came from Nepal and gave a presentation on conservation and the work of the Trust in Nepal. The dinner was followed by an auction of items kindly given by generous benefactors. The auctioneer was the journalist Jonathon Gregson. The whole event together with independent donations raised almost £30,000 towards the Trusts work in Nepal. It was, thanks to the committee and the generosity of the sponsors and those who attended, a very successful and enjoyable evening. Details of the Trust and how members can help are included with this journal.

Deaths

It is with great sadness that I have to inform members that a very good friend and founder member of the Society, Mrs Mayura Brown, died on 6th October, some six weeks after her ninetieth birthday. Just a month earlier, on the 5th September, Mayura had attended a delightful 90th Birthday party given in her honour by HE The Royal Nepalese Ambassador and our Patron, HRH Princess Jotshana at the Royal Nepalese Embassy. Many of Mayura's old friends in the Society attended and she really did enjoy this occasion. Her funeral was held at the Harlow crematorium on 21st October where over fifty people,

including many from the Society, were present. Her ashes were put into the Memorial Garden at Harlow and in addition some were taken to Nepal in December by our Chairman, Mr Peter Leggatt, where he put Mayura's ashes into the sacred River Bagmati in Kathmandu in accordance with her wishes. On 1st September the Society lost another longstanding member with the death of Maj PS Leathart. This was followed in January 2003 by the death of the Earl of Limerick, another of our members who contributed so much in the early days of the Society. (*Full obituaries appear elsewhere in the journal. Ed.*) I have also to report with sadness the death of Mrs Hunter Gray and Miss Nanette Simmons (life member).

Society Ties and Scarves

I think most members are aware that we now have a *new* tie - the pattern is as before but in a more up-to-date shape and is in silk. The price of these ties is £10 each including postage and they may be obtained from David Jefford, 20 Longmead, Fleet, Hants GU13 9TR, by post or at one of our meetings.

Royal Nepalese Embassy

Finally, I do want to say that so many of our events and meetings would not be possible without the help, support and encouragement of HE The Royal Nepalese Ambassador, HRH Princess Jotshana and their staff, and in particular Mrs Nelia Ranamagar who is so unfailingly charming and helpful.

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THE DISPERSED TREASURES OF NEPAL

By Mayura Brown

(This article was written in the late autumn of 2001 but was not in time for that edition and is the last article she wrote before her death in October 2002. Her obituary appears elsewhere in the journal. Mayura Brown was a fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society and had a great knowledge and interest in South Asian art. Her review of 'The Art of Nepal', as published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, is also elsewhere in the journal. Ed.)

When I received a request from the Royal Asiatic Society to review a book entitled "The Art of Nepal" I was delighted, but its arrival surprised me for it was but a catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum. Their collection of Nepalese artefacts was immense. I am not averse to museums exhibiting the art and antiquities of other nations, for that is their purpose. I would not have undertaken a pilgrimage to Athens unless I had been enchanted by the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum, but for one museum to have such a vast quantity of the artistic works of a small country like Nepal alarmed me. I had to admit that this work was excellently produced with scholarly information by the Curator, Dr P Pal. I was however disturbed to read that the artists' model-books and priests' manuals, which had been held by the same Nepalese families for generations, were no longer in Nepal. The Catalogue claims that these form "the largest and most extensive group of such material in the world" and adds that "the sketches further demonstrate the

breadth of the Nepali artist's repertoire, which cannot be discerned by study of surviving sculptures and paintings alone." Yet these documents are not in their country of origin, and a Nepali student of iconography would have to travel half way round the world to examine them. How were these very important papers allowed to leave Nepal, and how had the families, who were guardians of these documents for generations, been persuaded to part with them. Nobody seemed to have been aware of their great value.

In the days when Nepal was a 'closed' country and visitors entered only by invitation, there was hardly a need for careful documentation of their treasures. When tourists arrived in large numbers with permission to travel anywhere in the country, it was probably assumed that they would buy souvenirs from the local shops. Gradually irreplaceable treasures began to disappear, and I doubt if Nepal has any detailed knowledge of what the country has lost so far.

It would be a formidable task to contact museums all over the world requesting a list of the Nepalese antiquities they possess. I know that the British Museum has barely enough to fill a very small gallery. When an Exhibition of Nepalese Art was held there in 1998, the few exhibits had to be supplemented by a silver replica of the Krishna Temple in Lalitpur (Patan), a loan from the Royal Palace in Kathmandu, and a water colour painting of the same temple by Dr Henry Oldfield (1855) from the British Library. Perhaps one small crumb of consolation

is that most museums will treat their Nepalese acquisitions with care. The fate of those in private hands is uncertain. Some years ago a van arrived back in this country containing a small Nepalese stone figure. The Customs Officers became suspicious of the clumsy way in which it had been packed. There were no papers regarding its purchase or for entry into Britain. The statue was confiscated and given to the Nepalese Embassy in London. It was not of great artistic merit, probably from a remote village temple or shrine, but it had been purloined by two young men. How many others have evaded detection or had fake papers to support their possession is open to speculation.

A law has been passed in Nepal forbidding any antiquities from leaving the country, but the ingenuity of thieves can overcome any effort to frustrate their designs. The long southern border of Nepal is extremely porous and would require a very large force to police it and to track down smugglers. This is beyond the country's means.

Some years ago when I was in Nepal, I visited the town of Bhaktapur (Bhatgaon). I was told that a group of men arrived in the square one day with a long ladder and various pieces of equipment. They said they had to remove the statue of Bhupatindra Malla from the

top of the tall pillar and take it away for cleaning. People stopped to enquire what was happening and to discuss this strange new idea. Some were strongly against the statue being touched after so many years, others demanded to know on whose authority it was to be moved. As the crowd increased and the talk turned to arguments, the strangers departed hurriedly with their equipment. It was a pity the Police were not called in the first place.

In a Kathmandu square I found a small stone column where a statue had been removed from its niche. I had studied sculpture at the Chelmsford Art College and had worked with stone, so I knew it would require a noisy, time consuming effort to chisel out the figure by hand. My husband said that a small electric drill attached to a portable generator could do the job quickly. One can only surmise the method used to remove that statue. Thieves arrive obviously well prepared, and their audacity defies description. It is a worrying situation, but can anyone offer a solution to stem this loss? A poor country like Nepal could not begin to contemplate the vast financial cost of a survey of their remaining antiquities. It is up to the citizens of Nepal to be vigilant and protect their priceless treasures.

SOME NOTES ON NEPALI HISTORY

By Mayura Brown

(A shorter version of these notes was published in the 1996 journal. It seemed timely to republish them following the recent death of Mrs Mayura Brown. Ed.)

In response to numerous requests for information about my Great-grandfather Jang Bahadur Kunwar Rana, here are a few notes.

There is much interest in Jang's London residence during his visit here. A Nepalese Embassy, headed by Jang Bahadur, Prime Minister of Nepal, arrived in England in May 1850. They were accommodated in a splendid mansion in Richmond Terrace (off Whitehall). Probably an establishment for visiting dignitaries, it was provided with beautiful paintings, elegant furniture, chandeliers, and costly Brussel carpets. It was lighted by gas which must have surprised and delighted the Nepalese.

Besides these very pleasing apartments, a garden to the north gave excellent views of the river Thames. A large lawn lay to the east of the house, and to the south was the public road. It would be difficult to locate the exact spot

of the historic house now, because of the modern constructions that have taken place in the area.

The second inquiry is about Jang Bahadur's various titles. In the summer of 1856 Jang resigned from his post as Prime Minister. It went to his brother Bam Bahadur Kunwar Rana. HM King Surendra honoured Jang by bestowing on him the title of Maharaja of Kaski and Lamjung, two provinces in central Nepal, west of Gorkha. (August 1856.)

Bam Bahadur died in May 1857, just at the outbreak of the Sepoy Mutiny in India. Jang Bahadur resumed the Premiership, and as Nepal was an ally of Britain, he marched down to India at the head of 12,000 Nepalese troops. Apart from several small events en route, the main thrust of the expedition was the relief of Lucknow. They arrived too late to save the life of Sir Henry Lawrence, (British Resident in Nepal 1843-44) for whom Jang had a very high regard. In recognition of his services during the Mutiny, Jang received a British knighthood. Later he was awarded the G.C.S.I.

THE QUEEN'S GURKHA ORDERLY OFFICERS

By Capt (QGO) Bishnukumar Pun RGR

(Members will have met the Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers at Society functions and other occasions. This short history was prepared by HQ Brigade of Gurkhas and published in 'Parbate' and 'The Sirmooree' - journal of the 2nd Goorkha Rifles Association. It is reproduced here for members who may not know the background to these appointments. Ed)

"If we die tomorrow, no matter. We have seen all." - the Queen's Gurkha Orderly officers shortly after receiving the medals of The Royal Victorian Order at Buckingham Palace, December 1955.

The tradition of attendance by the Gurkha Orderly Officers on the Sovereign dates back to the time of Queen Victoria. The Queen was particularly impressed with the grandeur and devotion of the soldiers of the British India that when she became Empress of India under the Royal Title Act in 1877 she sought the attendance of her Indian subjects. This tradition was to continue after the coronation of King Edward VII following the death of the great Queen.

In 1903, six King's Indian Orderly Officers were appointed to attend the Sovereign in a ceremonial capacity and were brought over to England for a limited period of six months. The year following his coronation, the number was reduced to four officers - two from the Cavalry and two from the Infantry. Subedar Majors Santabir Gurung of 2/2nd Gurkhas and Singbir Ghale of 2/3rd Gurkhas were two of the four King's Indian Orderly Officers who formed a part of the guard at the Lying-in-State of the King in 1910.

Attendance of Gurkha Officers upon

the Sovereign provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit England. England was out of bounds for all Gurkhas and those who were permitted to attend duty in England had to uphold strict caste and religious regulations. On their return from overseas they had to undertake the strict Hindu purification ceremonies and handsome payments to the priests and local officials. After years of petition, the then Nepalese Prime Minister Juddha Shamsheer JBR granted permission in 1936 for the Gurkha Officers to take their turn in the King's Indian Orderly Officers scheme. Subedar Major Santabir Gurung had to wait for another 25 years before he was permitted to return to Nepal and conduct the purification '*puja*'. The scheme continued until the outbreak of war in 1939.

Since the re-introduction of this tradition by Her Majesty The Queen in 1954, the two Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers (QGOOs) have been selected annually to attend upon the Sovereign at Investitures and other official functions at Buckingham Palace. The duty was initially for summer months only. The tour of the MVO duty is now for a year. The total number of QGOOs now stands at 95. Eighty five of them have become Gurkha Major of their units or in one of the British Gurkha Nepal posts, some have achieved the rank of Major (GCO).

The QGOOs continue to be employed on their primary duty, which is to attend the Sovereign at Investitures and other royal ceremonial occasions.

Normally, twenty Investitures are held each year in the State Ballroom of Buckingham Palace and each Investiture is conducted by HM The Queen or HRH

The Prince of Wales. Up to 150 recipients attend each Investiture. The QGOOs attend the Sovereign as she enters the Ballroom and they remain on duty on the dais along with five members of the The Queen's Body Guard of Yeomen of the Guard. The sovereign is supported by the Lord Chamberlain, the Master of the Household, an Equerry-in-Waiting, the Secretary of the Central Chancery of Orders of the Knighthood, four Gentlemen Ushers - senior retired officers. The ceremony usually lasts for one and a half hours and throughout the proceedings a selection of music is played by the Orchestra of the Band of the Household Division. Over one hundred visitors also watch the ceremony. All these, combined with the unique atmosphere in the Ballroom makes every duty uniquely fascinating and it gives a tremendous sense of honour.

The concept of employing QGOOs on secondary duty is, however, new and it is developed to support the changing emphasis of duty. In addition to supporting the Sovereign at the

Investitures, the QGOOs continue to appear at social and recreational events in support of the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT). The QGOOs also conduct their duties and also to maintain the tradition associated with a series of visits to Gurkha units and act as a source of information to the units. It also allows them to provide the Brigade Headquarters with impartial advice on current issues and concerns of the Gurkhas. They have already travelled to the majority of Gurkha units in the UK.

The following statement by Colonel W F Shuttlewood OBE, the Colonel of the Brigade of Gurkhas, reflects the expanding emphasis on the duties of the QGOOs:

"The QGOOs are an essential part of the fabric of the Brigade. They provide an enduring link with the Sovereign and are hugely respected and admired by members of the Royal Household and the wider public. They have a significant impact in assisting with the raising of funds for the GWT".

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NEPAL - THE LAND OF UNIQUE ECOSYSTEM AND RICH BIODIVERSITY

By Dr K K Shrestha

(Dr Shrestha gave a lecture to the Society in 2001, he is the Associate Professor of Botany at Tribhuvan University and was at that time attached to the Natural History Museum, London).



Verdant valleys in the midlands.

The Himalayan kingdom Nepal occupies less than 0.1% of total land area of the earth, which is slightly larger than that of England and Wales combined. The country's 42% area is covered with forests and shrubland, 18% of its land is under cultivation, and 15% land is under permanent snow, with wonderful snow-capped mountains (over 200 mountains with more than 7000m elevation). Interestingly, there are 35 forest types and 75 vegetation types distributed in ten

bio-climatic zones from tropical to nival. The range of natural vegetation is varied from tropical lowland rainforest (Sal forest as low as 60m) to temperate forests of Rhododendrons, Oaks and Conifers in the mid hills (timberline 4000m) to the dwarf alpine scrubs and grasslands (to 6500m). Nepal is floristically influenced from six adjoining floristic regions, namely Central Asiatic in the north, Sino-Japanese in the north-east, Asia Malaysian in the south-east, Indian in the south, Sudano-Zambian in the south-west, and Irano-Turanean in the west.



Himalayan Region.

Considering the small area of the country, its bio-diversity is praiseworthy. It is worth to mention that **Nepal stands 27th position in the world in bio-**

diversity richness. There are 175 species of mammals, 847 species of birds (comprising ca. 10% of the world's total bird species), 180 species of fresh water fishes, 640 species of butterflies, 80 species of reptiles and 4440 species of insects. Similarly, it is estimated that Nepal comprises about 7000 species of flowering plants, of which about 5% species are endemic to the country, and 30% species are endemic to the Himalayas. The non-flowering plants comprise 450 species of ferns and allies, 740 species of liverworts and mosses, 460 species of lichens, 300 species of algae, and over 1600 species of fungi.



The dry region in the rain shadow behind the main Himalayan range.

Nepal is a multiethnic and multilingual country. There are more than 60 different ethnic groups speaking about 75 languages in Nepal. About 1000 species of plants are of ethnobotanical importance in Nepal. It is estimated that over 800 species of plants are used for

medicine, of which more than 50 species are commercially exported from Nepal. Similarly, 440 species of wild plants are consumed as food substitutes, more than 200 species are used as fodder plants, and 70 species as fibre yielding plants.



Terai flat lands.

The concern for resource conservation has grown steadily since the early 1960's, to ensure the sustainable utilisation of biological species and ecosystems. So far nearly 4% of the earth's land is designated as the protected areas. Nepal's current network of eight national parks, four wildlife reserves, one hunting reserve and three conservation areas encompass over 15% of its land area. Since the establishment of its first National Park (Royal Chitwan National Park) in 1975, a significant effort has been made to catalogue the biological resources of its protected areas and to conserve the endangered, threatened and rare species of animals and plants of the country.

THE WILDLIFE AND DOMESTIC VETERINARY PROGRAMME IN THE ROYAL CHITWAN NATIONAL PARK

By Dr Jacques Flamand

Royal Chitwan National Park (RCNP) was established in 1973 and is currently over 93,000 ha in size. It was designated a World Heritage Site in 1984 and is a major sanctuary to some of the world's most endangered species, including the tiger, the gaur and more than a quarter of the world's population of greater one-horned rhinoceros. Significant numbers of tourists visit Chitwan every year to see its wildlife, generating important revenue for the Park and the local tourist industry.



Dr Jacques Flamand on his rounds.

The availability of resources inside the Park, particularly for fodder and fuel, has led to incursions by people, and inevitably, to conflict with the Park authorities. The Nepali government has tried to address the resentment of local people by establishing a Buffer Zone around the Park. This zone is subject to particular legislation whereby local communities are made stakeholders in the Park, receiving 30 to 50% of Park revenues through the Buffer Zone Council. Areas of conflict still remain, however, in that wild animals such as rhino still cause damage to rice paddies

and tigers predate on livestock and even people.

The land is extremely fertile and almost a quarter of a million people now live in the Buffer Zones in 36 Village Development Council areas. Many households are dependent on subsistence agriculture of rice and lentils to feed themselves. Most households own a few head of cattle and buffalo, which are important as milk producers to generate some cash income. There are an estimated 146,000 head of livestock around the Park, mostly made up of local breeds of buffalo, cattle and goats, which are cheap to buy but produce little milk, but there are some improved animals



Dr Jacques Flamand at work on a local

which cost more and produce more milk.

In January 1998, Jacques Flamand, a veterinarian employed by the Zoological Society of London Conservation Division, set out to Nepal to launch the Wildlife and Domestic Veterinary Programme in Royal Chitwan National Park. This £500,000 programme spread over four years had been called for by the people neighbouring the Park, who were

desperate for a veterinary services for their livestock; and by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), who saw it as an opportunity to address the veterinary needs of the Park, including training of its staff and as a means of improving its image with its neighbours. At the same time it was hoped that animal health around this valuable conservation area would be improved, thereby lessening the chances of contagious disease affecting the wildlife. The programme was managed by the Zoological Society of London and jointly funded by the UK Department for International Development and the Kadoorie Charitable Foundations, Hong Kong, with some supplementary funding provided by the UK chapter of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation. By the time the Programme ended four and a half years later in September 2001 it had achieved its objectives and produced concrete results. These objectives were:

- 1) To create a professional veterinary programme, which addressed clinical and research issues relevant to the health of wildlife and domestic stock in the Buffer Zones.
- 2) To train Nepali counterparts in both wildlife and domestic animal management skills, this training to include counterpart veterinarians and veterinary technicians.
- 3) To provide buffer zone communities with a veterinary service aimed at improving the health of their livestock, reducing the inherent risks of investment in improved stock and increasing the earning capacity of individual and collective households.

4) To assist in the preservation of Nepal's biodiversity through the provision of professional advice on the management of its wildlife and its internationally important populations of the endangered one-horned rhinoceros, tiger and other critical species such as gaur and sloth bear.

5) To create a model project which combined community interests with long-term conservation benefits.

6) To reduce pressure on DNPWC by producing practical benefits for local people.



A veterinary clinic in the Royal Chitwan National Park.

In the first three years of the Programme four domestic veterinary clinics were built close to the periphery of the Royal Chitwan National Park - three to the north and one to the south - and were so situated as to serve as many of the immediate neighbours of the Park as possible. In addition, six local veterinary technicians were trained to diagnose and treat the major conditions encountered in Chitwan and to run the clinics on a sound economic basis so the clinics would be sustainable in the long term. The technicians were also instilled with explaining to their clients concepts of hygiene and disease transmission. Each

clinic has a Management Committee made up of nine people elected by the users who decide on fees and what services are provided by their clinic. The veterinary services provided have proved extremely popular. In the four years of the programme, over 7,400 cases were seen to by the technicians, with a high success rate. Vaccination and parasite control programmes have been instituted. In some areas there has even been a noticeable shift towards obtaining improved livestock breeds, which produce more milk - a sure sign that people feel confident that their more valuable stock will get good veterinary attention.

On the wildlife front, the DNPWC already had much experience of moving rhinos from Chitwan to Bardia with the means at their disposal. This was reinforced and a few new ideas brought in to improve the handling of wildlife. There was the opportunity to handle 51 rhinos during the four years of the Programme, in addition to wild buffalo, tiger, leopard, nilgai and gaur.

Another important role of the wildlife veterinarian is that of recognising wildlife disease and judging its significance to both the wildlife and the neighbouring domestic livestock, and obtaining diagnostic material from wildlife. Chitwan locals, who generally saw wild animals as a disease threat to their livestock, levelled many accusations at the wildlife. For example, it was believed that liver fluke were brought to the livestock by wildlife when this is not the case. With a build-up of knowledge thus gained, advice can be given to the

decision-making bodies on disease significance and what control measures, if any, are required. Throughout the life of the WDVP wildlife captures and post-mortem examinations were undertaken as part of ongoing wildlife management programmes. Opportunistic sampling of any handled wild animals today provides a means for the veterinary officer of the DNPWC to monitor diseases in wildlife, of which nothing was previously known from Chitwan. Fortunately, no major contagious disease threats to domestic stock were found in samples collected during the four-year period of the programme.



A wild one-horned rhino in the park

The Wildlife & Domestic Veterinary Programme has proved to be a model programme, combining community interests with long-term conservation benefits. The main beneficiaries have been the communities where issues of disease and economy are important and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation of Nepal.

(All photographs are copyright of the Zoological Society of London)

THE IMPACT OF VISITORS ON THE NEPAL HIMALAYAS

By Dr Buddha Basnyat

(This paper is the basis of the lecture given by Dr Basnyat to the Society on 26th April 2002. It was also presented to the International Society for Mountain Medicine in Barcelona. Dr Basnyat is the Medical Director of the Nepal International Clinic, Travel and Mountain Medicine Centre.)

Introduction

There have been economic, sociocultural and environmental impacts of tourism in the mountains of Nepal. There have been both positive and negative impacts. There is some research in this field and what is presented here is based on this evidence and our experience of the impact of visitors on the mountains. The idea of carrying capacity has to be kept in mind in assessing the impacts. Carrying capacity is a key concept in planning for sustainable mountain development, ie local community and tourism development. Carrying capacity seeks to establish ecological and behavioural thresholds beyond which the quality of life of mountain people and the visitors experience deteriorate.

Environment Resources

Clean air, watersheds, biological diversity (gene species and ecosystems), scenic beauty, human resources and renewable resources such as firewood, fodder and many more found in the mountains may all be called environmental resources.

Land Use

In the mountains there is one crop per season per year with generally very low yields. Much of the land previously used for agriculture has been taken for the

building of lodges and teashops in the main tourist areas. In addition some land has been left fallow to rent as campsites. Forest areas have been converted to agricultural use as building has increased. Agricultural activities in popular tourist areas such as the Everest and Annapurna regions have been replaced by tourist-related activities eg working as guides or managing lodges and teashops. Many households have abandoned their traditional cropping practices of growing buckwheat and barley to cultivate lucrative crops such as potatoes. In some areas fruit such as apples and peaches are grown as they find a ready market among passing trekkers. In the Langtang National Park profit per hectare has been found to be much higher under fruit cultivation than under traditional crops. There are reports that zopkio (yak/cow cross breed) are often used to substitute for porters due to high cash returns as one zopkio can carry three to four porter loads. This has increased the competition for fodder and increased pressure on the existing grazing land forcing more land to be brought into use.



Hotel/restaurant at Tukche in the Kali Gandaki valley.

Litter

The generation of increasingly large

amounts of garbage in the fragile mountain environment has caused a high level of concern. Both trekkers and climbers generate rubbish. The large amount of non-biodegradable rubbish building up in the mountain environment is a very worrying development. Even biodegradable rubbish takes longer to decompose at the higher and colder altitudes.

Pollution

The pollution of water sources by toilets, chemical soap for bathing and washing dishes and clothes in streams has been well noted. Almost one hundred thousand tourists visit the mountains annually and with the absence of water and garbage disposal management this can be a very serious problem.

Forests

The three groups that use firewood are tourists, lodge owners and porters that accompany trekkers. Some trekking groups that are handled by responsible agencies bring their own supply of kerosene, but it is the individual trekkers using lodges that are contributing more to increased use of firewood and in many instances porters cooking their own meals also use firewood. The better and more expensive agencies are now also carrying kerosene for the porters use. Finally the excess traffic of animals in places such as Tatopani in the Annapurna region has caused overgrazing and loss of vegetative cover.

Economic Factors

Table 4 shows that tourism provides an income of around US\$1.5M per year. Probably about one third of western tourists (100,000) that visit Nepal come to trek in the mountains. Those that go on group treks handled by trekking agencies

provide more employment for local Nepalese than independent trekkers (see Table 5). In agency-handled treks the ratio of support staff to trekkers is around three or four to one, whereas for independent trekkers it is no more than two to one. However in the more recently opened trekking areas, the needs of the local people are not adequately addressed. In the Manaslu area the local people are at a loss as to how they can benefit financially from tourism.



Annapurna Conservation Area Project tourist information and check post

Economic Impact on Women

A large number of women in the mountain villages have been able to be self employed with the advent of tourism. This is an important 'off farm' employment for women and an opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities as managers. Many have experienced, for the first time, a feeling of independence. The negative impact of this economic success has been the

inflationary trends which can effect the whole community, causing greater problems for those who have not been able to take advantage of the tourism 'boom' to increase their income. Tourists at times display a culture of conspicuous consumption, and receive privileged treatment, often at the expense of local travellers. Finally there is also a total dependence on tourism (the all the eggs in one basket situation) when tourist inflow is drastically reduced as we have seen recently resulting from Maoist activity internally and externally due to factors such as '9/11', war or fear of war in the Middle East or in South Asia.



Easy access to cash for tourists at Marpha near Jomsom.

Sociocultural Factors

Tourism has provided a great opportunity for people in the mountains to increase their contact with the outside world. Many in the Khumba region have their sons and daughters acquiring higher

education in the west, thanks to tourism. There is no question that people are more literate and more educated in the popular tourist areas like Khumbu or the Annapurna regions, unlike however the Rolwaling valley and other more remote and less trekked regions. In some places such as Upper Mustang visitors have helped significantly with monastery renovation. However many people also think there is greater moral laxity, drug addiction, a beggar mentality and a blind wish to imitate western ways due to contact with tourists.

Positive Impacts

The alleviation of poverty by income generation as alluded to above and increased awareness, eg fostering literacy, are praiseworthy impacts. In addition infrastructure development such as airstrips, bridges, trails, minihydel and water supply projects have all been worthwhile direct effects of tourism in these communities. There have also been socio-demographic effects, for example Sherpas no longer go to Darjeeling to seek better employment as this can now be found within Nepal. Inhabitants from less visited regions migrate to India, especially in the winter months to find work and fortune abroad. Tourism has also fostered the development of research, not only directly relating to tourists. Such useful research as that carried out in Pheriche by Peter Hackett into high altitude medicine and the work of the Pyramid Laboratory by westerners would likely not have been carried out. Thanks to tourism Nepal has received a great deal of positive international publicity often resulting in increased foreign aid. All this is helped by the large number of attractive books written on Nepal by foreigners and coverage in prestigious journals, eg 'The National Geographic'.

Negative Impacts

To understand the negative aspect of tourism in the mountains of Nepal, a reasonable approach is to examine the impact in Upper Mustang, formerly a restricted area only opened in 1990. Financially much was promised to the people (60%), by central and local politicians. This did not happen and has been perceived as a breach of trust. Revenue generation won over sustainable rural development. The area was opened up too quickly without considered planning and without physical and psychological infrastructure being in place. The result was uncontrolled pollution, resource shortages, theft of antiques leading to chaos in the community. This is now being turned around, albeit slowly.

Remedy

Systematic planning, not always the forte of developing countries, is necessary in order that tourism is linked to sustainable development with the required conservation and community constraints. Clearly defined roles, goals, and the rights and responsibilities of the stakeholders need to be articulated. Clear policy and legal frameworks need to be in place. Further research into tourism is required, keeping in mind the concept of carrying capacity. Finally with due respect to the tourist, he has to realise that in general Nepal is here to change the tourist and not for the tourist to change Nepal.

TABLES

Table 1: LITTER DEPOSITS IN THE MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENT - 1988

AREA	No of Trekkers	Total Weight Deposited in KGs
Annapurna	37,902	56,853
Khumbu	11,366	17,049
Langtang	8,423	12,635
Others	3,582	5,373

Source: Lama & Sherpa (1994, ICIMOD 1995)

Table 2: LITTER CLEARED FROM EVEREST BASE CAMP SPRING 1993

	Disposable Litter	Non-Disposable Litter	Oxygen Cylinders	TOTAL
14 x Expeditions	7,030	2,350	3,444	12,824

Source: Lama & Sherpa (1994, ICIMOD 1995)

Table 3: TOURIST 'MAKE-UP'

Total No. of Tourists	450,000
No. of Indian Tourists	150,000
No. of Western Tourists	300,000
No. of Trekkers	100,000

Table 4: INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS AND INCOME

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Arrivals (000s)	255	293	334	294	327	363	394	418
Receipts (US\$M)	109	126	110	157	172	177	161	164

Source: WTP (1998)

Table 5: INCOME & EMPLOYMENT GENERATED BY GROUP & INDIVIDUAL TOURISTS - 1988

Types of Tourists	Income
Group Tourists	US\$ 2.043M
Individual Tourists	US\$ 0.532M

Source: (ICIMOD 1995)

Table 6: REVENUE GENERATION AND PERCENTAGE REVENUE RECEIVED IN UPPER MUSTANG

YEAR	Revenue Generated (US\$M)	Percentage Received In Upper Mustang
1992	0.303	41.6
1993	0.535	25.99
1994	0.541	25.68
1995	0.527	15.18
1996	0.563	13.84
1997	0.548	14.56
TOTAL	3.108	19.46

Source: ACAP

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LINKING

Hendon School, London and Shuvatara School, Nepal

By Amita Sen

(Amita Sen, a member of the Society, is a specialist special needs teacher and Hendon School Nepal Project Coordinator.)

An exchange programme was initiated in 1997, involving Hendon School and three schools in Kathmandu. Since the first visit, pupils from both countries have participated in numerous activities such as design competitions, essay writing and exchanging drama video tapes. Books and other resources donated by Hendon are now in a number of Kathmandu school libraries. Our partner schools have, in turn, donated kite-making material to our technology department. The focus of our partnership moved towards developing joint work on environmental conservation.

Environmental education is not yet part of the curriculum in Nepal. However, one of our three partner schools, Shuvatara School, wished to develop such links.

Our first joint project looked at endangered animals in both countries. Pupils compiled multi-faceted fact files and exchanged information. The fact files are now used in the schemes of work of our geography and science departments. During the project Hendon pupils learned to use computer graphics and created an outstanding web page on endangered animals, which has been used by other schools. To the delight of our pupils, London Zoo acknowledged their hard work by displaying the fact files and graphic presentations. The project also received support from Kathmandu Zoo, which was working with local schools. As a result we contacted many different

schools in Kathmandu and four Hendon pupils visited Nepal. This gave pupils the opportunity to discuss their research with their Nepalese counterparts. The visit helped to communicate shared values and enhance international understanding through mutual cooperation. The government of Nepal has since acknowledged the success of the visit in motivating Nepali pupils about environmental and conservation issues. It is hoped that this model can also benefit our pupils by allowing them to compare their own privileged situation with that of their peers in a developing country.

In 2001 teachers from both schools visited each other. The visits provided opportunities to participate in skills sharing workshops, observe lessons and discuss the development of the partnership. Pupils are currently engaged in exchanging information on mythology and folk stories which have an environmental aspect. These stories will be turned into an animated CD for use by special needs and bilingual pupils. We hope that we can work with other schools in Nepal and the UK to extend our environmental and conservation work to our local communities.

The different project work developed each year between the two schools has helped to highlight and reflect on the issues of global citizenship. Reciprocal visits have helped to foster greater awareness of the political, social, economic and cultural situations of each others' country. Hendon pupils have gained real experience of how a resource-strapped country manages in contrast to a developed one. It is hoped that this

experience will lead to a commitment to an improved quality of social life at home and abroad. Both schools hold international links high on the agenda of their development plans. The opportunity to link with various schools in the world has enriched the curriculum and raised levels of achievement and motivation. There is no doubt that this partnership has encouraged teachers and pupils together to truly begin experiencing global citizenship which would otherwise have remained only in textbooks.

Amita Sen, Specialist Special Needs Teacher and Hendon School Nepal Project Coordinator

For classroom resources about Nepal visit **www.globaldimension.org.uk**

We recommend the following resources: *WaterAid Game* (KS2); *Burning Shangrila? Energy and Environment in Nepal* (KS2/3); *The Backbone of Development* (KS3/4); *Country Profile: Nepal* (KS4 and background for teachers).



THE SOCIETY HELPS FLOOD VICTIMS

Although the Society is not primarily a fund raising organisation, it does make small grants for emergencies such as the monsoon's floods which caused a great deal of damage. By good fortune the Chairman, Peter Leggatt, was in Kathmandu on business and was able to present a cheque for £2000 (NCRs 240,000) to the Nepal Red Cross Society. Through the good offices of the British Ambassador, HE Mr Keith

Bloomfield, a small ceremony was held at the headquarters of the Nepal Red Cross Society where the Chairman, accompanied by Mrs Pratima Pandey, Chairman of the Nepal - Britain Society handed the cheque to Mr Sanat Regmi, the acting Chairman and Mr Badri Khanal, Executive Director. A short article including a photograph of this event appeared in *The Kathmandu Post* on 28 Nov 02.



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THE MEMORIAL GATES

By Sir Neil Thorne

The Memorial Gates Trust has just completed London's latest landmark which is on Constitution Hill. Fifty years after the end of the Second World War it was decided that it was high time for us to acknowledge the substantial contribution made by five million Commonwealth and Kingdom of Nepal troops during the two world wars.

This memorial consists of four Portland Stone columns upon which are inscribed India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Africa, The Caribbean and the Kingdom of Nepal. Each column is capped by a bronze urn. In the space between the columns the road has been surfaced with red Indian granite setts. Constitution Hill slopes not only from Hyde Park corner down to Buckingham

stone memorials upon which are inscribed the names of the campaigns in which they served namely 1914-18 Mesopotamia, Persia, China, Syria, Palestine, South Arabia, West Africa, Egypt, East Africa, France, Belgium, Gallipoli, Russia and 1939-45 India, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Persia, Hong Kong, Dutch East Indies, France, Belgium, Italy, Greece, North Africa, East Africa, Syria, Iraq.

It has cost a total of £2,764,209 to build of which £1,087,500 was provided by the Millennium Commission and it took six months for Geoffrey Osbourne Ltd with their specialised stone masons subsidiary the Cathedral Works Organisation to build, but three years to plan and raise the necessary funds.



The Memorial Gates, Constitution Hill, London.

Palace but also from Green Park to the wall of the Palace. This makes it very difficult to construct normal gates and the chosen architect, Mr Liam O'Connor, put forward the suggestion that a line of rising bollards in bronze should be used together with matching bronze lamps. A Chattri or pavilion has been added in which the names of all the VCs and GCs won by the troops are displayed in the roof. The project is completed with two

The foundation stone was laid by Her Majesty the Queen in August of last year on behalf of the Queen Mother and the Inauguration was performed by Her Majesty on Tuesday the 6th November 2002.

(Sir Neil Thorne was the Chairman of Finance and Development for the Memorial Gates Trust that was set up in 1998. Ed)

ETON COLLEGE'S MEMORIAL TO HIS LATE MAJESTY KING BIRENDRA BIKRAM SHAH DEV AND THE LATE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY

By Sir Jeremy Bagge

On a raw winters day, more typical of the Himalayas, than England, a group of some seventy five Old Etonians and their families defied the weather and assembled on the morning of 8th December 2002 to see HE The Royal Nepalese Ambassador and HRH Princess Jotshana complete the planting of a group of Nepali pine and birch trees in the arboretum by the international rowing lake at Dorney. The recently opened lake has been designed and engineered by the College itself, with part of the surrounding area to include the arboretum.



Sir Jeremy Bagge pays a tribute to His Late Majesty King Birenda at the ceremonial tree planting at the Dorney Lake Arboretum; the Patron and the Ambassador look on.

The idea of such a memorial had been funded by donations from many of His Late Majesty's schooldays friends, including his housemaster, Peter Lawrence, his modern tutor, Tom Holden and his English tutor Margaret Parry. The

planting ceremony was followed by a private reception in Election Hall and then a luncheon hosted by the Provost, Sir Eric Anderson, who spoke very fondly and sincerely of the Eton - Nepal connection over some forty-five years. Generally the day was a very memorable and moving one and it was unanimously felt that His Late Majesty would have approved and probably wished that he could have been there to catch up with his friends' longstanding memories of those happy days at Eton.



Sir Jeremy and the Ambassador complete the planting

(The Society was represented by the Vice Chairman, Peter Donaldson and I representing one of His Late Majesty's close friends. The College has provided a very fitting memorial and it was clear to those of us present that he had been held in high esteem by both his tutors and his College contemporaries. Ed)

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 FROM THE EDITOR'S IN-TRAY

Funeral of her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother

HRH Prince Paras represented Nepal at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother on 8th April 2002. Pipers from the Royal Gurkha Rifles were on parade with the band of massed pipes and drums.

Honours and Awards

His Majesty King Gyanendra Bikram Shah Dev has awarded the Prasida Prabal Gorkha Dakshin Bahu to Field Marshal Sir John Chapple for services to Nepal and conservation.

As seen in the Daily Telegraph

Madeira drinkers may have noted the obituary of Mr Richard Blandy who sadly died at the early age of 55. He was chairman of the famous Madeira-based Blandy Group, one of the sixth generation of his family to live on Madeira. He spent time with the VSO at the Cadet College in Rawalpindi in 1965 just in time to dig trenches for the protection of pupils at the time of the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war. He was a keen walker having walked along the *levadas* - the old 15th century narrow ways used to circulate water around the island. Perhaps this was why he became interested in trekking in Nepal. He apparently was a founding contributor to a school in Taplejung known as St Mary's. I wonder if any members know the school or have visited it?

Reported from AFP Kathmandu:

'Son Seeker

'A 96-year-old man who has 30 daughters and grandchildren has married for the eighth time in the hope of having a son to perform his last rites. His bride is 35.'

Flood Risk from Mountain Lakes (Apr 02)

Apparently glacial lakes in the Himalayas are beginning to rise due to global warming as glaciers melt with new lakes also forming. UN scientists have been studying these in Nepal and Bhutan. The current estimate is that in Nepal some 20 such lakes are likely to pose significant threats of 'outburst floods' to valley populations below over the next 10 years. Work is reported to be underway to reduce the level of the Tsho Rolpa Lake situated above the Rolwaling and Tama Koshi valleys. The surface area has grown from 0.23 square kilometres in the late 1950's to 1.4 square kilometres now. An expert from ICIMOD in Kathmandu stated that a flood from this lake would threaten serious damage up to 67 miles down stream as far as the village of Tribeni, putting around 10,000 lives at risk and thousands of livestock.

From the New York Times International

'Britain: well-guarded nests.

'In an effort to thwart egg-stealing criminals, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds plans to employ the Gurkhas, the British Army's fierce

Nepalese regiment, to train its members in surveillance and camouflage. Using techniques taught by the Gurkha signals brigade (*sic*) which is trained to operate behind enemy lines, officials from the group will hide in the undergrowth and photograph thieves trying to pocket the eggs of birds like the endangered marsh harrier.

The Daily Telegraph carried the same story. The major differences were that the soldiers were off-duty men from the Recce Platoon of 2 RGR, and they were taken to a secret nesting site of marsh warblers in Kent. The training will be used in the protection of sites of endangered species such as Montague's harrier and Savi's warblers.

Theon Wilkinson who is honorary secretary of the British Association of Cemeteries in South Asia (BACSA) and lectured to the Society in 2001 on his walk to Kathmandu in 1946, saw this report, wrote that in the 3rd Gurkha Training Centre at Dehra Dun a similar technique was used for recruit training. Initially an instructor donned a tiger skin and then hid whilst he was then expertly stalked by recruits who were used to catching big game around their villages. In the next lesson the tiger skin was changed for a Japanese uniform!

The Mount Everest Foundation

The MEF is planning a number of events in 2003 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the ascent of Everest. George Band is writing a book on the history of climbing Everest from the

early days to 1953, endorsed by MEF, The Alpine Club and the RGS-IBG. A limited edition of John Hunt's book 'The Ascent of Everest' is being published by MEF with Hodder & Stoughton. The RGS is also bringing out its own book to mark the occasion. An anniversary expedition using 1953 style of equipment and resources is being planned to be on Everest in May 2003. Gala celebrations and dinners are all being planned for the summer. Details of events can be obtained from MEF by contacting Sarah Turner at sarahmalc@yahoo.com

Field Guides to the Birds of Nepal

In the last journal I commented on the problem of suitable field guides for birdwatchers visiting Nepal and noted that the Fleming book, *Birds of Nepal*, had been out of print for so long in the late 1980/90s. I discovered why, quite by chance, at a recent meeting of the Cambridge Bird Club where Krys Kazmierczak was talking on the birds of Bhutan, he has also produced works on birds in the sub-continent. Present also was Tim Inskipp. In conversation Inskipp agreed that an opportunity had been missed to produce copies at that time, but apparently the publishers had lost many of the plates and it was not worthwhile producing new ones. This is why the current 'reprint' of Fleming is in fact largely just photocopies bound together! One is tempted to say "ke game!"

 REVIEW ARTICLE

Gurkhas at War. Edited by JP Cross and Buddhiman Gurung. Greenhill Books, London, 2002. Pp 320. B/W photos. Maps. Bibliog. Index. Hb. £19.95. ISBN 1 85367 494 X.

*(Many members of the society will know of Lt Col JP Cross either personally or through his books on Nepal and the Gurkhas and their role in the British and Indian Armies. He undertook a journey across Nepal to record, on audiotape for perpetuity, the memories of the men who fought in campaigns from World War II to the present day. The last journal contained an extract from one of his letters (p.33, 'A Progress round Nepal'), as he travelled around escorted and assisted by Buddhiman Gurung. The book, **Gurkhas at War**, is a distillation of all the many tapes and was launched at a meeting of the Royal United Services Institution earlier in 2002. Below is an edited version of an article written by Cross that tells the story behind the publication of this work. This has been published in a number of journals. Ed)*

In May 1998 I was asked if I would try and produce an English version of what the Gurkhas themselves had to say about their war service. As one who falls, just, into the same bracket as World War II veterans, with none of us having all that mileage left, it seemed apposite that I undertook the task. Gurkhas' actions have always cast a long, collective shadow rather than a medley of individual ones. *Gurkhas at War* remedies this lacuna.

It is neither a military nor a regimental history but rather 'personal profiles' of those who were there at the time or 'war as we saw it'. It involved talking to well over 200 people, travelling from one end

of the country to the other and walking a long way. For the technically minded, one historian has gone so far as to list oral history eleventh of twelve types of primary sources, invaluable if no other form of evidence was available. The editor of *Time To Kill*, a book on soldiers' experiences of war in the west between 1939 and 1945, makes the valid point that "of course, memory is fallible but then so are the fruits of memory when written." Indeed: memory is an unstable entity, fickle at times, faulty at others, fallible ever. Joseph Conrad wrote: "In plucking the fruit of memory one runs the risk of spoiling its blooms." And how!

Memories, or their ghosts, of episodes some of us lived through but were not at, or have since studied - shades of Military History in the old Staff College Entrance Exam! - were pale substitutes for first-hand experience. The stories of the old men can now cloud or clear our ideas with dappled spotlights as, with a faraway look in their eyes and fixed expressions, they related and relived that which happened half a century or more ago: grandsons' activities seen through grandfathers' eyes, unmoved by contradictions, complexities or ambiguities.

Recording the stories was not easy but easier by far than the subsequent transcription: remnants of the 1939-1945 war were, in 1999, from 74 to 93 years of age (none of those who served in the Malayan Emergency are under 60 and none who served in Sukarno's Confrontation are under 50). Stories of the Middle East, Burma and Malaya/Singapore are remembered only by those who were from the very junior end of the rank scale: those from the senior end died years ago. The Malayan

Emergency and the Borneo Confrontation are remembered from both ends and those from the senior end of the rank spectrum have a more structured narrative to tell. The different tempos of the differing campaigns are reflected in the stories, whose qualities vary from fascinating, through frightful to frivolous. Yet these last almost always contain nuggets - such as the closeness of the fighting at Fort Dufferin in Mandalay when Japanese and Gurkhas were so intermingled at night that every man, Gurkha and Japanese, felt the shape of the steel helmet the other was wearing before killing the wearer or not. But all those who spoke reminded me yet again that, in every case we all depended on the efforts of a great body of men whose existence, in Field Marshal Slim's words, "is only remembered when something for which they are responsible goes wrong."

Many war-time men, apart from suffering from 'selective amnesia', were deaf, toothless, sometimes almost voiceless or even suffering from a stroke - or all four - so were difficult to understand. For some, story telling is essentially a 'liquid' affair with friends, not a 'dry' performance into a microphone. Even the recorded talk of the non-afflicted was sometimes too hard for Buddhiman - my surrogate son and chief helper - to understand, so mauled, muted and muttered were the words. When young the army had beckoned them beguilingly. Many men had no idea a war was in progress and some had no idea of what country they found themselves in nor, at times, who was their adversary. One man claimed that his Japanese captors had sent him on Nepal leave; he had gone and reported back.

Yet another facet of their talk was that they did not complain of any British inefficiency - thoughtlessness, yes, but not

at bad tactics or such events as blowing up the Sittang Bridge when so many men were on the far side of the river, nor at lack of rations, ammunition and stores as such. Sure, it was *dukha* but it was not seen as anyone's fault. Retreat through Burma? Capture at Tobruk? Defeat in Malaya, privations in Singapore? All were seen as there not being enough Gurkhas and possibly with Germany nearer Britain than anywhere else, a bigger need for military stores and equipment there meant less elsewhere. Apart from having taken of the Government's salt and their oath so 'never complaining, never explaining', they showed a pathological dislike of making adverse comments. Asia presumes an obligation of citizens to obey governments, Western democracy regards government as representing the citizens. This difference colours, clouds and distorts conceptions of the one about the other. As young men they were (and as old men still are) so used to incompetence and inefficiency that any deviation from normal army arrangements were either seldom as bad as had happened at home or accepted with the fortitude of a fundamental fatalism. At least, that is the way I have come to explain this phenomenon.

One common complaint was the *dukha* of and in service. *Dukha* stretches from 'pain' and 'grief' to 'trouble', 'distress' and 'suffering' to 'a hard time'. Active service conditions, let alone in battle, or when wounded or hungry, thirsty, cold, wet, outnumbered, far from base or far from home as a prisoner of war are natural candidates for *dukha*. I also wondered if it was a reaction to a deprivation of female company, discomfort and boredom as well as the fretful, nagging constant of inescapable duties of line sentry, inlying piquets, fatigues, broken sleep for one reason or

another alike in the line and out of it. Whatever reason it seemed pervasive then - and, with senescence sucking strength from once-lively limbs and the depression caused by 'life not being what it was', is pervasive now.

That the name and fame of the Gurkhas is worldwide is beyond dispute. The Gurkhas themselves are mostly reticent about their achievements and they told their stories dispassionately and, for the most part, modestly. Fear before an action was understandable but I believe that 'stage fright' would be more apt. After shot and shell started to fly and the enemy charged at them, "We had nothing to lose by risking our lives as we had lost them already," with the unsaid rider that they gave their all to master the situation - as the Law of Vital Interests took over and those 'last few yards' were as 'home ground'.

Strangely most men did not talk about the more horrendous events until, at the end, one of us asked them if there was anything else they'd like to add. Then came personal details, from the more prosaic "I had my hat shot off my head twice"; "I was wounded", to the unbelievable "As a prisoner of war in Singapore I refused to join the I[ndian] N[ational] A[rmy] so, to try and force me to, I was made to strip in front of a parade and had the whole of the nightsoil bucket poured over my body and not allowed to wash"; "We were fallen in and threatened with being killed if we did not join the I N A. We refused and three men were taken out and shot in front of us. We still refused."

I found that my interviews acted in a therapeutic and cathartic way: one was a 1/9 GR rifleman whose one ambition since 1945 when he jumped into enemy-occupied Malaya with Force 136 had been to 'chew the military cud' with a

British officer. Now aged 80, he had thought it would never happen and his eyes glinted with gladness and his smile was genuine and broad when he left us to tell the welfare staff he could now die happily as he had no more major wishes to fulfil; some spoke almost as at confession and later appeared similarly shriven: "Sahib, I ignored the advice given to me by my company commander in 1944 and I am sorry. I was wrong. I can't tell him but I am telling you as I have wanted to tell someone all this time"; a naik from 1/9 GR who won the IDSM in Italy so wanted to show his appreciation that he gave me the ceremonial salute from an inferior to a superior by kneeling down and putting his forehead on my feet. Most embarrassing.

Apart from everything else, gathering the data from almost all the Welfare Centres was a wonderful time to meet old friends. As I put in an essay written in 1988 when I trekked in the east of the country to let the Old and Bold know that the eastern depot was to close: "The glamour and vainglory of regimental soldiering over the years of four decades had long faded but the magic of camaraderie then formed, dormant for so long, instantly and without hesitation rose to the surface everywhere I went. At eight welfare centres, in villages or on the way, names and numbers, in the main, sprang to the mind and almost everybody had his own anecdote about the times we had spent together - some true and flattering, some untrue and flattering, others neither! Looking at the men's animated faces and shining eyes was like looking into a mirror in reverse: smooth-faced, clean-limbed, upright lads that had been were sometimes scarcely recognised now that they had become shrivelled, wrinkled, toothless and grey-haired or bald. I, too, after so much time, was one of that large

army of 'those who fade away'."

JP Cross

The review below was provided by Howell Parry, an officer of the 9th Gurkha Rifles. It was also published in 'Asian Affairs', journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs.

One of the highlights of our visit to Nepal in October 2000 was the morning Jim Vicary and I spent in Pokhara with John Cross and his surrogate son, Buddhiman. John's reputation as a soldier, linguist and Nepalese scholar is well known and secure. He is manifestly proud of Buddhiman, with his fluent English, poise and sophistication, a far cry from his origins as an almost destitute orphan. The two have collaborated in editing this fascinating compilation of personal accounts by former Gurkha soldiers of some of their experiences in war. During a hugely enjoyable meeting John and Buddhiman told us about their extensive travels collecting these reminiscences - incidentally, an almost unbelievable achievement by John considering his very limited eyesight - and I have since looked forward eagerly to sampling the result. It exceeded expectations.

These highly personal accounts are of necessity subjective, not always consistent with the known facts but they are always valuable in their honesty and frankness. Quick to reflect praise where due, they include many instances of shambolic battles, of officers or NCOs failing to come up to the mark and of stupid orders - carried out with loyalty and without complaint nevertheless. But these frustrations were accepted philosophically and with a never failing sense of humour. And they confirmed that, in a Gurkha, obedience was not entirely blind. It did not, for example, stifle resourcefulness. There were many instances where

initiative and instinctive tactical sense resulted in success where otherwise there might have been a setback. The interviews also made it clear that Gurkhas possessed a realistic acceptance of the possibility of death in battle and are not thereby deterred from performing brave deeds. Equally, it must be said, they set great store on gaining a bravery award - or *bahaduri* in Gurkhali - when deserved. The book records several instances of disappointment when an award went to comrades who, in their view, deserved it less. Unfairness intensely irritates Gurkhas. Another occasional irritant was British Officers who could not make themselves understood because of poor command of Gurkhali, sometimes with unfortunate results, although professional competence obviously excused virtually all other defects.

The book's first section dealt with Indian Army Gurkhas and their experiences in Malaya, Burma and the War against Germany, as well as in post-War operations in Java and the events resulting from Indian independence. The second section is concerned with Gurkhas who joined the British Army and their service in Malaya, Brunei and Borneo, Hong Kong, the Falklands, the Gulf War, the Balkans and East Timor. Thus the editors enabled readers to trace these reminiscences through a logical sequence of events and they have helpfully interspersed sections that provide overall context, in terms of both the relevant campaigns and the personality and native environment of Gurkhas.

These old soldiers did not always understand the strategic significance of what they were being ordered to do, nor indeed did their superiors particularly take pains to explain the situation. But their individual stories provided insights which are absent from many military memoirs and traditional histories that have

presented events 'from the top down'. For example, can anyone who did not personally experience it, imagine the perplexity in the mind of a rifleman as he witnessed the blowing of the bridge over the Sittang in February 1942, leaving many hopelessly stranded on the far bank, or the Gurkha who was a prisoner of war in Italy being bombed by British planes? To relate more stories from the book would only forestall the pleasure for those who read it, except a poignant instance where a group from 2/9GR, a regiment that was to remain as part of the Indian Army, came to General Sir Douglas Gracey, C-in-C Pakistan Army, in late 1947, having crossed the border from Amritsar, with a petition to be allowed to continue in British service.

Suffice to say I was enthralled by every page of the book and recommend it unreservedly to those who served with or have any interest in Gurkhas. John and Buddhiman deserve congratulations for

the spellbinding outcome of their unique project.

Howell Parry

Field Marshal Sir John Chapple has written in the 'Sirmoree', journal of the 2nd Goorkha Rifles Association:

'A fascinating book. Like all reminiscences it is very personal in the sense that others who were present will have quite different memories of the same events. A great addition to the history and in a way an unintentional testimonial and tribute to their own soldierly qualities.

JLC

I fully endorse the comments of both Howell Parry and Sir John Chapple. I too found it fascinating and read it from cover to cover as soon as I had a copy.

GDB

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 BOOK REVIEWS

Nepal in the Nineties. Edited by Dr Michael Hutt, *Oxford India Paperbacks*, 2001. Pp 171. Index. Pb. ICRs 345 ISBN 019 565 8248

This collection of eight essays, edited by Michael Hutt, was first published in 1994 following the major political events that took place in Nepal in 1990/91. The essays deal with the political and cultural background in the years prior to the 'revolution' or *jana andolan*. They include a detailed chronological account of the events of early 1990, the subsequent drafting of the new constitution and the elections of May 1991. There are further essays on the literature of the so-called 'democracy movement', development and the British Gurkha connection. Some of the essays originated from a series of talks and seminars held at the School of Oriental and African Studies under the title of the 'Himalayan Forum'. In the first essay Richard Burghart describes the establishment of the Panchayat systems of government instituted by King Mahendra in 1960 and the subsequent 1962 constitution. Under this constitution political parties were banned. He describes how the 'partyless' system slowly turned into a one party system run by the 'partyless Panchas' ie the local leaders, which led increasingly to power being exercised from the centre in Kathmandu. Hofstun, who was tragically killed in an air crash in July 1992 near Kathmandu, gives the details of events as they unfolded from late 1989 until April 1990. He discusses the causes of the revolution and examines both internal and external factors. Hutt's two essays deal with the drafting of the constitution

which took place from the end of the revolution until the first election in May 1991, and the part played by Nepali writers and poets in the decades prior to the revolution and their part in forming thought and opinion. He describes the formation of the Constitution Commission and their subsequent negotiations with the Palace and the demands from communal and religious groups as well as the various political parties. He concludes that the new constitution represented 'a dramatic advance on the evolution of a democratic constitutional order in Nepal.' He has reservations as to how it would work in practice which have been well born out by recent events. In the second he looks at how writers reacted to the Panchayat system and states that Nepali poetry became even more politicised than that written in the late 1940s at the time of the anti-Rana campaigns. Collett, a former Commanding Officer of 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles, contributes a short section on the British Gurkha connection. In this he examines the financial and welfare implications of such service both on Nepal and the individual servicemen. Although following the 'Options for Change' defence cuts the Brigade of Gurkhas was to reduce to a strength of 2500, difficulties in recruiting and retention in UK have led to an increase in the Brigades steady state strength to 3400 in the medium term. The increasing effects of politics in Nepal coupled with the Brigade being primarily UK based have led to a number of problems not previously encountered. Provided that these remain manageable Collett concludes that the British Brigade of

Gurkhas will remain a mutual benefit to both nations. The last two essays by Macfarlane and Seddon look at the problems of development work and make interesting reading for all those who have operated in this field. Much reference is made to work by Bista in his book *Fatalism and Development*. Both authors look at the class and cultural divides at local level. Seddon, who recently gave a lecture to the Society, looks at the capacity of the Panchayat government to implement development that was considered to be inadequate by such agencies as the World Bank. Initial analysis at that time seemed to believe that any potential to unrest would develop in the urban areas. In the event the current Maoist rebellion has originated in the rural areas rather than in the towns. Although in 1992/3 most authors had some optimism following the establishment of a democratic government, it was recognised that democracy would take some time to become established and bear fruit. In the decade since the revolution events have not turned out well for Nepal with the tragic Royal massacre of June 2001 and the Maoist rebellion of the last seven years that continues to spread across the country with increasing loss of life. It has been a timely re-publication of this very useful compendium of essays for Nepal watchers, serving to remind them of how democracy was re-established even if the subsequent results have not been as hoped for.

GDB

(I am indebted to the Editor of 'Asian Affairs', journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs for permission to reproduce this review. The address of the Society is: 2 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PJ. The website is www.rsaa.org.uk)

Art of Nepal. *A catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection. By Pratapaditya Pal. Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with University of California Press, Los Angeles and London. 1985. Illust, Colour & B/W. 2 Maps. £18.95.*

The small Himalayan kingdom of Nepal has produced highly skilled artists and craftsmen in excess of its size and past population. No iconoclastic invader ever conquered the country and though the ruling dynasties changed with occasional internal strife, the religion and culture of Nepal continued undisturbed while the traditional arts flourished.

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art has a truly enviable collection of Nepalese works. Their splendidly produced catalogue with an abundance of photographs has invaluable and detailed information by the Curator, Dr. Pratapaditya Pal. He has divided the Museum's exhibits into three parts - sculpture, drawings, (model-books and manuals), and paintings - each with a comprehensive introduction. These are preceded by concise chapters giving not only a short historical background of the country, but an insight into the sources and influences of Nepalese art and its form and function. The prologue states that most of the objects in the catalogue were the creation of artists in the Kathmandu Valley, the area of the old triple kingdoms of Kathmandu, Bhatgoan (Bhaktapur), and Patan (Lalitpur).

One of the special aspects of Nepalese art is the gentle intermingling of Hinduism and Buddhism. Dr. Pal has commented on the two faiths existing harmoniously for nigh on 2,000 years (p.16). The quotation from Perceval Landon (p. 14) includes the words: "strange though it may seem, Buddhism

and Hinduism have here met and kissed each other". To the ordinary Nepali it would not seem "strange". The mother of Gautama Buddha was a Nepalese Princess. He was born in Lumbini, southern Nepal, and the Nepalese Hindus revere him as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu. To a Westerner, however, this enduring religious association might appear unusual. Dr. Pal has referred to Landon as "the British diplomat and author". (p. 15) Landon was not in the British Diplomatic Service.

The largest number of pages in the catalogue are devoted to sculpture. Dr. Pal praises "the technical dexterity of the Newari craftsmen" and "their skill and aesthetic sensibility". (p.87). The introductory chapter as well as the descriptions accompanying each illustration give full particulars of each object. The pieces date from the VIIth to the XIXth century and are unsigned as was the custom. Besides stone, terracotta and ivory are wood carvings which include a richly ornamented representation of Chintamani Lokeshvara, (pp. 114-5), and a temple bracket adorned by the goddess Maheshvari (p.138). The achievements of the metal-workers assume an advantage by their variety, from the ornate plaque of the god Vishnu (p. 94 and plate 46), through the intricate "Scenes from the life of Buddha" (p. 103), to the elegant Avalokitesvara (p. 108). (Happily these skills are being sustained and stimulated by the programme of restoration and repair to the ancient palaces, temples and shrines, both Hindu and Buddhist, which is being funded through UNESCO).

The Museum's most unusual acquisitions are the artists' model-books and the priests' manuals which are presented in the second section. The period extends from the XVth to early

XXth century and Dr. Pal claims, with possible justification, that these form "the largest and most extensive group of such material in the world" and adds that the "sketches further demonstrate the breadth of the Nepali artist's repertoire, which can not be discerned by study of surviving sculptures and paintings alone" (p. 145). Some sketch books have over a hundred drawings, others have incomplete folios. Only a page or two from each manuscript is shown in the catalogue, but the introduction and the relevant documentation beside each drawing encompasses the contents of all the books and manuals. The books, which have been held by the same families for generations, should provide a unique opportunity for students of iconography to examine these interesting drawings.

The third part of the catalogue deals with paintings which are presented in black and white. Fortunately many are reproduced in colour in another part of the volume where their delicate details can be appreciated. The illuminated manuscripts, painted wood manuscript covers, mandalas, book illustrations, pictures on cloth and paper, and a royal portrait date from the XIth to the early XIXth century. There is a generous introduction to these works and full explanations of each print. Discussing the portrait of the young King Girvan Yuddha Vickram Shah, Dr. Pal writes: "His principle political act was to appoint as prime minister Bhimsen Thapa, who ruled Nepal with an iron hand from 1806 to 1837". (p. 231). Girvan Yuddha was barely nine years old when the appointment was made. It was the wise Queen Regent, Tripura Sundari, who chose a strong minister at a time of political uncertainty and when there was a minor on the throne.

An appendix, a sizeable glossary of

Sanskrit and Newari terms, a bibliography and index complete this volume, the second in a series documenting the Museum's holdings. It bears the mark of the authoritative scholarship we have come to expect from Dr. Pal and is a book that will enlighten and delight those readers who are interested in Nepal and her art.

Mayura Jang Kunwar

(I am indebted to the editor of the Royal Asiatic Society Journal for permission to reproduce this review which appeared in the 1987 edition of that journal. Note that Mayura used her Nepalese family name when writing such articles, doubtless to provide additional credibility. Any member finding him or herself at a loose end in LA will now know where to spend some time. Ed)

The Great Arc. *By John Keay. HarperCollins, London. 2001. Pp xxi + 182. 3 Maps. B/W Photos. Index. Pb. £6.99. ISBN 0 00 653123 7.*

Keay is a well known author of books of history and travel on the Sub-continent. This book tells the story of the early mapping of India, in particular the project to survey the Great Arc of the Meridian which was begun in 1800 and was the longest measurement of the earth's surface ever to have been attempted, from the southern tip of India to the Himalayas. Over a distance of 1600 miles, it took 50 years to complete and cost many lives in the process. The survey parties had to contend with appalling weather, often hostility from the local population through which the route took them, fever, floods, dacoits and many other hazards. They had to build survey 'towers' and even rebuild them after damage in remote places. Clearly there were political and military

reasons to establish territorial boundaries and it was from the Arc that much of the subsequent accurate surveys were made. The project was started by William Lambton who was considered something of a geodesic genius in the scientific world, although he is not much remembered now. His portrait however does hang in the offices of the Royal Asiatic Society. Lambton's successor was the ambitious George Everest. During this work the aim of measuring the height of the Himalayas became an object to be achieved. It was in honour of the achievement of accurately measuring the height of the highest Himalayan peak that the mountain was named after Sir George Everest. In the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the ascent of Everest and with the celebrations and the comment, already emanating from Beijing concerning the naming of Mount Everest (their name is Mount Qomolangma) this makes an appropriate and interesting read.



Here Today Gone Tomorrow. *By John Nott. Politicos, London. 2002. Pp xiii + 401. B/W photos. Index. Hb. £20. ISBN 1 84275 030 5.*

John Nott will probably always be remembered for his time as Defence Secretary during the Falklands war and for his TV interview with Robin Day when Nott abruptly ended it by walking out. It is from this interview that Nott takes the title for his memoirs when Day says to him "But why should the public, on this issue, as regards the future of the Royal Navy, believe you - a transient, here today and, if I may say so, gone tomorrow politician - rather than a senior officer of many years..." I know that many a serviceman has felt like asking that question to politicians! Nott has connections and interest in Asia and

Nepal and Afghanistan in particular. His ancestor fought in the First Afghan War and the opening chapter is a review of the Nott family's participation in the events of that time. After childhood he goes on to describe his military service in Malaya with 1/2nd Goorkha Rifles as the Regimental Signals Officer and as ADC to Maj Gen Perowne, GOC 17 Gurkha Division. This appointment led to his selection as ADC to the then C-in-C Far East Land Forces, Gen Loewen, who was due to carry out an official visit to Nepal and India. On this visit Nott describes meeting Gen Kaiser Shamsher Jungbahadur Rana who was the Nepalese Defence Minister at that time. Nott,

whilst an ADC had glimpsed another world of politics and strategy, not normally seen by most young officers, and decided that the restrictions of service life in the longer term were not for him. After Cambridge (and marriage) he describes life in the City with Warburg before he finally becomes an MP and enters politics. The meat of the book is the story of his life in the Treasury and particularly the MOD, the Defence Review and its effects on the Royal Navy and the Falklands war. His description of dealing at Chief of Staff and Cabinet level makes fascinating and very entertaining reading.

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 OBITUARIES

Mrs Mayura Brown

It was with great sadness that the Society learnt of the death of Mayura Brown on 6th October 2002, just a few short weeks after the celebration of her ninetieth birthday in August. She was a founder member of the Society and on the original committee and soon became treasurer. She put in a great deal of time and energy in the early days, helping the Society to grow and prosper. She was a long serving committee member, serving as vice-chairman and an instigator of the early newsletters that eventually developed into the journal for which she became a prolific contributor over the years. Mayura was born in Calcutta in 1912, her name at that time was Adela Mary Vincent. Her father was a businessman in Calcutta but it was through her mother that she traced her Nepalese ancestry back to the famous Maharaja Jang Bahadur Rana. Her grandfather was Ranjang Rana, a son of Jang Bahadur, appointed as the official representative for Jang Bahadur in the Vice Regal Court in Calcutta. Her grandmother was Mary Julia Sutherland whom he married in 1887. Mayura was educated there, possibly at a convent school. Her mother, known as Julia, died in Calcutta in 1939 and was buried by a Jesuit father the same evening in the Lower Circular Road cemetery. By that time Mayura was already in England. She had met Tommy Brown, an officer of the RAF Volunteer Reserve, who was called up for fulltime service at the outbreak of war. They were married in 1941. Tommy worked with SOE as an electronic engineer designing radio equipment for clandestine operations in the jungle. Mayura for her part also jointed the Air

Ministry and was employed in RAF ground maintenance units. At the end of the war she wished to pursue her interests in Nepal and Asian arts. In 1949 she started her study at the Chelmsford Art College where she did sculpture. Later in 1961, although she had no formal qualifications, she was granted a place at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), through the good offices of Col Clark who was Reader in Bengali studies at SOAS. Although she had an abiding interest in Nepal, she only visited twice, in 1933 and again in 1992 after a gap of almost 60 years. The story of her epic journey in 1933 by rail, road, horseback, litter and foot she graphically



The late Mayura Brown with the then HRH Prince Gyanendra in 1995.

described in the 2000 edition of the journal. The Prime Minister in 1933 was Joodha Shamsheer Rana, her great uncle. General Bahadur Rana was in charge of the arrangements for her visit. (He was apparently the first Nepalese minister to be accredited to Great Britain.) Her relatives looked somewhat askance at this attractive and vivacious young woman dressed in jodhpurs and riding astride around the Tundikhel, the huge open parade ground in the centre of

Kathmandu. In those days young girls were virtually in purdah. She was noticed by HM King Trubhuvan who enquired who she was, to be told that she was the great grand daughter of Jang Bahadur Rana!

However it was her experience of her visit to Nepal that kindled her interest in all things concerned with Nepal and the relations between the two countries of her origin, Nepal and Great Britain. She became a mine of information on the history of Nepal particularly the 18th and 19th centuries and the details of the machinations of the Rana and Shah dynasties.

She and her husband settled in Epping in 1948. He worked for Marconi as an electronic engineer and was involved with advanced communications systems for NATO, being attached for a while (1979/80) to the SHAPE Technical Centre at The Hague. Whilst Tommy was engaged on technical matters, Mayura continued her researches into Nepalese history. She also had an interest in radio and television and was in correspondence with the BBC concerning plays she had written for children's programmes. Although details are sketchy about her earlier life, Mayura became a talented dancer and actress. The April 1947 edition on *Theatre World* contains a picture of her in the arms of Robert Helpman in a costume drama then running at the Duchess Theatre in London. It seems she might also have been in a famous play 'Black Narcissus' in the summer of 1946. She remained in correspondence with Robert Helpman for some years.

In 1960 she became a fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society for whose journal she wrote articles and reviewed books. For these pieces she often signed herself 'Mayura Jung Kunwar' or 'Mayura

Kunwar Rana'. At this time the Britain - Nepal Society was formed and she was tireless in her efforts to make it a success, conscious as she was of the unique link that joined Nepal and Great Britain. She knew her history and was at pains to point out the aid given by her Great Grandfather during the Indian Mutiny in 1857 when he sent Nepalese forces to assist the East India Company troops. This relationship prospered, if quietly, as Nepal was determined to retain her independence from any expansionist ideas from British India. Nepal's ability to do this was helped by geography with the malarial terai jungle to the south and the high Himalayas to the north. Gurkha recruitment continued to increase throughout the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. In both world wars additional Gurkha units were formed and again the hereditary prime ministers provided contingents from their own forces to assist. Mayura was extremely supportive of the Gurkhas and was in the forefront when the Gurkha Welfare Trust was launched in the UK in 1969, even selling flags in Oxford Street. She took every opportunity to solicit support for the charity. She was also a prime mover in the efforts to have a Gurkha War Memorial established in London, writing to HRH Prince Charles on the matter. It was a moment of great pride for her when she was present at the unveiling of the memorial by HM The Queen in December 1997 and was presented to Her Majesty. She was also active in the Women's Council, championing the cause of Nepalese women.

There was an incident that constantly rankled with her. In one of the Government's fits of 'modernisation', Robin Cook, then Foreign Secretary, had the painting of Jang Bahadur Rana which

had been in that office for many years, removed. This insensitive act was seen on television, causing great offence to her, the Nepali community and their friends. Cook clearly did not understand the significance of this magnificent painting. (*See article in 1999 journal. Ed*).

In 1996 she was awarded the Prāsida Prabal Gorkha Dakshin Bahu by His Late Majesty King Birendra in recognition of her lifelong services to Anglo-Nepali relations. This decoration is now lodged in the Gurkha Museum. She was also the first person to be made an honorary member of the Yeti Association.

She will be greatly missed in the Society to which she was so devoted, not only for her written contributions to the journal, but also for her ability to compose the formal greetings sent to Nepal and her encyclopaedic knowledge of Nepal and the Society. She will be remembered for her indomitable character and her own words on reaching her 90th birthday as “the oldest living yeti in captivity.” She was a living link with the past that has so strongly joined together the nations of Nepal and Great Britain.

GDB

Major PS Leathart MBE

Scott Leathart died on 1st September 2002 at the age of 82. Like so many of his generation, his life was changed by WWII. Instead of taking up a career in forestry for which he had trained by taking a degree at Oxford, he joined the army in 1940, electing to become an Indian Army Cadet. It was this decision that shaped much of his career and future life. He was commissioned into the 9th Gurkha Rifles, a regiment in which two of his uncles had previously served. Initially he joined 3/9 GR then on the North West Frontier at Gardai, however

after a year they were withdrawn to Dehra Dun to commence training for the war in Burma. It was here that Scott and Dudley Spain (also a 9th Gurkha), were able to spend a few precious days of leave in Kashmir. When the battalion moved to Bengal they were able to visit Darjeeling together. They were soon to be engaged in operations against the Japanese in the Arakan campaign at the end of 1943. After their initial experience of operations in the jungle, the battalion was next sent to Assam to join General Wingate’s force preparing for the second Chindit expedition behind the Japanese lines in Burma. At the start of the operation the battalion was flown to a jungle airstrip known as ‘Broadway’. It was a complicated campaign designed to keep the enemy guessing and to prove that the ‘Japs’ were not invincible in the jungle. When this strip was forced to close the Gurkhas marched 100 miles through the difficult jungle terrain to another airstrip, known as ‘Blackpool’, with only one airdrop to sustain their combat supplies. The latter strip was also abandoned and it was in subsequent skirmishing that Scott was severely wounded in the arm. As a result he was evacuated to England, returning to India in 1945 to the Regimental Centre in Dehra Dun. There he once again met Dudley Spain. They were both selected to be the first British officers to visit Kathmandu as guests of the British Minister. The Commandant of the Centre recognised the advantages that would follow for Gurkha units if the British officers had a better understanding of the country from which their soldiers came. Unlike the recruiting areas of other Indian Army units, Nepal was a separate, independent country which was closed to foreigners. This meant that all knowledge acquired by the officers was second hand.

(Over the years as Nepal has opened up so it has become so much easier for today's officers to learn first hand about the country. Now language courses and initial treks are routine for all young officers.) Scott and Dudley made the journey by rail to Raxoul and on to Amlekhganj before following the traditional route by foot and pony as described by the late Mayura Brown in the 2000 edition of the journal. In Kathmandu they stayed at the Legation Residence and hosted, somewhat reluctantly it would seem, by Lt Col Sir George Falconer. They toured the valley and were granted two meetings with His Highness Joodha Shamsher, the Maharajah (the prime minister). They were presented with ceremonial kukris and photographs of the Maharajah. This visit was a valuable experience and had considerable influence on the subsequent life and careers of both Dudley and Scott. Returning to India, Scott was then embroiled in the post war operations in Malaya, and the particularly nasty events in Java. In 1947, with the advent of partition, ie the independence of India and the formation of Pakistan, 3/9 GR were involved with the traumatic events that followed that decision. At this time too the Gurkha regiments were split between the Indian and British Armies. Scott was transferred to the Second Goorkhas, joining the first battalion in Bombay. He took the advance party to Malaya and shortly after that the Communist insurgency broke out which was to last for some 12 years. During the initial operations Scott was a company commander and responsible for some early successes, and was mentioned in dispatches. In 1949 Scott took up the post as the first Officer Commanding of the newly raised Gurkha Contingent of the Singapore Police. The previous para-

military force, the Sikh Contingent, had, in Scott's words "disintegrated with dishonour." This was a challenging appointment. The subsequent success of this contingent, held in high regard to this day, results from the firm foundation laid by Scott. For his work in Singapore Scott was awarded the Colonial Police Medal in 1957 and was made an MBE in 1960. Following his retirement in 1959, he became Secretary of the Royal Forestry Society 1959 - 1974 and edited their journal 1960 - 84. During this time he also wrote a number of books on forestry. His memoirs were published in 1996 in his book *With the Gurkhas* which was reviewed in the 1996 edition of the journal, the proceeds of which went to the Gurkha Welfare Trust. The book is a moving tribute to the men with whom he served and shared so much. His interest in environmental matters shines through and his frequent reference to the birds he sees even under the hardest conditions shows this, devoting a separate annex to birds alone. Scott with his wife, Betty, whom he married in 1956 were strong supporters of the Britain-Nepal Society and he will be much missed.

(I am grateful to Col DR Wood and Maj DA Spain for providing the basis for this obituary. Ed)

The Right Honourable Patrick Edmund Pery, Sixth Earl of Limerick, KBE, DL, AM, MA, FCA

Patrick, Viscount Glentworth, was Captain of Boats at Eton, he did his National Service in the Queen's Bays and then went up to New College, Oxford, to read PPE. He was a brilliant skier and a passionate mountaineer, winning the Anglo-Swiss Parliamentary Ski Championships and becoming Vice-President of the Alpine Club.

In 1961 Patrick married Sylvia Lush who had previously been assigned by the Foreign Office to look after the representatives from Nepal visiting Eton in 1959, where the Crown Prince was a pupil, and to be the liaison for the entourage from Nepal at the time of the State Visit of Their Majesties, the King and Queen of Nepal, in 1960. Sylvia had been awarded the Order of Tri Shakti Patta and she and Patrick were encouraged to visit Nepal, which was an invitation that the young mountaineer was only too happy to accept. This was the beginning of a long association with Nepal.

Patrick and Sylvia went on an expedition to Nepal in 1962 with Simon Bowes-Lyon, Adam Stainton, Charles Wylie, Jane Knudtzon, and other founder-members of the Britain-Nepal Society. The Society had been conceived at the time of the State Visit and Patrick re-drafted the constitution for the Britain-Nepal Society in these early years. He had qualified as a chartered accountant and he took on responsibility as Treasurer for the new Society. He was working in Kleinworts, then a leading merchant bank in the City, and he took a key part in the merger of Kleinworts with Benson, Lonsdale which led to his becoming a Director of the enlarged Bank. He was chasing invoices for three shillings and sixpence for the Society and this became of less importance than his role in the bank, so that he passed on the baton to a new Treasurer, but he always remained a loyal supporter of the Society and of all matters concerning Nepal, its conservation and its independent sovereign status. He was able to support Lord Hunt when he spoke in the House of Lords at the time of India's blockade of Nepal in 1987. In 1993 he continued his family's military connection with his

appointment as Honorary Colonel of 68th Squadron (Inns of Court and City Yeomanry), part of 71st (Yeomanry) Signal Regiment, a city based Territorial Army unit.

Patrick's mother had been Executive Vice-Chairman and later the first non-Royal Vice-President of the British Red Cross and Sylvia, as Chairman of the



The Late Earl of Limerick

British Red Cross, spoke to our Society on the subject of the Nepal Red Cross. Patrick and Sylvia were wonderfully supportive of each other and both of them have played a major part on a much wider stage.

He succeeded to the title of the 6th Earl of Limerick on the death of his father in 1967. In 1972, Patrick was invited to join the Heath Government as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Trade and Industry. Among many other positions, he was Chairman of the Committee for Overseas Trade, President of the British Chambers of Commerce, Chairman of the British Overseas Trade Board, and many commercial companies including De La Rue (1993-97) who printed bank notes for many countries, one of which was Nepal. He had recently agreed to continue as Chancellor of the newly-

merged London Metropolitan University (with 32,000 students, the second largest university in Britain). He lived up to his title by writing appropriate limericks for family and other occasions. In response to December 1999 correspondence in *The Times* alleging that hereditary peers were as nonsensical as hereditary plumbers or poets, he contributed the following letter:-

*The virtue of genes, I insist,
Should not be too lightly dismissed;
If a poll's on the cards
For Hereditary Bards -
My name will be found on the list.*

Limerick, House of Lords

Patrick continued to lead a very active life, abseiling 622 feet in July from the top of Canada Tower (Britain's tallest building), in company with the Lady Mayoress, to raise over £19,000 from his

supporters for the Square Smile, the Lord Mayor's Charity. Last Christmas, he was skiing with his grandchildren in the French Alps.

His sudden death at the age of 72 came as a great shock to all his friends in the Britain-Nepal Society and we extend our deepest sympathy to Sylvia and their family. We are most grateful for all that Patrick Limerick did to support our Society and hope that Sylvia will maintain a close connection with us for as long as possible.

Anthony Wieler

(I remember the help I received from Lord Glentworth when, in 1965 as a young officer, I was asked to speak to the Society. He put me at my ease and then operated the projector. It is fitting that the Society's recent assistance to the flood victims was via the Nepal Red Cross. Ed.)

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Tel (020) 7506 1000

The Gurkha Welfare Trust
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GAP House
44 Queen's Road
Reading
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Tel (0118) 959 4914

The Wilderness Trust
c/o ECCO Tours Ltd
4 Macclesfield Street
London W1V 7LB
Tel and Fax (020) 7494 1300

The Britain-Nepal Medical Trust
130 Vale Road
Tonbridge
Kent TN9 1SP
Tel (01732) 360284

The Gurkha Museum
Peninsula Barracks
Romsey Road
Winchester
Hampshire SO23 8TS
Tel (01962) 842832

Britain-Nepal Chamber of Commerce
(Administrative Office)
Tamesis House
35 St Philip's Avenue
Worcester Park
Surrey KT4 8JS
Tel (020) 8330 6446
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The Pahar Trust
c/o Tom Langridge
5 Foxsteep Cottage
Crazies Hill Wargrave
Berks RG10 8NB
Tel (01734) 404004

If your address has not been included here or has changed please accept our apologies and request inclusion in the next journal. Ed.

NOTES ON THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

Patron: HRH Princess Jotshana Rajya Laxmi Devi Basnyat

President: HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO

The Britain-Nepal Society was founded in 1960 to promote good relations between the peoples of the UK and Nepal. We especially wish to foster friendship between UK citizens with a particular interest in Nepal and Nepalese citizens resident - whether permanently or temporarily - in this country. A much valued feature of the Society is the ease and conviviality with which members of every background and all ages mingle together.

Members are drawn from all walks of life including mountaineers, travellers, teachers, returned volunteers, aid workers, doctors, business people, members of the Diplomatic Service and serving and retired officers of the Brigade of Gurkhas. The bond they all share is an abiding interest in and affection for Nepal and the Nepalese people. Membership is open to those of all ages over 18 and a particular welcome goes to applications from those under 35.

Ordinary members pay a subscription of £15 (husband and wife members £25) per annum. Life members, a single payment of £300, joint life membership a payment of £500 and corporate business members £50 and charities £25 per annum. Concessionary rates are available at both ends of the age range.

The Annual Journal includes a wide range of articles about Nepal and is sent free to all members.

We keep in close touch with the Nepal-Britain Society in Kathmandu, and their members are welcome to attend all of the Britain-Nepal Society's functions.

However we do not have reciprocal membership.

Members of the YETI Association which provides equally for Nepalese residents or those staying in this country are also welcome to attend the Britain-Nepal Society's functions, and can become full members of the Britain-Nepal Society in the usual way. The YETI is a flourishing organisation and they publish their own attractive journal.

Throughout the year, the Society holds a programme of evening talks, which are currently held at the Society of Antiquaries, in Burlington House, Piccadilly where members are encouraged to meet each other over a drink before lectures.

The Society holds an Annual Nepali Supper, usually in February and a Summer Outing which is often shared with the Yeti Association. In the Autumn we hold our AGM, which is followed by a curry supper normally held at the Nepalese Embassy. The Society also hold receptions and hospitality for visiting senior Nepalese.

Apart from the Summer Outing, events normally take place in London.

The Committee are actively seeking suggestions from members for ways of expanding and developing the programme.

Those interested in joining the Society should write to the Honorary Secretary:-

Mrs Pat Mellor
3(c) Gunnersbury Avenue
Ealing, London W5 3NH
Tel: 020 8992 0173

THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

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