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**THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY**

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*Journal*

Number 30

2006

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# ACORN Nepal Trust

(Aid for Children of Rural Nepal  
and Educational Trust)

Charitable Society Regd. No. 701/1999



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## ACORN Nepal Trust

बन्धु, काठमाडौं - १४

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 EDITORIAL
 

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I selected the frontis piece photograph following a return to Calcutta (Kolkata in the modern idiom) which I made earlier in the year as it chimed well with two of the lectures that Society received in 2006, namely Major Gordon Corrigan's lecture on the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814 – 1816 and the update on the Brigade of Gurkhas by Colonel David Hayes. It was war that drew England and Nepal together, in the first place as adversaries and thereafter as friends and allies. Following the political events in Nepal during the year I have written a short piece on how those changes have affected 12a Kensington Palace Gardens. I am grateful to Nick Lindsay of the Zoological Society of London, Chris Bowden and Dr Richard Cuthbert of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, for their update on the vulture situation in Nepal. This is a serious environmental problem that is affecting the whole sub-continent. In the search for articles of interest I have turned to the Kathmandu-based periodical *Himal Southasian*. As I mentioned in the last edition of the journal, *Himal Southasian* has become a regional publication, and with the kind cooperation and permission of the editor I have reproduced two pieces that I considered would be of interest to members of the Society. Sara Shneiderman has written about cross border exchanges of trade and culture in the border area close to the Friendship Bridge and the Kodari Road. When the road was being constructed in the early 1960s it attracted considerable adverse criticism from India, in Nehru's words: "a dagger into the heart of India". Shneiderman is an anthropologist and contributed to *Himalayan People's War*

edited by Dr Michael Hutt and reviewed in Journal Number 29. I am sure that many members have travelled along the Kodari Road and crossed over the Friendship Bridge either to say that they have stepped into Tibet or more adventurously whilst travelling by road to or from Lhasa. I was in the former category and was technically not permitted to enter China. However I mingled with one of the ubiquitous German groups and strolled over to the small kiosk that sold food, drink and souvenirs. One of the Germans was overwhelmed to find Tsingtao beer for sale and in a paroxysm of delight danced up and down shouting: "Ein Deutche recept, ein Deutche recept!" Lager beer was introduced by the Germans when trading with China in the foreign enclaves established on the Chinese coast in the late nineteenth century.

Samir Kumar Sinha has written about the wildlife reserves of Chitwan, Valmiki and Parsa and current problems of tiger conservation in this border area. The current insurgency has meant that wildlife protection has not had the priority it should receive from the security forces who have been engaged elsewhere. There are disturbing reports of increased poaching that have made significant reductions in populations of tiger and rhino. The cause of conservation in Nepal suffered a severe blow as a result of the tragic helicopter crash in the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area in September.

Mention of this was made at the October meeting of the Society and I have included a piece about this tragedy as many members will either have known or be aware of those who lost their lives

and the contribution they made to conservation in Nepal.

Jane Loveless tells us about the visit she arranged for HE Mr Prabal Rana to Whipsnade Wild Animal Park before he left UK. Harish Karki has written about the early days when the Nepalese began to become interested in the restaurant business and how he started to learn the trade in Kathmandu before he and others came to UK.

The journal, as ever, records the passing of members and obituaries are included where possible and appropriate. The generation that went through World War II is fading and that is reflected in the obituaries included in this edition. Norman Points' interest in Nepal sprang from his war service in Italy where he served alongside the Gurkhas. Jimmy Marley saw service with the 4th Gurkha Rifles, serving in Malaya, Java and Sumatra before returning to civil life. He

recently made a return visit to India with the 4 GR Association in the autumn of 2005 for their regimental reunion. Dudley Spain spent a large part of his life in the sub-continent; he joined the 9th Gurkhas and served in Burma and India, transferring to the 2nd Goorkhas in 1947. Most of the rest of his service, both military and civil centred around Nepal. Those of my generation when travelling almost anywhere in Nepal, were invariably asked: "Do you know Spain Sahib?" If you did, you were immediately accepted as a friend of Nepal as undoubtedly Dudley was.

I must thank, once again, Mr Peter Donaldson who is the 'staff photographer' at our events for the good supply of photographs. As ever I am grateful to all the contributors and the advertisers for their continuing support of the journal.

## **STOP PRESS** **HONOURS AND AWARDS**

Mr Keith Bloomfield has been awarded the CMG in the new Year's Honours list for his recent service as Ambassador in Kathmandu.

One British officer and four Gurkha soldiers (one warrant officer, one corporal and two riflemen) of D Company 2 RGR received Mentions in Despatches in the December list of operational gallantry awards for their brave conduct in Afghanistan. This shows the high level of combat that these troops endured during their recent operations.

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## THE ARCHIVIST

Mrs. Celia Brown has agreed to take on the task of collecting archival material and in obtaining where possible, brief memoirs. She would like to hear from anyone who may wish to contribute. However, in the first instance she would appreciate it if members could let her know what they have available. The editor of the journal and the committee are

planning to produce a short history of the Society over the period 1960 to 2010 to commemorate the Society's fiftieth anniversary in 2010. Archival material will play an important part in the production of this publication.

Her address is : 1 Allen Mansions,  
Allen Street, London W8 6UY and  
email:celia.collington@btopenworld.com

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THE OCHTERLONY MONUMENT, CALCUTTA  
OR THE SAHEED MINAR



The Ochterlony Monument or the Saheed Minar as it is known today in modern Kolkata, (Calcutta) was originally built to honour General Sir David Ochterlony's 'victory' in the Nepal War of 1814 -16. The monument was re-titled and dedicated to 'the martyred freedom fighters' following Indian independence in 1947. The column, 165 feet in height, is an interesting mix of architectural styles, combining a Grecian pillar on an Egyptian plinth capped by a Turkish cupola. The guide books state that, from the top of the monument excellent views of the city and the maidan can be seen, however permission to ascend must first be sought from the police. On our visit in January 2006 the monument firmly closed. It was wired off and no explanatory plaques concerning the history of either of its two dedications were in place.

GDB

Mr RF Rosner, a member of the Society who lives in New York, explains the American connection:

Sir David Ochterlony (1758 - 1825), Knight of the Bath *and* Baronet (the first officer of the Honourable East India Company's Army, as opposed to the British Army, to be so honoured) was born and educated in Massachusetts. In 1776, after moving to England with his widowed mother he obtained an East India

Company military cadetship in India. Ochterlony had an extremely successful military career being credited with the British victory in the war with the Gurkhas of Nepal. Before that conflict was over Ochterlony began the recruitment of Gurkhas into the British Indian Army, a practice that continues to this day in *both* the British and Indian armies. Upon becoming the Company's Resident in Delhi he adopted the life style of a Mogul prince, including an extensive harem. There is an oft-repeated, but probably apocryphal story of the daily parade of his 13 "wives", each on her own elephant. Almost fifty years after he first arrived in India Ochterlony was still being referred to in a contemporary account as an American. After Ochterlony's death a monument was erected to his memory in Calcutta. Mark Twain in *Following the Equator* admired this monument.

However, it is obvious from his comments that Twain had not read the inscription on the monument which refers to Ochterlony's New England birth and education, as well as his military accomplishments, since Twain makes a point of asking, without supplying an answer, who Ochterlony was and what he did to deserve his monument.

RF Rosner

## ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE JOURNAL

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## THE SOCIETY'S NEWS

By Dr Neil Weir  
Honorary Secretary

We were all saddened by the withdrawal of HE Mr Prabal SJB Rana in June this year. He has been a great friend of the Britain –Nepal Society as well as a founder member of the Society, and has very willingly hosted many of our events at the Nepalese Embassy. Some of us were able to say goodbye to him at a small party during which he was presented with a silver picture frame.

At the time of writing, Mr Dipendra Pratap Bista who is an *ex officio* member of the Britain-Nepal Society Executive Committee has been appointed Charge d' Affaires at the embassy. Shortly before the departure of His Excellency, Mrs Nilia Ranamagar announced that she wished to retire from her post as secretary to the Ambassador, a post she had held for a period of some 27 years. We are all extremely grateful to her for being such an accessible and friendly person. She has now started a small business close to her husband's restaurant and I am sure will continue to take a lively interest in the activities of the Britain-Nepal Society.

To reflect her long association with the Society, she has been made an Honorary Life Member.

### LECTURES

Our new venture of holding the lectures at the Medical Society of London has proved to be a great success. The surroundings are more intimate and we have been made most welcome. As an experiment our June meeting was followed by a Nepalese supper provided

by the Munal Restaurant. This was much appreciated and will be repeated next year. Most important of all, our Honorary Treasurer is happier that these events are not as expensive as before. The lectures given were:

31 January 2006

Sandra Noel: 'Captain John Noel – Everest Pioneer'.

15 March 2006

Major Gordon Corrigan: 'How it all started, the Anglo-Nepal War 1814-1816'.

8 June 2006

Col. David Hayes: 'Today's Brigade of Gurkhas'.

19 October 2006

Nick Lindsay: 'Vultures – new species at risk in Nepal'.

We are grateful to all the speakers for their time, enthusiasm and excellent illustrations. As is the custom we shall look forward to receiving them as our guests at the Annual Nepalese Supper on Thursday 22 February 2007. The dates for the 2007 meetings are:

#### **Tuesday 30 January**

Professor Michael Hutt from SOAS

#### **Wednesday 28 March**

Colonel William Shuttlewood from the Gurkha Welfare Trust

#### **Tuesday 22 May**

The Britain – Nepal Otolology Service

#### **Tuesday 16 October**

Colour Slides of a 1948 American Expedition to Nepal

All will be held at the *Medical Society of London, 11 Chandos Street* starting at 6.15pm with a wine reception. The talks will commence at 6.45pm.



### ANNUAL NEPALI SUPPER

The supper, attended by 110 members and guests, was held on 23 February 2006 at St. Columba's Church of Scotland Hall in Pont Street. HE The Royal Nepalese Ambassador was the principal guest. He updated us on the current situation in Nepal.



*Dr & Mrs Dhital with Mrs Jenifer Evans at the Supper.*



*Sir John Chapple with the Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers at the Supper.*



*Mr & Mrs Bista with Mrs Himalaya Thapa and Mr Ron Rosner at the Supper.*



*HE Mr Prabal SJB Rana at the Supper.*



*Mrs Sneha Rana, Mr Timothy George and Mrs D Grahame with the late Major Dudley Spain.*



*The Ambassador with the Chairman and Lady Thorne at the Supper.*



*Sir John Chapple and the Chairman with HE Mr Prabal SJB Rana at his farewell.*



*Mrs Marion Donaldson, Mrs Sheila Birch, Mrs Sneha Rana, the Chairman with the Ambassador at his farewell.*



*Elements of the committee at the summer outing enjoying their picnic.*



*Gen Shridhar Rana with Dr Dhital and Mr Harish Karki at the Ambassador's farewell.*



*Dr Dhital and Mr Harish Karki and friends at the summer outing.*

medieval and the art-deco periods. We were joined by a good contingent from the Yeti Association and enjoyed an excellent curry lunch, once again provided by the Munal Restaurant.

### **SUMMER OUTING**

Eltham Palace, in southeast London, was the venue for this year's outing on Sunday 25 June 2006. It proved to be a fascinating place which was a mix of the

### **WEBSITE -**

**[www.britain-nepal-society.org.uk](http://www.britain-nepal-society.org.uk)**

The website is up in skeleton form and we are presently working with Mr Derek Marsh of Crystal Consultants (UK) Ltd at filling in the gaps. We are very grateful to him for his enthusiasm and skill. We are very keen to hear of any organisations that have existing websites or email addresses and which might like to be linked to the Society website. The aim is for the BNS website to provide a comprehensive list of organisations undertaking work in Nepal as we often hear of organisations interested in the



*The Secretary, Dr Neil Weir with Mr Dipendra Pratap Bista, Charge D'Affaires at the summer outing.*

same subject but working quite independently without knowledge of each other.

**SOCIETY TIES, SCARVES AND LAPEL BADGES**

Mr David Jefford kindly looks after the sale of the Society ties which cost £10.00 each including postage. They are obtainable from him at: 20 Longmead, Fleet, Hampshire GU13 9TR or at AGM or one of our major functions.

Miss Jane Loveless has supervised the production of a very attractive lapel badge which will be available for sale for £3.00 (cash only!) at the AGM and other major functions.

**DEATHS**

It is with great sadness that we report the death during 2006 of the following members:

- Lt Col CN Fraser
- Major MJ Fuller
- Mrs Beryl Hodgkinson
- Capt JM Marley
- Mr NE Points
- Maj DA Spain

**THE  
BRITAIN - NEPAL**

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# THE BRITAIN - NEPAL SOCIETY

BYRON - HETI PRINCHIBI KOTRIANA BAIYA LAJIB DAVI BANWAT  
(FEBRUARY) 1988 (THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER KG CVO)

From: Lt Col(Resd) GD Birch  
'Howes'  
33 Abbey Street  
ICKLETON  
Suffren Walden  
Essex CB10 1SS

20<sup>th</sup> April 2008

The Rt. Hon. Sir Robin Jarvis KCB KCVO  
Private Secretary  
Buckingham Palace  
London  
SW1A 1AA

I have pleasure in submitting through you a message to Her Majesty The Queen from the Britain - Nepal Society on the occasion of Her Majesty's Eightieth Birthday. The message is as follows:

On the occasion of Her Majesty's Eightieth Birthday the Britain - Nepal Society sends warmest Birthday greetings and deepest respect on this special day to Her Majesty The Queen on behalf of the Society, and wish Her continuing health and happiness.

Thank you for kindly conveying the greetings to Her Majesty.

Yours sincerely,

Lieutenant Colonel GD Birch  
Chairman

*...Promoting friendship between the peoples of the United Kingdom and Nepal...*



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

8th August, 2006

*Dear Colonel Birch,*

I have been asked to thank you for your kind message of eightieth birthday greetings sent to The Queen on behalf of The Britain-Nepal Society

Your thoughtfulness in writing was much appreciated and Her Majesty sends you her warm best wishes in return.

*Yours sincerely,*  


Warwick J. S. Hawkins  
Special Assistant to the Private Secretary

Lieutenant Colonel Gerry Birch.

## CHANGES AT 12A KENSINGTON PALACE GARDENS

By Lt Col Gerry Birch

I suspect that most members of the Society will have visited 12a Kensington Palace Gardens at some time. By kind permission of the ambassador, the Society has held its AGM there for many years and other functions have often taken place there. 'Country' members, even if they have not been able to come to meetings, may well have dropped by to obtain their visas before making their expedition or trek to Nepal.

Why 12a? Well Number 12a was built in the grounds of Number 12; nothing new there as this is a common ploy these days! It has been the site for the embassy since the first Nepalese legation arrived in London in 1934. The first ambassador was General Bahadur SJB Rana, his title at that time was 'minister', and he was in post for the period 1934 – 36. Over the years terminology and status has changed, leading to the title of 'Royal Nepalese Ambassador'. Following the political changes in Nepal during the summer when HM King Gyanendra stepped back and handed power back to the government, royal titles have been dropped. For example the Royal Nepalese Government, the Royal Nepalese Embassy, the Royal Nepalese Ambassador, the Royal Nepal Army and the Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation were re-titled, the Nepalese Government, the Nepalese Embassy, the Nepalese Ambassador, the Nepal Army and the Nepal Airlines Corporation.

Personalities were also affected. The new government withdrew some twelve

ambassadors in their most important missions abroad. They were given 45 days to move. This did allow the Society to arrange a hasty farewell for HE Mr Prabal Rana and small party was held and a suitable presentation was made to mark his tenure and friendship with the Society. Prabal was no stranger to UK. He was a student at University College London 1958 – 61. He was also a founder member of both the Society and the Yetis. He followed in his father's footsteps, General Kiran SJB Rana who had been ambassador 1974-78. During World War II the General had commanded the Mahendradhal Battalion in the Burma campaign. Prabal was deputy head of mission 1982 – 87. He was made a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (CVO) by Her Majesty the Queen for the detailed planning and the arrangements that he made for the visit of Their late Majesties King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya that took place in November 1980. He was brought out of retirement to take up his last appointment in 2003. He had always been very supportive of the Society and keen to foster goodwill in UK and he will be much missed for his consistent help and interest in Society affairs. At the time of drafting, Mr Dipendra Pratap Bista, formerly the deputy head of mission (and ex officio member of the Society's committee) is now Charge d'Affaires and continues to support the Society in every way.

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## VULTURES IN DECLINE – A NEED TO REACT BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE

By Nick Lindsay, Chris Bowden and Dr Richard Cuthbert

*Nick Lindsay, Head of International Zoo Programmes, Zoological Society of London*

*Chris Bowden, Director of Vulture Programme, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds*

*Dr Richard Cuthbert, Vulture Programme Research Director, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds*

### Summary

Tens of millions of vultures used to be present across India, Pakistan and Nepal but since the early 1990s three vulture species have undergone catastrophic declines. Populations have decreased by at least 97% in India over the last 12 years and 92% in just five years in Pakistan. Vulture numbers continue to decline at around 40% a year, placing these three critically endangered species on the brink of extinction.

Extensive research has identified the main cause of the declines to be diclofenac, an anti-inflammatory drug routinely administered to livestock in Asia. Vultures are exposed to the drug when they consume carcasses of animals have been treated with diclofenac a few days before their death. Diclofenac is highly toxic to vultures, causing them to die of kidney failure.

The potential loss of these vulture species has profound ecological and social consequences in Asia. Vultures play a vital ecosystem service by rapidly disposing of carcasses that would otherwise pose a risk of disease. With the decline of vultures there has been a dramatic increase in feral dog numbers, which pose a real risk to human health and safety.

The South Asia Vulture Recovery Plan aims to halt the vulture declines and to minimise the ecological and social costs of the decline in the three species. Through an active program of research, captive breeding and advocacy it is hoped that the survival of vultures in Asia can be assured.

### History of Declines

Vulture declines in India were first recorded in Keoladeo National Park, Rajasthan, by Dr Vibhu Prakash, principal scientist of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS). Between 1985 - 1986 and 1996-1997 the population of oriental white-backed vultures in the park declined by an estimated 97% and the colony was extinct by 2003. Since the initial surveys, BNHS has now confirmed that these levels of declines have been seen in all regions of India and have also been reported in Nepal and Pakistan.

A number of hypotheses were put forward for the cause of the decline including contaminants, infectious disease, and food shortage. The geographical pattern, extent and spread of the declines along with results from analyses of blood from sick birds and the tissues from dead vultures in India, initially suggested infectious disease as the likely cause. However research by the Peregrine Fund (TPF) in Pakistan discovered that the major cause of the decline was a veterinary drug called diclofenac. This is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) used widely in the veterinary industry across South Asia.



### The problem of diclofenac

Most cattle in India are kept by people for work and for the dairy products rather than for the meat. Therefore they are often left to die naturally, with no attempt to recover the carcasses as vultures can reduce the carcass of a cow to a pile of bones in less than an hour. However, the farmers do not want the cattle to suffer if they are old and infirm so give them pain-killers to ease their condition. Diclofenac is the cheapest and most widely available treatment particularly for rural communities.

Vultures usually feed in groups so large numbers of vultures can be killed by just one contaminated carcass. Population modelling has shown that less than 1% of carcasses need to contain a lethal quantity of diclofenac to account for the rate of decline seen.

The effects of diclofenac on birds of prey remind us of the devastating impact of DDT on birds worldwide. It took years for governments to remove DDT and associated chemicals from use.

### Species

Gyps vultures are obligate scavengers and perform an important ecological function by stripping the soft tissue from carcasses. They used to be widespread and abundant, accounting for the majority of vulture sightings in both Africa and Asia. Their abundance in India and Nepal, where Hindu religious taboos restrict the consumption of meat, is explained by the role Gyps species have in consuming the large number of cattle carcasses in this region. In most parts of Africa, vultures primarily feed on dead wild ungulates. All Gyps species are wide-ranging in their foraging behaviour and juveniles

disperse more widely than adults. Satellite tracking of Eurasian and Himalayan griffon vultures from Northern India reveals that spend their summers in Mongolia and north-west China, returning to India for the winter.

Three vulture species in Asia belonging to the Gyps genus are now critically endangered. These species are the Oriental white-backed vulture, *Gyps bengalensis*, the long-billed vulture, *G. indicus*, and the slender-billed vulture, *G. tenuirostris*. Other vulture species, including other Gyps species, occur in the region but it is as yet unclear if these have been affected in the same way but there is a genuine concern that many other species could be hit by diclofenac.

Less than 1% of the Indian population of the oriental white-backed vulture and less than 3% of long-billed vultures remain. Numbers continue to fall by between 20 and 50% each year. The rarest of the three species, the slender-billed vulture, is also declining at a similar rate.



Andrew Routh (ZSL senior vet), Devojit Das (BNHS vet) and Jackie (BNHS) checking an injury to a long-billed vulture.

### **The impact of no vultures**

The potential loss of these vulture species has profound ecological and social consequences in Asia. Vultures play a vital ecosystem service by rapidly disposing of carcasses that would otherwise pose a risk of disease. Rotting carcasses can pollute water courses and attract vermin such as rats that carry disease. There has been a dramatic increase in feral dog numbers, which pose a real risk to human health and safety. These dogs can and do carry rabies and are often in close proximity to human communities and the consequent risk to humans is clear.

In some areas bones stripped bare by vultures are collected and used in fertiliser manufacture but without vultures to clean the bones so thoroughly this business could be dying out.

To reduce the problems, local communities have to find alternative ways to dispose of carcasses which are not only time consuming but also costly. Burning or burying the bodies is not necessarily the perfect solution either, and will ultimately lead to a reduction in the food available for vultures.

### **South Asia Vulture Recovery Plan**

In February 2004 a group of international vulture experts and research scientists met in India to discuss the vulture decline and to develop an action plan to try and save the species rapidly heading towards extinction. The South Asia Vulture Recovery Plan was the result of the meeting.

The plan recommends 3 major actions:

- The removal of diclofenac from the system in India, Nepal and Pakistan.
- The identification of a safe and

effective alternative NSAID to replace diclofenac.

- The establishment of a conservation breeding programme for all three species.

By the time of the meeting there was already a very strong consortium of organisations working on the vulture crisis from India, Nepal, Pakistan, the UK and the US. Until then the effort had been put into research into the decline so this was quickly redirected in line with the action plan.

### **Vulture Conservation Breeding Centres**

Because of the unprecedented scale and speed of the decline it is necessary to bring all three species of vultures into captivity away from the risk of diclofenac and thus to ensure their survival. Once diclofenac has been removed from the system these birds and their offspring can be released back into the former ranges. It will take a considerable time before we can be confident that there is no diclofenac left so a long term captive programme is being planned.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), and the National Bird of Prey Trust have been working with the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and national and state governments in India to establish captive breeding centres. With significant support from the UK government's Darwin Initiative the first vulture conservation breeding centre was established in 2003 as the research centre when the cause was still unknown. The centre is expanding to accommodate viable populations of all three species. A second centre is now ready for use in the

Buxa Tiger Reserve in West Bengal. It is proposed that another 4 centres will be required in the region to ensure sufficient birds are in a safe environment to re-establish good population of each species in the future.

The aim is for each breeding centre to



*Inside the colony aviary.*

hold 25 pairs and to establish breeding colonies of each of the three species. With the limited availability of wild vultures this is already a challenging target. If successful, however, these centres could be holding up to 200 birds or more which, in itself, puts huge demands on resources to staff and run the centres. This has not been done before to such a scale. The Eurasian griffon vulture and the Californian condor programmes did not work with numbers anywhere near these targets but these numbers are required because of the scale of declines in South Asia.

### **Nepal**

The scale of the problem in Nepal does not match that of India, however the likelihood of the extinction of the 2

species found in Nepal is as real. Traditionally there have not been the same size of populations of vultures as in India but the decline has been as noticeable with declines of over 90% in some areas. Resident vulture populations are now extinct in the eastern areas of Nepal. There are a few remnant populations of the oriental white-backed vulture which could still be crucial in the recovery of the species in Nepal but the slender-bill vulture may well be lost to the country already. Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) has been working on the decline, monitoring wild vulture colonies for some years, supported by ZSL and RSPB. In 2005 the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) joined the group with the aim of developing a breeding centre near the Royal Chitwan National Park. It may be impossible to catch the sort of numbers being proposed in Nepal but it is still crucial to bring some vultures into a safe environment while work in the wild continues. An awareness campaign has started to alert communities, especially those near existing vulture colonies, to the risks of diclofenac and to encourage a change to meloxicam. It is also important to let these same communities know of the importance of vultures and to work with them to protect vultures.

The government agencies involved in veterinary drug use (the Department of Drug Administration, the Veterinary Services, the Livestock Services, etc) have proved to be extremely supportive but there is a long way to go before we can be confident that these vultures will not be lost to Nepal altogether.

### **Meloxicam**

To combat diclofenac's devastating effects on vulture populations, the Indian government announced, in March 2005, its intention to phase out the use of the drug. However, progress has been hampered by the lack of an alternative drug that is known to be safe for vultures yet effective for treating livestock. Such an alternative has now been found and details have now been published, summarising the research by a team of scientists from South Africa, Namibia, India and the UK.

The team, led by Gerry Swan of the University of Pretoria, found that the drug meloxicam was safe to vultures at the likely range of levels they would be exposed to in the wild. Meloxicam, which is similar to diclofenac in its effectiveness for treating livestock, has recently become available for veterinary use in India and Nepal and can easily be used in place of diclofenac.

Publication of these results coincided with a two-day international meeting, convened by the government of India in Delhi in January 2006, to decide how to save the endangered vultures. Removal of diclofenac from their food supply is a vital step so having identified a safe alternative at that time was very important. The meeting was able to incorporate the new information into the resulting action plan for India and with representatives from other countries in the region there, it presented an ideal opportunity to inform all concerned parties about the new drug.

In May 2006 the Indian government directed that all licences for the manufacture and importation of veterinary diclofenac in India are withdrawn within three months, and it appears that this has been successfully

carried out. The government in Nepal withdrew import licences for diclofenac and the main manufacturer in Nepal (Medivet) ceased production voluntarily, switching production to the safe alternative, meloxicam. Veterinary meloxicam was registered for use in Nepal in December 2005 and it has now been launched onto the market. Although it may take time to remove the residual stocks of diclofenac this is a major step towards ensuring there is a safer environment for the remaining vultures. An important example has been set by Medivet, keeping the alternative drug at the same retail price for the farmers.

### **The future**

Despite the progress made over the past 2 years or so, the scale of the challenge faced cannot be under-estimated. India, Nepal and Pakistan make up a huge area, the majority of which had vultures until relatively recently. To ensure those areas with remnant populations are free of diclofenac is almost impossible in a short time frame so the only real option in the short term is to bring the birds into captivity and safety. This is a costly operation but if it can be done to the scale recommended the future of these species of vulture can be assured. Remember this is not just a project to save a few birds, it is a huge programme



*Constructing the aviary.*

aimed at ensuring species that have played a key role in the ecosystem in the region have a future and can once again contribute to a complex balance of both domestic and wild species.

If you would like further information or want to follow the programme please visit the vulture programme web-site: [www.vulturerescue.org](http://www.vulturerescue.org)

If you would like to support the project through a financial contribution please contact Nick Lindsay by e-mail at: [nick.lindsay@zsl.org](mailto:nick.lindsay@zsl.org) or by phone on 01582 871302 and b mail to: Nick Lindsay, Whipsnade Wild Animal Park, Dunstable, Beds., LU6 2LF

**NOTE:**

Vultures are nature's scavengers, quickly disposing of rotting animal carcasses.

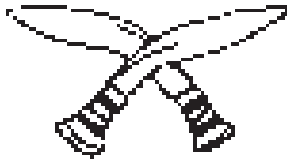
Their absence has allowed feral dogs,

jackals and rats to thrive, leading to fears of the spread of rabies and other disease.

The Parsi community relied on vultures to consume the bodies of their dead, but this has now become impractical.

Captive breeding and release of a related species, the griffon vulture, led to a thriving wild population being re-established in the Cevennes region of France.

*(During recent visits to Nepal in 2005 I noted only two vultures and in 2006 whilst in Calcutta I spotted one small colony of around 10 birds on the edge of the wetlands surrounding Calcutta and one group of 12-15 in the Kaziranga National Park, Assam. Ed.)*



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## SWAPPING IDENTITIES – BORDERLAND EXCHANGES ALONG THE NEPAL - TIBET AUTONOMOUS REGION FRONTIER

By Sara Shneiderman

*(Sara Shneiderman contributed to 'Himalayan 'People's' War' edited by Michael Hutt which was reviewed in the 2005 edition of the journal. She has been carrying out research work for a PhD at Cornell University concerned with ethnic communities that inhabit the Himalayan borderlands of Nepal, Tibet and India. I am grateful to the editor of 'Himal Southasian' (www.himalmag.com ) for permission to reproduce this article from the November-December 2005 edition. Ed.)*

For most Nepalis, the Chinese border town of Khasa is synonymous with cheap clothes and electronics that eventually make their way down the Arniko Highway to Kathmandu. But for a growing number of people from the Nepali villages adjacent to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), Khasa is the gateway to a set of opportunities that take advantage of China's positive discrimination policies towards minority groups and borderland populations. While northward migration has increased in recent years in response to Nepal's internal conflict, the Nepali, Tibetan and Chinese inhabitants of the area are also bound together by a rich history of cross-border economic and social relationships.

The town's three names – Khasa in Nepali, Dram in Tibetan and Zhangmu in Chinese attest to its multiple personalities. Located at the mouth of the steep gorge where the Bhote Kosi exits the Tibetan plateau and enters the Himalayan mid-hills, the original settlement of Dram was a customs outpost where Tibetan officials registered Nepali traders en route to the trading centre of Nyalam, 30 km further north. Before the Chinese army

established Dram as the official crossing on their newly built road in 1960, the now-thriving town consisted of little more than a cluster of shacks. More important settlements in the area were the villages of Gosa, Lishing and Syolbugang.



*Friendship Bridge looking northwards to Khasa/Dram/Zhangmu. (GDB)*

Until 1960, the residents of Lishing and Syolbugang considered themselves Nepali citizens, an assumption reinforced by the visits of tax collectors representing the Nepali state. When Chinese officials arrived, they asked local leaders to show them where the border was. One Lishing elder now in his 80s recalls: “We did not know what a border was or where it should be. We could not understand the language of the Chinese officials. They made us walk and walk and we just stopped when we got tired. That is where the border is now.” Whether by accident or design, the villages of Lishing and Syolbugang ended up inside the TAR; in

exchange, China granted Nepal the previously Tibetan villages of Lapchi and Lamabagar.

### The Xiaerba

The residents of all four border villages were given the choice: either stay put and accept Chinese or Nepali citizenship by virtue of location, or move across the new border in order to maintain previously existing citizenship. Families often made mixed decisions and many are now split across the border, with some family members possessing Nepali *nagarikta* (citizenship) certificates and others Chinese identity cards. This situation proved traumatic during the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the border remained closed. With the liberalisation of the Chinese economy in the late 1980s, conditions have improved. The 1992 implementation of a Sino-Nepalese treaty, which allows citizens of either country who reside within 30 km of the border to cross freely without a passport or visa, has allowed many families to reunite. The provision has also proven an advantage to some families, who have been able to establish joint-venture businesses.



*Friendship Bridge. (GDB)*

Despite the very real political boundary, most people in the area have complex identities shaped by the cross-border flows of language and culture. The

term ‘Sherpa’, for example, used today by the inhabitants of Lishing and Syolbugang to describe themselves, has differing implications in Nepal to those in the TAR. The Chinese government classifies the Sherpa (or Xiaerba) as a *dzu*, or ‘less-developed ethnic people’. This classification falls short of the full status of *minzu*, or ‘ethnic nationality’, which defines larger Chinese minority groups such as Tibetans and Mongolians. The Sherpa do not qualify for *minzu* status, first, because their population is so small (approximately 1600, according to the most recent Chinese census); and second, because they have neither a distinctive writing script nor other cultural practices notably different from those of mainstream Tibetans.



*The Nepalese Customs post. (GDB)*

In Nepal, one would expect the Sherpa to establish an ethno-political organisation to agitate for incorporation into the higher status *minzu* group, but the Chinese state does not allow for such organisations. Anyway as one Sherpa who teaches Chinese at the local middle school explains, “We are happy to remain in the *dzu* category because we get more positive attention from the government.”

Such attention includes educational and civil service quotas for *dzu* citizens; with such a small population the competition is minimal. *Dzu* students also receive extended time to complete their examinations and are graded on a more forgiving scale.



*The Kodari Road after a monsoon landslide. (GDB)*

Perhaps more importantly, categorisation as *dzu* qualifies Lishing and Syolbugang's Sherpa community to receive support from Beijing's new fund for development of borderland populations. According to a Lishing official, over the past two years the area has received over three-and-half million yuan (about USD 371,000) earmarked for infrastructure development, livestock improvement and income generation. The villages have been fully electrified and now have access to both reliable drinking water facilities and mobile phone services. When compared with the inferior living conditions of Sherpa and other ethnic groups immediately across the border in Nepal's Sindhupalchowk and Dolakha districts, it is little surprise that most 'Chinese Sherpa' feel certain that they or their parents made the right choice by accepting Chinese citizenship in 1960.

### **The big prize**

Nonetheless, many Nepali citizens who were never presented with that decision have still been able to adopt alternative strategies to take advantage of China's rapid economic development and ethnic policies. After the 1992 Nepal-China treaty opened the border for locals, many Nepalis from the nearby villages of Marming and Tatopani relocated to Khasa. They opened businesses to import Nepali goods – mostly grain and ghee – into the TAR. "When I started, Tibetans depended on Nepali rice, flour and butter," explained Namkang, one of the first Nepali Sherpa to establish a successful business in Khasa. "The market was all ours and we profited enormously. But in the last decade, China has grown so much that now they can transport goods more cheaply from the mainland to Lhasa, so we are suffering." Nowadays, the more lucrative business goes in the other direction, forcing savvy businessmen like Namkang to reorient their trade and serve as middlemen in the transport of cheap Chinese goods to Kathmandu's markets.

Despite the diminishing profits, many Nepali border citizens still believe that the quality of life is better on the TAR side. Nepalis from the border areas can work for up to one month in Dram or Nyalam without any formal registration, but for longer periods they need to register for a foreign resident permit. With a recommendation from a Chinese employer or landlord, this process can be quick. Authorities in Nyalam estimate that there are almost 400 Nepalis with foreign status in the county, and thousands more who come to work for less than a month at a time.

The biggest prize of all is to become a Chinese citizen, although the only sure way to do so is by marrying one. Many



Nepalis, both male and female, have taken this route. There is another, back-door option, however: changing one's name to 'Sherpa' upon crossing the border and hoping to be mistaken for a Xiaerba. This is why members of other regional Nepali ethnic groups (such as the Thami and Tamang, found across the border in Nepal) are difficult to locate in Khasa – most introduce themselves as 'Sherpa'. Some go further by dressing in a 'traditional' style that few Sherpa themselves do, or by pretending that they do not understand Nepali.



*Constructing the 'dagger' in 1964. (GDB)*

But there are also those who seek to capitalise on their Nepali heritage. In Khasa and Nyalam, Nepali food is perceived to be cheap and healthy. To emphasise their Nepali-ness and draw customers, many Nepali eateries display photos of the royal family or play Nepali pop music. Ironically, these are precisely the symbols of dominant culture from which ethno-politically active Sherpa or Tamang inside Nepal seek to distance themselves.



*Constructing the approach to the Indrawati River Bridge 1964. (GDB)*

Historically, links between frontier citizens were found not only in the Khasa area, but also along the full length of the Tibetan-Nepali border from east to west. For instance the most travelled trade route between the 12th and 17th centuries did not follow the modern road, but rather ran through Kyirong – what is now Rasuwa District on the Nepal side and Kyirong County in the TAR. Only recently have cross-border relationships become centred around the road crossing. For now, the adaptations made by Nepal's borderland citizens – as the highway connects them to the TAR, the Chinese market and Beijing's economic and ethnic policies – are most evident in and around Khasa-Dram-Zhangmu. However, with several new road links under development between Nepal's northern regions and the TAR (notably through Rasuwa and Mustang districts) it is likely that old frontier relationships will be rejuvenated and similar adaptations will occur in these border regions as well. For now though, Khasa-Dram-Zhangmu remains the best developed site for the give-and-take between contemporary Nepali-Tibetan-Chinese identities. There are as many ways to define identity along this route as there are people crossing the border every day.

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## WILD FRONTIER: VALMIKI-CHITWAN-PARSA

By Samir Kumar Sinha

*(Sinha is an environmental scientist currently working at the Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar. I am grateful to the editor of 'Himal Southasian' (www.himalmag.com) for permission to reproduce this article from the November-December 2005 edition. Ed.)*

“Shouldn’t the tigers of a trans-boundary Nepal-Bihar forest area be given dual citizenship, so that they are protected on both sides of the border?”

Flying northeast into Kathmandu from the direction of New Delhi, just as the aircraft begins its descent adjacent to the Nepali terai, a wide stretch of jungle suddenly appears beneath. This is an unexpected swath of green, given that whole stretches of the terai region have been deforested over the past half century by logging and human encroachment. This expanse of low wooded valleys and riverine jungle is unique as the finest stretch of wild lands west of Assam – also a vibrant reminder of the great jungles of the Ganga plains that disappeared long ago. Today, this expanse is habitat to several Southasian ‘climax species’, most importantly, the one-horned rhinoceros, the tiger and the gharial and marsh mugger crocodiles.

Perhaps just as distinctive is that this area of jungle falls under three wildlife units in two different countries. The Royal Chitwan National Park and the Parsa Wildlife Reserve are protected areas within Nepal; the Valmiki Tiger Reserve is part of Bihar State in India. This cross-border region thus offers

unique possibilities for cooperative protection of one of the few unique, surviving natural habitats in the region. Unfortunately due to recent political confusion in Nepal and a general lack of interest all around, the possibilities for cooperation are, for the moment, in abeyance.

The Valmiki reserve is named after the sage Valmiki, who is said to have written his epic *Ramayan* in a retreat located in these rolling hills. Located in West Champaran District, the reserve extends westward from the town of Valmikinagar, by the Gandaki River, to Bhiknathori, a railhead settlement on the ancient trade route from the plains to Nepal’s central hills. In the middle is the Someswar range, part of which is known as the Shiwalik range in India and the Churia in Nepal. On both sides of the Someswar undulation, in Chitwan District of Nepal and West Champaran of India, are found the indigenous forest-dwelling Tharu people.

What is today the Royal Chitwan National Park was once part of a much wider area populated only by the Tharu in forest pockets, extending all the way across this ‘doon’ valley of Chitwan to the Himalayan foothills. After most of the valley was cleared through lumber extraction and settled by hill folk starting in the early 1960s, it was decided to convert the southernmost region, as yet uncleared, into first a protected area and later a national park. The Parsa Wildlife Reserve extends eastward from the national park and is part of the Parsa District, otherwise highly populated by

the Bhojpuri-speaking Madeshi community and containing the entrepot town of Birgunj.

The contiguous forests of Chitwan-Parsa-Valmiki (CPV) support a healthy population of what can be described as the Subcontinent's flagship wildlife species, the Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris*). In the colonial era and earlier, this wildlife-rich area attracted rajas, nawabs and zamindars who came for extended hunting expeditions. Later, colonial royalty such as King George V and King Edward VIII (Prince of Wales) also came to hunt big game – which would be conducted spectacularly on elephant-back with sometimes hundreds of additional pachyderms providing support, driving prey towards the hunter.

This area was once continuous woodland stretching from the Dehradun region of present-day Uttaranchal, 1800 km east to Assam, past the Nepal terai and the Bhutan duars. Today, it is visible in satellite imagery only in patches. This fragmentation of habitat has presented a crisis for the Subcontinent's tiger population, which make up about half of the world's total. Of the estimated 6000 tigers that survive in the wild today, as many as 200 of them survive in the alluvial grasslands and moist deciduous forests along the Nepal-India border – in the Bardia and Shukla Phanta reserves of Nepal's western terai and Chitwan-Parsa-Valmiki at the centre. Besides being the larger, the CPV region also has the largest area under forest cover, which affords a more ideal tiger habitat. An estimated 80 tigers reside in the trans-border region, with about 35 thought to be normally resident in Valmiki in India and the rest in Nepal.

The CPV region has become so vital for tiger conservation that the US World Wildlife Fund has identified it as a Tiger Conservation Unit (TCU) that should receive top international priority. A TCU is defined as an area of habitat that either already contains or has the potential to host an 'interacting population' of tigers. CPV is a priority because of what scientist call 'habitat integrity', a situation of low poaching pressure and a relatively abundant tiger population. Scientists assume that such an environment offers the maximum possibility of long-term survival for tigers in the wild.

### **World heritage**

Because of the three regimes and two countries under which Chitwan-Parsa-Valmiki is located, the full extent of the size and scope of this conservation area is not fully appreciated by the administrators on the two sides of the border, nor by the public at large. Taking the TCU as a whole, this is a protected wildlife area of 2311 sq km, which includes 932 sq km of Chitwan, 499 sq km of Parsa and 880 sq km of Valmiki. Including buffer zones and other areas outside the core wildlife reserves, the total conservation area covers an area as large as 3549 sq km.

Chitwan was declared a national park in 1973, while the Parsa Wildlife Reserve was announced in 1984. Wild elephants are actually the star attraction of the latter reserve; Chitwan is known for the tigers in its sal and other forests, and the rhinoceroses in its riverine grasslands. The habitat had been well protected as a royal hunting reserve from 1846 to 1951 during the Rana regime. In 1963, an area

south of the Rapti River was demarcated as a rhinoceros sanctuary, which was later converted to the national park. In 1984, recognising the wealth of its natural habitat, Chitwan was added to the World Heritage List by UNESCO.

Prior to Indian independence in 1947, the Valmiki forest was owned by the Bettiah Raj and the Ramnagar Raj. Interestingly, the rulers of Ramnagar were descended from a raja said to be named Burangi Singh, a satrap of the “mountains of Telhoni or Telahu” in Nepal, according to a historical source. Owing to oppression by the king of Nepal, he is said to have taken refuge in the low hills around Tribeni Ghat, which is the point where the Narayani River (Gandak in Bihar) flows into the plains. The fleeing raja established himself at Ramnagar, which today falls in a subdivision of West Champaran.

Both Bettiah and Ramnagar states took advantage of the income that the jungle offered. The Valmiki forests were subsequently leased out to companies such as M/ s Dearn & Co and Nepal Timber Co, which led to years of exploitation and degradation of the woodlands. The government took over the tracts after Independence in 1947, later establishing the Valmiki Wildlife Sanctuary in two stages, in 1978 and 1990. Between 1974 and 1994, however, Valmiki was heavily exploited by the Bihar State Forest Development Corporation until the area was declared a Tiger Reserve under the Project Tiger Programme, originally started by Indira Gandhi as prime minister. Finally, there was a complete ban on the extraction of all forest products. Though not fully implemented, this new policy led to a

healthy recovery of the Valmiki forest. In fact a recent study of the entire terai region in India found Valmiki’s forest cover and species wealth to be far better than elsewhere.

### **Nationality of the tiger**

The Chitwan-Parsa-Valmiki forests together form the territorial area of many tigers. The cross-border movements by the animals increase during the breeding season. During the summer there is a general move north into Chitwan by the beasts inhabiting the northern side of Valmiki. The Indian paramilitary forces deployed along the border in response to the Maoist rebellion in Nepal have also noticed these movements – they file reports, for example of a ‘Nepali tiger’ entering the Valmiki or an ‘Indian tiger’ moving north into Chitwan. Of course the international frontier has no meaning for the big cats. They have no citizenship: they simply traverse the habitat that evolution has ordained as their own.



*Royal Bengal Tiger. (Alex Sliwa)*

During the 2003 monsoon, a tiger corpse remained trapped for two days in the sluice gate of the Gandak Barrage at Valmikinagar. The Indian press reported that a dead “Nepali tiger” was stuck in the barrage, as if the deceased creature

had a passport or identity card. In reality no one can guess the origin of a tiger in these trans-boundary habitats unless it is radio-collared or in some way marked. Even then, because of the animals' shifting bases, it is impossible to locate the points of origin of borderland tigers. In essence, a tiger can move through the forests of either country, and in any of the three protected areas. The responsibility for its care and protection subsequently rests with the forest wardens and policymakers of both countries.

In the Madi Valley of Chitwan, which hosts a cloistered settlement of Tharus and hill migrants surrounded by jungle, one hears similar references to the nationality of tigers. Between 1980 and 2000, nearly 50 people were said to have been killed in Chitwan; 24 of these deaths took place in the four years prior to 2001 in the Madi region. Most of the 'suspect' tigers were said to have been 'Indian', entering from some degraded tracts on the other side of the border. Conversely, when a tiger killed two villagers at Rhagia in India, it was assumed by the Indian authorities that the culprit was 'Nepali'. The real cause of the deaths, of course, was the increasing encroachment into the protected forests by the villagers of either nationality – this is the habitat of the tigers, after all, for which the only citizenship is the jungle.

### **Eco-regional cooperation**

As yet, no thorough study has been done on habitat status, land use and the population and movements of tigers in the area south of the Madi Valley within Chitwan, where the Nepali and Indian

forests meet. It is assumed that this is an important corridor for tiger movement between the eastern part of Valmiki reserve and the Chitwan-Parsa forest. During a May 2005 tiger census in Valmiki, several tigers were reported in this eastern sector. Evidence of tigers has also been found near the Someswar Fort, on a summit of the range by the same name, south of Madi. Boulder mining has recently been banned from Valmiki's easternmost edge, which is further expected to improve tiger habitat, with less human disturbance.

As it cuts through the Churia/Shiwalik hills, the meandering Narayani River ('Gandak as it flows into India) provides a direct link between Chitwan and Valmiki. This corridor sees the downstream movements of tigers, rhinos and ungulates from Chitwan into Valmiki during the monsoon floods. In August a field assistant with the Wildlife Trust of India even saw a tiger cub floating down river near the barrage. In 2000, a 'Nepali' rhino was located in the Pandai riverbed of eastern Valmiki. A herd of elephants was also recorded having entered Valmiki from Chitwan and moving southward towards human settlements before being driven back.

A clear protocol has still not been agreed upon as to how to deal with these animals of the contiguous forests of CPV. The across-the-border arrangements have generally been ad hoc. If this TPU is to be maintained in the relatively high quality of its habitat and wildlife, there is a need for the two countries to begin sustained cooperative efforts. This includes control of illegal logging and poaching, and ensuring that the encroachment of human inhabitants in

the surrounding villages does not degrade the quality of habitat required for the tigers and other animals.

For their parts, poachers and loggers currently use this wild frontier to their advantage, quickly hopping the border after committing forest or wildlife-related offences. Nepal's Maobaadi reportedly use the Someswar forest tract from the Bhikna Thori railhead into the Madi Valley as an arms and material supply route into the hills of central Nepal. While it is unclear whether this has impacted Nepal's conservation efforts, a sharp increase in the number of rhinos killed by poachers is clearly problematic. The national park's protection has always been the jurisdiction of the Royal Nepalese Army which is currently preoccupied with anti-insurgency operations throughout the country and is said to have lean presence in Chitwan.

The national park has long been the pride of the Nepali conservation effort and it has a far better protection system than does its Indian counterpart. But reports of a sharp rise in rhinos killed here in the last year bespeaks the deteriorating situation in Chitwan, which results in a degradation of the status of the whole cross-border region. Poachers and contraband runners come from both sides of the frontier. Last year, Nepali authorities arrested Indian villagers with leopard skins and tiger bones at Tribeni Ghat on the Gandak; earlier, a Nepali was also caught red-handed with leopard skins by Valmiki authorities. Surveillance of the region by wildlife authorities from both sides – rather than just by the paramilitary forces of one side – would help tremendously in tackling poaching and contraband trafficking.

A meeting of Indian and Nepali wildlife officials on trans-boundary



conservation was held between Nepal and India in January 1997. Far-reaching resolutions were adopted to promote the establishment of trans-border conservation areas in appropriate regions, maintain appropriate data bases and share relevant information for biodiversity conservation. It was also decided to create anti-poaching mechanisms, conduct joint training and to exchange research information on wildlife matters. At a follow-up meeting in New Delhi in 1999, the two sides agreed to develop communication systems in Nepal-India trans-border conservation areas, as well as to protect corridors for the seasonal movements of wildlife. In particular there were expressed commitments to develop eco-regional cooperation in the CPV area.

Unfortunately these laudable decisions have yet to be implemented on the ground, particularly in Chiwan-Parsa-Valmiki. Here trans-boundary cooperation is still in its embryonic stage. Admittedly Valmiki is on the road to recovery after being included in the Project Tiger scheme, added to the ban on forest resource exploitation. But because the ecological integrity of the entire CPV region is vital, it is important to maintain the high standards of management in the Royal Chitwan National park, as well as to enhance the 'integrity' of the Parsa Wildlife Reserve. All in all, focus in all three units should be on protection, containing wildlife trade, regular habitat monitoring and paying attention to the needs of the large carnivores, especially the tiger.

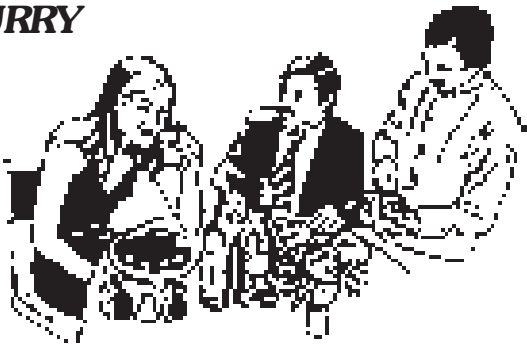


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## HE MR PRABAL RANA AND PARTY VISIT WHIPSNAD WILD ANIMAL PARK

By Jane Loveless

On a hot Sunday morning in June, Whipsnade Wild Animal Park (the Zoological Society of London's sister zoo to London Zoo) had great pleasure in introducing some of its wonderful animals to His Excellency Mr Prabal Rana and his party of twelve friends. On arrival they were immediately taken by staff to the Asian Rhino Section. The two female rhinos, Beluki and Behani (presented to the Zoological Society of London in 1997 by the late King and his government) were half-submerged in a cool mud bath quite some distance away in the paddock, so were not clearly visible. However Jaffna, the large male, was ready and waiting in his indoor enclosure for a few treats! The keeping staff was on hand with buckets of bananas, apples and vegetables that soon disappeared down Jaffna's throat. The Ambassador and friends had great fun feeding him his unexpected picnic, taking care to avoid contact with his huge, razor-sharp teeth!

Next the party visited the Elephant Section. Here they were greeted by Lee Sambrook, Team Leader, who showed us the indoor facility, and explained how the elephants are managed within it, and how they are trained to raise their feet for a pedicure. Currently, Whipsnade has four adult females, two young elephants, and

the huge male Emmett who was in musth and therefore separated from the rest of the group. We were asked not to walk too close to his enclosure as we made our way to meet Emilia, a two-year old female who was out for a walk with her mother and aunt with tails and trunks linked. Again, bananas were to hand and the party enjoyed feeding this very endearing, greedy animal.



*HE Mr Prabal SJB Rana visits the Nepalese rhinos at Whipsnade*

All in all a wonderful time was had, and the Ambassador and his party enjoyed a unique close-up with some of Whipsnade's residents. I personally would like to thank Les Radford and Mick Shillingford for the time they spent organising the section visits, and for showing us around, and of course all the keeping staff. It was much appreciated.

## 'KHUKURI TO COOKERY'

By Harish Karki

*(Harish Karki is a long-standing member of the Society, and until his recent retirement, was the owner of the 'Johnny Gurkha' restaurant in Aldershot. He served for six years in the Brigade of Gurkhas 1960-66 in the Gurkha Engineers. He returned to Kathmandu and whilst working there developed an interest in the hotel and catering industry. He is a prominent member of the Yeti organization, having variously held the appointments of treasurer, vice president and president. Ed.)*

"Imagine an exodus of experienced catering people wanting to make the dream a reality. Now imagine managers, waiters and chefs gaining access to come over to the United Kingdom on a work permit scheme; the rest is history."

In 1967 the first handful of promising, hard working and ambitious Nepalese would-be skilled workers and restaurateurs arrived in London. This was no accident but a vision and idea held by a man who went to Nepal and stayed in and around the hotels and restaurants in Kathmandu, sampling and noting down the cooking methods, spices and basic kitchen utensils used to create some of the most original fresh-tasting ethnic cuisine in the world. He managed to spread the word through visiting the sparse hotels and restaurants in Kathmandu trying to recruit chefs/assistants, cooks, waiters, managers, bar staff and to bring them over to England to start what he would successfully call his 'Kwality Empire'. The man was Mr. Riju Bhagwanani. He has since passed away but some of his family reside in Dorset. Mr. Bhagwanani set up a company by the name of KWALITY London Limited, opening his first restaurant at 145 Whitfield Street, London W1 and then

'Volga Tandoori' on the corner of Conway Street. This was followed not long after by 'Volga II' on the Edgware Road, W2.

Mr. Bhagwanani introduced and influenced the tandoori cooking delicacy in London as until then there was only a small number of Indian restaurants but none of them seemed to specialise in tandoori dishes. There was the 'Viraswamy' restaurant in Piccadilly, and the 'Agara' but the late Riju Bhagwani led the way for restaurant wallahs everywhere.

Prior to this, basic curries only were to be



found on an Indian menu, but Mr. Bhagwanani imported a clay tandoori oven from Bombay, and within a year or so the idea had caught on like wildfire and tandoori ovens became a basic yet essential part of every Asian restaurant in London and the Home Counties.

The very first Nepalese restaurant that I had known belonged to the late Krishna Bahadur Thapa. Mr Thapa opened his first restaurant in Ealing and was able to provide jobs for newly arrived Nepalis, although this is not forgetting another Nepali already working here, Ram Prasad Sharma.

Mr. Sharma came originally from the Gorkha district in the west Nepal. He has since retired from the restaurant trade, but is still in good health and prosperous. It

has been reported and widely acknowledged that late Rup Bahadur Karki arrived in the UK in 1967 under the work permit scheme. It is very saddening as he has recently demised.

Shyam Das Maharjan was the second and most experienced to the chef who arrived in 1967. The third group brought four more work permit holders into the UK, Kalu Ram Tamang, me (Hari-Bivor Karki), Ram Das Maharjan and finally Mohammed Ali. Mr. Mohammed Ali was retired and went back to his home is Kathmandu.

As my service with the British Army came to a close I returned to Kathmandu, and I was then employed in two different jobs. The first by day, I was employed as a boxing instructor under the Nepalese Ministry of Defence where I was involved with the Nepalese Cadet Corps, and then by night I worked in the Hotel Soaltee. During this period in Nepal, jobs in the hotel catering field were few and highly sought after. My ambition was to become a manager within the hotel and catering industry.

When I arrived in the UK I had no idea what civilian life would hold for me. I stayed in London for about five months and Mr. Bhagwanani asked me to go to Nepal and hold interviews for more catering-experienced workers. I selected four people and they were Dhan Bahadur Mali, Ishwor Prasad Manandhar, Punnya Das Madhikami and Ram Bahadur Gurung. As a result many Nepalese worked very hard and found their own way up through the hotel and catering system and through their honest reputation, saved sufficient funds and gained enough experience and knowledge to start up their own businesses.

When I came to England my employment with KWALITY London Ltd ceased, as the restaurant was burnt down, and not wanting to wait until the restaurant had been refurbished and re-opened, I

conferred with Mr. Bhagwanani and asked whether or not there would be any vacancies opening for me at the 'Volga'.

So, I started again and relocated to Edgware Road W2, and after working for a few months I came across an advertisement in the paper offering a variety of posts at the Portman Intercontinental Hotel, Marble Arch. I applied and was successful, securing a trainee restaurant manager post. At that time part of the advantages of working for new and highly recognised hotel was the inclusion of a qualification in hotel and catering work, recognised in the entire world. The Westminster Technical College, Victoria, was where the day release course was held and to make up the time spent at college my weekends were also to be sacrificed. After I successfully passed the course I felt bitterly disappointed as the promotion I thought I had readily deserved was given to my German colleague. Now feeling a little humiliated and disillusioned I began looking for other work. I wandered around taking up a variety of jobs until I had enough and decided to open my own restaurant. It was the very first Nepalese restaurant to open in Aldershot called 'Johnnie Gurkha's'. I tried to ensure that when customers walked in they would immediately feel at ease and as they waited for friends, family or colleagues that they could be immersed in all things Nepali style.

From my own observation and through talking to the first generation Nepalese who entered the restaurant profession, it was agreed it was a golden age. The trade that fed us, provided us with money and work and also provided us with a roof over our heads. The children of those restaurateurs who did not wish to follow in their parents' footsteps, witnessed at first hand the hard work and the unsocial hours we all had to work, and how it affected our lives with our families and at the end of

the day we all want something bigger and better for our children do we not?

It was our background that provided us with strength and showed us and how much we had achieved and how far we had all come. The trade that made us all promise ourselves that we would work hard for 10 years or so, then head back home with the hard earned money, or what money we thought we might have been able to salvage after years of contributing for our stay in the United Kingdom, seemed to have been made a lifetime ago.

We became tied with families then children and then properties were purchased. In time children needed to be sent to schools. The more and more we searched for the path to take us back to Nepal the more we found ourselves not even knowing what direction we should take. In honesty in my younger days I yearned to have money and lots of it too, but I soon learnt the value of money and what it looked like but money as a

characteristic I would say is fickle.

Since these humble and early beginnings in the restaurant trade, the food industry has surged forward in keeping with modern times, and nowadays Nepalese restaurants can be found all over the United Kingdom. The menus of these new eateries are becoming more diverse and are imaginatively titled but the heart of it all is essentially and typically a product of Nepal.

I simply wish to salute my fellow restaurant colleagues and supporters of Nepal and its cuisine.

*(Members will doubtless remember Mr Manadhar's restaurant, the 'Natraj', in Charlotte St, London, one of the very early Nepalese restaurants. Nepalese restauranteurs have now achieved just about full coverage of all UK now that the 'Gurkha Kitchen' has opened in Lerwick, Shetland! Ed.)*

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## DISASTER IN THE KANCHENJUNGA CONSERVATION AREA

By Gerry Birch

On the morning of 23 September a helicopter carrying a crew of four with twenty passengers crashed into a mountainside near the village of Ghunsa in a remote part of the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area in northeast Nepal. There were no survivors. There was, apparently, bad weather in this part of Asia at the time. On board were senior Nepalese government and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) officials, both from Nepal and the West and officials from foreign missions in Kathmandu. This tragedy received little coverage in the UK media.

The Kanchenjunga Conservation Area Project was launched in March 1998 with the aim of conserving globally threatened wildlife species such as the Snow Leopard. The area is well known for its rich biodiversity. Combined with aspects of conservation were programmes to aid the local community in areas of health promotion, education and income generation. The project had finally reached the stage to be handed over to the local community to manage, and on the previous day the formal handover ceremony had taken place. Hence senior officials involved had been flown from Kathmandu for the occasion. At the ceremony Dr Chandra Gurung said, "We are very proud to be part of this effort. The handover will be held up around the world as a positive example of people managing their own natural resources and enable learning on how to make conservation more equitable and sustainable."

It would appear that the party were travelling to view other parts of the area the next day when tragedy struck. Amongst those killed were:

Mr Gopal Rai, Minister for Forests and Soil Conservation and his senior civil servant, Dr DP Parajuli.

Mr Paul Mustonen, Finnish Charge d' Affaires.

Margaret Alexander, Deputy Director USAID

Dr Jill Bowling, Conservation Director WWF UK

Jennifer Headley, regional coordinator, Eastern Himalayas WWF UK

Mr N Poudel, Director General, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation.

Mr Sarad Rai, Director General Department of Forests.

However members are likely to have known or met:

Dr Chandru Prasad Gurung who originated from Sikles, and was Director of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) for some years. He was also Member Secretary of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, and was extremely well qualified with an international reputation among conservationists. He was the current head of the WWF Nepal Programme.



*The late Dr Chandra Gurung.*

Dr Harka Gurung who was the first Minister of Tourism. He was well known for his contribution in the fields of mountain tourism, conservation and environment. He was the author of one of the early books on Nepal, *Vignettes of Nepal*. He studied in Patna and took his Ph D at Edinburgh University. He had been a research fellow at SOAS and held other academic appointments.

Mingma Norbu Sherpa was working in Washington as Director of Conservation WWF Programmes. He originated in Khunde and attended the Hillary School in Khumjung. He obtained a degree from Canterbury University, New Zealand and a further degree from Manitoba University.

He worked as park warden in the Sagarmatha National Park, the first Sherpa to hold that appointment. He was the designer of ACAP and carried out the feasibility study, becoming Director for three years. In the WWF,

which he joined afterwards, he became the country representative of WWF's Bhutan and Nepal programmes before moving to the USA as Director of Conservation Programmes.

Dr Tirtha Man Maskey was the former Director General of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation. He started his career in 1972 as a warden of Chitwan National Park. Later he studied in the USA gaining degrees at the Universities of Michigan and Florida. He had acquired a great deal of practical experience in wildlife park management.

The loss to Nepal of all these eminent people with all their practical knowledge and experience of wildlife conservation is incalculable, especially at this time. I was able to send the Society's condolences electronically to the site opened for that purpose and HE Dr Hall undertook to pass the Society's condolences in person to

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Himal Southasian is a monthly news and current affairs magazine which is published in Kathmandu. Originally it dealt only with Nepal but due to its increasing success it now covers the SAARC / South Asian region. The editors consider this to be a 'review magazine' that contains longer and more analytical articles, two of which are reproduced in this edition of the Britain – Nepal Society Journal by kind permission of the editor.

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 BOOK REVIEW
 

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**Important Bird Areas in Nepal: key sites for conservation.** *By Hem Sagar Baral and Carol Inskipp. Bird Conservation Nepal and BirdLife International, Kathmandu and Cambridge. 2005. Pp 242. Photos. Maps. Tables. Pb. £25. ISBN 99933-792-2-0. Distributed by NHBS Environment Bookstore [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com)*

The Maoist insurgency in Nepal has largely ended the extraordinary appeal of the country for foreign birdwatchers, whose expeditions in the 1970s and 1980s contributed richly to Nepali ornithology. This publication is a testament both to their work and to that of a young cohort of skilled Nepali scientists and bird guides, who are now at the cutting edge of study into the country's threatened birds and habitats. Fittingly, the two lead authors, Hem Sagar Baral and Carol Inskipp, are two of the outstanding representatives of these home-grown and foreign generations of ornithologists.

The book's layout is similar to that of other national IBA publications. The small size of Nepal is reflected in the inclusion of just 27 IBAs. This, together with the attractive layout, makes the book particularly easy to get to grips with. The introductory sections on birds, habitats and selection of IBAs bring out well the terrific bird and habitat diversity in relation to geographical area, including the remarkable fact that six biomes are represented in Nepal, only two fewer than India.

These biomes are well featured in the IBA list and, in terms of area, about 81% of Nepal's IBA network is included in the protected areas that cover an impressive 18% of the country. Of more concern is that 12 IBAs (44%) have no statutory protection and that the average size of these IBAs is just 35,000 ha, compared to 150,000 ha for protected areas. The IBAs include such favourites as Chitwan National Park and the Annapurna Conservation Area. But many other sites are little known to foreign

birdwatchers and several have been poorly studied (the same is true for the five potential IBAs that are included). There are therefore great opportunities for visiting birdwatchers and Nepali workers to start filling in these gaps in our knowledge. The current security situation is clearly an issue and potential visitors should liaise closely with their embassies and local ornithologists to assess risks.

It will come as no surprise that Nepal's birds face a range of threats familiar in other Asian countries, such as loss of forests, wetland degradation, conversion or degradation of grasslands and hunting and fishing. The book also highlights the catastrophic reduction in numbers of *Gyps* vultures as a result of diclofenac poisoning, the spread of exotic and invasive plants and the threat posed by climate change. The authors make a range of recommendations for action, including building on Nepal's remarkable success in allowing communities to manage forests, which has led to phenomenal local increases in forest cover.

This book is the most important publication to date on bird conservation in Nepal. Let us hope that peace will soon return and allow a rapid increase in effective conservation work in this spectacular country.

*Mark Mallalieu*

*(Mallalieu was formerly Director of DFID in Kathmandu. This review appeared in the June 2006 edition of BirdingAsia, the bulletin of the Oriental Bird Club. Carol Inskipp lectured to the Society in June 2005 on this topic and an outline of her lecture appeared in the last edition of the journal. Dr Hem Sagar Baral, Chief Executive of Bird Conservation Nepal, also won an important UK award in 2005 which provided funding for the conservation of the Phulchowki IBA. He also wrote about the Koshi Tappu reserve in the 2005 edition of the journal. Ed.)*



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 OBITUARIES
 

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**Lieutenant Colonel CN Fraser**

Clive Neilson Fraser died suddenly at his home on 21st August 2006. He was born on 25th January 1944 and served in the 2nd Goorkhas from 19th November 1965 to 1st November 1993. At the time of his death, he was Honorary Secretary of the Sirmoor Club, the 2nd Goorkhas Regimental Association, a post to which he had been elected in September 2003. He came from a distinguished military family, the son of Colonel HV Fraser, CMG, OBE, TD, RTR and nephew of Colonel JN "Bumble" Fraser MBE, MC, 2nd Goorkhas. Clive enlisted at Mons Officer Cadet School, Aldershot on 28th February 1963 and was commissioned into the Royal Tank Regiment. He served with 1 RTR at Hohne in Germany until being gazetted to a Regular Commission in the 2nd Goorkhas. He joined the 2nd Battalion in February 1966 and saw operational service in Borneo during the "Confrontation" with Indonesia. Various appointments in the Battalion followed including that of Signals Officer. He was posted to the British Gurkha Transit Camp in Barrackpore to the north of Calcutta, as Adjutant for a short tour of duty from September 1969 to January 1970. Regimental appointments as a Company Commander followed until 1976 when he enjoyed a Loan Service appointment with HQ Staff of the Sultan of Oman's Armed Forces. In 1978 he served with the Training Depot Brigade of Gurkhas in Hong Kong, then with the MOD in the UK and in 1980 returned to his Battalion as Second-in-Command. A series of Staff appointments and promotion to Lieutenant Colonel followed. His penultimate appointment as a Regular officer was as Liaison Officer

Brigade of Gurkhas at the MOD from January 1989 to September 1992. It was during this time that he became involved with the Britain – Nepal Society as an ex officio member of the Society's committee. He was always very supportive of the Society's aims and events. He retired from the Active Service list in September 1993 and became a Retired Officer (RO) grade Civil Servant, working initially in Aldershot. In 1998 he moved to HQ Brigade of Gurkhas (HQBG) in Church Crookham as Brigade Secretary/Regimental Secretary The Royal Gurkha Rifles. In this appointment he was again a member of the Society's committee. In May 2000, with the impending move of HQBG to Netheravon he moved back to Aldershot to HQ 4 Division as Military Secretary and was still serving when he died.

In their tribute to him in the *Sirmooree* (the 2nd Goorkhas regimental journal), Brigadier Peter Little wrote: "Of his generation in the Regiment, Clive was amongst the most committed to what the Sirmoor Rifles stood for. He had an especially strong sense of duty and believed passionately in the maintenance of what some may now regard as old-fashioned standards, both personal and professional. He would go to endless trouble to ensure everything was in its correct place, whether for a military task or for a carefully managed social event..... He was very much one of the regiment's workhorses who had a hand in the implementation of so many of the changes to the Brigade of Gurkhas that took place after Confrontation and leading up to the disbandment of the old Gurkha regiments.... Professionally it

was no surprise that he became Brigade Secretary when he retired from the Army and later Military Secretary in HQ Southern District, where his ability to be discreet and his determination to ensure that the careers of all officers, whatever their rank, were properly and fairly managed were put to good use". Society members who either knew or worked with Clive will fully endorse these sentiments.

*(I am indebted to Brigadier Peter Little and the editor of the 'Sirmooree', Major John Burlison for their assistance with this obituary. Ed.)*

### **Capt Jimmy M Marley**

Jimmy Marley died at home on 4th February. Jimmy was born in Littlehampton in 1922 where his father was a schoolmaster at a prep school. Sadly his father died when Jimmy was only four years old. His aunt, then married to the Deputy Governor of British North Borneo (now Sabah), also died at about the same time leaving two children. As a result both families were brought up together in their grandparents' house in Hook Heath, near Woking. After prep school he gained a scholarship to Haileybury, becoming head of his house and captain of boxing. From there he won an exhibition to Queens' College Cambridge going up in 1941. During his first year he read classics and won a wartime half blue for Rugby Fives. He volunteered for the Cambridge University Officers' Training Corps, joining the Tank Corps section. There is still a letterbox in Cambridge, somewhat askew, which bears witness to his prowess at driving a tank. After a short spell in the Tank Corps, Jimmy was sent to the Officers' Training School at Mhow in India, subsequently gaining his commission in

the Indian Army in 4th Prince of Wales's Own Gurkha Rifles in November 1942. During the two month voyage from UK to India he had studied hard and passed the mandatory Urdu language examination, one of only two cadets out of the 400 on the trip to do so. Initially he found himself in HQ 115 Brigade near Dehra Dun. Many interesting people passed through at that time, the most memorable for Jimmy being Jim Corbett, the famous hunter of man-eating tigers, and author of *Man-eaters of Kumaon*. On one training exercise Jimmy was responsible for ensuring that people were clear of an area to be used for live artillery firing to accustom the infantry to advancing under artillery cover. Jimmy later discovered that one of his father's old pupils, a Gunner officer, was responsible for some rounds dropping short! After a short spell in Colombo with 4/10 GR he was posted to 3/4 GR (Chindits).

He served in Malaya, Java and Sumatra as a company commander. On his release from war service he returned to Queens' College, Cambridge and completed a law degree, having changed from classics, in two years. This entailed a good deal of hard work in austerity Britain in 1946/47 (the hard winter). On going down from Cambridge Jimmy was articled to a small family law firm and became a qualified solicitor in 1950. He remained with this firm for a short time before joining an elderly acquaintance from Woking who had a practice in the Strand. On the death of his partner in 1959 Jimmy continued there until 1970 when he joined a City partnership from which he retired in 1984. In retirement he used his knowledge of the law to help the local community with the usual problems of development and was instrumental in

the formation of the Woking Squash Club. Jimmy was a great supporter of his old regimental association, 4th (PWO) Gurkha Rifles. He made several trips to India to visit the Regiment including his last in November 2005 after serious surgery. He was a strong supporter of the Society attending, with his second wife Jenny, many of the meetings in London.



*(The picture shows Jimmy on his last trip to India at Jim Corbett's bungalow in KalaDhungi. I am grateful to Mrs Jenny Marley for providing the information on which this piece is based. Ed.)*

### **Mr Norman Eric Points**

Norman Points died on 8th January 2006 aged 83. As with so many of his generation his interest in Nepal and the Gurkhas stemmed from contact during World War II. He joined the Army, under-age, and served with the Essex Regiment. It was in the final stages of the attacks on Monte Cassino in Italy that he fought alongside the Gurkhas and retained from that time a lasting admiration for their courage and loyalty. He was seconded to SOE and parachuted into the mountains of northern Italy and was later involved in the pursuit and search for Mussolini. His next mission was to be in Borneo but the war ended whilst he was still in Singapore. After his

war service he followed a career in the Civil Service; much of this was devoted to welfare services for disabled ex-servicemen and their families. He had excellent powers of advocacy which he used to good effect in the resolution of the many problems he had to face throughout his work in this field. Such was the level of respect in which he was held that over two hundred guests attended his retirement party in London. Retirement gave him the opportunity to pursue his interest in military history, travel, clockmaking, hill walking, music and writing. He researched and published a biography of his distinguished forbear Colonel General Sir Sydenham Points of considerable renown in the Thirty Years War, the Civil War and as a Governor of Antigua. He also wrote many articles for local and in-house journals. In addition he was for twelve years chairman of the North East Essex Association of the National Trust. Sadly the last five years of his life were dogged by illness following a severe stroke which greatly reduced his ability to both write and speak. He found solace in his lifelong interest in music. Norman was a life member of the Society but age and illness prevented him from attending the Society's functions in latter years.

*(I am grateful to Mrs Lillian Points for providing the information on which this piece is based. Mrs Points edited two of the earlier editions of the journal. Ed.)*

### **Major Dudley Augustine Spain OBE, OSTJ,**

**Trisakti Patta, Gorkha Dakshina Bahu,** Dudley Spain died peacefully at his home at Bath during the night of the 18th November 2006 aged 88.

Dudley Augustine Spain was born 18th April 1918 amidst the strife of the Great

War (1914-1918) and was brought up by his grandmother in South Norwood, then a rural area to the south of London. It was perhaps this 'generation gap' that gave Dudley his quintessentially elegant manners; those of an earlier generation. After education by governess and at private schools, he took the Indian Civil Service Exam but just missed the grade in a strong intake. He opted to work in India nonetheless and joined the Midnapore Zamindari as a manager, a large estate in north Bengal which, I believe, grew jute and indigo. He was in charge of one of the sectors and was responsible for all aspects of life and management of the staff. With the clouds of another war gathering, Dudley was commissioned into the 9th Gurkhas and served in various theatres of the Second World War, and with the regiment in India and beyond. Dudley's first visit to Nepal came in 1945. He met HH Maharaja Juddha S J B Rana, the Prime Minister, in a formal Durbar. When the Prime Minister asked how he found Nepal, Dudley replied in court Nepali, "Your Highness, Nepal is a small country but like a diamond." This appealed to the Prime Minister and led to friendships with his sons and grandsons. Dudley knew every Prime Minister of Nepal from then on.



On the heels of peace came Indian Independence and Dudley transferred to 2nd King Edward's Own Goorkha Rifles. He served in Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong. In 1953 he led the 2nd Goorkhas in the Coronation Procession of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II which he described as "a very wet seven mile march." The following morning he led a detachment with the regiment's Nishani Mai (the Queen's Truncheon) to Buckingham Palace to be presented to the Queen. Later, Dudley was posted to Nepal as Embassy Liaison Officer during the construction of HQ Gurkha Lines of Communication in Dharan in eastern Nepal, and used to recall fondly the remoteness of the area in those days when the 'Char Kos Jhadhi' really was jungle and tiger were seen regularly. Spain Farm was a feature of Dharan Camp until its closure in 1989. Dudley was attached to the retinue of His late Majesty King Mahendra on his state visit to the United Kingdom. Something of his boyhood passion for trains reached its zenith with travels from London to Glasgow on the Royal Train and he used to laugh about the asperity of an unknown telephone operator somewhere around Crewe (in the days before direct dialling) who asked him to put money in the slot only to be told by Dudley that there was no slot only a plate saying HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

As a result of his travels with King Mahendra, Lord Lansdowne, the Minister of State at the FCO suggested Dudley may wish to consider a career after the army in the Foreign Office; an offer Dudley took up with alacrity and was posted as Oriental Secretary to the British Embassy in Kathmandu. This position was unusual, the officer remaining long-term, as a fixed point around which other



officials came and went. Dudley handled the portfolio of Aid, Development & Commerce as First Secretary for some sixteen years. He developed deep friendships with most of the leading figures of Nepal over those years and quipped, in 1990, as politics changed, “well, I’ll now have to dust down my old friendships with the Koiralas that have been under wraps for some time.” He met Girija Koirala when he was Prime Minister in the 1990s on one of his annual visits and they talked of the days before 1960 when BP Koirala used to visit the Dharan area.

Living in Nepal, he employed Chet Narayan Ranjitkar and his wife Jamuna and rented a flat from General Kiran SJB Rana (*Royal Nepalese Ambassador to Great Britain 1974 – 79*) at Kiran Bhavan in Sanepa. Chet and Jamuna became his loyal staff serving him until he finally retired. At the end of his Foreign Service, Dudley was appointed Country Director for Save the Children Fund UK in which role he was able to develop effective links with the Health Ministry and was instrumental in establishing Maternal Health Centres in various district hospitals. A lasting friendship with the then Health Minister, Mrs. Sushila Thapa, was able to facilitate the SCF UK long after Dudley’s retirement. During his tenure he hosted an official visit of HRH The Princess Anne, Patron of SCF UK.

Dudley married his darling Alma in later life - whom he had not met for many years as a result of the exigencies of service in the Indian sub-continent. They were happily married living between Bath and Kathmandu until Dudley retired from Nepal after his final assignment, a study on Aid and Development in Nepal for His late Majesty King Birendra in 1983. Alma predeceased him.

After retirement to England, Dudley made almost annual visits to Nepal latterly as a trustee of King Mahendra UK Trust, an international affiliate of Nepal’s King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation. He was one of the founders of the Nepal - Britain Society and was, for many years, its Trustee. He was also a senior life member of the Britain – Nepal Society, and made a strong contribution to the Society’s activities, attending many events, latterly despite difficulties he experienced with increasing age. His last appearance was at the Society’s supper on 23rd February 2006. With his long experience of Anglo – Nepali relations he was also a source of information and advice, not only to the Society’s committee but also to the Nepalese ambassadors, many of whom were either already or later became his friends.

He was an Officer of the Order of the British Empire, the Order of St. John and was invested with Gorkha Dakshina Bahu and Trisakti Patta by Their late Majesties King Mahendra and King Birendra.

Dudley represented the dedication, quiet competence, and discreet service that were the hallmark of the British officer and civil servant of his era. His knowledge of and travels through Nepal were deep and wide-ranging and, perhaps as a result of service with 9th Gurkhas, traditionally recruited from the high caste Thakuris of western Nepal, he could speak elegant Nepali with ease. Right up to his death, he was in constant touch with friends in the country. He was a staunch conservative and delighted in the developments of Nepal. We mourn his passing but in Virgil’s words – *meminisse juvabimus* – we shall delight in remembering.

*Marcus Cotton*

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## YETI NEPALI HOUSE UPDATE

For many years Nepalese living in the United Kingdom have dreamed of having a Nepali centre in London; a place where they could meet and organise social and cultural events. A space that would encompass: a library of Nepali books and literature; a class room to teach the Nepali language to the younger generation and members of our host community, sports facilities, and possibly a place to worship.

The Yeti London Welfare Foundation, a registered UK charity, was established in 1997 to create such a centre. So far, we have raised over ninety seven thousands pounds mainly due to contribution by our benevolent members and friends of the community which includes several individuals and firms contributing more

than one thousand pounds each. The Foundation's accounts are closely monitored by its trustees and regularly submitted to the charity commission.

Our initial aim is to purchase a property, with a view to building the centre at a later date, when we have sufficient funds.

I would like to thank all benevolent donors who have kindly contributed towards the fund.

Dr Raghav P Dhital  
Chairman

Yeti London Welfare Foundation  
(UK Charity Commission Reg No:  
1061923)



## *The Royal Society for Asian Affairs*

Interested in Asia? The Society's aim is to promote greater knowledge and understanding of the countries of Asia, present and recent past, from the Near East to the Pacific Rim. We are an active and friendly organisation with fortnightly lecture meetings in London, social functions, overseas tours at roughly annual intervals, thrice-yearly publication of a much respected Journal Asian Affairs, a library of over 5000 books for members' use and an archive collection whose catalogue is accessible via our website. There is a Junior Members' Section for under 25 year olds and the Society administers the annual Sir Peter Holmes Memorial Award to encourage young people aged 18-25 to travel with purpose in Asia.

Membership enquiries are invited to:

The Secretary, RSAA, 2 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PJ  
Telephone: +44(0)20-7235 5122 Fax: +44(0)20-7259 6771  
Email: sec@rsaa.org.uk Website: www.rsaa.org.uk

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The King Mahendra UK Trust for Nature  
Conservation  
6th Floor  
Gracechurch House  
55 Gracechurch Street  
London EC3V 0JP  
Tel (020) 7550 3663

The Gurkha Welfare Trust  
PO Box 18215  
2nd Floor, 1 Old Street  
London EC1V 9XB  
Tel (020) 7251 5234  
Fax (020) 7251 5248

School of Oriental and African Studies  
University of London  
Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square  
London WC1H 0XG  
Tel (020) 7898 4034

The Britain Nepal Otolaryngology Service  
(BRINOS)  
2 West Road  
Guildford GU1 2AU  
Tel (01483) 569719  
Fax (01483) 306380

Yeti Association  
(Nepali Association in UK)  
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Wembley  
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Email:  
yetinepalassociation@hotmail.com

The Esther Benjamin's Trust  
Wandsworth Business Village  
3-9 Broomhill Road  
London SW18 4JQ  
Tel (020) 8877 2519

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  
PO Box BNCC  
c/o 12a Kensington Palace Gardens  
London W8 4QU  
Tel/Fax: 01483 304150/428668  
www.nepal-trade.org.uk

Student Partnership Worldwide  
17 Deans Yard  
London SW1P 3PB

The Royal Society for Asian Affairs  
2 Belgrave Square  
London SW1X 8PJ  
Tel: 0207 235 5122  
www.rsaa.org.uk

*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 membership is 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 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 organization and they publish their own attractive journal.

Throughout the year, the Society holds a programme of evening lectures, which are currently held at the Medical Society of London, Chandos Street, off Cavendish Square, where members are encouraged to meet each other over a drink beforehand.

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 which normally takes place at the Royal Nepalese Embassy. The Society also holds receptions and hospitality for visiting senior Nepalese.

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

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

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

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

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## THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

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*Patron:* Her Royal Highness Princess Jotshana Rajya Laxmi Devi Basnyat

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

*Vice-Presidents*

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Embassy (*ex officio*)

Mr Steve Askam, FCO (*ex officio*)

Mr Simon L Lord ED, HQ Brigade of Gurkhas (*ex officio*)

*Editor of the Journal:* Lieutenant Colonel GD Birch\*

*Membership Secretary:* Mrs Pat Mellor\*\*

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