
THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

Journal

Number 33

2009

A LEGACY OF LOYALTY



The day will come when an entire generation will exist who will be unaware of the debt of honour owed to the Gurkha soldier; a generation which cannot remember, as we do, the brave and loyal service Gurkhas have given to the British Crown over nearly two centuries.

That is why we are asking those who do remember, to consider making a provision now for the time when funding and support for Gurkha welfare will be much harder to come by. You can do this by a legacy or bequest to the Gurkha Welfare Trust in your Will.

This will help to ensure the long-term future of our work.

In just the last four years the monthly 'welfare pension' we pay to some 10,400 Gurkha ex-servicemen and widows has risen from 2,500 NCR to 3,800 NCR to try and keep pace with inflation in Nepal. Welfare pensions alone cost the Trust £4.4 million last year. Who knows what the welfare pension will need to be in 10 or 20 years time.

If you do write or amend your Will to make a provision for the Trust then do please let us know. We hope it will be many years before we see the benefit of your legacy, but knowing that a number of our supporters have remembered the Trust in their Wills helps so much in our forward planning. Thank you.



PLEASE WRITE TO: The Gurkha Welfare Trust, PO Box 2170, 22 Queen Street, Salisbury SP2 2EX, telephone us on 01722 323955 or e-mail staffassistant@gwt.org.uk Registered charity No. 1103669



ACORN Nepal Trust

(Aid for Children of Rural Nepal
and Educational Trust)

Charitable Society Regd. No. 701/1999



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CONTENTS

- 4 Editorial
- 7 The Society's News
- 9 We Won – The Esther Benjamin's Trust
- 14 Golden Rain
- 18 A Great Game Connection with Jersey
- 24 Darjeeling and Tea
- 28 Autism in Nepal
- 30 From the Editor's In-Tray
- 35 Review article – Britain's Gurkha War
- 41 Short reviews
- 44 Obituaries
- 49 The International Trust for Nature Conservation
- 50 Useful addresses
- 51 Notes on the Britain – Nepal Society
- 52 Officers and Committee of the Society



The pavilion in the Dream Garden, the restored garden of the Kaiser Mahal (Kaiser Library).



Mr Jhabindra Prasad Aryal, Charge d'Affaires with the chairman at the Supper.



The vice chairman, Mr John Ackroyd and the secretary, Mrs Pat Mellor at the Supper.



Miss Myrtle Ross at the Supper.



Brig Christopher Bullock at the Museum.

 EDITORIAL

The year 2009 has been a difficult one politically for Nepal, as was indicated to the Society in the lecture given to us by HE Dr Andrew Hall earlier in the year. Changes in government will have distracted the Constituent Assembly from their task of producing the new constitution, with inevitable delays. One of the major sticking points has been the question surrounding the future of the Maoist 'fighters' now being held in UN monitored camps across the country. Negotiations to absorb some into the Nepalese Army have failed. The Chief of Army Staff refused to accept this proposition and, as a consequence, was dismissed by the Prime Minister, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, (aka 'Prachanda'). His dismissal was then reversed by the President which resulted in the Prime Minister's resignation and the withdrawal of the Maoist party from government. Mr Madhav Kumar Nepal is the current PM (as at December 2009). The Maoists then imposed a blockade on Parliament which has further delayed progress and means that it is practically certain that the May 2010 deadline for a new constitution will not be achieved. During early November it became apparent that unless Parliamentary business was resumed, the country would soon run out of government funds as the budget had not been passed. After considerable discussion the Maoists lifted their blockade for three days during which time the budget was approved. The blockade was then re-imposed. The current UN mandate will run out in January 2010. Since UNMIN has not yet fully achieved its purpose, it would seem that an extension is likely and negotiations are under way at the time of drafting. Climate change is of great importance to Nepal as everywhere else. To highlight the Copenhagen climate conference, the Maldives government held

an under-sea cabinet meeting. Not to be out done, the Nepalese cabinet held a meeting on 4th December at the Everest base camp, a somewhat costly and potentially dangerous exercise.

As ever Nepal has to face both India and China. There seems to be increasing Chinese involvement as they have indicated a greater willingness to help get food and goods to the remote northern border areas by routing traffic via their main east-west road to the north of the main Himalayan range, using feeder roads emanating southwards into Nepalese territory. The Nepalese are increasing border security at the northern passes and routes into the Tibet Autonomous Region. This will permit greater control over Tibetans wishing to enter Nepal en route to India and Dharamsala, the current home of the Dalai Lama. Both the former King Gyanendra and more recent political leaders have sought to woo Chinese support to strengthen legitimacy and to off set Indian influence to the south. The *quid pro quo* has been the tightening up over the Tibetan exiled community with the closure of the Dalai Lama's representative's office and the UN-funded Tibetan Refugee Welfare Office in 2005 by Gyanendra and the subsequent refusal by the Maoist government in 2008 to reopen these offices. Issues in respect of the Arunachal (former North East Frontier Agency)/ Chinese border are once again high on the Chinese agenda since they claim this as Chinese territory. India with her own Maoist problems, will wish to minimize problems coming out of Kathmandu. All these competing pressures have a strong influence on the direction of 'Himalayan politics'.

Notwithstanding political life in Nepal, there is this autumn a high level of tourist activity. Hotels are recording high

occupancy rates and tourists one meets all seem to have had enjoyable experiences. Looking ahead some problems would appear to be looming. Relatively little rain fell during the monsoon and already this is affecting electricity supplies with load shedding in place. Likewise drinking water will become scarcer. There are always threats of strikes and *bhanda*s by Maoist activists which could affect movement around the country, both road and air and hotel staff. Much will depend upon how the politicians resolve their differences over the coming months.

A Society as old as ours, approaching its golden jubilee, inevitably loses its founder and senior members as the years go by. This year is no exception. We were sad to learn that Jim Edwards, of Tiger Tops fame, a life member of the Society, had died in March. I had had the good fortune to meet him in Kathmandu in mid 1962, when we both arrived in Nepal at about the same time. The expat community in those days was very small so I was glad to get to know someone of my own age on my visits to Kathmandu from Dharan. Our paths crossed quite often over the succeeding years with our children attending the same prep school. Jim was initially famous for his work in making Tiger Tops an iconic location in for wildlife tourism in Nepal. With the late Colonel Jimmy Roberts he established the Tiger Mountain group of companies which set the standard for wildlife tourism, trekking and mountaineering in Nepal. This brought a large number of 'high value' tourists to Nepal, contributing greatly to Nepal's economy over many years. Jim always sought to ensure that his work was sound environmentally and took great care of the needs of his local staff. Many Society members, their children and their friends will have experienced Jim's generosity and hospitality in Nepal. He co-founded the World Elephant Polo Association. The

annual championships, held on Meghauri airstrip in Chitwan, attracted much attention from the British press, highlighting Nepal as an important tourist destination. He was also the driving force behind the setting up of the International Trust for Nature Conservation (ITNC), a conservation organisation which has been able to concentrate on projects that did not necessarily fit the remit of the large global trusts. A full obituary, written by Marcus Cotton, a colleague and friend is elsewhere in the journal.

Another erstwhile member from the early 1960s, Tom Spring-Smyth also died in mid year. The late fifties and early sixties in Nepal were what I term the 'Han Su Yin' or 'post Han Su Yin period' (*See footnote.*). It was the age of pioneering there, at least for westerners. It was the age of Boris Lissanevitch at the Royal Hotel, Father Marshall Moran at St Xaviers School and Toni Hagen, the Swiss geologist and explorer. Tom, a retired military engineer, was working for the UN on the early feasibility work for the Karnali hydro-electric project. Tom was a keen horticulturist and travelled widely looking for plants. Members will recall the outing in 2000 to the Hillier Arboretum hosted by Tom to see the Gurkha Memorial Garden that he master-minded. A full obituary, written with the aid of Tony Schilling, is also elsewhere in the journal.

Sadly too Sir Anthony Hurrell died in the spring. He was ambassador in Kathmandu 1983-86. His route to becoming ambassador did not follow the usual path, not having started his career in the Foreign Service. He was also a very keen ornithologist and bird ringer.

As the Secretary reports, one of our strongest supporters, former chairman and vice president, Peter Leggatt, very sadly died just a few days before the Society's AGM.

I am grateful as always to the Journal's

contributors. Philip Holmes has provided an update of the Esther Benjamin's Trust's continuing operations to return Nepalese girls who were working in Indian circuses in appalling conditions. With permission from the editor of *The Kukri*, journal of the Brigade of Gurkhas, I have included a story written by Lt Col John Cross, in his own inimitable style that comes from his journeying around Nepal to meet ex-servicemen and their families. Major Kelvin Kent has written about the Jersey connection with one of the nineteenth century 'Great Game' characters. Although not strictly about Nepal, it was at least peripheral to that area of operations. It was the Nepalese consul in Lhasa that helped Sir Francis Younghusband in his initial approaches to the Tibetan authorities in 1903/04. A 'game' is still being played out in Central Asia and one should perhaps remember Lord Curzon's words at the 1908 annual dinner of the then Central Asian Society, "fifty or a hundred years hence, Afghanistan will be as vital and important a question as it is now." Darjeeling is very much part of the Nepalese diaspora and is well known to senior members of the Society. Thanks to the late Mr Peter Leggatt, a director of Camellia PLC, I am pleased to include a short article from the *Camellia Journal*, house magazine of Camellia PLC, which sketches out a brief history of the development of the tea industry in the Darjeeling district. Nepalese were encouraged to take up work in the developing tea gardens in the late nineteenth century. Over the succeeding years with both an expanding population and increased development, there has been a movement of Nepalese north and east into Bhutan's lowland region, to Assam and the surrounding states. Nepali is a very useful language for travel within north east India. There is a twenty year, outstanding dispute with Bhutan over the question of the Nepalese ethnic group, known as the

Lhotshampas that established itself there. Some 90,000 refugees were put in camps in east Nepal that have been in existence since the early 1990s and although the question is still not settled, some 60,000 are being offered the chance to move to the USA.

Thanks to the efforts of John Cross, Mr John Pemble has had his original work on the 1814 -16 Anglo-Nepal war republished. The book has been thoroughly reviewed under the new title of *Britain's Gurkha War*. The Society was privileged to receive a lecture from Pemble, the text of which has been published in *Asian Affairs*, the journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs (formerly the Royal Central Asian Society). There is quite a literary tradition in the Society as the 'Short Review' section demonstrates. I congratulate the authors involved. Harish Karki has written about his early life in Nepal and the army before coming to UK and becoming a successful restaurateur. Brigadier Christopher Bullock has written the definitive history of the Brigade of Gurkhas and John Cross is continuing his series of historical novels. There are here plenty of ideas for members or indeed their spouses for suitable presents.

The frontispiece photograph shows the pavilion in the recently restored section of the garden of Kaiser Mahal. This has been tastefully done and is a haven of quiet amongst the noise and bustle of Kathmandu. There is a good restaurant and coffee bar run by the Dwarika Hotel. It is an excellent place to sit and write or just relax. The famous library put together by the late Field Marshal 'Kaiser' Shumsher Rana (1892-1964) with its pictures provides a reading area for students and visitors and houses the Ministry of Education.

(Foot note: Han Su Yin wrote a novel set in Kathmandu in the late 1950s entitled *The Mountain is Young*. Her characters are based on real people there at that time and her description of life in the Valley is very evocative. Ed.)

THE SOCIETY'S NEWS

By Pat Mellor

Once again, we have been privileged to be able to hold our AGM and our Executive Committee Meetings at the Nepalese Embassy by kind permission of Mr Jhabindra Aryal, Charge d'Affaires. The Committee and Members give their thanks to Mr Aryal and to all the members of the Embassy staff who are always unfailingly charming and helpful to us. This last year I have been acting as Honorary Secretary with the great help of Mrs Jenifer Evans. However I am looking forward to all the Members putting their minds to finding that elusive being – a new keen Honorary Secretary bursting with wonderful new ideas.

LECTURES

In 2009 the Society was able to hold four talks, three at the Medical Society of London and one at Canning House, Belgrave Square, where the Royal Society for Asian Affairs have their office & library and hold their talks. These were:

Wednesday, 28th January Lt Col Gerry Birch gave a fascinating talk with a collection of slides from the 1948/49 American Zoological Expedition to Nepal from the archives of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs.

Thursday, 12th March, John Pemble's talk was entitled "Gurkhas, Guns & Shawl- wool goats – Looking again at the Anglo Nepalese War". John Pemble took members through the new revised edition of his book entitled "Britain's Gurkha War – The invasion of Nepal 1814-16". This

book has a forward written by the inimitable John Cross.

Thursday, 26th March at Canning House – (rather soon after the last lecture but fitting in with Dr Andrew Hall's visit to London), HE Dr Andrew Hall OBE, British Ambassador to Nepal, gave members an outline of the present situation from both the political and general angle in Nepal. This talk was attended by many members interested to hear directly about the current situation. Dr Hall gave members a clear, if somewhat depressing picture of some aspects but it was hoped that some improvements were possible as work continued on the constitution. Members were keenly interested and kept Dr Hall answering questions long after the official end of the talk.

Thursday, 15th October, George Band OBE gave a talk entitled 'Everest 1953, Hillary and His Himalayan Trust', which gave us a picture of Ed Hillary and the schools that he started in Nepal as a charitable trust. This very popular talk was followed by a Nepali supper attended by some 40 members and guests.

Our grateful thanks goes to all these excellent speakers who gave us their time, shared their knowledge and showed beautiful slides. We look forward to meeting them again and thanking them personally at the Annual Nepali Supper in 2010.

ANNUAL NEPALI SUPPER

As usual, the Supper was held at St Columba's Church of Scotland Hall in Pont Street on the 19th February 2009, with over 120 people attending. This was a very happy and successful evening and we were glad to welcome orderlies and a piper from the Queen's Gurkha Engineers to play during the evening. Members really appreciate the help that these men so willingly provide. Also we were happy to welcome the two Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers to the Supper as our guests.

Please note that the date for the 2010 Annual Nepali Supper is Thursday, 18th February.

SUMMER OUTING

The Summer Outing this year was held on Sunday, 4th July, when, with great help in the arrangements from Mrs Jenifer Evans, we visited the Gurkha Museum in Winchester. Some 43 members gathered for a pre-lunch drink and chat (of which there was plenty) and then we all trooped into the very lovely dining room at the Museum with the tables set with the silver and settled down to a delicious lunch supplied by the Gurkha Kitchen Restaurant nearby. After lunch, Brigadier Christopher

Bullock OBE MC gave a short and interesting talk about his forthcoming book, *Britain's Gurkhas*, before we toured the Museum, which has seen many of the exhibits brought up to date. It was a fascinating and well worthwhile a visit, and an excellent day out.

The date for the Summer Outing next year is to be Saturday, 3rd July 2010 to Whipsnade Zoo.

DEATHS

It is with sadness that I have to report that the following members died during 2009:

Dr Brian C Davies
Mr A V Jim Edwards, Life Member & Founder of Tiger Mountain
Sir Anthony Hurrell KCVO CMG – former ambassador in Kathmandu
Mrs Diana Roberts
Major T Le M Spring-Smyth

Late Note:

It is with great sadness that we have to record the sudden and unexpected death of Mr Peter A Leggatt, MBE, at his home in London on Sunday 29th November, former chairman and vice president of the Society. An obituary will be included in the 2010 edition of the journal.

SOCIETY TIES SCARVES AND LAPEL BADGES

Mr David Jefford kindly looks after the sale of the Society ties and scarves which cost £10.00 each including postage. They are available from him at: 20 Longmead, Fleet, Hampshire GU52 7TR or at the AGM or one of our major functions.

Miss Jane Loveless has supervised the production of a very attractive lapel badge which is available for sale for £3.00 at the AGM and other major functions.

WE WON

By Philip Holmes

Founder/Director - The Esther Benjamin's Trust

“Tirmaya, aged 14, from Nepal, was sent by her parents to the Weston Circus at the age of six. She went there through an agent, whom she identified as Dhan Bahadur of Nepal, a local man. She does not remember her exact address. She has not visited her home in all these years, nor have her parents visited her. She requested Dhan Bahadur to take her back to her parents, but he pretended not to recognise her. She implored the researchers to help her return home.”

This extract comes from a report we published in 2003 which followed our undercover survey during the latter half of 2002 investigating the use of trafficked children in Indian circuses. Tirmaya was one of scores of lost Nepali girls we found inside the circuses – each of whom had been sold by their parents into a life of abuse (including sexual abuse) and exploitation by cruel circus owners.

Nepalese girls were highly sought after by the circuses as a way of attracting customers who were lecherous voyeurs rather than circus skills fanatics. The girls would be scantily clad during performances, with fixed smiles; if they smiled too much or too little they would be beaten after the show.

These modern-day slaves performed three times a day, seven days a week with continuous training between shows. They were bound to the circuses by illegal contracts brokered by scurrilous child trafficking agents – contracts which effectively imprisoned them for 10 to 15 years with no remuneration. Illiterate parents had no idea as to the content of

the contracts they were ‘signing’ – often with a thumbprint as they had never held a pen before, let alone used one – and they were frequently written in English in any case.

Other parents didn’t care, for in selling the children they would often be offloading unwanted progeny from first marriages for a few dollars in up-front cash with the prospect of additional payments further down the line. They were consigning their daughters to oblivion.

Six years ago I was shaken by the grim content of our report, its findings of vicious beatings and entrapment inside these prisons that masqueraded as circuses, and I was moved by the desperate requests of the children for the researchers to help them. It seemed like an impossible task for our new, very small charity – an apparently unequal, unwinnable struggle with the powerful Indian circus industry. But it was one I felt we had to accept.

We set up an office at Hetauda in the south of Nepal, in the heart of the main child trafficking area of Makwanpur District. We liaised with families who had sent children south into India and regretted their decision. They sought help in retrieving their daughters. We built up a “Hetauda List” – the names and details of missing children against their last known circus whereabouts. Then we began to work through the list, circus by circus, mounting rescue operations by sending a team into India (sometimes accompanied by parents) to wherever a particular circus was thought to be playing. Some of our team members

were former circus staff – poachers turned gamekeepers – who could use their connections in India to establish a circus’s whereabouts. At the circus location the team would link up with the local authorities and instigate a police raid on the unsuspecting circus.

The first big rescue took place in April 2004 when we freed 29 children from The Great Indian Circus in Kerala, south India. Interviews with the rescued children and teenagers indicated that the situation inside the circus was even worse than we had believed. The newly-rescued girls could talk freely and it became clear that all of the teenagers were being raped by the circus owner. One little boy, Shankar, had the horrifying task of taking girls to the circus owner’s tent at night. He would hear the screams and pleas for mercy as he waited outside. Others told of food that was full of stones and shared with the animals. The punishment for attempted escape was to be stripped naked and beaten in front of the whole troupe. The victim’s cries would be drowned by the revving of circus motor bike engines.

Our rescues have continued ever since and we have made astonishing progress to achieve results in what can often be a losing battle. These results can be measured not just in terms of children rescued but by how closely we support the trafficking survivors and their families after the retrieval operations – and by the actions we have taken against the perpetrators.

Many survivors have no families to return to, so we offer long-term refuge accommodation in Kathmandu that offers compassionate care and support, education and vocational training and social development opportunities. Where

reunification is possible (and deemed safe) we financially support the children as they rejoin school and the older ones who enter vocational training.

Beyond our main focus of care, we have tackled the trafficking problem at its core in two key respects: income generation activities are helping communities to develop their own sustainable income and subsequently not be so vulnerable to the approaches of traffickers; meanwhile, we have successfully pursued legal action against the traffickers and circus owners – with lengthy custodial sentences suitable deterrents to any prospective agent or owner.

Dhan Bahadur Gurung, the agent mentioned in Tirmaya’s case, was apprehended in early 2005. In a landmark court case, for which we provided the witnesses and legal team, he was convicted of trafficking in May 2006 and sentenced to the maximum 20 years in prison with no prospect of remission. This was the first time the circus was recognised by a Nepalese court as being “immoral” and a trafficking destination comparable to the Indian sex trade. Since then we have put another 12 agents behind bars, the latest one being a notorious agent called Shankar Basnet. No known agents are currently trafficking to the circus industry.

Lakhan Chaudhary, a prominent circus owner, had raped some of the girls at his New Raj Kamal circus. When we rescued these girls in 2007, he was sent to prison pending trial; he was the first circus owner to be jailed. The trial began this year and we provided the witnesses. The key witness, Rita (name changed), was one of his victims and she gladly and confidently gave evidence against him. That she had the confidence to testify is

tribute to her and the recovery she has made in our secure, compassionate residential refuge.

Changing tide

Throughout 2008 it became clear to us that a sea change was taking place within the circuses – they were voluntarily sending girls back to Nepal to avoid the bad publicity they had been receiving in the media. (For example: a rescue that I went on in June 2008 received front page coverage in *The Times of India*. Circus owners didn't want the hassle, and no doubt the word about Chaudhary's arrest was getting around.) The net flow of Nepalese girls was definitely back from the circuses, a turning of the tide that I had not anticipated. Nor had I expected improvements in working conditions inside the circuses, with the violence stopping and girls being paid salaries. This being the case, many girls chose to stay with the troupe rather than return to a more uncertain future in Nepal through voluntary release by the circus.

This trafficking route between Nepal and India is now closed; the supply has stopped because agents are in jail and there is no longer a demand from the circuses for Nepali girls. The "Hetauda List" has evaporated. Such a victory is a rare occurrence in the struggle against child trafficking, where the traffickers so often seem to be one step ahead of the authorities and concerned organisations such as ours. This is certainly a battle won, but a greater challenge lies ahead.

The challenge is to provide continuous care for over 150 children whose only support now is The Esther Benjamins Trust. We provide the accommodation, care, access to education and vocational training these young people need to recover. It costs £45 per child per month

to provide this care – and with many children likely to be with us for at least the next 10 years, that is a long-term commitment.

Hundreds of other Nepali children have been displaced to India – some working in coalmines, others living on the streets without support. Our researchers are currently investigating the severity of the problem, but it is feasible that more children will need to be afforded the same care and attention as the other beneficiaries we are helping.

To meet these commitments, we need substantial funds – and that is why I am asking you to join me as a child sponsor. For £25 per month you could pay for one child's full residential care; £15 would cover their education. If you can spare £5 per month, it will help a child to enjoy the stimulating social activities we coordinate at the refuge. Alternatively, you might like to consider becoming a testator if you are planning to draft or re-write your Will. Please remember how even a modest gift in your Will can be made to go a very long way in impoverished rural Nepal.

The Esther Benjamins Trust
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GOLDERN RAIN

By John Cross

(I am grateful to the editor of 'The Kukri', journal of the Brigade of Gurkhas for permission to reproduce this piece. Ed.)

The two old men had been enemies for more than half a century. Their quarrel had its roots in the distribution of their inheritance. The elder brother, Jaimordhan Rai, aged 80, had the lower and better plot of land: his younger brother, Dhanmordhan Rai, aged 76, had the upper and less fertile. Local legend had it that the division of the two properties was a line of old laburnum trees but according to the younger brother that was not where their father had intended it to be. Claim and counter-claim had soured relations to such an extent that the two men only ever met when an important visitor arrived; otherwise they went their own way, armed with kukris against an attack by the other. I learnt all this as I walked in the hills of eastern Nepal in early 1967.

Back in the unit, while planning my trek, I had been asked by a soldier if I would visit his house, taking a letter to his father. I told him to explain where it was to my soldier-guide who, in turn, told me it was an hour's walk from his own home, down in the valley.

Winter was over when we reached my guide's home high up on a ridge but the cold wind was still bitter, bringing flurries of late snow. He had business to attend to so suggested I went down the valley to the home of the soldier whose letter I had said I would deliver.

"It's warmer down there than up here. Time you stopped shivering!" He grinned at me. "Leave tomorrow

morning after your meal. You'll be there by noon; I'll send my younger brother as guide."

"That's fine. I'll be back by late afternoon."

He eyed me, hesitated, and then said, "I'll expect you when I see you but don't forget we're due to move off north tomorrow, for a week or so."

The weather grew warmer as we descended and I appreciated it. From a vantage point I saw a large house, strongly built and surprisingly gracious of aspect. It was surrounded by an orchard of orange, apple and peach trees, all starting to bloom. There were banana plants and a vegetable garden. Up the slope, maybe ten minutes walk away, was a much poorer house with the surrounding land ill-kempt. A row of trees ran between the two areas, the richer and the poorer, almost like a dividing line of falling golden rain, so profuse were the flowers.

"That's where we're heading for", my guide told me.

"What are those trees with yellow flowers?" I asked him.

"Laburnum."

Barking dogs brought the family out, women and children first then, a minute or so later, a stiff-backed old patriarch, the master of the house. He looked at me inquiringly but said nothing. I went up to him and made the customary salutation. "I'm your son Kishné's officer. I come with his greetings, bearing a letter from him to you. He is in good health and doing well."

The old man, still not talking, gestured that a chair be brought for me. He then winced and put his hand over his mouth.

He was obviously in great pain.

After refreshment had been offered the old man leant over to me and, with a great effort, said, in a straightforward way that brooked no argument; "You are my guest. You will stay here until the day after tomorrow, spending two nights in my house. No friend of Jaimordhan Rai ever stays less."

He paused, winced and put his hand to his face as though nursing his mouth. He shook his head obstinately when I remonstrated that in no way could I abuse his hospitality for so long and, anyway, I had to move farther north the next day.

He turned to my guide and dismissed curtly: "You heard. Tell that up there to your elder brother. Be off now. I'll look after my son's saheb and arrange for an escort from here when the time comes."

Before I could expostulate further we were joined by another old man who came down the hill. He looked furtively about then asked, Nepalese style, not directly to me but to another, who I was. No one answered so he introduced himself as the younger brother, Dhanmordhan Rai, from the house up the hill. The two old men sedulously ignored each other except when the dictates of convention compelled otherwise. It was embarrassing and I felt uneasy; two days and two nights, I dismally thought, during an awkward silence as I remembered the gossip I had picked up on my way.

I turned to my host and said he seemed to be in pain.

"My tooth ache is so bad, has been for six months, that I could easily hang myself from one of my fruit trees and relieve myself for ever from this wicked pain. I haven't had a proper meal since it started."

It was at least ten days' walk to the

nearest dentist and then there was no guarantee of anything being done when he got there. Also it was a tremendous effort for the old man, who lived in hopes it would get better of itself. That gave me an idea: escape was impossible that day, but as I had some Chinese toothache dope in my kit in my guide's house, I thought I would offer to go and fetch it for him the next day - then, having escaped, send it back down.

That evening, after our meal, Jaimordhan, torn between pain and the dictates of hospitality, sat and talked. I egged him on judiciously, and I learnt his side of the quarrel between the two brothers. It seemed that the division of the two properties was the line of laburnum trees but that was disputed. It all struck me as so sad that such a feud, having festered for so long, would probably outlive them both and continue into the next generation.

My bed was to be one side of the porch. I was surprised to see two lots of blankets brought out. I was put on one side and my host slept on the other, with a kukri by his side and a lantern burning all night. He had slept with that particular kukri ever since the quarrel started. Before we went to sleep I put my plan to him and he only acquiesced when I said I'd come back down for the other night after my journey north.

I bade farewell after our meal next morning. I told the old man to send someone with me to bring back the phial of dope and before I left I demonstrated how to put some cotton wool on a sliver of wood...

...I returned ten days later. The whole family turned out to greet me. I was amazed to see the two old men, the two brothers, obviously friendly and happy to be with each other where before the opposite had been the case. I was

garlanded and made to sit between them.

"We want to tell you," said Jaimordhan, "that we have made up our quarrel. And it is all thanks to you!"

"Yes," chimed Dhanmordhan, "that is so. We are now talking to each other properly after more than fifty years."


They could only tell me that the toothache was completely cured and, in the euphoria of no pain and being able to eat again, Jaimordhan had suggested to Dhanmordhan that he also try it. He had sniffed it but, even so, the magic of the dope had persuaded him to take the hand of reconciliation that his elder brother had proffered. It was all rather wonderful and far beyond the expectations of any of us, including myself.

Later on that day I paid Dhanmordhan a visit in his house. Before I went I examined the dope and made it a

permanent present for my host. As I walked back down to stay a second night in the lower house, I guessed the secret of the dope's magic. Apart from curing toothache by its mild poison killing the damaged nerves, its latent power of patching up quarrels probably lay in the fact that it had a laburnum base (as I had read when I gave it to Jaimordhan) and the smell of it had subtly reminded them of the smell of the yellow blossoms of the laburnums that had unconsciously taken them both back to childhood years of happiness.

Although that is pure conjecture, the kukri that Jaimordhan had slept with all those years is very real. It is in my possession, given as a token of that magical day.

Years later I learnt from Kishné that neither of them had quarrelled again for as long as they lived.

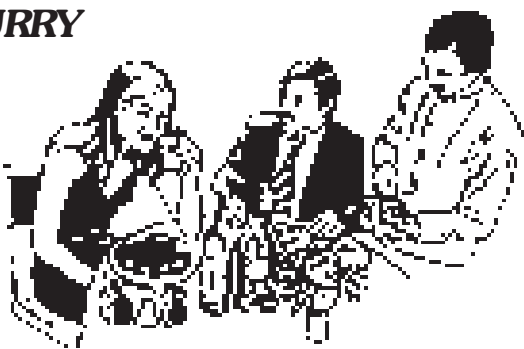


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A GREAT GAME CONNECTION WITH JERSEY?

George Macartney's Role in Kashgar

By Kelvin Kent FRGS

Although this piece is not about Nepal itself, Nepal is integral to the Sub-continent and its history. Many British officers and Gurkha soldiers played their part in what became known as 'The Great Game' played out in Central Asia in the 19th & 20th centuries. Kelvin Kent, a member of the Society, now living in the USA, is a 'Jerseyman', as was the late Jim Edwards. Kent lived in Jersey throughout the German occupation. Both Kent and Edwards were educated in Jersey at the same time and knew each other.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century a titanic imperial struggle for supremacy in Central Asia took place primarily between Victorian Britain and Tsarist Russia that involved Manchuruled China, the Indian sub-continent and even Germany, Japan and the remnants of the Ottoman Empire. This extremely dangerous and courageous venture, whose spies worked under the guise of explorers, archaeologists and diplomatic entities, became known as 'The Great Game'. Rudyard Kipling's famous character Kim was nothing more than "a pawn in the Great Game."

The Great Game's intelligence battlefield extended from eastern Turkey into what are now known as northern Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Afghanistan, Western China, Japan, Tibet and, of course, the old Indian sub-continent. Indeed, the goal of all parties concerned was to scout out and analyze the locations,

movements and aspirations of the opposing sides, knowing that the control of routes over the passes into India and the domination of that country's vast resources were the principal aims and attractions.

The British, first by way of the British East India Company and, from 1858 onwards, after the Mutiny the year before, the British Government itself was firmly entrenched in India and all of what is now Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Burma with spheres of influence in western China, Afghanistan and neighbouring communities. However, the Russians, who themselves were pushing relentlessly eastwards, just north of the actual Great Game geographical regions, were becoming concerned with the possibility of preventing further British expansion and eagerly wished to grab some of the action for themselves. The great historical 'Silk Road' cities like Bokhara, Samarkand, Yarkand, Turfan and Kashgar became centres of intrigue and virtual 'open season' for both subtle and not-so-subtle methods of sizing up the competition and using subterfuge to thwart the efforts of any opponent. Expeditions reported back to the British Viceroy in India, the Royal Geographical Society in London and the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. These organisations were involved in the arrangements for tasks of traditional exploration, scientific research, and cartographical work, which provided detailed measurements, local intelligence and intricate map-making reports relevant to military intelligence operations.

One of the Great Game explorers was the soon-to-be famous Lieutenant Francis Younghusband who made the first known European crossing of the treacherous Mustagh Pass over the Karakoram Mountains to modern Pakistan in 1887. Younghusband had made a pioneer journey of 4,000 miles all the way from Peking, via the Gobi Desert, for seven months and, of course, brought back much valuable intelligence information – not least of which was gathering information about what the Russians were up to. Earlier, such famous characters as Moorcroft, Conolly and Stoddart embarked on incredibly dangerous missions resulting, not unexpectedly, in death by brutal means. Other professional explorers like the Swede, Sven Hedin, also paved the way in many of the critical areas. But also participating indirectly in the Great Game were famous archaeologists of the day like the foreign-born British expert, Sir Aurel Stein, the German, Albert Von Le Coq, the Frenchman Paul Pelliot, the mysterious Count Otani from Japan and later, the American, Langdon Warner. All of these men shared one thing in common and that was the city of Kashgar, situated just west of the notorious Taklamakan Desert where the northern and southern legs of the Silk Road joined before continuing westwards to the Mediterranean. Kashgar, an oasis city in present-day Zinjiang Province of Western China, at the foot of the Tian Shan Mountains, had become one of the key locations for the gathering of intelligence and subsequent communication back to the British Government in India and the Russian equivalent in St Petersburg. It was also China's westernmost railway

outpost but accessible from Kashmir. As a firmly Muslim stronghold, in an Islamist dominated region, it housed the largest mosque in China. For the British, however, it was not just Kashgar as a key strategic location but the man who fulfilled the position of host, consul and "mailbox" for some thirty years from 1891 to 1918. His name was George Macartney, who, at the age of 24 had accompanied Younghusband on another of his expeditions, this time to the Pamirs. The aim was to fill in the blanks on British maps and assess the likely allegiance of local tribes, whether to Afghanistan or China. Macartney spoke fluent Chinese and was the offspring of a mixed British Chinese marriage since his father, Halliday Macartney, a British military officer serving in China, had married close female relative of the then rebel Taiping Prince. Halliday Macartney later joined the Chinese army under General Charles Gordon and served in a number of mid level civilian positions in Nanking. About a century earlier, an even more well-known member of the same Scottish family from Auchinleck, another George Macartney – later to become Viscount Macartney and an Earl in the Irish Peerage, had been a distinguished diplomat serving as governor of Madras in India and Britain's first official representative to China's emperor.

For nearly 30 years the George Macartney (of Kashgar), with his amazing linguistic skills and ability to speak Mandarin, French, Russian, German, Persian, Turkic and Hindustani, acted as valued interpreter and British Representative and Consul, operating from the same premises known as Chini Bagh. But the amazing

thing about this unusually intelligent, quiet and gifted man was that he made Chini Bagh the social centre, repository and meeting place for all of the Great Game players of that time. This he accomplished with the aid of his new wife, Catherine whom he brought out to India in 1898. That it was, literally, a sophisticated game, no one denied, but sharing Russian vodka, English delicacies or Japanese saki was all par for the course. In fact, Macartney became the linchpin, freight handler and post office for all expeditions and movements to the east, north and south. His information was later used by Younghusband in preparation for the latter's expedition into Tibet in 1903/4 and by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, in helping to formulate British strategy in central Asia.

Throughout the 1880s and 90s and up to two years after World War I, Macartney, now regarded as the central character in the region, both for military intelligence and for possessing all the latest knowledge concerning the incredible treasures that were being discovered and evacuated through Kashgar by the British, German, Japanese and French, was, himself, crucial to British foreign policy in the region. Certain extremely valuable manuscripts were named after him and he saw fit to purchase, for his country, many ancient Buddhist works of art uncovered from the desert regions to the east. Macartney also masterminded all clandestine operations and consolidated the resulting intelligence. His network of spies were known as *Aksakals* and resided in nearly all of the surrounding towns. He dealt expertly and amicably with all his counterparts and maintained the very best of

diplomatic relations with those who were known to be in direct opposition to the British policies in Asia. Peter Hopkirk, author of *The Great Game, Foreign Devils on the Silk Road* and other publications on this fascinating period of British imperial history describes George Macartney as "one of the truly great players" of the Great Game. In 1913 he received a KCIE and was rewarded with the building of a grand new consulate building on the very site of Chini Bagh. Even the Russians and Chinese recognized him as consul-general.

But what of a Jersey connection? It seems that Sir George and Lady Macartney, having retired from the civil service (probably in the late 1920s or 1930s) opted for a life of comparative seclusion, away from the limelight of British society. They purchased a flat in Jersey. For some reason (probably because he became ill) he was evidently "trapped" in Jersey by the German Occupation and is listed as having died there at the age of 78 on May 19th 1945, just a few days after Liberation Day. One obituary shows his address in Jersey as 4 Overseas, Dicq Road in St Savior. This was what one would currently view as a cross between a respectable flat and a retirement home. It was owned by the Sowden family and, ironically only a hundred yards from where I grew up in a house called Leighton in Dicq Road. Evidently he had three children, Eric, Sylvia and Robin. It would be interesting to find out if there is more to this story. Could there still be people on the island who knew him? References to this George Macartney, accessible via the web, show vastly disparate information, and tend to mix him up with his earlier

namesake and even spell his name differently. However, a book entitled *Macartney at Kashgar – New Light on British, Chinese and Russian Activities in Sinkiang*, by Sir Claremont Skrine and Dr. Pamela Nightingale, first published by Methuen and Company Limited in 1973, offers the most accurate account of this remarkable, unorthodox, cordial, popular, modest, astute, tactful and influential man who endured nearly 30 years of difficult circumstances in one of the remotest outposts of the British Empire. Much later, one of Britain's most famous mountaineers, Eric Shipton, also occupied the position of British Consul in Kashgar. Even today a modern version of the 'Great Game' is still being played out in Central Asia.



Detailed map of the Kashgar region.



George Macartney on left with Francis Younghusband on right with the Amban of Yarkand in the centre. Taken at Yarkand in 1890.

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GIVING NEPALESE CHILDREN A CHILDHOOD

The Esther Benjamins Trust is a registered children's charity working for some of the most marginalised children in Nepal. It was set up in 1999 by Lt Col Philip Holmes in memory of his wife who took her life in January of that year because of childlessness.

The Trust works through its own partner organisation, the Nepal Child Welfare Foundation, which is unique in being run by former British Army Gurkha officers. Since its inception, the Trust has given freedom and a loving home to innocent children imprisoned in adult jails alongside parents (the two youngest are pictured), and street children escaping domestic abuse. We fund education for deaf children and we are rescuing and rehabilitating some of the hundreds of Nepalese girls who have been trafficked into India to work as circus performers. Held on long contracts in grim conditions, these girls are subject to frequent physical and sexual abuse. We bring them back to Nepal, to their families and communities. We offer education to younger ones to prepare them for mainstream school, and training and employment to older ones at a range of farming and business initiatives that we are developing.

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DARJEELING AND TEA

By Arun Singh

Managing Director Goodricke Group Ltd

(This article is a shortened version of a piece that appeared in the winter 2009 edition of the 'Camellia Journal', the house magazine of Camellia PLC. I am grateful to the Directors of Camellia PLC for permission to reproduce it here. Ed.)

The history of Darjeeling is complex. Originally ruled by the Raja of Sikkim, the land we know today as Darjeeling, which lies in the foothills of the Himalayas, was the subject of much dispute during the latter part of the eighteenth century. At that time Sikkim was engaged in a series of unsuccessful local wars and the Nepalese Gorkhas had made significant inroads into Sikkim territory. British attempts to prevent the Gorkhas from overrunning the entire northern frontier culminated in the Anglo-Nepal war of 1814. The Gorkhas were defeated in 1816 leading to the treaty of Segauli, the terms of which obliged Nepal to cede all territories it had annexed from the Raja of Sikkim to the East India Company. Two years later, under the treaty of Titalia, the East India Company reinstated the Raja (whom the Gorkhas had driven out), and restored to him the lands between the Mechi and the Teesta and guaranteed his sovereignty.

The intervention of the British effectively prevented the Gorkhas from turning the whole of Sikkim into a province of Nepal. But stability did not last long; ten years later a dispute arose again between Sikkim and Nepal. The terms of the Treaty of Titalia meant that the British Governor General, Lord Bentinck, was called upon to settle the matter, which he in turn deputed to a Captain Lloyd.

Captain Lloyd, accompanied by Mr JW

Grant, the Commercial Resident at Malda, duly visited Darjeeling. From a report dated 18 June 1829, we learn that Lloyd had visited the 'old Gorkha station called Darjeeling' in the February of that year and 'was immediately struck with it being well adapted for the purpose of a sanatorium'.

The men also recognised the strategic importance of Darjeeling's location.

Lord Bentinck promptly instructed one Captain Herbert together with Grant, to examine and map the area, giving particular consideration to its strategic and communication benefits. Their report confirmed the feasibility of establishing a sanatorium in Darjeeling and so Lloyd began negotiations with the Raja of Sikkim for the transfer of Darjeeling in return for an equivalent sum of money or land. In 1835, the negotiations were concluded and Darjeeling was gifted to the British East India Company.

Essentially the deal was an unconditional cessation of what was then a worthless uninhabited mountain. The land gifted by the Raja was not the whole of Darjeeling as we know it today, but just a narrow enclave of some 138 square miles, which included the towns of Darjeeling and Kurseong, with entry and exit being restricted to a narrow path. In return, the Raja received a gift parcel comprising one double barrelled gun, one rifle, 20 yards of red broad cloth and two shawls, one of superior quality and one of inferior quality. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Raja appeared before the Governor General for compensation and in 1841 it was agreed he would receive an allowance of Rs. 3,000 per annum.



The bronze Buddha at Badamtam.

Tea in Darjeeling

Having acquired their tract of land, the British transferred Dr Campbell, a civil surgeon in the Indian Medical Service from Kathmandu to Darjeeling in 1839 to be Superintendent of the new territory and sanatorium. He devoted his energies to the task of developing the station and attracting settlers who could cultivate the mountain slopes, as well as stimulating trade and commerce. Dr Campbell made his own attempts at cultivation bringing China tea seeds from Kumeon, a hill station in northern India, and planted them in his garden. One must presume his efforts were successful because in 1847 the government decided to plant out tea nurseries in the area.

The first commercial tea gardens were established in 1852. These early estates comprised three gardens, Tukvar, Steinthal and Aloobari, all of which were planted with seeds raised in the government

nurseries. Within four years their success led to the cultivation of a further 25 – 20 hectares and by 1864 ten or so gardens had been set up.

Darjeeling tea has worldwide reputation for excellence due to its fine quality and flavour. Here tea is grown in century old gardens, at elevations of 750 – 2,000 metres. The bushes thrive on the rich soil, nurtured by intermittent rainfall, sunshine and moisture laden mellow mists, whilst the hilly terrain provides natural drainage for the district's generous rainfall.

The high quality results in extremely low yields with Darjeeling producing only some 10 million kilos of tea a year. The taste of the teas varies with the seasons – the first growth after the dormant winter period (known as the first flush) produces astringent, flavoursome teas, much prized by some buyers, particularly those in Germany. But those of the second growth of flush are regarded by many as the finest

teas, producing as they do a more mature and lasting flavour. These teas have a full taste with a hint of muscatel.

There are just 86 estates producing Darjeeling tea, covering a total area of only 19,000 hectares and accounting for 3% of India's total tea output. The estates employ more than 52,000 people on a permanent basis with a further 15,000 workers being brought in during the plucking season, which lasts from March through to November.

Most of the workers are women and they are employed on a family basis. Half their income is paid in cash, with the balance being provided by way of benefits such as free accommodation, subsidised cereal rations and free medical care. The gardens used to run primary schools but these have now been taken over by the State, although the garden management continue to maintain the buildings.

Camellia's interest in Darjeeling

The Camellia Group owns five gardens in Darjeeling – Thurbo, Badamtam and Barnesbeg through Goodricke Group Ltd and Castleton and Margaret's Hope through Amgoorie India Ltd. The total area under tea is 1,844.63 hectares and the Gardens' combined annual output is around 845,000kgs – these teas being amongst some of the finest in Darjeeling. As well as the quality of the tea, the group places great emphasis on improving the living standards of the workers. There are well equipped hospitals, staffed by qualified medical officers and paramedics, with housing, electricity and education for the workers' children also being areas of high priority. Each of the gardens has its own unique characteristics and a brief description of each may be of interest.

Thurbo

It is thought that the name of the garden dates back to the nineteenth century, when the British invading Nepal, set up a camp in what is now the Thurbo estate.. 'Camp' translates locally as 'Tombu', which may have become Thurbo in later years.

Established in 1872 at an altitude of between 762 and 1890 metres, Thurbo is situated close to the Nepalese border, nestling in the shadows of the mighty Kanchenjunga. The nearby orange orchards and orchid farms lend an exotic charm to the garden whose teas are blessed with an unmatched quality.

Badamtam

Located in the Lebong valley, 14 miles west of Darjeeling Bazaar, the garden was founded in 1861 by Christine Barnes and covers some 351 hectares. Tea is grown between 305 and 1830 metres; the teas are highly prized abroad. Over the years Badamtam has become a role model for other estates with its state-of-the-art machinery and processing and its high welfare standards. The garden has magnificent views of Kanchenjunga and is overlooked by a majestic fourteen foot bronze Buddha sculpted by the renowned artist Meera Muherjee.

Barnesbeg

Like Badamtam, Barnes beg was planted by Christine Barnes between 1858 and 1877 and is of similar size to Badamtam but at a lower altitude. 'Barnesbeg' probably derives from Barnes 'bhag' or garden.

Castleton & Springside

Castleton is the flagship of Goodricke's gardens. It was planted by Dr Charles Graham in 1885. The slopes span

Kurseong, Pankhabari and the Hillcart roads. Originally known as 'Kumseri', Castleton derives its name from a building in Kurseong which looks like a castle and exists to this day. Castleton's teas are highly prized by connoisseurs and royalty in England, Japan and the Middle East. At 146 hectares, Springside is one of the Group's smaller gardens. The name derives from the loss of an early manager's baby whose grave is located close to a spring which waters the graveside garden which is still maintained today.

Margaret's Hope

This garden was planted about a century ago at an altitude of between 915 and 1830 metres. Salamanders inhabit this estate and great pains are taken to preserve

them especially around the garden's own small lake. The name 'Margaret's Hope' was given to the garden in 1927 by the then owner, Mr Cruikshank. His daughter Margaret, enchanted by the beauty of the garden, was deeply attached to the place. On leaving for England she vowed to return but tragically died on board ship from a tropical disease. Hence her father christened the garden in her memory.

This is a brief overview of the Group's interests in Darjeeling. As guardians of estates that have lasted well over a century, Camellia's ongoing investment should ensure the continued fruitfulness of these estates for many years to come.



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AUTISM IN NEPAL

By Dr Sunita Maleku Amatya and Kalphana Ghimire

Autistic disorder (autism; more recently described as "mindblindness") is a lifelong neurological and developmental disorder. Autistic children often have problems in communication, avoid eye contact, and show limited attachment to others and appears to live in his/her own world, showing little interest in others, and a lack of social awareness. The cause of autism is not known. Research suggests that autism is a genetic condition. Reports from USA suggest that about one in 100 children has an autism spectrum disorder. Autism is more prevalent in boys than girls, with four times as many boys affected than girls.

Specialized behavioural and educational programs are designed to treat autism. Special education programs that are highly structured focus on developing social skills, speech, language, self-care, and job skills. Preventive measures to reduce the incidence or severity of autistic disorders are not known at this time.

Nepal has been known to the world as the land of Mount Everest, and birth place of Lord Buddha and the land of the Gurkhas. Landlocked between the two giants of Asia, the country has undergone series of unpredictable political upheavals. The country is still struggling for basic human and medical needs. The struggle for physical health in the country is still in a very infantile state and the psychological health has been totally neglected.

Autism is a distant stranger in Nepal, even to the medical fraternity. A person with autism is most probably left undiagnosed, and ends up in a mental institute or is hidden in the darkest corner of the house away from the social world.

The prevalence of autism in Nepal is unknown as no authentic study has been conducted in this region.

AutismCare Nepal is a very small organization started by parents of a nine year old autistic child on 2nd April 2008, on the auspicious occasion of the World Autism Awareness Day. It is the only active autism organization in Nepal that is run by passionate parents that care for autistic children. We provide support and information services to persons and their families with autism. We would like to work with organizations worldwide to share information, resources and assist families and children at a national and international level. We intend to educate, to increase awareness and act for the rights of autistic children throughout Nepal. Initial work was started with distributing brochures about autism and writing newspaper articles. A proposal to survey on the population of autistic children is underway. The text for a Nepali brochure has been completed and text for a booklet on guidelines for parents of autistic children is being reviewed.

Our immediate goal is to set up a school for autistic children targeting their specialized behavioural and educational programmes with individualized treatment plans to develop social skills, speech, language, self-care, and job skills. We have rented a house for two years and are now furnishing the rooms. The rent is £500 pounds per month which for now is being paid by the parents of autistic children. We have enthusiastic speech therapists but lack special techniques and experience for working with autistic children. We also lack educators and occupational therapists. We

need your support to support children with autism in any manner such as fund raising, making a donation or volunteering. If not we will be also happy if you all could include our children in your daily prayers. Please check our website www.autismnepal.org for further information. We would be grateful for any support you could provide.

AutismCare Nepal, PO Box 10918,
Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal

(On a recent visit to Nepal I met the founder of Autismlcare Nepal, Dr Hem Sagar Baral, the founder and former chief executive officer of Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN). It was his daughter referred to in the text above. Ed.)

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FROM THE EDITOR'S IN-TRAY

Honours and Awards

2 RGR Battle Group received one MC, two QCVSs and nine mentions in despatches as a result of their six month tour of duty in Afghanistan.

The Society congratulates Mrs Pratima Pande, President of the Nepal – Britain Society on her appointment as an MBE for services to Anglo-Nepali relations.

Professor Surya Subedi OBE

The Society congratulates Professor Subedi on his appointment by the United Nations as Human Rights Envoy for Cambodia. The press release announcing this is shown below:

The UN Human Rights Council has appointed a Nepali Professor as the next UN Special Rapporteur for human rights in Cambodia. The Council voted unanimously to endorse the nomination made by the President of the Human Rights Council to appoint Professor Surya P. Subedi at its meeting in Geneva yesterday (March 25). The Council consists of 47 member States elected by the UN General Assembly.

Speaking at the meeting of the Council in Geneva after the Council decision to appoint Professor Subedi, the Cambodian ambassador to the UN welcomed the appointment of Professor Subedi and expressed the willingness of his government to cooperate with him in discharging his responsibilities as an independent human rights law expert.

Dr Subedi is Professor of International and Human Rights Law at the University of Leeds in England. He also is a Barrister in England, an Advocate in Nepal, and holds a doctoral degree in international law from the University of Oxford, a Master of Laws degree with Distinction

from the University of Hull in England and an LLB from Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

Commenting on his appointment, Professor Subedi said: "I am delighted and honoured by the trust and confidence placed in me by such a high level UN body in recognition of my work in the field of international and human rights law." He added that "It is a huge privilege and an opportunity to make my contribution as an independent expert to enhance the human rights situation in Cambodia. I very much look forward to working with the government and the people of Cambodia."

He went on to say that: "Such a high level UN appointment is a matter of honour and pride not only for me personally but also for the people and the country of Nepal. As the UN mandate holder in Cambodia, I will do my utmost to discharge my responsibilities as effectively as possible."

Since this is a non-residential appointment Professor Subedi would be working for the UN from his university in England and visit Cambodia to monitor the human rights situation there and report to the UN Human Rights Council.

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Mercer

The article in the last edition of the journal concerning the late Lt Col Andrew Mercer provoked some comment. Nicholas Rhodes writes of Andrew Mercer: 'He had a walk-on part in Satyajit Ray's film *Kanchenjunga*, and many people remember him 'walking erect' in that film like the archetypal British gentlemen that he was. It made him quite a star. A photograph of Andrew Mercer appears in the book *my wife and I*

authored, *Man of the Frontier S W Laden La (1876-1936): His Life and Times in Darjeeling and Tibet* - the biography of her grandfather. The picture is with a group of Sherpas at a reunion on the occasion of a visit to Darjeeling by General Bruce.' (This book was reviewed in 'Asian Affairs' and reproduced in the last edition of the journal. Ed.)

Lt Col J P Cross writes: 'I was interested in reading about Andrew Mercer whom I met in 1951. I learnt that he was offered to be an OBE (civil) for his services in Darjeeling, but he declined as he feared that the Indian authorities might think it an award for being a spy.'



The Dharan clock tower.

The Tom Hughes Family Trust

The trust is still continuing its work in Dharan. An annual newsletter is published and can be obtained by email from: vennbannister@onetel.net. Older members from Dharan days will remember the BMH Wardmaster later the Admin Officer, Ranjitsing Rai and his wife Doma. They are now in their eighties but remain well and active. Major David Bannister's last newsletter mentioned a 'clock tower' in the centre of Dharan Bazaar. Apparently it is a copy of the old clock tower on the Kowloon waterfront, erected by former Gurkha soldiers as a monument to their fallen comrades.

The Vulture Crisis

Readers of the journal will already be aware of the 'crash' in the numbers of vultures across the Sub-continent as a result of feeding on cattle treated with diclofenac. In India the captive vulture programme has bred two slender-billed vultures, a first captive breeding success. In Nepal 44 Oriental white-backed vultures have been collected for a future captive breeding programme. The leading conservation organisations involved are RSPB, ZSL, Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) and the Nepal Trust for Nature Conservation (the former King Mahendra Trust). BCN have established 'vulture restaurants' near Lumbini, Dang and Nawalparasi. All these sites are situated near the East – West Highway and are open for tourists and birdwatchers to visit. The restaurants provide a source of diclofenac free meat which is fed to the vultures in the area. Aged cattle that are known to be free of diclofenac are purchased from their owners and looked after till they die naturally. A recent survey carried out by BCN at Nawalparasi indicates that at least 42 nests have been identified and more are expected. On a

recent extensive visit to Nepal, the only vultures noted, apart from those in the breeding aviary at Kasara, were those in the area of the Nawalparasi restaurant.

The Gurkha Museum in 2010

The Museum's summer exhibition will run from 7th August to 5th September 2010, entitled *Faith, Food and Fashion in Nepal*. A series of lectures are scheduled:

18 Mar 10 - *The Devil's Wind*. With Dr Richard Holmes. Theme is the Indian Mutiny.

16 Apr 10 - *The Assault on Kanchenjunga 1955*. Major Tony Streater.

11 Jun 10 - *Pakistan's Regional Role with Afghanistan and India*.

08 Oct 10 - *Slaughter with a Smile*. A review of military operations from Crecy to Op Herrick. Major Gordon Corrigan.

Details of lectures and of the 'The Friends of the Gurkha Museum' can be found at the Gurkha Museum website www.thegurkhamuseum.co.uk



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Images from 2001 BRINOS ear surgery camp - Nepal; March 2005

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REVIEW ARTICLE

John Pemble. *Britain's Gurkha War – The Invasion of Nepal, 1814 – 16.*

Frontline Books, an imprint of Pen & Sword Books Ltd. Barnsley, S. Yorks, UK. 2008. pp. xv + 398. B&W plates. Maps. Appx. Bibliog. Index. Hb. £19.99. ISBN 978 1 84832 520 3.

This work was originally published in 1971 under the title of *The Invasion of Nepal – John Company at War* by the Clarendon Press, Oxford. It had become difficult to obtain with a cost of up to \$100 or more. Although the original price was £4.50, thought to be expensive by its then reviewer Sir Olaf Caroe in the Royal Society of Asian Affairs journal, *Asian Affairs*, its scarcity had turned it into something of a collectors' item. The author, John Pemble, had completed a spell as a civilian instructor at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (now a senior research fellow at Bristol University) and used this topic for research which led to initial publication.

Lt Col John Cross was approached by Frontline Books for suggestions for any books on Nepal and the Gurkhas that they could publish. Cross recommended that this work be re-published. John Cross, a member of the Society, is possibly the pre-eminent authority on the history and languages of Nepal. He is the author of many books on the history of the Gurkhas and Nepal having served in Brigade of Gurkhas throughout his service life since 1944, finally retiring to live and study there. He was asked to write a forward for the re-launched book re-titled *Britain's Gurkha War – The Invasion of Nepal 1814 – 16*, which is reproduced below:

“To respected Ean Ramsay, the great-great-great-grandson of General Ochterlony from the great-great-great-grandcousin of Bhakti Thapa. Two hundred years ago we were enemies, now we are friends.”

This was written on the back of a painting of Bhakti Thapa especially commissioned in Nepal by my surrogate Nepali hill man son, Buddhiman Gurung, to Ean Ramsay, the last direct descendant of the Great Man. Buddhiman, his wife and I gave it to Ean Ramsay when we met him in England in 1994.

In my view, and I have lived with Gurkhas, militarily from 1944 and in Nepal from 1976, almost one-third of the time of the British-Gurkha connection, it says it all. In straightforward un-poetical words, it captures the mystical dimension of the result of the Anglo-Nepal War which John Pemble so vividly and accurately describes in this book, arguably the best written and easiest to read book on this subject ever produced.

I have read widely and am of the opinion that, had Nepal's army had the same resources as had the East India Company and the 'Royal', British, Army, artillery piece for artillery piece, elephant for elephant et cetera, the British would not have prevailed. But prevail they did: the one column that beat the Gorkhas was in 'naya muluk' – 'the new country' – chiefly in Kumaon and Garhwal; the three columns that were beaten back from a few timorous toe-holds in the Tarai failed to achieve anything positive. Apart from the incursion up to Makwanpur (and the Chinese incursion of 1792), Nepal's heartland cultural, religious and territorial virginity is still unsullied.

There is no doubt that Ochterlony was an excellent commander but as a civil administrator he was not popular: This is borne out in letters written by William Linnaeus Gardner, 1770-1835, founder of Gardner's Horse, still an Indian Army unit now designated 2nd Lancers (Gardner's Horse). In a letter dated 16 September 1820 he wrote: 'I have no hesitation in saying that the English name is at present disgraced. ... I wish for the sake of his character, that Sir David would die.' In an undated and earlier letter he wrote: 'Sir David is very unpopular here with all natives and all Europeans. Skinner [of Skinner's Horse fame] told him on taking leave that it was a pity he (Sir D) had not died 16 years ago, for then he would not have left a dry eye in Delhi, but that now, were he to die, there would be public rejoicings, and the *dhole* [drums] would resound in every house!!!' (The Gardner Papers, NAM 6305-56).

I have walked well over ten thousand miles in Nepal, am known to many and have spoken to thousands of Nepalis. It is striking that the motto, 'It is better to die than be a coward', reputedly the motto that has become the motto of all Gurkha soldiers to this day, has never once been mentioned. This is, I believe, because it never was the hill man's motto. Certainly, the hill Gurkha, like everyone else, does not want to lose. What the hill man will say is that, once there seems no hope of staying alive, that is when one can fight without worrying about one's life. I do not know the originator of the quotation but Kaji Amarsing Thapa, a relation of Bhimsen Thapa, the prime minister, who started the Anglo-Nepal War and who also lost it, is reputed to have used the saying. Amarsing seems not to have approved of the war but, not wanting to appear against the most powerful man in Kathmandu, echoed, but did not originate similar

sentiments as expressed by the Sikh, Mokhan Chand, in 1809 when Ochterlony moved from Delhi to compel the Sikh durbar to give up its recent conquests, 'It is better to die in honour than to live in shame' and later by the Afghan Muzaffar Khan, defender of Multan in 1818, 'It is more honourable to die fighting than to capitulate without firing a shot'.

But it is pertinent to ask if, in fact, such a motto was 'binding'? No: the Gorkha commander, Bal Bhadra (Bahadur) Kunwar (a.k.a. Thapa, Singh), at Kalunga (Nala Pani), gained immortality in Nepalese annals by his bravery. His name is on the reverse of the same memorial that was erected to Gillespie. Nepalese history is silent that Bal Bhadra left the fighting after the battle of Kalunga and *Nepalko Sainik Itihas (Nepal's Military History)*, published by Headquarters of the Royal Nepal Army, 1992, has it that such information only came from the British. William Moorcroft, Chief of Stud at Pusa, recorded in his journal, D248/59ff, that he saw Bal Bhadra killed as he led a Gurkha battalion of Ranjit Singh's army that attacked the Afghans near Attock, in 1824. And much more recently, in 1996, the request for the required 'constitution' to set up a Gurkha Museum in Kathmandu was turned down by the Chief District Officer, his reason being that he would do nothing to help turncoats.

People ask why the Governor General of the time did not do more against Nepal than was the case. While this is fully explained by Pemble, it is fair to say that, had he, without doubt the remarkable relations the British and the Nepalis have had since the war would never have fructified in the way they have. Of a truth, the opposite would have been true. One proud Nepali boast is that it is still one of the very few countries in Asia that was never a colony, albeit the

Government to its south did affect its behaviour.

Ochterlony's victory was in a minor war against a people unknown to those in England. Only on India's northern marches were the Nepalis (or Gorkhalis, as they were often called) known about. When the news of Ochterlony's victory eventually did reach England, the euphoria of Napoleon's defeat was still heady in military circles. Its significance and long-term implications were totally lost in England. And yet, today, not so far off the two-hundredth anniversary of the Britain-Nepal connection, more respect is paid to the hill man Gurkha than, again probably, to the vanquished of Waterloo.

Prior to the war, the tactics used in 'the new country' between 1790 and 1814 were sedulously copied by the Revolutionaries in the opening years of the civil war that started in the Far West of Nepal in 1996 but this time the opposition to such was insufficient to curb it – the government of the day could not use artillery against its own people. Another similarity is that, in both cases, one man from each house, willy-nilly, had to serve the army that was trying to expand territorially. Likewise, the problems that were engendered by a 'baby king' in 1814 have, sadly in my view, been all too frequent between then and now.

Those whom Ochterlony was fighting against were only partly men from heartland Nepal. The rigour of the discipline and hardships encountered had the effect of many of them deserting, first to Ranjit Singh's army in Lahore and later to the British. Although there was no proof of this, I believe that those men from heartland Nepal thought that the British would be able to take them back to their home areas. They were disappointed in that but the paternalistic attitude of the

British officers, the friendliness of the British soldiers and their own obvious superiority to the men from the plains, made them realise, probably for the first time ever, their value as fighting men. This factor still pertains. As an aside, Bhakti Thapa's weapons are in a cave at the top of a steep mountain and are still worshipped twice a year and the language of the prayers is that of the now-dead language of the Duras, Bhakti's mother tongue. At last count I saw that there were eight swords and five scimitars.

Since being soldiers in the Indian and British armies, the Gurkhas' record has been and is unsurpassed. Just three examples from modern times: without them the land war in Burma would not have been won in 1945, maybe never; the Emergency in Malaya and Confrontation in Borneo would have rumbled on for many more years, probably inconclusively; and, with much panache and efficiency, in Afghanistan and Iraq.

On another level, too, even when the 1st of Foot was no longer on the British Army's Order of Battle, the Gurkhas, albeit fewer in number, were retained. And not only that: the Gurkha soldier has a worldwide reputation of doing that bit extra for longer and at a higher standard than, probably, any other soldier. A high standard brings its own penalty of expectation and, luckily for Britain and independent India, Gurkhas are fully confident and able to maintain that standard to an almost mystical dimension.

Even so, please read on from here. Pemble's explicit and engaging writing shows how, against all expectations, this mystical dimension started.'

JP Cross

The book has attracted reviews from both Col Dennis Wood and Brig Bullock, both experienced historians of the Brigade of

Gurkhas, having been serving officers of the Brigade and trustees of the Gurkha Museum.

Brig Bullock writes:

‘This scholarly and erudite book throws a particularly interesting slant on the causes of The Anglo –Nepal war and the warrior state of Nepal which provoked it as well as covering the war itself in fascinating detail. Most books about the causes of the war tend to follow the line that because Nepal had occupied territories claimed by the British East India Company war resulted whereas Pemble looks much deeper in his quest for the reasons behind it which were complex and owed as much to personalities as politics . He also diverges from the commonly held view that the ruling class of Nepal originated from the admixture of Rajputs fleeing north to avoid the Mogul invasion of India and Nepal’s ethnic Mongolian inhabitants and predates them to a much earlier stage in the history of Nepal. This well researched and thought provoking work makes clear that the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-16 was fundamental to the subsequent relations between the two countries leading to the recruitment of the hillmen of Nepal, the Gurkhas first by the British in India and subsequently their employment separately by Britain and India.

In 1814 Nepal was a warlike expansionist state whose highly efficient army had already invaded Tibet and now occupied the sensitive North West Indian states of Kumaon and Garhwal .Already embroiled elsewhere with Sikhs and Maharattas it was a tricky situation for the surrogate of British power, The Honourable East India Company and it took drastic, if reluctant military steps to solve it. At first it limited itself to driving

the Nepalese army out of the territories they had occupied and when this did not curb Nepal’s militaristic tendencies by invading Nepal itself. Clearing the Nepalese out of the territories they had occupied was a major undertaking involving large numbers of King’s Service British troops and East India Company sepoys but even so met with mixed success most of the columns being baulked by the determined Gurkha resistance. Fortunately in General Ochterlony, his energy in no way abated by the possession of two Indian wives and numerous progeny, the British had a leader of real quality in stark contrast to some of his fellow column commanders. His column’s victory in the first campaign was enough to convince the Nepalese to agree to a negotiated settlement which they subsequently renounced believing, erroneously, that the British were over extended.

Ochterlony’s masterly conduct of the second campaign, the invasion of Nepal itself, was a desperate race against the onset of monsoon conditions and makes for compulsive reading. This second campaign, no longer bedevilled by the foibles and inadequacies of fellow commanders, showed just how quickly Ochterlony had transformed his East India Company army after the first bitter experience of being confronted by the formidable fighting power of the Gurkha army and its charismatic leaders. What distinguished the fighting throughout was that despite its severity both sides behaved with exceptional civility in regard to prisoners and wounded founded on a mutual respect that has continued to the present day.

Colonel John Cross who writes the Foreword is probably the greatest living expert on the Gurkha state having spent his entire adult life with them first as a

Gurkha officer and then as an inhabitant of Nepal itself. It is thus not surprising that he sets the scene so subtly for this fascinating book.’

Col Wood writes:

‘The Nepal War could have been of very little interest to the British public at the time. It was fought in a remote part of the world where British interests were then controlled and managed by the Honourable East India Company (HEIC), motivated as a trading organisation, rather than by the British Government. Even the HEIC’s hierarchy knew very little about Nepal, and no one could have foreseen the war’s future effects. Moreover it must have been eclipsed by the threat from the nearby French *betes noires* with their chief ogre’s escape from Elba and the crucial battle of Waterloo taking place in the middle of it. Yet its consequences, unimaginable at the time, have been of huge value to both Britain and Nepal. From it have followed 200 years of alliance and friendship between the two nations which provided peace in an important frontier region of India and extraordinary military support for Britain ever since, including the long hard times of two World Wars beside the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58 when the going was also tough. In short, Britain has gained incalculable value from Gurkha soldiers who have been enlisted for service under the Crown since 1815. Even now the British army has nearly 4,500 Gurkhas in its infantry, engineer, signals and logistics forces. In return, Nepal has also had great benefit from the inward flow of money, education and training of its people and an external source of employment for a country where jobs were once few except in domestic agriculture and basic trades.

Dr Pemble, a Senior Research Fellow

at Bristol University and once on the staff at Sandhurst is an historian and author of wide interests and considerable skill. Here he describes the invasion of Nepal with clarity and accuracy in just over half the book’s content, and adds extra value by devoting almost a third of the book to setting the scene in some detail for about 50 years or more prior to 1814. In this lead-in he gives lucid and interesting descriptions and comments on the Gurkha people, their depredations and annexation of their neighbours’ lands, their quarrel with the British the geography and the truth about Himalayan trade and the Bengal army. His analysis of the size and state of the Company’s and British forces over several decades is an eye-opener and very helpful to a reader trying to understand why they often performed poorly during the operations of 1814-16. Officers and men: their numbers, morale, organisation, dress, equipment, pay, promotion systems, age and service, training and the enervating effects of the Indian climate are among the topics covered and they make fascinating reading.

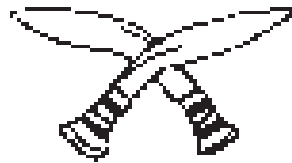
Although the Nepal war brought British victory in the end, it was a sorry tale of many military failures. John Pemble describes the strategy and tactics, the problems caused by immensely difficult terrain, and the qualities of people on both sides including those of the opposing commanders (most of the senior British ones proving to be inept). There are good descriptions of the invading columns, their opponents and their success and failures; although it is a pity that the black & white maps show only the basic geography and not the columns’ routes or the sites of their actions. The Bengal Army and the British regiments revealed major shortcomings in several ways for mountain warfare in

inaccessible places. But fortunately for Britain, as is often the case, most of the officers and men endured hardship, dangerous living and fighting with admirable courage and fortitude. They were said to have suffered 3,000 battle casualties besides 2,000 lost from sickness and desertion. Importantly, the book also describes the circumstances and origins of recruiting those Gurkhas and other hillmen who formed the 1st & 2nd Nusseree, Sirmoor and Kemaon Battalions in April 1815; three of which later became the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Gurkha Rifles. One of those original recruits was senior Subedar in the Sirmoor Battalion, during the Indian Mutiny 42 years later.

This is a definitive account of a relatively obscure war from which sprang the shoots of that wonderful alliance and friendship between Britain and Nepal which has been of huge benefit to both countries for nearly 200 years. It is not only a splendid historical record which

everyone interested in Gurkhas and in India should have for reference but good reading and excellent value for money as well.'

As both the reviews above fully demonstrate, there is a great deal of very detailed information contained within this work. Members who attended will long remember Pemble's thought provoking lecture that he delivered to the Society in March. He postulated that at the time the British were, may be subconsciously, looking for heroes as their empire developed across the world. The text of the lecture has been printed in the November 2009 edition of *Asian Affairs*, the journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs. This is not a book to read on a flight to Kathmandu. It deserves serious study and will serve as an outstanding source for reference for the origins of the British – Gurkha connection and the history of that time.



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SHORT REVIEWS

A Boy from Siklis – The Life and Times of Chandra Gurung. By Manjushree Thapa. Penguin Books, India. 2009. Pp 226. Pb. NCR 400 (ICR 250). ISBN 978-0-1430-6548-7.

In September 2006, a helicopter crash in east Nepal claimed the lives of both Nepalese and foreign environmentalists on their way to the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area. The foremost of those killed that day was Dr Chandra Gurung. (See p.37 of *Journal No 30 of 2006. Ed.*) Manjushree Thapa, who for a time worked with Dr Gurung, has written a sensitive biography of his life along with the background to the early work on conservation in Nepal. She has researched his childhood in the Gurung village of Siklis and how by sheer hard work and enthusiasm, he rose to lead Nepal's most successful conservation project – the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP). That a man from this background was able to achieve the necessary high academic qualifications and rise to lead a conservation organisation (the King Mahendra Trust – now the National Trust for Nature Conservation in Nepal) under royal patronage and eventually head Nepal's WWF programme is a tribute to his abilities both as a leader and a diplomat. This work makes fascinating reading for all those who have an interest in Himalayan conservation and is a fitting tribute to his memory. Sadly his loss, with those others on that day, has profoundly set back future work on the environment in Nepal.

GDB

(This work is readily available in Pilgrims Book Store, Thamel, Kathmandu. Ed.)

Britain's Gurkhas. By Christopher Bullock. Third Millennium Publishing, London. 2009. Pp 320. Hb. £45. Over 200 illustrations. ISBN 978-1-906507-27-5.

This work was launched at the Gurkha Museum on 10th November 2009, too late for a full review in the journal. This is a major definitive piece on the Gurkhas and their history of the unique connection with UK. Below is a quote from Third Millennium's own material that advertises the book, which I fully endorse.

'Ranging from 18th century India to 21st century Afghanistan, this new, highly illustrated authorised history of the Brigade of Gurkhas is destined to become the definitive work on the subject. In this account, the whole panorama of the Brigade's unique history is covered from the early 19th century to the present day, including the tense moments when the continued existence of the Brigade hung by the slenderest of threads. As well as being a thoroughly researched and accurate account, there are plenty of instances of Gurkha humour shining through amidst battle and adversity. It is highly readable and also takes full advantage of the unique archives of the Gurkha Museum. With the invaluable help of the Curator and Archivist, the book is lavishly illustrated with pictures, photographs and maps, many never seen outside the Museum.'

General Sir David Richards, KCB, CBE, DSO ADC Gen, Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas writes in

the Forward: 'I wholeheartedly commend Brigadier Bullock's book as our authorised history to anyone who wishes to know more about our splendid soldiers.'

GDB

Johnnie Gurkha's is with me. By Hari Bivor Karki. Arthur H Stockwell Ltd, Ilfracombe, Devon. 2009. Pp 232. Pb. £6.99. ISBN 978-0-7223-3997-8.

Hari Bivor Karki or Harish Karki to Society members has written his autobiography to date. The book tells his story from his birth in Okhaldunga in the hills of east Nepal in 1945 to the present day as a successful restaurateur in Aldershot. His family moved down to Biratnagar so that they could provide a better education than was then obtainable in the hills at that time. In 1961 Harish enlisted into the Brigade of Gurkhas, joining the Gurkha Engineers. After only six years service he had to return home as his father had become seriously ill. He then had to seek out other forms of employment. Having completed an engineering degree he worked for a time on the construction of the then new East-West Highway that was being built with assistance from various international agencies. Later he joined the National Cadet Corps as boxing instructor and was responsible for training both the army and the police. During this time he started working part time at the Soaltee Hotel in the catering department to supplement his income. Harish had discovered a new interest and one that would take him to UK, as the first Nepalese restaurants were then opening up. Eventually he opened his own restaurant, 'Johnnie Gurkha's', in Aldershot which became a very well known place to eat in this busy garrison

town. Over the years Harish kept a diary and it is on this that he bases the book. He is a thoughtful person who has had to make some difficult decisions for his family. He has had to overcome many problems that face immigrant families and he tells this with sensitivity. Also he has played a significant part in helping his fellow Nepalese as they sought to establish themselves into new, and to them, strange surroundings. His story makes interesting reading, especially when immigration is currently so topical. I recommend this work to the Society.

GDB

(The book was released on 21st December 2009. Ed.)

Kathmandu Valley Style. By Lisa Choegyal et al. Serindia. Hb. Cost £40 appx.

This a 'coffee table' format recently published by Serindia. It has an excellent choice of architectural pictures taken of an eclectic selection of both modern and traditional buildings in the Kathmandu Valley which have been well produced. These include the British ambassador's residence, the Kakani bungalow, Lisa's own house in Budanilkantha, as well as Rana palaces and modern structures. It is available through Amazon.

GDB

The Crown of Renown – Gurkhas and the Honourable East India Company: 1819-1857/8. By Lt Col JP Cross. Hallmark Press International. 7 Greenway Gardens, Croydon, UK. Pb. £19.95 ISBN 978-1-906459-38-3.

The latest in John Cross's series of historic novels was released on 4th December 2009.

(Hallmark Press see hallmarkpress@
googlemail.com). The work covers the
period of early contact with Nepal by the
East India Company [Known as 'John
Company' - even in the early 1960s
Indian rupees were being traded in Nepal
near the border areas with India and still
referred to as 'Company rupees'. *Ed.*] up
to the Indian Mutiny. This follows his
other historic novels, *The Throne of
Stone* and *The Restless Quest – Britain*

*and Nepal on collision course and the
start of the British-Gurkha connection in
1746 – 1815.* This latter work is due to
be re-published in UK by the Blenheim
Press in 2010. Cross plans two further
novels. The next, *The Fame of the Name*,
will cover the period to 1947 with the
last to cover 1947 to date, entitled *The
Fire of Desire*.

GDB

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

 OBITUARIES

**A.V. Jim Edwards**

Jim Edwards, who died recently in Kathmandu, was one of the pioneers of tourism in Nepal, along with his friends Boris Lissanevitch and Colonel Jimmy Roberts. A far-sighted man, gifted with luck and charisma, Jim had the vision to see the future for conservation-based wildlife tourism, in the Himlayan mountains and jungles that he loved, long before the concept of “ecotourism” came into being.

A.V. Jim Edwards was born 24th November 1935 in Hampshire, England, before moving to Jersey, Channel Islands when he was thirteen after the early death of his mother. He was educated in England then on the island. His father, Slim, served in the RAF during the Second World War and spent much of his life at sea. In his teenage years, Jim was an adventurous youth and enjoyed sailing and swimming as well as representing Jersey with friend Charles Maine in badminton. His first job was as a delivery boy for a St. Helier butcher and an illicit

pound of sausages often found its way onto the Edwards’ table! After a brief spell with the States of Jersey, he did national service with the Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regiment and then joined Lloyds bank, Tonbridge Wells before being transferred to Sweden, a posting he found more convivial. Dreaming of seeing more of the world, and always the adventurer, Jim drove overland on a Saab car promotion, through Europe, the Middle East, and the Indian sub-continent before arriving in Nepal in May 1962. Enraptured by the splendours of the country, he decided this was where he wanted to live. Travel further afield was put on hold and he spent a year exploring the Terai jungles, hunting, and fishing, largely in the remote Karnali region in far west Nepal. Jim also worked around this time with the new USAID Mission in Kathmandu, managing logistics.

In 1964, Jim teamed up with American anthropologist turned wildlife ecologist, Dr Charles (Chuck) McDougal and started the first wildlife tourism company, Nepal Wildlife Adventure, to operate jungle treks, fishing and hunting expeditions. It was the beginning of a long and distinguished career in the travel industry. In 1969, with his mind set on learning more about the travel trade, Jim enrolled in the Pan American World Airways Management Training Course, in New York. In his absence, Chuck McDougal continued to run Nepal Wildlife Adventure, while Jim in return, was able to send many clients to their company from the US and Europe. Finishing his course, he worked for Pan Am in Sales, Marketing, and Public Relations in New York City for three years.

In Kathmandu, there was a small community of foreigners who all knew each other. On a tip-off from Boris Lissanevitch, Nepal's pioneer hotelier, Jim heard of Tiger Tops a small camp in the Chitwan rhino reserve that was in need of improved management. Elected a fellow of the prestigious Explorer's Club in New York in 1967, Jim met the owners of Tiger Tops, Texan millionaires and big game hunters, Herb Klein and Toddy Lee Wynne. At their request, in 1971, Jim and Chuck McDougal took over the Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge that the Texans had built in the 1960s as a wildlife tourism enterprise in Chitwan where they had enjoyed hunting safaris. With Chuck's hard work on the wildlife, his brother, John Edwards, on the operational side, and Jim's marketing and business flair, they turned Tiger Tops into a famous conservation tourism model. Jim used his contacts in Pan Am and the World Wildlife Fund, to help lobby the Nepal government to turn Chitwan into a National Park and it was gazetted in 1973. In 1974, Jim teamed up with Colonel Jimmy Roberts, the pioneer of Himalayan trekking who had started Mountain Travel, the first trekking company in the world. Thus was formed Tiger Mountain, very much Jim's group of adventure travel companies throughout Nepal and India. Over the 1970s and 1980s, the group of companies included partnerships with lodges in Madhya Pradesh, Kashmir, and Karnataka in India, expanded camps in Nepal and activities in Sri Lanka. Tiger Mountain pioneered tourism in Ladakh and organised early tours in Bhutan and Tibet. A chance meeting with explorer, Col. John Blashford-Snell, led to pioneering descents of Nepal's Trishuli River in Nepal, resulting in the establishment of Himalayan River Exploration, the first river running

company in South Asia. Jim's last major project was the establishment of a permanent lodge on Prince Charles's "Royal Trek" route operated by Mountain Travel in 1980. Jim's eldest son, Kristjan, supervised the project. Sir Edmund Hillary opened Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge in 1998.

Seeing the effective manner in which tourism, carefully and sensitively managed, could be a positive force for conservation, Jim, and his colleagues formed the International Trust for Nature Conservation, a UK registered charity with a mandate to support conservation initiatives around the world. ITNC has supported various conservation projects in Nepal and India. Jim is widely recognised for his immense contribution to Nepal's tourism industry, setting standards of adventure tourism that are admired all over Asia. At a time when Nepalese corporate management was in its infancy, Jim's constant concern was to provide opportunity to many Nepalese, often with limited education, and to set the standards for caring and inclusive management that remains the hallmark of Tiger Mountain today. It was a matter of great pride to Jim that Mrs Gandhi commented, "Why do we have to look to Nepal to learn how to manage wildlife tourism lodges."

For his contribution to Nepal's tourism industry, Jim Edwards was the recipient of many awards and accolades. Jim founded the World Elephant Polo Association in 1981 with James Manclark and ran the annual World Championships at Meghauri, Chitwan, a tribute to his sense of humour, marketing acumen, and enjoyment of a fine party. Elephant polo attracted many celebrities and further promoted Tiger Tops as well as raising funds for many charities.

A man of immense charm and love of life, Jim could bowl people over with his

inspirational energy, hospitality, self-deprecating sense of humour and monumental generosity. Jim defied stereotypes, yet sought an element of conformity, and was immensely pleased to be made an honorary member of the Sirmoor Club, the regimental association of 2nd Gurkhas and member of the St Moritz Tobogganing Club. He was iconoclastic and did not suffer fools easily. Indeed his anger, when roused, was famed for its fulminating qualities! Yet, normally, he subsided just as quickly. Jim had a sharp eye for a finely turned ankle, and much enjoyed the company of women. In 1970, he married Icelandic beauty, Fjola Bender. Then in 1978, he met Belinda Fuchs at Tiger Tops, a zoologist from Switzerland, and they were married in 1983. In later years, he lived happily with his devoted companion Tia Rongsen from Nagaland. Jim had four children who were a source of great pride and comfort to him: two by his marriage with Fjola, Kristjan, and Anna Tara; and two sons by his marriage to Belinda, Timothy, and Jack.

Jim was passionate about the jungle and enjoying wild places with friends. He fished regularly on several rivers in Iceland, where he suffered the first of two strokes in 2004 while fishing with his sons, Timothy and Jack. His courage and tenacity in regaining mobility won him wide respect. Sadly, in January 2009 he suffered a second major stroke whilst mahseer fishing in Karnataka. A paradoxical man, Jim challenged and inspired all those with whom he came in contact. Life was never dull when Jim was around. He enriched the lives of many from all over the world and provided support for many Nepalis at home and abroad as part of his lifelong love and commitment to Nepal and her people. We mourn his passing but in Virgil's words –

meminisse juvabimus – we shall delight in remembering.

Marcus Cotton

Sir Anthony Hurrell KCVO CMG

Anthony Hurrell died in April 2009 aged 82. He had a distinguished career in the civil and diplomatic service. He came, for those days, from a relatively humble background and achieved a great deal through hard work and application and a sense of duty. He was always surprised that he had been promoted and, as was as often the way, he underestimated his own ability. He was finally appointed ambassador in Kathmandu from 1983 to 1986. His route to the this post was an unconventional one since he was not in the diplomatic service prior to his appointment in Kathmandu, as all his previous service had been in other civil service departments. He was born in February 1927 in Norwich, son of a publican and was educated at Norwich School and St Catherine's College, Cambridge. After national service 1948-50 in the RAEC, he joined the Department of Labour where he served for some three years before moving to the Ministry of Education for nine years. In 1964 he was transferred to the Ministry of Overseas Development. During his time there he spent a year as a Fellow at the Center for International Affairs, Harvard. In 1972 he was appointed Head of the South East Asia Division of the ODM based in Bangkok. On his return to UK he was promoted to Under Secretary and then joined the Central Policy Review Staff in the Cabinet Office which was followed by a year with the Duchy of Lancaster in 1977. He returned to the newly named Overseas Development Agency (ODA) working firstly in the Asia and Oceans Division and

then the International Division, work for which he was made a CMG, before being selected as ambassador to Nepal. Shortly before the end of his tenure in Kathmandu, HM The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh visited Nepal on their second visit to the country. He was appointed KCVO. Throughout his career he was ably supported by his wife, Jean who shared his enthusiasms and interests. On his retirement he returned to his house, 'Lapwings', in Dunwich on the Suffolk coast where he was able to continue his life-long interest in ornithology. He was a very skilled bird-ringer and set up what is known as a 'constant effort site'. This means that the site, when operating, must be manned and checked every day. He was always reluctant to leave 'Lapwings'. All holidays generally had to be taken in July as this was considered to be the least productive month for bird-ringing. He returned to Kathmandu on holiday in 1990 to look once again at the rich birdlife in Nepal, travelling from west to east visiting all the sites that he once knew. I believe that he looked upon his time in Nepal as the highlight of his career.

GDB

Major T Le M Spring-Smyth

Tom Spring-Smyth died on 30th April 2009 aged 85. He was for many years a member of the Society. Tom came from a long line of distinguished forbears, both Springs, Smyths and the Le Mesurier family, who trace their history back to the sixteenth and thirteenth centuries. These forbears include a General of the British Army (a VC and MC). Earlier, another was a cavalry subaltern in the Sikh wars. Tom went to Bedford School completing his education in time to join the army in the middle of World War II, following his



father to become a professional military engineer. After officer training he was commissioned into the Royal Engineers and posted to the King George V's Own Bengal Sappers and Miners. His first posting was to the Sirmoor Field Company in Burma. He quickly rose to become the officer commanding. His company was assigned to the planned invasion of Malaya which did not take place following the atomic bombs dropped on Japan. He remained in northern Burma with his unit where they were engaged in road and bridge maintenance and inland water transport. In 1946 the company returned to India where Tom was appointed to 7 Field Company of 8th Indian Division. They were sent back to Burma and Tom was in Rangoon for Indian Independence on 15 August 1947. He returned to England and back to peacetime training. In 1950 he was posted to 68 Squadron of the Gurkha Engineers in Hong Kong and later as Adjutant, served in the regiment in Hong Kong and the Malayan emergency. Notwithstanding his experience, the more formal strictures of post war soldiering were not always to his liking.

On retiring he was able to satisfy a life-

long love of plants and joined a British Natural History Museum expedition, collecting plants and seeds in east Nepal. He then joined and later ran the hydro-electric power feasibility study on the Karnali River in west Nepal under the UN Special Fund. Looking back these were carefree times with a small expat community based on Kathmandu. In 1968 he was back in Nepal with the Overseas Development Ministry working on Gurkha resettlement. This was followed by projects with the UN FAO and as project officer, World Food Programme in Nepal. In 1975 he joined consulting engineers, Sir William Halcrow & Partners and set up their office in Singapore. His role was to expand the firm's work into south and Southeast Asia. Tony Schilling, a member of the Royal Horticultural Society for many years, first met Tom when he went to Kathmandu to help with the newly established botanical garden at Godaveri at the southern end of the Kathmandu Valley. Tony had already been aware of Tom's work as he had been the receiver of seedlings sent back to Kew that Tom had collected in 1961 on the British Natural History Museum expedition. Many of these seedlings were rhododendrons, one of Tom's great interests. Tony writes: 'I personally sowed and carefully recorded these valuable accessions from the distant Himalaya, little thinking that our paths would cross in a few years time when I realised my own dream of working and exploring in Nepal. Nor did I realise that following my return to Britain in 1967 in order to take up the curatorship of Wakehurst Place, the numerous young plants resulting from Tom's expedition would be transferred from Kew to the more agreeable growing conditions in the High Weald of Sussex. Later many of these plants found their way into other

gardens including the Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh, the Crown Estates, Windsor and the Sir Harold Hillier Arboretum. It was during the 1961 expedition that that Tom collected and despatched three seedlings of the deciduous *Daphne bhoulua* var. *glacialis* via the diplomatic bag to Kew. The clone, subsequently named Gurkha, was one of those seedlings and is now well established in gardens. Another of Tom's accomplishments was his introduction of the Dawn Redwood, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, to Nepal in 1971.' (*The story of this is recorded in the 2007 edition of the journal by Dr Mark Watson. Ed.*) Tom's friend, Roy Lancaster, a well known plantsman took the plants, the purpose of which was to introduce them to Nepal as quick growing trees that might be useful for fuel wood. The aim was to help to preserve the indigenous forest varieties that were traditionally used for that purpose. Throughout the remainder of his career Tom continued to collect plants and seeds and give horticultural advice from wherever he went, including the Rothschild garden at Ramat Hanadiv in Israel. Later in life he was proud of the establishment of the Sir Horace Kadoorie Gurkha Memorial Garden at the Sir Harold Hillier Arboretum, near Romsey. The following is an extract written by Tom from the Indian Army Association Newsletter, 1999: 'At the centre of the Gardens lies Jermyns House containing garden staff offices and a restaurant, all in a wonderful setting. Behind the house there is a steep-sided descending valley with a path down the middle. Looking at this in early September 1996 it suddenly came to me that it could be the perfect site for a Gurkha Memorial Garden planted exclusively with plants from Nepal. I saw a mini Nepalese valley before me. The

curator and staff fell for the project at once and from the start we had the enthusiastic support from Brigadier Christopher Bullock, curator of the Gurkha Museum, Winchester, only some 15 minutes up the road. It was Christopher who had the brilliant idea for the form of the memorial itself – a stepped stone platform – as a chautera – a resting place for porters’ heavy loads. The vertical faces of the platform were to carry the badges of the Brigade of Gurkhas and those of the Gurkha Brigade of the old Indian Army.’ The project was funded by the Kadoorie

Foundation Trust in Hong Hong. The blueprint for the chautera was provided by the Royal Engineers Works Section in HQ British Gurkhas Nepal and signed by a Nepalese draughtsman. Tom contributed much in his life both as a military engineer and horticulturist.

GDB

(I am grateful to Major (Retd) Dick Francis of the Queen’s Gurkha Engineers and Mr Tony Schilling for providing information for this piece. Ed.)

THE INTERNATIONAL TRUST FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (ITNC)

The ITNC was established by the late Jim Edwards in 1980 as he was acutely aware of the need for conservation if successful wildlife tourism was to continue to be a viable proposition. It was his way of trying to put something back into the environment. It is a UK registered charity administered by a group of experienced trustees. Mrs Pat Mellor acts the Charity’s secretary. An integral part of the trust’s activities is recognizing the needs of local communities and in particular raising awareness of the benefits of healthy habitats and wildlife populations. ITNC works mainly in Nepal and India. The trust has initiated several projects which once established, have been handed over to local groups for further successful management. The Trust operates educational programmes, species monitoring and effective anti-poaching activities.

Tiger projects currently ongoing are:

Long term monitoring, including camera trapping to look at population dynamics in the Chitwan National Park.

Tiger Haven in the adjacent Dudhwa National Park, India.

Other projects include:

Anti-poaching in the Nepal National parks

Reforestation in the Tharu Village tree nursery

Sea Buckthorn cultivation in Ladakh.

Community conservation awareness camps.

Details can be found on the Trust’s website: www.itnc.org

Following the death earlier this year of Jim Edwards, the Trust is hoping to raise sufficient funds for a suitable project in his memory. Donations can be made through Mrs Pat Mellor, secretary to both ITNC and the Society.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

The UK Trust for Nature Conservation
in Nepal
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Zoological Society of London
Regent's Park
London NW1 4RY
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The Gurkha Welfare Trust
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Fax: 01722 343119
www.gwt.org.uk

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The Britain Nepal Otology Service
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Yeti Association
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The Esther Benjamin's Trust
Third Floor, 2 Cloth Court
London EC1A 7LS
Website: www.ebtrust.org.uk

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

The Gurkha Museum
Peninsula Barracks
Romsey Road
Winchester
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Tel: (01962) 842832

Britain-Nepal Chamber of Commerce
PO Box BNCC
c/o 12a Kensington Palace Gardens
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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
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www.rsaa.org.uk

Bird Conservation Nepal
PO Box 12465
Lazimpat
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Tel: + 977 1 4417805
www.birdlifeneपाल.org

NOTES ON THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

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 in the autumn we hold our AGM. The Society also holds receptions and hospitality for visiting senior Nepalese.

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

THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

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