

---

**THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY**

---

*Journal*

Number 34

2010

---

Golden Jubilee

THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY *Journal* Number 34 2010

Golden Jubilee

# 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](mailto: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



फोन नं. : २७७,७६२, २७८६३०  
पो.ब.नं. : ३०४६ काठमाडौं  
फ्याक्स : ९७७-१-२८२६८८

नेपालका ग्रामीण बालबालिकाहरु लागि सहायता संस्था

## ACORN Nepal Trust

बन्धु, काठमाडौं - १४

**President**  
Rtn. Hari Bivor Karki

**Vice-President**  
Prof. Dr. Bharat B. Karki

**Secretary**  
Anjela Nepal Karki

**Treasurer**  
Mrs. Bimala Katuwal

**Executive Members**  
Dr. Yagya B. Karki  
Mrs. Shova Subedi  
Mrs. Sushila Khadka

**Hon. Members**  
Lady Morris of Kenwood  
Rtn. Gerald Hughes  
Mr. Brian Mayhew  
Ms. Diana Reason  
Dr Abhiram Bahadur Singh



**Main Office**  
Prof. Dr. Bharat B. Karki  
Balkhu, Ring Road, Kathmandu - 14  
Tel: 279762, Post Box: 3046  
Fax: 977-1-282688

**Founder President**  
**U.K. Contact**  
Rtn. H.B. Karki  
21 Victoria Road, Aldershot  
Hampshire GU11 1TQ  
Tel/Fax: 01252 316058

---

## THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

---

### Journal

Number 34

2010

---

### CONTENTS

- 3 Editorial
- 6 The Society's News
- 11 Twenty-Five Years of the Britain – Nepal Society
- 18 Highlights of the last twenty-five years
- 21 The British Ambassador's Residence at Kathmandu
- 29 Hodgson: A Pioneer of Himalayan Natural History
- 34 Henry Ambrose Oldfield's Paintings of Nepal
- 42 A Portrait of an Ancient Ancestor
- 44 The Vigil
- 47 With the British Council in Kathmandu – Memories of our  
Posting 1965-69
- 50 The Tiger Tops Story
- 58 A Trek to Langtang
- 60 Mohansingh Tamang – The Original Cook of the first Nepali Suppers
- 62 Happy Memories
- 63 Nepal – A Personal Reflection
- 67 The foundation and work of the Britain Nepal Otolaryngology Service  
(BRINOS)
- 71 Thought, Word and Deed
- 77 Diplomatic Appointments & the Society's Officers
- 82 From the Editor's In-Tray
- 84 Events at the Gurkha Museum
- 85 Book Reviews
- 89 Obituaries
- 94 Useful addresses
- 95 Notes on the Britain – Nepal Society
- 96 Officers and Committee of the Society



*The embassy bungalow at Kakani, by Desmond Doig.*

---

 EDITORIAL
 

---

Readers will note that to mark the Society's golden jubilee it was decided to go to a colour production for the Society's 34th edition of the journal. I regret that it has taken some time to put together but I hope that the result will nevertheless prove to be an enjoyable read. When we first considered how to mark this significant period in the Society's history, there was an idea to reproduce a series of past articles in a separate publication. However the costs involved, not to mention the time, precluded this approach. Notwithstanding that, the late Mayura Brown's piece on the Society's first 25 years, originally written for the silver jubilee edition (Number 9), has been re-published. I have also included a re-run of the piece jointly written by the late Sir Michael Scott and Mrs Mayura Brown on her famous ancestor, Jang Bahadur Rana, whose great grand-daughter she was. His portrait hung for many years in the Foreign Secretary's office in the FCO. A number of members have also written about their memories of the early days of the Society. The Society has developed from a small elite group of people with a special interest in Nepal to a membership of around 450 countrywide, with addresses from Truro to Ullapool as well as a few members living in other countries, the USA, France and Nepal to name but three. Society events are perforce somewhat 'London-centric' and I am aware that many members retain their interest through the pages of the journal. As editor I hope that this colour edition will make up for those who were unable to attend the Society's successful anniversary reception in the Durbar Court of the FCO last September. Details of this event are in the secretary's report.

When looking for suitable articles I hoped to be able to highlight the historical links between Great Britain and Nepal. On

the surface it seems to be an unlikely liaison between a small island off the European mainland and a landlocked country on the southern slopes of the Himalayas. History has dictated otherwise and I hope that the selection of articles reflects that. Although the general public connects Everest and the Gurkhas with Nepal, these two topics have been well covered in the past and in other organs, so I have tried to look into other aspects of the relationship and Society connections where possible. The year 2015 will however mark the 200th anniversary of Gurkha service to the Crown. Plans for this event are already under consideration. The Society would wish be associated with this. In this respect we should note that 2010 saw the death of one of the last World War II Gurkha VCs – Havildar Lachhiman Gurung. History has it that Lachhiman went to get cigarettes for his father but only returned five years later, without, cigarettes, but wearing the VC which he had won during the latter stages of the Burma campaign. I have however included a piece written by Col Richard Cawthorne concerning the origins of the Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers, originally King's Indian Orderly Officers. It is a century since the Indian Army provided four orderly officers to attend the lying in state of King Edward VII in May 2010. Two of these officers were from Gurkha Regiments, Subadar Majors Santbir Gurung 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles) and Singbir Ghale 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles'.

The Treaty of Segauli, which was concluded following the Anglo-Nepal war of 1814 -1816, stipulated that the East India Company had the right to install a resident in Kathmandu. He required somewhere to live and the story of the residence is told by Dr Andrew Hall, a Society member and

former ambassador (2006 - 2010). Mention is also made of the Kakani bungalow situated on the northern edge of the Kathmandu valley that was granted to the resident by the Nepal Durbar in order that he could retire to the hills in the hot weather. The frontispiece picture is taken from a painting by Desmond Doig. One of the longest serving and most active residents was Brian Houghton Hodgson (1822 – 1843). He was what might be described as a true polymath. His interests ranged widely covering language, religion, culture and natural history. During his tenure in Kathmandu he was best known for his work as an ornithologist and zoologist. He wrote some 130 papers and commissioned teams of Nepalese artists to produce a series of drawings of mammals and birds. These paintings are now held by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL). I asked Carol Inskipp to write a short piece on Hodgson since she is the co-author of *A Himalayan Ornithologist – the life and work of Brian Houghton Hodgson*. She also contributed to *The origins of Himalayan Studies - Brian Houghton Hodgson in Nepal and Darjeeling 1820 – 1858* edited by David Waterhouse. Members will remember that part of the launch of this book was aided by the Society at a meeting in the embassy in 2005. I am grateful to Sir John Chapple and Miss Jane Loveless for their help over access to the collection of Hodgson paintings held by ZSL as ZSL holds the copyright. There are some six books of paintings, most of which have never been published. I have selected just four examples to illustrate Carol's piece, none of which has been published before. It was difficult to choose. The Imperial Woodpecker looks very 'imperial' and I rather liked the Jacana. However the Adjutant Stork is the logo of the Army Ornithological Society, of which Sir John Chapple is president, and readers will be aware of the population crash of vultures on the subcontinent. There has been a recent

revival in interest in the Hodgson paintings which is described elsewhere in the journal.

Following the theme of early Britain – Nepal connections is a piece by Mr Kanak Mani Dixit on Henry Ambrose Oldfield which appeared in *Asian Affairs*, journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, in November 2008. I am grateful to the editor of *Asian Affairs*, Mr Barney Smith, former ambassador in Kathmandu (1995 – 1999) for permission to reproduce this article and for the cooperation of that journal's publisher, Taylor & Francis.

I am also indebted to the Royal Geographical Society for permission to reproduce the illustrations that accompany it and who hold the copyright. Oldfield was the Residency surgeon and something of an artist. Although the resident was confined to the Kathmandu valley (hence the need for the Kakani bungalow), the surgeon seems not to have been regarded as a threat to the Nepal Durbar and had wide access to the country as the collection of paintings and drawings demonstrates. Clearly the medical profession was not considered to be subversive! The author, Kanak Mani Dixit is the editor of *Himal Southasian* and was curator of the 1999 Oldfield exhibition held in Nepal.

We must not dwell too much on the past although we ignore history at our peril. I have therefore asked for more recent Britain – Nepal connections. Bob Jordan, also a Society member, looks back to the late 1960s at his time in Kathmandu with the British Council. His recent work on Nepal, *From Missionaries to Mountaineers – Early encounters with Nepal* is reviewed in this edition. Many members will have visited Chitwan National Park during their visits to Nepal. The flagship resort in the park is of course the renowned Tiger Tops. Tiger Tops in its present form was the work of the late AV Jim Edwards whose obituary appeared in the last edition of the journal. Although there are now several other tourist

locations in Chitwan, Tiger Tops was the first and set the standard for both service and conservation and has made a huge contribution to Nepal tourism, although not without its difficulty at times. Lisa Choegy, a long-term friend, colleague and director has written the story from the very beginning of this project. As I wrote in the last edition many members have much reason to thank Jim for his kindness to so many of them and their children. Tony Schilling (our man in Ullapool) has written about his work in the botanical gardens in Godaveri in 1965 – 1966.

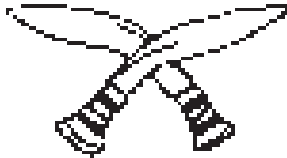
Coming right up-to-date is the article written by Neil Weir (secretary to the Society 2004 -2007) about his work with the Britain – Nepal Otology Service which he founded in 1988.

I have also included a piece written by John Cross written in his own inimitable and enigmatic style. This first appeared in *The Kukri* and I am grateful to the editor for permission to include it here.

Although the journal looks back at some past and present connections, the Society

has to look forwards. In common with many such organisations, the membership is aging and we need to attract younger members. This was looked at in some detail by my predecessor as chairman, the late Mr Peter Leggatt, and a sub-committee. Results were less encouraging but the existing membership is best placed to recruit so I ask you all to take any and every opportunity to bring in new members.

And finally we urgently need a new secretary to replace Mrs Pat Mellor. I sincerely hope that somewhere within the membership there is someone who could come forward. The secretary is the key position in any Society. I can assure any potential candidates that help can be provided for this role. The membership list is on computer and does not have to be managed by the secretary and mailing is available for out-sourcing thus making the secretary's task much less burdensome. I hope that this will encourage someone take on this role, so necessary for the smooth continuance of the Society.



## **THE GURKHA MUSEUM**

PENINSULA BARRACKS  
ROMSEY ROAD, WINCHESTER  
HAMPSHIRE SO23 8TS

Tel: (01962) 842832 Fax: (01962) 877597

### **THE UNIQUE AND EXCITING GURKHA STORY**

Open: MON-SAT 10am - 4.30pm  
SUN 12 - 4pm

*Registered Charity No. 272426*

---

## THE SOCIETY'S NEWS

By Pat Mellor

Acting Honorary Secretary



*HE Dr SC Chalise, Ambassador & Dr Adhikary with Chairman & Mrs Birch, Lady Chapple, Mr Andrew Patrick (FCO), Mr JP Aryal (DHM) & Mr Timothy George*

His Excellency, the Nepalese Ambassador, Dr Suresh Chandra Chalise and his wife, Dr Milan Adhikary arrived in London eight months ago and have already made their mark. They have made a wonderful impact here in London and have attended many functions, Society ones as well as Nepalese events. They have also held important gatherings at the Nepalese Embassy. Their British friends are already numerous. The Society sends them all good wishes for their time in London.

Once again, we are privileged to be able to hold our AGM at the Nepalese Embassy, and the Nepalese Ambassador, HE Dr Suresh Chandra Chalise has also

allowed us to hold our Executive Committee meetings there. The Committee and members give their thanks to His Excellency, as well as Mr Jhabindra Aryal, Minister Counsellor, and all the staff, who are always unfailingly kind and helpful to the Society.

### **50TH ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION**

50th Year of the Society was wonderfully celebrated by a Reception at the Durbar Court in the Foreign Office. The Committee chose this venue for its magnificence and its relevance to the Indian subcontinent. Britain's relations with Nepal were bound up with all Britain's dealings there. Durbar Court means a collective meeting place; it was



felt that this was the appropriate venue for this important event. These celebrations were supported by 300 members and their friends, and were enjoyed by everyone. The Society was honoured by the presence of our President, HRH The Duke of Gloucester who graciously met and spoke to many of our members. Also present was the Nepalese Ambassador, Dr Suresh Chandra Chalise and his wife Dr Milan Adhikary, together with many of the Embassy staff. We were also happy to welcome the two Queen's Own Gurkha Orderly Officers to the event, and also for the Piper from Queen's Gurkha Signals who piped as the guests arrived. I think we must record our thanks to the Society's sub-committee for their tireless work in organising a really splendid evening and also our gratitude for the efficient help and advice given by the FCO staff. Caley B, the caterers were excellent too.

### **THE ANNUAL NEPALI SUPPER**

The 2010 Annual Nepali Supper, held at St Columba's Church of Scotland Hall in Pont Street in February was attended by approximately 120 people and was hugely enjoyed by everyone. Members



*Brig Gen Rayamajhi, Defence Attache (2nd left) with Lt Gen Shridhar (extreme right) and friends*



*Vice president, Mrs Celia Brown & Mr & Mrs Karki with the QGOOs*



*The Ladies from the Nepalese Embassy*

and their guests were glad to welcome a piper from the Brigade of Gurkhas and for the orderlies who efficiently looked after the bar – a very important role!

Also members were happy to welcome the two Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers

to the Supper as our guests and for all their help at the occasion. The catering was carried out by Munal Restaurant and was up to its usual delicious standard.

Once again the next Annual Nepali Supper is to be held at St Columba's Church of Scotland Hall on Wednesday, 23rd February 2011.

## LECTURES

In 2010 the Society held two lectures, both at the Medical Society of London in Chandos Street.

The first was given by Dr Mark Watson from Edinburgh Royal Botanic Gardens and he gave us a wonderful insight into the beautiful and diverse botanical heritage of Nepal. His lecture was accompanied by wonderful slides.

The second lecture was a fascinating one by Charles Allen on his latest book, *The Buddha and Dr Fuehrer*, which gave us an archaeological reassessment of Nepal's Buddhist sites and those near by over the border in India. This lecture was well supported and followed by a Nepali Supper supplied by Munal Restaurant.

Our grateful thanks to both of 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 2011.

There will be two lectures in 2011, both at the Medical Society of London and both followed by a Nepali Supper. The dates are Thursday, 12th May and Thursday, 6th October. Speakers will be announced during the year.

## SUMMER OUTING

Unfortunately the 2010 Summer Outing had to be cancelled, and your committee have decided not to arrange this outing in future, as support and interest has dwindled over the last few years.

## ACTING HON SECRETARY

Once again, I have come to the point that I

have to resign. After many years as Honorary Secretary it is inevitable that I have to hand over to another and new Secretary, someone with new and exciting thoughts for the ongoing development of the Society in the coming years. There should be changes and new challenges ahead – as there should be in any organisation. We cannot afford to stagnate – in our Membership, Committee and events – the very essence of our Society. It is the Membership in the collective sense that truly makes this Society the unique and precious one that it is, and so deserves a new and bright outlook from a young and energetic Secretary.

It has always been an honour and a privilege, as well as challenging and immensely enjoyable to be the Secretary of the BNS, and I must also express to you all my gratitude for all the support, friendship and help that I have experienced over the years.

## TIES AND BADGES

Mrs Jenifer Evans has now taken over the sale of the ties. The price of these ties is £10 each including postage and they may be obtained from Mrs Jenifer Evans, Bangers Mead, Lower Froyle, Alton, Hants GU34 4LL by post or at one of our functions. Jane Loveless is also selling lapel badges at £3 at all of the functions.

David Jefford has looked after the sale of the ties for many years – as long as I have been Secretary and that is since 1994, and so I think we must all give him a rousing vote of thanks for having sold so many ties and scarves and for his dedication to attending so many functions to be able to display and sell them to members. Thank you David, and welcome Jenifer.

**DEATHS**

It is with sadness that I have to report that the following members died during 2010:

Mr Ralph Biggs

Mrs ZL Harben

Lt Col A M Langlands OBE

Mrs Beryl Mumford

Mrs Rita O'Brien (wife of the late Mr Terence O'Brien, CMG, MC, formerly HM Ambassador in Kathmandu 1970-74)

Rani Teeka Rana

Col Charles H Mixon (the Society was only recently informed of his death, in 2007. His wife now lives in the USA.)

**Lt Col HCS Gregory OBE KSG**

It is with great sadness that we have to record the recent death of Lt Col HCS Gregory, one of our vice-presidents, on Sunday 6th March. He had dedicated his life to the Brigade of Gurkhas and was a strong supporter of the Society, having held the offices of both treasurer and chairman and was the founding editor of the journal, a post he continued to hold for 20 years. A full obituary will appear in the next edition of the journal. *Ed.*

**THE  
BRITAIN - NEPAL**  
  
**medical trust**

Registered Charity No. 255249

BNMT has over 40 years of service improving the health of the people of Nepal

Basic health services in low income countries like Nepal need £17 per person  
Nepal's expenditure is only £7 - Too many mother and newborn deaths in Nepal relate to this deficit

BNMT uses its grants and donations to prevent disease and to improve access to essential services

To make a secure donation, go to our website at [www.britainnepalmedicaltrust.org.uk](http://www.britainnepalmedicaltrust.org.uk)

The Britain Nepal Medical Trust, Export House, 130 Vale Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1SP  
Tel: 01732 360284, Fax: 01732 363876, Email: [info@britainnepalmedicaltrust.org.uk](mailto:info@britainnepalmedicaltrust.org.uk)

# ***Munal Restaurant***

**Est. 1990**

[www.munalrestaurant.co.uk](http://www.munalrestaurant.co.uk)

e-mail.munalrestaurant@hotmail.com

## **FINEST NEPALESE CUISINE**

*FOOD FROM GURKHALAND*

393 UPPER RICHMOND ROAD PUTNEY LONDON SW15 5QL

TEL: 020 8876 3083/8878 9170

TAKEAWAY SERVICE AVAILABLE

10% Discount on collection only

WE GUARANTEE GOOD QUALITY FOOD AT REASONABLE PRICES

RECOMMENDED BY GOOD CURRY GUIDE

WE ALSO DO OUTSIDE CATERING

OPEN

7 DAYS A WEEK

12-2.30 p.m. & 6-11.30 p.m.

WEEKEND TILL MIDNIGHT

### **BRANCHES**

76 CENTRAL ROAD

WORCESTER PARK, SURREY

KT4 8HX

Tel: 020 8330 3511/3711

### ***FREE HOME DELIVERY***

*(Orders over £12.00 within 3 miles radius)*

### **TAKEAWAY**

205 LOWER RICHMOND RD

PUTNEY, LONDON, SW15 1HL

Tel: 020 8789 0357/0798

Tuesday-Sunday (5.30-11pm)



---

## TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

By Mayura Brown

*(This piece first appeared in Journal No 9 – the Silver Jubilee Edition, 1985. Ed.)*

The State Visit of Their Majesties King Mahendra and Queen Ratna of Nepal in November 1960 was the inspiration for the founding of the Britain-Nepal Society. His late Majesty, King Mahendra, not only honoured us by becoming our Patron, but also donated £500 to start the Society.

Bhuban and Jharendra Singha, General Shanker Shamsher J B Rana, with Pashupati Rana and Prabal Rana (now First Secretary at the Embassy) were the prime movers in the formation of the Society with enthusiastic support from many British friends. A Committee was hurriedly assembled and the obvious choice for President was Sir John Hunt of Mount Everest fame.

An Inaugural Reception was held at the Dorchester Hotel for Their Majesties, the Royal entourage, and a glittering collection of guests.

The first year was spent in consolidating the Society. The Nepalese students then in Britain already had their own Association, the 'Yetis', and preferred to remain a separate organization but were of course eligible to join as individuals.

Bhuban was our first Chairman, with Lt Col Sir Geoffrey Betham (British Envoy & Minister Plenipotentiary in Nepal from 1938-1944) as Vice-chairman.

The first Annual General Meeting was held at the Nepalese Embassy on the 20th October 1961 by invitation of the new Ambassador, Sri Kali Prasad Upadhaya. There were several changes in

the Committee. Bhuban was returning home so Sir Christopher Summerhayes (British Ambassador in Nepal from 1951-54) was approached to take her place. Both Sir Geoffrey and the Hon Francis Stonor (Hon.Treasurer) resigned for reasons of health, and Mr T Lovell-Garner (Hon Secretary) due to pressure of work. Lady Wheeler became Vice-Chairman, Mrs Ruth Rhodes Hon Secretary, and I the Hon Treasurer.

We had to make plans for the coming season, and it was decided that our meetings should consist of lectures on every aspect of Nepalese life and culture. The Society was to be strictly non-political.

It was not easy to contemplate a programme for the year with greatly diminished finances, and the Dorchester Hotel Reception had left us fairly impoverished. We were spared the cost of hiring a hall, as the Ambassador very kindly offered us the Embassy Ballroom for our meetings. But we had to calculate the expense of hiring chairs, the postage and stationery required, printing of notices, and a four-page Newsletter I would write for those members unable to attend meetings. The cost was beyond us. I mentioned this to the late Lord Nelson of Stafford, one of our Vice-Presidents, who promised immediately to have our notices and Newsletters copied at his English Electric offices in the Strand, as well as our annual statements. I still remember Lord Nelson's generosity with gratitude as we needed such help to put the Society really on its feet. Mrs Rhodes

and I managed the secretarial work between us. We must have addressed hundreds of envelopes and stuck on endless stamps in those early years of the Society. Another saving was achieved by Ruth preparing the snacks for the meetings. We would pack the sausage-rolls, sandwiches, etc. into boxes and go off in her little Fiat to wherever the meeting was being held.

It was most auspicious that our very first lecture-meeting on January 24th (1962) was honoured by the presence of HRH Crown Prince Birendra, then a pupil at Eton, and HRH Prince Gyanendra. The Minister for National Guidance, Planning and Education, Bishwabanda Thapa, was also present. The well-known anthropologist, Professor von Furer Haimendorf of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, introduced us to the 'Sherpas of Eastern Nepal' with a beautifully photographed film of Kumjung and neighbouring villages. About 70 members attended our first cultural effort which was most encouraging.

This set the pattern of the Society's yearly activities. An Annual General Meeting in the autumn, spring and winter lecture-meetings, and a Birthday telegram sent to our Patron, HM King Mahendra every June.

In 1963 Mrs Rhodes felt we should add a summer outing to our annual programme. She arranged a coach ride through the Cotswolds, a picnic lunch en route, and a visit to Stanway Hall by courtesy of Mr Guy and Lady Violet Benson – a privilege as this house was not open to the public.

Each year we have found different venues. Gardens, Stately Homes (we

enjoyed the Polo Match at Cowdray Park), various boat trips down the Thames including 'Son et Lumiere' at the Tower of London, and our recent enjoyable excursion when we ate our curry supper while passing the impressive Thames barriers. In 1976 General and the Rani Kiran went with us to the Gurkha Museum at Church Crookham, and we have enjoyed the hospitality of many friends including Lord and Lady Hunt, the Earl and Countess of Limerick, Lord Camoys, Sir Gilbert and Lady Inglefield, Mr Anthony Wieler, and Mr & Mrs Paul Broomhall. In 1972, after a picnic lunch in the Broomhall garden, we visited the battlefield at Hastings where we had a lecture explaining how William of Normandy's troops defeated King Harold's army. Some Gurkha cadets from Sandhurst were with us. One of them said: 'The English would NEVER have lost if we Gurkhas had been here with them!'

A Reception at the House of Lords in honour of HRH Crown Prince Birendra was held on 6th April 1964. Our Sponsor was Field Marshal Viscount Slim, a Vice-President of the Society. We were able to express to His Royal Highness our appreciation of his interest in the Society and to wish him every success in his studies.

I was very fortunate to receive the sum of £450 from Rani Jagadamba Kumari Devi, widow of General Madan Shamsheer J B Rana, to be used by the Society for furthering interest in Nepal. We decided to mount a photographic exhibition with photographs contributed by members. The Kodak Company gave us a great deal of help by reducing their price for enlargements and mountings,

and Qantas Airways allowed us the free use of their exhibition gallery in Piccadilly. "The Kingdom of Nepal" exhibition was launched with a Cocktail Party on November 23rd 1966 and was open to the general public from November 24th to December 8th.

It was transferred to the Royal Geographical Society and remained there from December 1966 to June 1967 and was seen by a large number of people. On April 17th a Reception was held at the RGS for HRH Princess Sharada and the Kumar Khadga Bickram Shah when they were able to view the photographs.

We tried unsuccessfully to find other locations for this very interesting exhibition but the expense of transportation, insurance, etc. defeated us.

The Nepali Suppers at New Zealand House did not start until February 1968. We borrowed Mohansingh and his son Puran from Mr Anthony Wierler to cook the meal with the help of the ladies of the Committee. Miss Jacqueline Cheny (Mrs C N C Mitchell) was the organiser, and in those days the Committee also washed up the dishes! As the number of diners increased it became difficult for amateurs to cope, and we were glad to find Mr Manandhar to do the catering. These suppers have become a popular feature of our winter programme. At the 1984 Supper, Captain Rambahadur Limbu, VC, asked me if I remembered his son. When Rambahadur came to London in 1966 to receive his decoration there was a small party for him at the Embassy. The late Mrs Aimee Huban (her son, Captain John Huban, 1/5 Royal Gurkhas Rifles, was killed in Italy fighting with his men) brought toys for Rambahadur's children and I gave them to him. It was good to hear that little Bhaktabahadur

had grown up and joined his father's regiment, the 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles.

Apart from important guests who attended our Nepali Suppers, several receptions took place for visitors from Nepal, among them the Reception on May 17th 1966 at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, in conjunction with the Gurkha Brigade Association, for the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Nepalese Army, General Surendra Bahadur Shah and the Rani Surendra. In May 1969, the Reception at the Army & Navy Club, Pall Mall, was for the Rani Kaiser, widow of Field Marshal Kaiser Shamsher J B Rana, a Life Member of our Society and founder of the Britain-Nepal Society. She was accompanied by the Rani Surendra, the Field Marshal's daughter.

Receptions have been held as well at the House of Lords, Royal Overseas League, the Alpine Club, and the English Speaking Union for the Nepalese Ambassadors and the British Ambassadors to Nepal. Encouragement and help have been given to us by Ambassadors of both countries and Embassy officials for which we offer sincere thanks.

After General and the Rani Kiran returned to Nepal, the next Ambassador was Sri Jharendra N Singha who had been First Secretary in London at the birth of the Society. He and Bhuban found our growth and success "most gratifying". The present Ambassador, Sri Ishwari Raj Pandey, first visited London in 1963 as Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Planning, and returned as First Secretary in July 1968 until September 1972. We welcomed him back in July 1983 with his courageous wife, Gita, who manages to fulfil her

commitments from a wheel-chair.

Lack of space allows for just a few names, but all those who have served the Society must accept our warmest appreciation. Our Presidents: Lord Hunt, Mr Arthur Kellas, and Sir George Bishop. Chairmen: Mde Bhuban Singha, Sir Chrispptopher Summerhayes, Sir Antony Duff, Colonel Charles Wylie, Mr Paul Broomhall, Brigadier Taggart, and Colonel Colin Scott. Our dedicated and hardworking Secretaries: The late Ruth Rhodes, Lord Camoys, Mr Christopher Cox, Colonel Eric Mercer, Miss Cynthia Stephenson, and our indefatigable Celia Brown. Vice-Chairmen and Treasurers: Lady Wheeler, the Earl of Limerick, Mrs Helen Lawrence, Mr Nicholas Rhodes, Mr Anthony Wieler, Colonel Gregory and Mr Rodney Turk. Hon. Auditors: Mr A.E Leach, Mr J K King and Lord Chorley.

It was a great shock to learn that our Patron had died on 31st January 1972. I had attended Their Majesties' departure from London Airport on the 20th November 1968 when the King had been here for medical treatment, but His Majesty was very well and cheerful when I had an Audience on the 28th October 1971 at the Embassy. (Some of our members will remember being presented to our Royal Patron in October 1966.) We were all greatly saddened by our loss, and a letter of condolence was sent to HRH Prince Birendra.

In February 1975 HE General Kiran took our Coronation gift with him to Kathmandu, and we celebrated with a pre-Coronation Nepali Supper on February 19th. (The Coronation took place on February 24th.)

Their Royal Highnesses Princes Gyanendra and the Princess Komal were

our guests at the Reception at the Royal Overseas League on the 28th September 1973. The Prince was to be our new Patron. TRH were our guests again at a dinner at the League on the 30th July 1981. Also present was HRH The Duke of Gloucester, an Honorary Life Member of the Society. In 1984 a dinner was held at the English Speaking Union for our Patron and HRH Princess Komal. The Prince explained the aims of the King Mahendra Wild Life Trust for Nature Conservation in Nepal. He is Chairman of this important and very necessary foundation.

One cannot but regret that some of our founder-members are no longer with us. Sir Geoffrey Betham, Mr Kenneth Keymer (his father built the famous ropeway to Kathmandu) and General Shanker Shamsher J B Rana who died in June 1976. Nepalese Ambassador in London from 1949 to 1954, and one of our Vice-Presidents, he and Ranisahiba often entertained the British Ambassadors to Nepal and our Committee members in appreciation of their work and help to the Society. He also supported the Gurkha Welfare Appeal. Colonel Ronnie Duncan (5th Royal Gurkhas, PPF) a founder member who died in 1963 is well remembered. His widow Brenda now aged 90, regularly attends our meetings. What greater loyalty can we expect! Also much missed is Clem Sykes of the British Council who died recently. He was an active member for 16 years and a Committee member for most of that period.

Lecture-meetings are the foundation on which our Society has flourished, and we have treated our members to well over a hundred so far. From earliest times



they have attracted 120 or more members and guests, and their educational value and the cultural information derived increases one's understanding of Nepal.

It would require a large volume to describe all these talks fully. I hope our Lecturers, who gave so generously of their time, will accept our warmest thanks and forgive the omission of some names.

Most people think of Nepal in terms of mountains and spectacular views. Lord Hunt, Sir Edmund Hillary, Colonel Charles Wylie and a host of mountaineers have taken us to heights few of us could hope to attain. We sit comfortably, warm and untired, and our eyes undertake the hazardous task of climbing.

On expeditions that do not attempt the great peaks, we are able to acquaint ourselves more intimately with the inhabitants of the high hills. Many Nepalese have seen in these illustrated talks parts of their homeland they have never witnessed.

In 1962 John Tyson, now Headmaster of the Bura Nil Kanta Boys' School, showed us his expedition to map the Jagdula Lekh, Sisne Himal and the Kanjiroba Himal.

In 1966 we saw his journey to Tukche and Dolpo and in 1971 a trip through the gorge of the Langhu river. In 1966 Professor Haimendorf showed us "The Bhotias of West Nepal", in 1967 anthropological field work in Nepal, and in Humla (1972) and the training societies in Nepal (1978). In 1966 we saw Dr David Snellgrove's "Cultural Survey in Nepal" and the life of a Sherpa in 1980. Nancy Noel's subject in 1982 was "Less Well Known Aspects of Nepal" and Mr P S J B Rana, FRCS,

spoke on "Evolution of Modern Medicine in Nepal".

The various expeditions and treks, including some notable films by Sir George Bishop, emphasise the difficulty of transport and journeys, especially for the sick. Several doctors related their experiences but Dr Peter Steele managed to bring some fun into medical life.

Projects for the 1962 Three Year Plan were shown by Mr Andrew Shearer after our AGM in 1963. The English Electric Company had re-equipped the (1911) hydro-electric station at Pharphing. Equipment was supplied for the Sunderijul and Thara Khola stations, as well as the Kathmandu 11000 volt ring main system. In 1965 Major Tom Spring-Smyth told us about the Karnali Project in West Nepal.

Quite in contrast was a film shown in 1974 by the late Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark which filled older members with nostalgia. This was Kathmandu in 1951 when Buddhist relics were brought to the city. THR the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were at this meeting. Our young members had a chance to see "Nepal of the Past" when the late Mr Kenneth Keymer showed black and white slides from a vintage magic lantern. Those slides should be kept in archives somewhere for they gave a historical picture of Nepal as it was in the early part of this century.

Films on the flora of Nepal by both Adam Stainton and Tony Schilling are extremely popular. Their knowledge of Himalayan flowers, trees and shrubs is authoritative and their films a delight. We owe a debt to these plant collectors for many of the beautiful Himalayan plants that grace our gardens today. Much useful work has been undertaken

by the British Museum (Natural History) in the field of zoology, botany and entomology. Mr K Hyatt, one of our members, has shown films of their findings (1963 and 1972), and the Green Jackets also undertook high altitude research on these subjects for the Natural History Museum (Film of 1972). Birds and Butterflies have not been neglected and we have had two splendid films on the wild life of Nepal (1981 and 1984).

It is fortunate that John Sanday is restoring the ancient and unique monuments in Nepal. The work is vital and he continues to do it with great care and understanding of the materials and methods used by the original craftsmen and builders. In 1977 the Society donated £100 towards the restoration of the Surajya window in the Hanuman Dhoka. His films on the architecture of the Nepal valley are always a revelation, and he is to be congratulated on reviving the old

national crafts. His first talk to the Society was published in the first number of our now popular Journal (1977).

A very successful special meeting was held on May 23rd 1983 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first flight over Everest by the Marquis of Clydesdale and Flight Lieutenant David MacIntyre in 1933. This splendid achievement by British pilots and aircraft should have been celebrated nationally. It is to the honour of our Society that we paid tribute to these brave men. Once again I must thank Dr William Brown (Celia's husband) for finding the film of the flight for us to show at our meeting.

Over a period of twenty-five years a very large number of people have given their services generously as Vice-Presidents and ordinary members of the Committee. They deserve appreciation and thanks for their contribution to the success of the Society.

## British Association for Centenaries in South Asia

1999-2000

HMNS has been invited to participate in the centenary of the British Association for Centenaries in South Asia.

The British Association for Centenaries in South Asia is a non-profit making organisation which was set up in 1999 to mark the centenary of the British Association for Centenaries in South Asia. The Association is a non-profit making organisation which was set up in 1999 to mark the centenary of the British Association for Centenaries in South Asia. The Association is a non-profit making organisation which was set up in 1999 to mark the centenary of the British Association for Centenaries in South Asia.

The British Association for Centenaries in South Asia is a non-profit making organisation which was set up in 1999 to mark the centenary of the British Association for Centenaries in South Asia. The Association is a non-profit making organisation which was set up in 1999 to mark the centenary of the British Association for Centenaries in South Asia.





## WorldWide Volunteering



**Volunteering opportunities for people of  
all ages throughout the UK and  
worldwide**

[www.www.org.uk](http://www.www.org.uk)

**T. 01935 825588**

[worldvol@worldvol.co.uk](mailto:worldvol@worldvol.co.uk)

**F. 01935 825775**

*"You are never too old to volunteer"*

---

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

I have trawled through the secretary's reports and have listed some of the high lights of Society events:

**1985** – To mark the Society's silver jubilee a reception was held in October in the Banqueting House, Whitehall in the presence of HRH Prince Charles and HRH Prince Gyanendra. A dinner was also arranged by the Anglo-Nepal Parliamentary Group in the House of Commons. Lectures that year included one by Lord Hunt on his mountaineering expeditions over the years. Mr Hermanta Mishra from the King Mahendra Trust spoke about the Trust's aims to conserve wildlife in Nepal.

**1986** – A reception was arranged by the Anglo-Nepal Parliamentary Group at the House of Commons. Lectures included one by Mike Cheney on his 21 years in Nepal centred on his trekking exploits and another by Lt Col Tony Streater on his climbs in the Himalayas.

**1987** – Sir Arthur Norman of the UK branch of the King Mahendra Trust spoke about the Annapurna Conservation Area Project.

**1988** – The Society raised £5300 for earthquake relief in eastern Nepal.

**1989** – A reception was held for HRH Prince Dipendra in the House of Commons. The Society outing was for curry lunch at Queen Elizabeth's Barracks, Church Crookham followed by a visit to the newly opened Gurkha Museum in Winchester.

**1990** – Lectures included those by Mr Chris Walters & Mr Roger Brown from Binneys on water projects to obtain water for Kathmandu, Dr Michael Hutt from SOAS and Mr Neil Weir on ear surgery camps.

**1991** – Lectures included Nepalese coins by Nicholas Rhodes, Kadoorie Aid by Lt Col Alistair Langlands and Himalayan wilderness by Roger Mear. An outing was made to Stowe School.

**1992** – The Nepali Supper was held for the first time at St Colomba's Church Hall. HRH Prince Gyanendra was able to attend. A Society outing was held with boat trip on the River Thames. The FCO and the Society committee held a lunch for the Speaker of the new Nepalese Parliament.

**1993** – Lectures were given by Maj Dudley Spain on the King Mahendra Trust, a trip to Lo Mantang by Lt Col Gerry Birch and on the Yakha people of east Nepal by Dr Andrew Russell from Durham University. The outing with the Yetis was to Blenheim Palace.

**1994** – Lectures were given by Dr Rita Gardner on her soil erosion work and by Col Newton Dunn on the Gurkha Welfare Trust. A reception was held for the Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr MK Nepal at the House of Commons and later that year the Prime Minister, Mr Man Mohan Adhikari spoke at Chatham House during a flying visit to Europe.

**1995** – Mrs Mayura Brown was awarded the Prasida Prabal Gurkha Daksin Bahu

II by HM King Birendra. The investiture was held at the Royal Nepalese Embassy by the ambassador.

**1996** – Lectures were given by Dr Andrew Hall on the Lang Tang region, by Neil Weir on otology in Nepal and by Julia Hegewald on water architecture found in the temples of the Kathmandu valley.

**1998** – A reception in honour of HRH Prince Gyanendra was held at the House of Commons.

**1999** – An outing to Stonor Park, the home of Lord Camoys, took place in the summer. A reception was held at the House of Lords attended by both our president, HRH The Duke of Gloucester and our patron, HRH Prince Gyanendra.

**2000** – A fascinating lecture was given by Lt Col Charles Wylie and Lord Chorley on their adventures climbing Machapuchare. Another lecture featured three young people about their ‘gap’ year experiences. Society members attended a lecture by Dr Flamand on veterinary work in Chitwan National Park. A summer outing took in both the Gurkha Museum at Winchester and the Gurkha Garden at the Hillier Arboretum masterminded by Maj Tom Spring-Smythe.

**2001** – This was a sad year due to the death of HM King Birendra which resulted in our patron succeeding his brother to become King of Nepal. A small group of members went to Nepal in the autumn despite a decision to postpone a possible Society sponsored trip to Nepal until 2002. Postponement was due to the ‘9/11’ tragedy in New

York. The summer outing was to Wrotham Place, the head office of the Lawrie Group PLC, the company for which our chairman Peter Leggatt worked.

**2002** – The lecture programme included a talk by George Band on Everest and the Hillary school. A summer outing took place at Whipsnade Zoo. The Nepalese one-horned rhinos were a great attraction.

**2003** – The lecture programme included one by Maj Kelvin Kent on the 1972 British attempt on the southwest face of Everest. HRH The Duke of Gloucester attended the Nepali supper at Pont Street and in the summer an outing down the Thames to the barrier was a popular event.

**2004** – Lectures were given by Dr Gillian Holdsworth on the work of the Britain Nepal Medical Trust and Philip Holmes on the Esther Benjamin’s Trust; also Mr Chris Evans spoke about the permaculture project at Jajarkot to improve agricultural methods in inaccessible places. The summer outing was a picnic in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

Following the AGM at the embassy Mr David Waterhouse spoke about his recently published book on the long serving nineteenth century British Resident at Kathmandu, Brian Houghton Hodgson.

**2005** – An evening with Michael Palin was held in the Nepalese embassy as a fund-raising event for BRINOS. The summer outing was to Kew Gardens.

**2006** – The lecture programme included Sandra Noel talking about her father,

Capt John Noel, on early 20th century expeditions to Everest, Maj Corrigan on the Anglo-Nepal war and Col David Hayes on the present Brigade of Gurkhas. The summer outing was a picnic at Eltham Palace.


**2007** – Lectures included an update on the Gurkha Welfare Trust a review of the new terms of service for the Brigade of Gurkhas by Col Hayes, Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas; Professor Michael Hutt of SOAS reviewed the political situation in Nepal in respect of the Maoist insurgency. A rather damp outing was held at Polesden Lacey.

**2008** – Lectures included the experiences of small team from the Royal School of Arts who went to help villagers of east Nepal with design and production of material and garments made from nettles

(*allo*). Professor David Howard spoke about his work on Everest on human physiology. The Society had a stall with the Britain - Nepal Chamber of Commerce at the Trade & Tourism Fair on 21 & 22 September held at Limkokwing University in Piccadilly.

**2009** – HE Dr Andrew Hall, a Society member and current ambassador in Kathmandu updated the Society on the present political situation in Nepal. George Band, the youngest member of the successful 1953 Everest team and chairman of the Himalayan Trust UK, spoke about the work of this charity set up by the late Sir Edmund Hillary to provide schools in the Solu Khumbu region. An outing was held to the Gurkha Museum in Winchester.

GDB



# LIGHT OF NEPAL

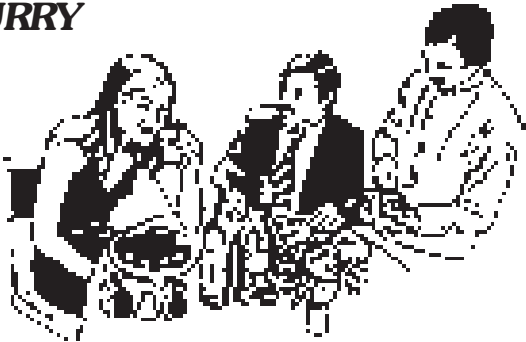
## TANDOORI AND CURRY

### RESTAURANT

*(Fully Air Conditioned)*

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

**268 KING STREET  
HAMMERSMITH  
LONDON W6 0SP  
TELEPHONE: 020 8748 3586, 020 8741 2057**



## THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE AT KATHMANDU

Dr Andrew Hall

*(The author was formerly HM Ambassador at Kathmandu, 2006 -2010.*

*The views expressed here are his own.)*



*Plate 1 Sketch of the Residence by Hodgson's brother*

### **The old Legation House**

Nepal was obliged to accept a British Resident at Kathmandu following war in 1814-16 with the East India Company, concluded by the Treaty of Sugauli. The Hon Edward Gardner presented his credentials to King Girvan Yuddha at the royal palace of Nuwakot in 1816 and the Residency was established on land to the north west of Kathmandu gifted by the King - but believed locally to be 'ill-omened'. It was noted in 1948 that, "The original title deeds, if there were any, have been lost".

The 50-acre site in Lainchaur (named from the English 'lines', the usual name for British enclaves throughout India) incorporated not only Gardner's Residence but all the offices and accoutrements of the British presence in

Nepal, including a troop of cavalry (the Nepal Escort). It included a church, a greenhouse, a miniature zoo, a bird sanctuary – and a cemetery, whose first occupant was buried in 1820.

The first Residence, according to a sketch (Plate 1) by the brother of its most famous occupant, Brian Houghton Hodgson – who, between 1820 and

1843, was successively Assistant Resident, then Acting Resident, then Resident in his own right - was a substantial stone-built house. Hodgson was also provided with a summer cottage, on a ridge to the north west of the Kathmandu Valley at a place then called Koulia, in the vicinity of the village of Ranipauwa. A sketch by



*Plate 2 Kakani Bungalow c. 1918*

Hodgson's successor, Sir Henry Lawrence (1843-45), shows the original bungalow at Koulia, which was later destroyed. Its replacement, still in the possession of the British Embassy, stands on the ridge at Kakani, just to the west of the boundary of the Shivapuri National Park. (See Plates 2 & 3)



*Plate 3 Kakani Bungalow 2008*

The original Residence (Plate 4) was rebuilt in 1884, (Plate 5) in the style of the villas and bungalows then found throughout the hill stations of British India. But this building was badly damaged in the great earthquake of 1934 which destroyed swathes of Kathmandu and led to substantial loss of life. Although repairs were made, the house was eventually demolished towards the end of 1940. The Minister, as the Resident was now styled, Lt Col (later Sir) Geoffrey Betham and his wife, shifted temporarily to the First Secretary's residence.

Work began the following year on a new building. The Maharaja of Nepal, Joodha Shumshere Rana, laid the foundation stone on 1 May 1941 – a photograph in the collection of Betham's granddaughter, Mrs Vanessa Miller, shows the Maharaja in full regalia and Betham in diplomatic uniform at the ceremony. Betham's initial enthusiasm was somewhat dented by the inevitable delays that set in. He wrote to London in February 1942 that construction work had been "sorely retarded owing to the difficulty of

getting the material of the required standard through the Nepalese Government". But when, eventually, the Bethams moved in to their new home they were delighted with the result: "It is a magnificent two-storied building constructed on the most up to date earthquake-proof plan and is fitted with electricity and modern sanitation". Within a few years, though, the building's shortcomings had become more apparent, with a visiting Ministry of Works official complaining that the house was "built in the New Delhi style which is unsuitable to the climatic and general conditions in Kathmandu".

### **Division of the spoils**

Betham retired from Nepal in 1944, to be succeeded by Lt Col GA Falconer. With the independence of Pakistan and India in August 1947, properties formerly belonging to British India were to be apportioned between the new successor states. (Another consequence of Indian independence was that Falconer was the last British Minister and the first British Ambassador to





*Plate 4 Residence 1874*

Nepal, where he continued to serve until 1951.) India, as the only one of them represented in Nepal, appeared to have a reasonable claim to assume title over the old British embassy, but when negotiations became deadlocked over the desire of both India and Pakistan to acquire the Kabul embassy, India opened a temporary embassy in 1948 at the small palace of Shital Niwas, further north on Maharajgunj (today the official residence of Nepal's President).

The Maharaja offered Britain a new embassy site adjoining the old one. The new British embassy was to be significantly smaller than its predecessor. A Foreign Office report of 1948 called for a new residence "not of grandiose design, but sufficient to be representative and not to look too modest in comparison with the Indian Embassy, which will be next door".

However a political crisis intervened, with the flight of King Tribhuvan and most of his family to the Indian Embassy at Shital Niwas on 6 November 1950 and his subsequent departure to India. King Tribhuvan returned to Kathmandu to assume full power on 18 February 1951, promising his people a democratic constitution

framed by an elected Constituent Assembly (a promise not to be delivered until 57 years later, when elections were finally held in 2008 to form a Constituent Assembly; the Assembly's first act, on 28 May 2008, was to ratify the abolition of the monarchy). Amid the turmoil, plans to relocate the British Embassy were high on nobody's priorities.

Wearying of the still unresolved dispute between India and Pakistan, the British Foreign Office Minister, Herbert Morrison, finally wrote to both Prime Ministers in December 1951, proposing to relinquish the Kathmandu embassy to India (and eventually the Kabul property did pass to Pakistan).

Although the new Prime Minister, MP Koirala, had reaffirmed the old Rana promise of land to the new Ambassador, Sir Christopher Summerhayes (1951-55), progress was soon stymied over two issues. One concerned the temporary arrangements to be made. The British wished to move into the palace of Shital Niwas, effectively swapping with the Indians, while they constructed their new Embassy on the site promised by the Government. M P Koirala was evasive; Summerhayes believed it was because he wanted Shital Niwas for his own use. Instead he proposed the British move temporarily to Bahadur Bhavan. Bahadur Bhavan was a larger palace situated off Kantipath, the property of General Bahadur. (Later it was to become the renowned Royal Hotel; currently it houses the offices of the Election Commission.) But Summerhayes was not keen: Bahadur

Bhavan needed substantial renovations and the owner wished to retain a portion for his own use. In the face of steadfast Nepalese opposition to allowing temporary use of Shital Niwas – Summerhayes even tried to enlist the King's support, but to no avail - plans for a temporary move were shelved.

Even more troublesome was the question of Plot 4, a spur of land attached to the old embassy site which projected southwards into the planned new site. Its particular importance to the British, given their need for accommodation, was that it was already the site of the Second Secretary's bungalow. India proved reluctant to part with Plot 4: Summerhayes and his Indian counterpart Sir CPN Singh exchanged numerous polite but rather chilly letters. The Indian, not surprisingly, was impatient to take possession of the embassy to which his government was indisputably entitled, particularly as his successor was soon due to arrive. Summerhayes, backed by instructions from London, would not budge until the British had possession of Plot 4. Finally, in October 1952, the

new Indian Ambassador, Bal Krishna Gokhale, agreed to the transfer of Plot 4, subject to several conditions. At last the way was clear for the British move to the site next door.

### Forest House

As early as 1948 it had been foreseen that the new British Embassy would have many fewer staff than its predecessor. Initially the plan had been to build the new Embassy more or less from scratch. The architect's estimate was a rough total of £66,000 for all the new buildings which would be required (Residence, Chancery, First Secretary's residence, Archivist's residence, servants' quarters, guards' quarters, stores etc). But these plans were soon scaled down, presumably for lack of funds for such a project in the post-war years. Now Summerhayes came up with a cheaper option: to adapt and refurbish the buildings on the land to be purchased from the Government of Nepal. His plan saw the Ambassador moving to Forest House, his deputy to the Second Secretary's house on Plot 4, the old Post Office becoming the

Chancery and the adjacent wireless operator's cottage becoming the Second Secretary's accommodation.

Forest House, also referred to as Forest Park, had previously been occupied by Evelyn Smythies. Smythies had retired after a distinguished career with the Indian Forestry Service as the Chief Conservator of



*Plate 5 Residence c. 1918*

Forests for the United Provinces. In 1940 he arrived in Kathmandu to take up the position of Forest Adviser to the Nepal Government. It remains unclear how far Smythies himself was responsible for building or adapting Forest House. The central core, judging from its construction method, is of a style typical of nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings in Kathmandu but a subsequent addition – possibly by Smythies himself – added an additional wing, allowing for an extra bedroom.

The Smythies left Nepal in 1947 and the Forest House reverted to the Government of Nepal. By 1952 it was occupied by the Prime Minister, MP Koirala. When there was “a mild rebellion” on the night of 22/23 January 1952, “the Forest House with comparatively low walls round it was easily surrounded by the insurgents and the Prime Minister was lucky to escape”. The Prime Minister immediately moved to a better protected house and a junior Minister was allowed to move into the Forest House until it was vacated for British use later that year.

### **The move to the new Embassy**

A first Agreement for Sale with HM Government of Nepal was signed on 27 February 1953 between the British Minister of Works and Khadgaman Singh Basnayak, Counsellor for Foreign Affairs. The UK agreed to pay £11,256–7s–6d sterling (equivalent to Mohar Rupees 221,750–50) for three plots and the main buildings on the land, Forest House and the Post Office.

The agreement stipulated that if the UK no longer required the land and buildings then right of first refusal reverted to the Government of Nepal to

buy back the land at the then purchase price (£5,942–5s–6d) and the buildings at their current value. Should the offer not be accepted within one month the UK would be at liberty to sell the property on the open market. The transaction was confirmed in a Deed of Sale of 4 March 1954 between the Minister for Foreign Affairs, D R Regmi, and the UK Minister of Works.

Finally, on 12 March 1954, Summerhayes handed over the old Embassy to India: “It is hoped that this was done without significant loss of prestige and the move in any case took place in a friendly atmosphere after the previous wrangles”. The Indian Ambassador being absent in Delhi, the Charge d’Affaires wrote to “convey deep appreciation and thanks for the handing over of both the Embassy house and furnishings in it in such good condition”.

Summerhayes also wrote to Nepalese Foreign Minister Regmi on 25 March 1954 to place on record that he had handed over the old Embassy property while retaining two plots of land. One was the troublesome Plot 4 (wrangling with India over payment for it continued for decades afterwards), the other the old Cemetery to the west of the Embassy, for which no original Deed could be found but which had been in use since the first burial in 1820. Foreign Minister Regmi acknowledged this communication on 30 March 1954.

The new Embassy was established on a site of some eight acres. Works were set in hand to make the various properties on the new compound habitable. It became clear that no new money would be forthcoming from the Ministry of Works for a significant building programme. Instead, Forest House was extended by widening and walling in its verandah on

the south side to form the new entrance hall and enlarging the drawing room by building an extension on the south side. This also allowed for an extension to the main bedroom above. The dining room was enlarged by incorporating the existing pantry. The nearby old Post Office was adapted to become the temporary Chancery and the two-storied cottage adjacent to it refurbished. All properties were provided with water-borne sanitation and electric light. Most materials for the works had to be sent up from India, using the ropeway, since Kathmandu was still not at this stage connected by road with the outside world.

#### **The Residence today (Plate 6)**

Further internal adjustments and improvements have been made over the years to the Residence, and additional staff and office accommodation has been built within the compound, but the four original properties otherwise remain much as they were in 1954.

However, structural surveys indicate that Forest House would perform extremely poorly in the event of another great earthquake, such as that of 1934, in the vicinity of Kathmandu, a consideration which does not seem to have been addressed in 1954. Investigations continue to identify an engineering solution which would enable the building to meet acceptable seismic standards.

#### NOTES

On Hodgson's life and work see: David M Waterhouse (ed), *The Origins of Himalayan Studies: Brian Houghton Hodgson in Nepal and Darjeeling 1820-1858* (Abingdon; Routledge Curzon, 2004).

Smythies' wife Olive wrote a charming memoir of their lives, including the seven years they lived in Kathmandu: Olive Smythies – *Ten Thousand Miles on Elephants* (1961; reprinted 2007 Natraj Publishers, Dehra Dun).

Other information and quotations have been taken from Betham's and Summerhayes' official correspondence with the Foreign Office, London.



*Plate 6 Residence 2008*

## 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.

By supporting our work with a donation or legacy you will enable us to continue our vital work with disadvantaged and discriminated against children. Help us to turn their lives around, from lives of misery with no hope to lives full of the joys of a happy healthy childhood and a positive future. Thank you for your support.

The Esther Benjamins Trust, Third Floor, 2 Cloth Court, London EC1A 7LS

Tel: 020 8877 7519 or 2520

Fax: 020 8877 2520

Email: [ebtrust@hotmail.com](mailto:ebtrust@hotmail.com)

website: [www.ebtrust.org.uk](http://www.ebtrust.org.uk)

Reg.No: 1078187



# Tiger MOUNTAIN

THE PIONEERS OF HIMALAYAN TREKS, JUNGLE LODGES AND ADVENTURE TRAVEL



| Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge & Tented Camp | Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge |

| Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge | Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge & Tented Camp |

| Mountain Travel Nepal | Adventure Travel Nepal | Himalayan River Exploration |

| World Elephant Polo Association / Charities Supported |

**Website : [www.tigermountain.com](http://www.tigermountain.com)**

It is worth checking our website for updated information on Nepal

Contact email: [kristjan@tigermountain.com](mailto:kristjan@tigermountain.com)

Tel: 00 977 1 4361500

Fax : 009 771 4361600

PO Box 242, Kathmandu, Nepal

## HODGSON: A PIONEER OF HIMALAYAN NATURAL HISTORY

By Carol Inskipp

*(Carol Inskipp is a leading authority on Nepalese and Indian ornithology. She with her husband, Tim Inskipp has written a number field guides and reference works on ornithology of the region. She has co-authored and contributed to studies on Hodgson. I gratefully acknowledge the permission given by the Zoological Society of London to publish some examples from their collection of Hodgson's collection of paintings, the copyright of which remains with ZSL. Ed.)*



*Brown Winged Jacana*

Our present day knowledge of the birds and mammals of the Himalayan region can be traced back to the pioneering work of a remarkable nineteenth century naturalist, scholar and administrator, Brian Houghton Hodgson. Born in Prestbury, Cheshire in 1800, Hodgson was for many years British Resident in Kathmandu. He described or collected 124 species of birds and 31 of mammals, new to science. A number of animal species bear his name. The English titles of Himalayan birds include Hodgson's Frogmouth, Hodgson's Hawk

Cuckoo, Hodgson's Redstart and Hodgson's Bushchat. In scientific nomenclature one finds *Columba hodgsonii*, *Anthus hodgsoni*, *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*, *Prinia hodgsonii*, and *Abrocopus hodgsoni*. Even a bird genus – *Hodgsonius* – is called after him, an honour few naturalists can claim. The names of several mammals also testify to his involvement in their discovery, such as *Hystrix hodgsoni*, *Panholops hodgsonii*, Hodgson's Flying Squirrel and Hodgson's Bat.

Owing to Nepalese restrictions on the movements of British personnel in the residency, most of Hodgson's specimens were collected for him by a team of trappers. Some of the birds and mammals were brought to Hodgson live and he was able to observe their appearance and behaviour at first hand as he kept them in the Residency grounds.

Hodgson was a prolific author, writing as many as 146 papers on natural history comprising 82 on mammals and 64 on birds. His principal contribution in the field of natural history was his ornithological work. His bird collection of some 9,512 specimens was one of the largest single collections made in Asia and consisted of 672 species. Only 59 species of the total collection originated from outside Nepal, the rest representing almost three-quarters of the country's present total. His collection of 903 mammals was also important, consisting of 124 species including two-thirds of those now recorded in the country. Hodgson's 84 specimens of

© ZSL

reptiles, amphibians and fish also form part of his vast collection. He made a gift of all his collections, some 10,500 mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish, to the British Museum, the first donation immediately after his departure from Nepal in 1844, and the second when he left the subcontinent for good in 1858.

Perhaps Hodgson's least recognised achievement, and one that had it been more widely known would have probably established Hodgson's pre-eminence among Indian ornithologists, was his collection of water colour paintings. Hodgson, a corresponding member of the Zoological Society of London since 1832, generously donated to this institution a large collection of original manuscripts relating to his natural history work including his first collection of water colour paintings. The paintings are still held in the library of the Zoological Society of London and bound in large folio volumes, eight in all comprising 1,125 sheets on birds and 487 on mammals. The backs of this first collection of paintings were crammed with full descriptions of plumages, furs, colours of bills, legs and feet, and irides, as well as extensive measurements. He also wrote copiously on their breeding behaviour, nests and eggs, habits, altitudes, localities and dates of collection.

Hodgson trained a team of Nepalese artists to produce the water colour paintings and sketches. Unfortunately nothing is known about these talented men. Raj Man Singh probably produced the majority of the paintings and it is likely that he was trained and employed by Hodgson for many years.

It seems likely that John Gould's paintings in *A Century of Birds Hitherto Unfigured from the Himalayan Mountains* which commenced in 1830 were the



*Imperial Woodpecker*

© ZSL

inspiration for the paintings in Hodgson's collection. This was illustrated with eighty colour plates which, when compared with some of Hodgson's earlier paintings, show a similarity in style. Gould, in an attempt to give drama to his paintings, occasionally contorted the posture of a bird far beyond any natural range of movements. However, later work of Hodgson's artists became freer, more natural and closer in style to contemporary bird art culminating in some superb paintings, for example that of Tibetan Partridge *Perdix hodgsoniae*. Further examination of Hodgson's collection of paintings and those of Gould reveal the difference between paintings produced from dry skins and those done from live or freshly killed birds. This is particularly noticeable with regard to the soft parts – bills, legs, feet and eyes. Presumably Mrs Gould, who actually did



the paintings for the *Century* when faced with the task of their preparation, either guessed the colour of such perishable features or reproduced the faded colours she found on the dry skins. Hodgson and his artists, with the advantage of sketches or drawings done from fresh specimens or live birds, would capture the features and colours truest to the living bird.

Certainly for its time, Hodgson's collection of paintings was as good as, and more accurate than anything published previously, and he was at pains to point out the paintings' truth to life in his private letters and public announcements related to the proposed work. For example he wrote to James Prinsep: 'Have you got the latest batch of drawings – twenty two sheets? And are they not wondrous work for a Nipalese? I have some more now executing which I dare any artist in Europe to excel and they are rigidly correct in their minutest detail.'

A later set of paintings was executed, largely a reworking and improvement of those kept by the Zoological Society of London, with some new additions including 30 sheets of amphibians, reptiles and fish. These refined versions (which lacked Hodgson's invaluable notes) eventually went to the Zoological Library of the British Museum (Natural History) in London, but their original purpose was to illustrate a work on Himalayan birds and mammals that Hodgson aimed to publish.

In 1837 on behalf of his son, Hodgson's father approached John Gould in England to enlist his support for his son's proposed work. However Gould would only consider a work solely on birds and wanted to restart all of the magnificent

paintings from scratch as he was 'perfectly convinced that no work executed from the drawings of Indian artists will sell'.

Birds duplicated in Gould's own *Century* were to be simply copied into the new book. Gould wished to write the descriptions and measurements, leaving Hodgson to complete the text on behaviour and habitat. Gould would take much of the financial responsibility, but there was no doubt that Hodgson was being asked to play a secondary role in his own project. Hodgson, who was in Nepal, wrote to his father, 'I am not likely ever to assent to that proposition.' He disapproved of the large format of Gould's paintings in his previous works and thought the text in the *Century* 'miserably trivial.' Hodgson wished to produce a working text for the



*White backed Vulture*

© ZSL

scientific naturalist, while according to Hodgson, Gould saw his market among, 'particular chaps at home who have ample means to gratify a taste for the superb in works of art.'

Hodgson did not give up his struggle to see his book in print, however.

Advertisements appeared in Indian natural historical journals in 1835, 1836, 1837, 1842, 1843 and 1844. Large expensive works of this kind usually relied upon the goodwill of subscribers, people who promised to purchase the work once it was finished. Eventually Hodgson accumulated 380 names in India. By 1843 the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* announced that 'in the present month the first division of the Zoology of Nipal' was about to come forth. A similar announcement appeared in the *Calcutta Journal of Natural History* the following year. In 1844 Hodgson appealed to the British Museum Trustees for some financial assistance to publish the illustrations, citing his generous donation of his specimen collections that this might attract their favourable consideration, but the Museum declined. After that there was nothing and the book never materialised.

Very sadly the large majority of paintings have never been published. In later years their existence was overlooked and this great achievement of Hodgson and his Nepalese artists was largely unrecognised. Not surprisingly Hodgson was disillusioned by his lack of success. In a letter to James Prinsep in 1836, he wrote: 'By my soul it is a d.....d bore to be compelled to fawn and entreat for subscribers as if one was the obliged instead of the obliging party, and when one undertakes to labour with pains and cost for the love of science.'

Hodgson received some acclaim in his lifetime. The Zoological Society of



*Adjutant Stork*

© ZSL

London awarded Hodgson a silver medal for his help in obtaining a pheasant collection in 1859 and in 1863 he was made an Honorary Member of the Society. He was also elected a member of the Linnaean Society and of the Royal Asiatic Society and in 1877 a Fellow of the Royal Society. However, Hodgson's disillusionment was a constant theme in his later correspondence.

Sadly Hodgson's achievements are hardly recognised by naturalists who live in or visit the Himalayas today, yet his work forms the backbone of our present knowledge. In a rare moment of self-acclamation he wrote in 1859: 'No-one knows better what pains and cost have been bestowed by me upon zoology and no-one better knows how little fruit of said pains and cost I have yet realised owing to the indifference of the so-called patrons of

science.....I must have stood without dispute the greatest discoverer nearly on record – certainly by far the greatest on record for northern India for my particular field.’

The illustrations that accompany this are examples taken from the collection held by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and have not been previously published. I am grateful to ZSL for permission to include these in this piece.

[Based on Cocker, M. and Inskipp, C. 1988. *A Himalayan Ornithologist* Oxford University Press, Oxford and Datta, A. and Inskipp, C. 2004. Zoology .... amuses me much. Pp.134-153 in *The origins of Himalayan Studies. Brian Houghton Hodgson in Nepal and Darjeeling, 1820-1858*. ed. DM.Waterhouse, Routledge Curzon, London.]

### SECRETARY

The Society urgently needs a new secretary to take it forward following the retirement of Mrs Pat Mellor. The task has been considerably reduced by the introduction of an electronic membership list which is not maintained by the secretary but is out-sourced as can major Society mailings. This has taken a good deal of what candidates might consider the less exciting work of the secretary. Anyone interested in taking on this important role for the Society should contact either Mrs Pat Mellor or the chairman, Lt Col Gerry Birch.

Email contacts:

gerry.birch3@btinternet.com or  
Mrs Mellor at itncnature@aol.com



## *The Royal Society for Asian Affairs*

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

Membership enquiries are invited to:

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

## HENRY AMBROSE OLDFIELD'S PAINTINGS OF NEPAL

By Kanak Mani Dixit

*(Kanak Mani Dixit is a journalist in Kathmandu who is also involved in civil rights issues, and writes books for children. He is editor of 'Himal Southasian', a magazine that serves the South Asian region and publisher of 'Himal Khabarapatrika', a Nepali language fortnightly. He was the curator of the 1999 Oldfield exhibition held in Nepal. Ed.)*

Appreciation of history is enhanced when one is able to visualize it. Unfortunately, Nepal's history in this sense is obscured by the lack of 'secular imagery' – pictures showing how its cities, villages, mountains and the plains looked in the past. While the tradition of stone/wood/bronze sculpture and *poubha* and *thangka* (devotional paintings) goes back many centuries, by and large the images created did not depart from their linkage to religious or court iconography. As a result, the art inheritance of Nepal



Plate 1 The Town of Kyarung (Kyirong) © RGS

gives us a good sense of how we worshipped in the past and which rulers we glorified, but little of what the landscape looked like or how the urban toles (neighbourhoods) and *bahals* (courtyards) were peopled.

But there are a few images to provide us with a window onto the life of the Nepal of more than 150 years ago. Curiously they are mainly the result of the British 19th century water-colour tradition. The first pictures were apparently produced at the behest of Brian Hodgson, the long-serving British Resident in Kathmandu in the earlier part of the century, but the most prolific output was that of Henry Ambrose Oldfield, the doctor in the British Residency between 1850 and 1863, who painted several hundred water-colours of which 229 are now in the archive of the Royal Geographical Society, with a further 28 in the British Library. As the architect and conservationist Sudershan Raj



Plate 2 Bam Bahadur reviews his troops as they move north © RGS



Plate 3 Mangahiti water spouts, Patan © RGS

Tiwari says, the significance of the Oldfield collection is that “it shows us how our great grandparents lived in the middle of the 19th century”. According to the respected cultural historian Satyamohan Joshi, “Landscapes have never been a tradition in Nepali painting, and so these Oldfield paintings have added a whole new dimension to our historical art. Through study of these pictures, we can try to understand more about our country’s history, religion, culture and art.

When Oldfield arrived in Kathmandu, Nepal had just embarked on what turned out to be a century-long period of ‘autocratic stability’. A few years before, in 1846, the redoubtable Jang Bahadur had seized power following the Kot Palace massacre in which over 30 of his rivals lost their lives. He went on to establish the Rana dynasty of hereditary prime ministers and it was they, rather than the royal family of the Shah dynasty, who had the real power until 1950. Jang Bahadur (whose portrait until only a few years ago looked down upon the British Secretary of

State in his office in Whitehall) saw that it was important to maintain good relations with Britain, then the dominant power in the area. In 1950, he spent some months on a visit to London where he met Queen Victoria. His visit gave him an insight into British military and industrial strength and thus probably led to his decision to take the British side during the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and to personally lead his troops to the aid of the beleaguered British in

Lucknow. But he made it clear that his decision reflected a determination to be on the winning side rather than sentimental attachment. His independent stance was demonstrated by his decision to grant refuge in Kathmandu to the rebel queen of Lucknow, Begum Hazrat Mahal.

Jang Bahadur seems to have got on well with Oldfield, for, in 1855 when he declared war on Tibet, he apparently allowed Oldfield to accompany the troops of his brother, Bam Bahadur, to the Kyrarung (Kyirong) frontier north-west of Kathmandu. At that time, the few Europeans who arrived in Kathmandu were forbidden to venture beyond the rim



Plate 4 Ashok's tank, Patan

© RGS

of the Kathmandu valley. As a result, Oldfield produced a series of paintings of great historical interest, which show the ultimately victorious Gorkhali forces headed by Bam Bahadur moving north to meet the Tibetan/Chinese forces. They give us an eye-witness account of how a Nepali army column heads to war, how it camps and how it marches. Plate 1 shows Bam Bahadur reviewing his army as it hauls its mounted dismounted cannon to the front. Plate 2 shows the progress of operations near the town of Kyarung at the mouth of an important pass which leads to Tibet. These and other pictures are the only visual record of this conflict and they confirm Oldfield's role as probably Nepal's first war artist. Perhaps it was because this was the time of a supremely self-confident satrap in Jang Bahadur that the surgeon of the British Residency got the freedom to range far and wide, not just to Kyarung, but to Trisuli Valley has left us today the prize of a large collection of pictures reaching far back in time.

Oldfield's contribution must thus be evaluated over and above consideration of his work as an artist, for, in truth, Oldfield was a good draftsman rather than a great artist. He was, in the words of Gotz Haggmuller, a conservation architect long resident in Bhaktapur, "certainly a skilful dilettante with good eyes, a lot of patience and perseverance, and with the curiosity typical of some members of the British Raj". When he painted buildings, temples and



*Plate 5 The Chobar Gorge and the Ganesh Temple* © RGS



*Plate 6 Street scene in Kathmandu* © RGS

monuments, Oldfield drew with a, with a keen hand and correct perspective, with a real relish for detail and decay. "He paints like a surgeon", as one local expert has put it. He has left behind some remarkably accurate records of, for example, the Mangahiti water spouts next to the Patan Durbar (Plate 3). However Oldfield does not show the same exactitude when drawing landscapes. Thus, the lower Mahabharata mid-hills are depicted everywhere as ribbed and rounded elevations, while the snow-covered mountains (*himals*) are fanciful and stylised creations, seemingly

borrowed from the genre of Chinese murals. Thus, when looking beyond Oldfield's monuments to the mountains he has taken care to include in his drawings, it is not possible to recognise any of the hills on the Kathmandu Valley rim (Shivapuri, Champadevi, Phulchowki or Ngarjun/Jamacho). Likewise, in his extensive foray up the trisuli valley to Kyarung with Bam Bahadur's force, the ramparts of Ganesh Himal peaks to the west and the Langtang Lirung massif to the east are not recognisable from real life.

It is likely that while with buildings, Oldfield may have made detailed sketches before retiring to his studio at the Residency (and on occasion he may have painted *in situ*), when it came to mountains, Oldfield seems to have relied on unreliable memory, romanticised at that. Oldfield also seems to have been somewhat negligent in illustrating the human condition. One could say that this is a loss because from the images the social scientist is unable to read much



Plate 8 Temple in Nangul

© RGS



Plate 7 Summer House in the Royal garden, Patan  
© RGS

about clothing, festival participation, and other cultural aspects of the Valley's population. The few activities in which Oldfield's humans seem to engage is to bathe and wash (see Pimbaha Pokari – 'Ashoka's Tank' – Plate 4, and the picture showing the Chobar Gorge and the Ganesh Temple Plate 5), to sit around listlessly on the ground (a true enough trait even today, and seen in many pictures), and to carry the occasional *kharapan* (twin basket). One aspect on which Gotz Haggmuller and Sudarshan Raj Tiwari have remarked is Oldfield's unconscious miniaturising of human figures vis-à-vis the streetscape, most evident in the 1853 Bhaktapur 'Street Scene' (Plate 6), an aspect which both ascribe to the artist's socialisation within European architectural monumentalism, which, says Tiwari, made him oblivious to the "intimate scale of the historic urban architecture of Nepal".

From a historical perspective, the pictures by Oldfield provide ample evidence that by his time the Newar cities of the Valley, Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, had indeed become physically debilitated – a result of the loss of



Plate 9 Dhanara tower (*Bhim's folly*)  
Kathmandu © RGS

community and nobility-related patronage following the decades of the rule by the Shah dynasty of Gorkha. The Malla kings in each of the kingdoms were gone and the Shahs who had taken residence at the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar had other priorities –funding expansionary wars and keeping the new hill nobility happy – to distract them from the need for the upkeep of the cultural heritage of the Newar inner city. The steady decline of the Newar inner towns had thus already begun by the time of Oldfield's assignment in the Valley, as is clear when one sees the rundown pavilion in the Bhandarkhal garden of Patan Durbar (Plate 7) or the crumbling and overgrown roofs and cracking facades of buildings and *agam chhen* ('god house') in some of

the pictures of urban courtyards/squares. His painting of Nangul (Plate 8) in particular shows the sad state of repair of some of the community buildings originally constructed to provide an income stream for the temples they surrounded. The fact that the Gorkha invaders, while they did leave the inner city more or less untouched in vanquishing the Malla kingdoms, nevertheless brought to the Newar institutions and architecture. As Tiwari writes, "Drains had lain unattended for years; temples and *bahals* (courtyards) were falling apart; poverty, particularly at the community level, was debilitating and many *guthi* (trust) had gone as *birta* (award) to the new Gorkha gentry."

But while the gradual decline of the architecture of the Valley towns over the course of last two and half centuries is well known, the fact is that the truly irreversible cultural devastation that has overtaken the Valley's towns and countryside has mostly occurred since the mid 1970s. Which of today's Kathmandu citizens will not be affected by Plate 5 which shows ladies bathing and swimming in the clear waters of the Bagmati as it exits the Valley at Chobar Gorge? (The little touch added by Oldfield, that of clothes set out to dry on the grassy banks by the river, is authentic and is to be appreciated.) Oldfield shows the depth and darkness of the Chobar Gorge in its original state (the Bagmati only converted from river to sewer – Chobar as the flush toilet – in the 1980s), without the suspension bridge put up by Chandra Shumshere Rana in the 1920s. The hilly spur top-left of Oldfield's picture is no longer there, having been dug away to feed limestone for the making of cement for the Chobar Cement



Factory, now defunct. Most recently, in 2008, a cement and concrete vehicular bridge has come up which completely obstructs the view. Satyamohan Joshi has commented: “If Oldfield were today to visit what he knew to be the beautiful - spot of the Chobar Ganesh temple by the Bagmati, he would be appalled by the dirt, the smell and the pollution. He would surely put his paint brush back in its case and walk away.”

Oldfield’s accurate rendition of the ancient Valley structures has already helped conservation architects make a correction in two significant instances. Some years ago, Kathmandu-based architect and conservationist Niels Gutschow found in a Bangkok bookshop an 1855 issue of *The Illustrated London News*, containing an engraving of an Oldfield painting of the Patan Durbar Square (not among the illustrations to this article). It shows the long two-storied building running along the street to the south known as Thanapati. This building was being restored, and it was only through Gutschow’s chance discovery of the engraving that the restorers know that Thanapati had a peculiar octagonal *fuca*, an ornamental pavilion-like structure emerging from the roof of the building. Having lost its *fuca* for perhaps more than a century, today’s Thanapati has had it restored – and posthumous thanks are due to the surgeon of the Residency.

Another act of restoration is at the Pimbaha Pokhari ‘Ashoka’s Tank’ (Plate 4) a water tank near Patan Dhoka, which was until very recently fed by the Raj Kulo, the royal aqueduct which brought water from near Godavari to

recharge the aquifers beneath the town. This tank had over the past decades fallen into extreme disrepair, in addition to the fact that it had all but dried up. A few years ago, Patan municipality as well as the German-aided Urban Development through Local Effort project provided some funds to the community to try and restore the pond to its original state. In this, Oldfield’s picture has come as a gift from the past to the locals, for he shows us how Pimbaha Pokhari used to look. Plate 4 shows a view taken from the south-east corner, and it is clear that the tall walls which surround the tank today did not exist back then and that the building at the centre of the pond was originally an airy pagoda-style pavilion, on an island, the only structure of its kind in the Valley. It was subsequently replaced by a stucco building and the island connected to land by a causeway. Very recently, as a result of what was learned from Oldfield and through the support of the surrounding local community, the stucco building was dismantled, and the wood-and-tile pavilion as existed in Oldfield’s day was restored (though the causeway remains an aberration).



Plate 10 The ancient hilltop site, Gorkha © RGS



Plate 11 The golden gate at Bhaktapur

© RGS

There are several other similar architectural restorations which could be carried out based on Oldfield's legacy of paint on paper, given the interest of the authorities and lay supporters. One Example would be the enchanting, but now vanished, wooden pavilion in the Patan Darbar's Bhandarkhal garden (Plate 7). There will be many other details in the many drawings of *bahals*, monuments and streetscapes that the keen eye could spot and activism could restore back to the original state, as has happened in the case of Pimbaha Pokhari and Thanapati.

A different sort of historical insight is provided by Plate 9 which shows Dharara, 'Bhimsen's folly', the stucco tower put up by Bhimsen Thapa at the gate of his palace, Bagh Darbar (Bagh

meaning 'garden' not 'tiger' as it is often rendered). (According to the notes of Brian Hodgson, there were originally two towers.) Even today, Dharara remains an incongruous Moghulesque marker for Kathmandu city, although what we now see is the shorter version put up after the great earthquake of 1934. Oldfield's subject, however, is the original tower, which was at least two levels taller. What is additionally new to the observer is Oldfield's detailed rendition of the wide gash in the masonry that spirals down the entire length of the tower. This must have been the result of the earthquake which shook the Kathmandu Valley in the previous decade, the 1840s in which historian Mohan Khanal reports that 700 houses were damaged and 74 citizens died. This grievous damage to the Dharara was not previously known, and,

before this, all references to the original, taller structure has been predicated on photographs taken in the early part of this century, with the damage repaired.

It is perhaps worth pointing out that we can be reasonably confident in the accuracy of Oldfield's draughtsmanship because his painting of the Nyatpala temple of Bhaktapur would count as an accurate record of the same scene today. The temple looks much as it did when Oldfield painted it.

There is much that the students of Nepali and Kathmandu landscape and urbanscape can learn from the artwork and of Henry Ambrose Oldfield, who takes us back more than a century and a half to allow us to study his contemporary impressions of the Valley and the nearby region. What we can do today, is to utilize Oldfield's paintings to develop a further commitment to our heritage and our environment, and to internalise the need for conservation.

## NOTES

All of the illustrations which accompany this article are reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Geographical Society.

The references to the views of Sudarshan Raj Tiwari, Satyamohan Joshi, Gotz Hagemuller and Mohan Khanal are taken from the booklet brought out on the occasion of the 1999 Oldfield exhibition held in the Baggikhana Gallery at the Yala Maya Kendra at Patan Dhoka.

*(I am grateful to the editor of 'Asian Affairs', the journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, for permission to reproduce this article which first appeared in the November 2008 edition of that journal and also to the journal's publishers, Taylor & Francis of Abingdon, Oxfordshire. I also acknowledge the help I received from the Librarian of the Royal Geographical Society and the permission to reproduce the plates from their Oldfield collection. Ed.)*

## SOCIETY TIES SCARVES AND LAPEL BADGES

Mrs Jenifer Evans has kindly taken on the sale of the Society ties and scarves which cost £10.00 each including postage. They are available from her at: Bangers Mead, Lower Froyle, Alton, Hampshire GU34 4LL 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.

## 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. Her address is: 1 Allen Mansions, Allen Street, London W8 6UY and email: [celia.collington@btopenworld.com](mailto:celia.collington@btopenworld.com)

A PORTRAIT OF AN ANCESTOR  
OR  
A PORTRAIT SAVED

*(Many members will have seen articles and letters in the press concerning the portrait of Jang Bahadur Rana and the television programme on the Foreign Office with glimpses of the portrait in the Foreign Secretary's Office. Sir Michael Scott, former ambassador to Nepal and Mrs Mayura Brown, great-granddaughter of Jang Bahadur, have contributed to the notes below - Ed)*

*Sir Michael Scott writes:*

When the Rt Hon Robin Cook MP became the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary in 1997 he decreed the removal from his new office of the portrait of Maharajah Jang Bahadur Rana, Prime Minister of Nepal, who visited Britain in 1850 and was received and honoured by Queen Victoria. Although admired by Foreign Secretaries over some years, it appeared that Mr Cook felt uncomfortable in the presence of what he regarded as evidence of Britain's Imperial past (not that Britain ever occupied Nepal, and Jang Bahadur came as a friend and ally).

This distinguished full-length portrait (by the court painter Bhajiman Chitrakar who accompanied the Prime Minister) in its splendidly ornate gilt frame was to be consigned to the outer darkness.

Among those alarmed at this widely-reported decree was Mrs Mayura Brown, a founder and Vice-President of the Britain Nepal Society and a great granddaughter of that same Maharajah. Fearing that the painting's destination might be some dusty basement corridor in the FCO, a carefully worded letter was despatched to the Foreign Secretary's office in which Mrs Brown explained her interest and asked what was intended for the portrait of her great-grandfather.

This appears to have focused some minds wonderfully, and the reply explained that the painting was to be



*His Excellency General Jang Bahadur  
Kunwar Rana, Prime Minister and  
Commander-in-Chief of Nepal  
(1817-77, ruled 1846-77)  
Oil painting by a Nepalese artist, 1849*

lodged with the new British Library at St Pancras. The authorities there have come up trumps.

The Oriental and India Office Collections are housed in specially designed accommodation on the third floor. On a long white wall above some

of the book-shelves there are nine portraits and pride of place in the centre, longer than the others, is the full-length portrait of General Sir Jang Bahadur Kunwar Rana, Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Nepal (1817-1877). He is depicted wearing a magnificent green and gold tunic-coat, gem-encrusted helmet and plume, and a dress sabre. Flanking it are portraits of seven Indian and Persian dignitaries and one of Lord Clive.

Until 1998 the portrait, presented to the East India Company by the Sitter in 1850, had been seen in recent years mainly by Foreign Secretaries and their visitors - Ambassadors, Foreign Ministers, senior diplomats and the like - a few dozen in any year. In future it will be seen by hundreds of researchers, students and visitors to the Collections - a worthy resting place for such a historic and indeed attractive painting. As usual, Shakespeare got it right: "All's well that ends well".

*Mrs Mayura Brown comments:*

From my childhood I had heard about the portrait. I knew that my great-grandfather, Jang Bahadur Kunwar Rana had, in 1850, taken this large painting to England, a long and very tedious journey. He was one of the first high-caste Hindus to break with religious convention and cross the "Kala pani", but an invitation from the British Government was a great honour, and Jang Bahadur would carry greetings from the King of Nepal to Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria. In London he offered his sword to the Queen should Britain ever require his services and that of his country. This promise was kept when Jang went down to India with a large contingent of Nepalese troops in support of the British during the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. He was knighted for his loyal support.

In the late 1950's I was engaged on research at the India Office Library. In those days it was housed in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and I was taken to see the portrait of my great-grandfather. It was a stunning painting. It had been removed from its frame which was undergoing repairs. The late Dr Mildred Archer, Keeper of Paintings and Drawings at the IOL gave me a photograph of the portrait.

Many years later, in 1987 I saw it again. The room of the Foreign Secretary, the Rt Hon Douglas Hurd, was being refurbished and the portrait was put, for safe keeping, into the office of Lord Glenarthur, then Secretary of State. I had the privilege of being photographed beneath it. That photograph is now in the Gurkha Museum.

*(This article by the late Sir Michael Scott and the late Mrs Mayura Brown appeared in the 1999 edition of the journal. Mrs Mayura Brown was the great granddaughter of Jang Bahadur Kunwar Rana. She was the Society's living connection to 19th century Nepal until her death in 2002. It was a shame that this portrait was not in the FCO for the Society's golden jubilee reception in September. Ed.)*



Images from 2010 BRINOS ear surgery camp - Nepalgunj, March 2008

Richard Oliver - photographer - 0201 8147 3428



Images © Richard Oliver 2008

### The Britain-Nepal Otology Service

A charity dedicated to the prevention and treatment of deafness in Nepal



[www.brinos.org.uk](http://www.brinos.org.uk)

Registered Charity No. 800453

## THE VIGIL

By Colonel Richard Cawthorne

One hundred years ago, on 7th May 1910, King Edward VII died and for the first and only time Gurkha officers, who were serving as King's Indian Orderly Officers (KIOO), took part in the funeral of a Sovereign.

On ascending the throne in 1901, King Edward VII had proposed that a number of native orderlies be attached to the Royal Household. This idea eventually led to the appointment of KIOO. Drawn from regiments of the Indian Army, they attended the Sovereign for the season from April to August. While in England, they were under the supervision of a British officer from the Indian Army and, accompanied by orderlies and cooks, were accommodated in a private house in Pimlico close to Buckingham Palace. The first officers attended King Edward VII at his coronation in 1903 and thereafter four KIOO were appointed annually until the outbreak of the Second World War when the tradition ceased.

In 1910, the KIOO comprised Subadar Majors Santbir Gurung 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles) and Singbir Ghale 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles and two subadars of the 39th Garhwal Rifles. King Edward VII had been for some years Colonel-in-Chief of 2nd Gurkha Rifles while Queen Alexandra had recently been appointed as Colonel-in-Chief of 3rd Gurkha Rifles. The Officer-in-Charge was Major H St A Wake 8th Gurkha Rifles who, like his predecessors and successors, maintained a diary of the KIOO's tour of duty. It is upon his diary that this article is mostly based.

The KIOO had arrived in London towards the end of April 1910 and were

being fitted with new uniforms and familiarising themselves to life in England when the King died. On 13th May, the Orderly Officers were received in Audience by King George V, who invited them to guard the body of his Father during the Lying-in-State and afterwards to be his Orderly Officers. A few days later they were summoned to Buckingham Palace to attend a private Lying-in-State of the King. The diary describes how they were conducted into the Throne Room and after standing for some time in front of the coffin, saluted and retired backwards until they had withdrawn from the Room.

On the 17th May, the KIOO were taken by open landaus to Buckingham Palace where they took their place in the procession immediately in front of the massed bands leading the gun carriage cortege that was to convey the coffin of King Edward VII to Westminster Hall for the Lying-in-State. On arrival at Westminster Hall, the KIOO joined the Gentlemen-at-Arms, Yeoman of the Guard and officers of the Household Cavalry and Foot Guards in keeping vigil over the coffin. The four Orderly Officers mounted guard at the foot of the coffin one at a time, for one hour each. They performed this duty day and night continuously for 72 hours receiving much praise, to include that of the most senior and revered officer of the Indian Army, Field Marshal Lord Roberts, who commented on "the admirable and steadfast manner in which they had performed such a difficult and trying feat."

The KIOO then took part in the procession that conveyed King Edward's coffin from Westminster Hall to Paddington Station. Just before the

procession was about to set off, King George sent verbal orders that he wished the Orderly Officers to accompany the coffin to Windsor which they duly did on the Special Train. They processed to Windsor Castle and attended the funeral service in St George's Chapel. The KIOO returned to London later that day worn out after more than 80 hours of continuous duty. The diary records that they felt tremendously honoured and overwhelmed at being invited by King George V to play such an important part in the funeral.

Queen Alexandra subsequently showed her gratitude by presenting each officer with a gold & pearl pin in memory of King Edward VII and a signed photograph of herself and King Edward in recognition of their services whilst on duty during the Lying-in-State. At their final audience with King George

V, the Orderly Officers were presented with the Victorian Medal, except for Subadar Major Santbir Gurung who, having previously been awarded the Medal, received a clasp.

Just over a quarter of a century later, King George V died in January 1936 but as the KIOO were not on duty at the time they did not take part in his funeral. And as the successor to the KIOO, the Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officer, was not instituted until 1954, Gurkha Orderly Officers did not attend the funeral of King George VI in 1952.

The part played by Subadar Major Santbir Gurung in the funeral of King Edward VII was later to form the basis of Rudyard Kipling's story "In The Presence".

*(Col Cawthorne is presently chairman of trustees of the Gurkha Museum. Ed.)*



*The Lying-in-State*



---

WITH THE BRITISH COUNCIL IN KATHMANDU  
– MEMORIES OF OUR POSTING 1965-69

By Bob and Jane Jordan

Nepal has a special place in our hearts because it was our first posting with the British Council and our first home together after getting married. Bob had been appointed as an English Language Officer and sent to do a Post Graduate Certificate in Education specialising in English as a Foreign and Second Language at the Institute of Education in London. Here he met Jane who was following the same course. We got married in July 1965 and a month later set off on the journey of a lifetime to Kathmandu. Neither of us had been out of Europe before and we had had to look up Nepal in the atlas to see exactly where it was. We travelled to Marseilles to board the French ship “Vietnam” and had a wonderful voyage via the Suez Canal to Bombay, then by train across India to Calcutta and by air to Kathmandu: so many new sights, sounds and experiences. We were met at Gauchar Airport by the Representative, Lynndon Clough, who had started up the British Council in Nepal in 1959. One of his first comments to Bob was, “I’m glad you’ve got a beard. It makes you look older than your 28 years. Nepali men can’t or don’t grow beards until they’re in their fifties, so they’ll think you’re quite old and have more respect for you.” As we drove past paddy fields and mud houses we wondered where we would be living.

Our first home was in a flat near the Clock Tower but after six months we moved into a newly built concrete box in Gairi Dhara just behind the Royal Palace. Our landlord lived next door in a traditional Newari house, on the other side were paddy fields and nearby was a cluster of houses we called “pig village” because

of the small black pigs running around. We had a virgin piece of land around the house which Jane and our gardener Suku created into a thriving garden with vegetables, lawn and flowerbeds. On one occasion Bob saw the villagers stoning a pi-dog, which ran into our garden for refuge. He thought they were treating it cruelly and went forward to rescue it until Suku shouted out, “Sahib, dog, rabies”. Horrified, we had to drive it out of the garden and leave it to its fate. We had to get used to many life-style differences, such as employing servants, eating buffalo and goat, rather than beef and lamb. The chickens were bought live and slaughtered by the cook. Jane remembers bartering for vegetables in the market, buying cheese at the Swiss cheese factory and the excitement of when the first cold store shop opened importing frozen meat and fish from India.

Bob’s job was to train high school teachers of English in both language and methodology on 5-month in-service courses. With his colleague, Mike, and a Ministry of Education official, Bob had to trek to schools all over the country to test and recruit teachers for these courses. Nobody in the Council before we left the UK had thought to tell him this. They just assumed he could do all that walking; on one such recruiting trip they walked 120 miles in 11 days. Nor had he any special walking boots – just a trusty pair of ‘Hush Puppies’. An interesting encounter when Bob went to open an account at the Nepal Bank was meeting the manager, Mr Raj Bhandari, who proceeded to ask Bob about his shoes, the Hush Puppies. Bob tried to explain the name and then learnt that the

bank manager had his shoes made by Church's in England; a rather superior brand. A common interest in stamp collecting cemented an unusual friendship that lasted the four years we were there.

Jane worked part-time teaching English at the College of Education and enjoyed the challenge of trying to introduce new ideas by organising group work in classes of 100. Later she moved to work for Janak Nath Pyakural at Kanya High school in Lainchaur, teaching children, writing materials and training the teachers. All this was done on a voluntary basis as there were no actual posts available. In those days the British Council office was in a rather attractive colonnaded building on Kanthi Path. This housed the offices, the library and a lecture room, while the training courses were held in a building in Tahachal. Among the locally employed staff was Giridhar Manandhar, who was Clough's right-hand man, and has remained a good friend of ours right up to the present, publishing Bob's most recent book. At that time, tourism and the hippy trail were just beginning, there were few metalled roads and we drove our Landrover over the dusty roads and tracks. Boris Lissanavitch held sway at the Royal Hotel and we went bird-watching with the Flemings searching for the rare Spiny Babbler. Our entertainment was dinner parties, picnics, play readings and the occasional performance by visiting theatre groups at the Rastriya Naach Ghar organised by the British Council. However, one picnic we were invited to, organised by the teachers attending one of Bob's courses, was a lesson in cultural difference. Our concept of a picnic was of sandwiches or salads, but we were to discover that the goat being led along with us was in fact our meal. It was slaughtered, butchered and cooked and we had a delicious goat curry at about 4.00pm.

We were both involved with the committee supporting the Paropakar Orphanage run by Asha Ram Sakya; Bob ran a stamp collecting club and Jane helped with an art class for the boys, as well as helping to organise fund raising activities. On one occasion the group had arranged an exhibition of the boys' art, which Queen Ratna attended and Jane escorted her around.

One of Bob's roles was to keep an eye on the VSO volunteers who were working in schools around the valley. There were four of them while we were there and we used to invite them to our house for a good meal every now and then. One of these was Charles Allen, now well known for his writing on South Asia. The work with the VSOs led to strong friendship with the head of the Peace Corps in Nepal, George Zeidenstein and his wife.

One of the high points of our four years in Nepal was meeting Sir Edmund Hillary at a British Embassy cocktail party in August 1968. He asked Bob about his work and was telling him about the schools he had built for the Sherpas, when Bob asked him if he knew what was happening in the schools. Hillary didn't say anything then, but this question led to us being invited to lunch by the Council Representative, Robert Arbuthnott, to meet Ed Hillary and his wife Louise. After 'vetting' Bob, Hillary invited him to go on an inspection tour of the primary schools in Solu Khumbu. Ed drew up the itinerary and the brief. This included observing classes and interviewing teachers, checking inventories, meeting managing bodies and drawing up a report. In Ed's words "It'll last about three weeks and will involve a devil of a lot of walking. So hope you don't mind this?" It was agreed that we could both go and so we flew to Lukla in September. We spent 17 days and visited seven primary schools, walking for

a total of about 75 hours in the direction of Mount Everest up and down the mountainsides, along valleys and across torrents from Lukla, via Namche Bazaar, Thyangboche to our highest point, the school at Pangboche. It was the end of the monsoon season so we had a lot of rain and leeches and only occasional views of the mountain peaks. In those days Bob smoked and discovered that the best way to remove leeches without causing bleeding was with a lighted cigarette. We viewed the yeti scalps at Thyangboche and Pangboche monasteries and met Kappa Kalden, the famous Sherpa artist. We ordered two paintings which cost something like £10.00 and which still have pride of place on our sitting room wall.

Occasionally we found ourselves in dangerous situations. One such was on a holiday trek up the Kali Gandhaki from Pokhara up to Marpha. In those days the Mustang area was out of bounds due to the Khampa raids into Tibet. We were getting towards the end of the day's trek and our porters had gone ahead to get our accommodation organised. The sky was very dark and torrential rain started. We sheltered under an overhanging rock as boulders began to bounce down the hillside. We could see the little bridge crossing a stream below us and then up above it on the other side the house where we would be staying. We decided to take a chance and raced down the hill towards the bridge with stones and boulders flying past our heads. By some miracle we got across safely and retreated into the safety of the village house where we stayed the night. Overall this trek between Annapurna and Dhaulagiri was absolutely spectacular and just as fascinating in a different way as the one to Solu Khumbu.

Another life-threatening experience was when Bob was staying at the Gurkha recruiting depot at Dharan in Eastern Nepal. He was there running a course for

local teachers and was sitting on the verandah typing up a syllabus. Suddenly a British Major came and stood by him and said quietly, "Keep on typing. Don't stop, and don't watch me." He was carrying a golf club and Bob was a bit puzzled but carried on working. He heard a sharp crack and swivelled around. The officer said, "It's OK now. Come and look." Bob was horrified to see the headless body of a cobra. The Major explained, "I glanced out of the doorway and saw the cobra coming towards you, reared up and with its hood puffed out ready to strike. Perhaps it was the typing that aroused it. Too risky to shoot it, so I got my club and knocked its head off." He certainly saved Bob's life.

We had so many wonderful as well as dramatic experiences, too many to describe here, but our four years in Nepal made a deep impression on us and have resulted in a lifelong affection for the country and its people. Over the years Bob has collected new and antiquarian books about Nepal and has over 1800 books; one of the largest collections in Britain. His book, *From Missionaries to Mountaineers: Early Encounters with Nepal* is based on extracts from this collection and has recently been published by Giridhar Manandhar and launched in March 2010 at a meeting of the Nepal - Britain Society in Kathmandu. (See the Book Review section. Ed.)

("English All Over the Place" by Gerry Abbott and Bob Jordan published by Starhaven 2001 is available from starhaven@aesthesia.co.uk or directly from Bob Jordan. (This work was reviewed in *Journal No 25* published in 2001. Ed.) "From Missionaries to Mountaineers; Early Encounters with Nepal" by R. R Jordan published by Giridhar Manandhar 2010 is available from earlyencounters@hotmail.co.uk or telephone 0161 485 2798.)

**THE TIGER TOPS STORY**  
**An Icon of Nepal Wildlife Tourism That Has Captivated Travellers  
 and Conservationists for 45 Years**

By Lisa Choegyial

“If you can talk me into that, you can talk anyone into anything!” declared Jim Edwards, leaning back in his photo-filled office in Kathmandu, “You’d better stay on and work with us!” Thus began my Tiger Tops career in the spring of 1974. I had just returned from my first visit to the famous Chitwan jungle lodge and was totally captivated by the beauty of Nepal’s Terai jungle and the persuasiveness of Tiger Tops’ tourism and conservation ethic. The excitement of exploring the jungle on elephant back deep in tiger country had not palled, even though I had been charged by a rhino and baby the week



*Tiger Tops during the Coapman era*

before whilst out on foot, saved by a tourist-laden Roop Kali and her smart elephant driver, Sultana. Despite being a perilously close encounter, the delighted visitors thought it was all part of the Tiger Tops show, and I was hooked on the wild thrill of jungle life. I still am.

This year (2010), Tiger Tops celebrates its 45th anniversary. On 11 November 1965 the first visitors, a group of five Americans, landed on the grass Meghauly airstrip in a chartered Royal Nepal Airlines Dakota DC-3. Their destination was the newly opened tree-top lodge in what was then a Rhino Sanctuary (established 1963), a former hunting reserve of the ruling Ranas and Maharajahs. This was the beginning of nature tourism in Nepal, the birth of what is now recognized as one of Asia’s best wildlife tourism experiences. Over the years, the rich biodiversity, large mammals and wealth of birdlife in the forests and grasslands of Chitwan National Park (gazetted in 1973) has become a key feature of Nepal tourism, attracting more than 80,000 visitors annually.



*Jim & Chuck at Tiger Tops takeover, 1972*

Nepal tourism was in its infancy at that time, and very few visitors had penetrated the remote Himalayan kingdom of Nepal since it opened to foreigners in 1951. In March 1955 the first tourist group arrived. The year 1965 was a landmark for Nepal tourism. Kathmandu's first modern hotel, Hotel de l'Annapurna, opened its doors in July 1965. Previously the only one was Boris Lissanevitch's Royal Hotel, the converted Rana palace that today houses the Election Commission in Kantipath, immortalized in Michael Peissel's *Tiger for Breakfast*. In February 1965 Nepal's first trekkers visited the Everest region, a small group of American ladies organized by Col Jimmy Roberts's Mountain Travel Nepal, the pioneer of the Himalayan trekking industry. Today, trekking and mountaineering in Nepal attracts over 25% of Nepal's 500,000 tourists annually. These 133,000 visitors (in 2009) help to provide employment, income and tourism benefits for isolated and remote mountain communities.

Tiger Tops was started by two Texan oil millionaires and big game hunters, Toddy Lee Wynne Jr. and Herbert W. Klein from Dallas. In early 1964, they sent John Coapman to Chitwan, an Indian-born American who had been their hunting guide. His not inconsiderable task was to find a site, lease land from the authorities, construct a lodge, train local villagers and begin tourism operations. The first structures were a circular dining bar area, and the house on stilts built around a *kapok* (silk cotton) tree containing only the four top bedrooms. By early 1966 another set of eight bedrooms were built in the jungle clearing near the confluence of the Rapti and Reu rivers. A couple of elephants and a few landrovers took visitors to Tiger Tops Hotel, as it was then called, to view



*Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and John Edwards, 1978*



*Jim and Lisa in the Durbar Marg office*

the wildlife for which the area was famed – rhino, deer, wild boar, monkeys, crocodiles and birds against the backdrop of the white Himalaya peaks. Few saw tiger or leopard in those days, despite a couple of blinds (machans) near the Lodge. With business picking up, John Coapman hired journalist Elizabeth Hawley to set up an office and help with administration in Kathmandu.

However by the early 1970s the distant owners, Toddy Lee Wynne and Herb Klein, had grown tired of management problems that emerged as



*Robert Redford with manager KK Gurung, 1981*

business grew. Committed to their goal and original vision, they recognized more professional help was needed to fulfil their dream of a successful wildlife tourism operation in Chitwan. Following a chance meeting at New York's Explorers Club annual dinner, they were convinced by the enthusiasm of AV Jim Edwards that his energy and passion could turn around the business. In February 1972 Jim took over Tiger Tops with his friend and business partner Dr Chuck McDougal.

Jim and Chuck had been frequent visitors to the Himalaya during the 1960s and were founders of Nepal Wildlife Adventures, an early hunting and fishing company. Chuck was pursuing studies in anthropology in South Asia, and Jim was in the marketing division of Pan American World Airways in New York. Taking a leave of absence to dedicate themselves to Tiger Tops, they were joined by Elizabeth Hawley and later by

Jim's younger brother John Edwards, along with a team of Nepalis from villages adjacent to Chitwan whose relatives are still with Tiger Tops today.

Time and Jim's legendary story-telling talent have probably embellished accounts of the Tiger Tops' takeover. With no communication system to alert Lodge staff, Jim, Chuck and Elizabeth arrived unannounced on foot having waded the rivers carrying a bagful of cash. There is no doubt that they found a sorry situation of starving elephants, unpaid staff, broken vehicles and crumbling buildings. Jim liked to say that the new management took off "with a roar". By the time I joined Tiger Tops in 1974 to help with marketing, public relations and quality control, the Lodge was well established with 22 rooms and a steady stream of visitors, mainly Americans who constituted a significant 40% of the market in those days before the Gulf War and terrorism threats.

In the intervening years Tiger Tops has seen many changes and improvements to buildings and facilities, but Jim and Chuck's original ethos of controlled tourism, supporting conservation priorities and educating visitors to understand wildlife issues has never been compromised. Alternative energy, organic farming and innovative environmental practices featured from the outset. Decades before the term "ecotourism"



*Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge*

was coined, Tiger Top's formula was hailed as a tourism model that both contributes to environmental and biodiversity conservation, and brings tangible benefits to local communities. Today Nepal has emerged as an acknowledged leader in the field of sustainable tourism, with Government and industry partnerships committed to using pro-poor tourism strategies to tackle the country's widespread poverty. Improving livelihoods by delivering tourism benefits is a core theme of Nepal Tourism Year 2011.

The Palaearctic and Oriental zones overlap in Nepal, resulting in uniquely rich flora and fauna. Dramatically diverse ecosystems and altitudes range from Mt Everest (Sagarmatha) at 29,028ft (8,848m) to Tiger Tops in the Terai at about 300ft (100m). Protected as a World Heritage Site since 1984, Chitwan's magnificent birdlife and wildlife viewing opportunities doubtless helped establish Tiger Tops as a must-see destination. Nowhere else in South Asia was there a better chance of glimpsing the elusive Royal Bengal tiger and leopard, and almost-guaranteed sightings of Asia's largest rhinoceros, the Great One-Horned, with its skin folded like armour



*Jim welcomes HM King Birendra & Queen Aishwarya, 1988*

plating. Gaur (India bison) largest of the world's wild cattle, four species of deer including the elegant spotted deer (*chital*), the rare Gharial fish-eating crocodile and over 450 species of birds are found in Chitwan National Park.

Tiger Tops comfortable facilities and well-planned activities made these attractions accessible, even though they are located deep inside tiger country.

Elephant safaris, guided walks, local boat trips, village visits, trained naturalists, and Chuck's daily slide-show educated guests about Nepal's environmental issues whilst enjoying a holiday in the jungle. Providing quality interpretation and wildlife guiding was always a priority at Tiger Tops. Naturalists familiar to regular Tiger Tops guests include Dhan Bahadur



*Hillary Clinton poses with Tiger Tops staff, 1995*



### *Elephant Polo*

Tamang, Kalu Ram Tamang, DB Chaudhary, Ram Din Chaudhary and Gun Bahadur Kumal, greatly respected for their deep knowledge of the jungle. Many Tiger Tops managers had the opportunity to travel overseas and today their training influences wildlife operations and research throughout South Asia. For example, Bhim Gurung went on to obtain his PhD in tiger ecology.

In addition to general interest tour series, specialist museum and zoo groups such as from the Audubon Society, Zoological Society of London and Frankfurt Zoo amongst many others, helped establish Nepal's international wildlife credibility. The Smithsonian Institution's long-term tiger monitoring project used Tiger Tops trackers and pioneered the early use of camera traps, with Chuck as their Research Fellow. Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands visited as WWF International president, and Sir Peter Scott "launched" the first Gharial crocodile into the Narayani River, reared by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation to secure this endangered species. The

first batch of Gharial eggs was hatched in my bedroom!

University researchers and documentary filmmakers found the convenience and expertise of Tiger Tops hard to resist as a base in those early days, including Sir David Attenborough and teams from BBC Natural History Unit, Survival Anglia and National Geographic.

In response to growing tourism demand, expansion at Tiger Tops took the form of a 24-bed Tented Camp on an island in the Narayani River, and later in its

current site on a plateau overlooking the grassland and distant Himalayan peaks. A culture-based Tharu Lodge built in the village style of the indigenous Terai people was created in 1981 on the edge of the Park. In 1987 Tiger Tops expanded to Bardia National Park in the Far West of Nepal with the opening of a tented camp overlooking the Karnali River and the following year construction started at Karnali Lodge on a site adjacent to the protected forest.

The Tiger Mountain group was created when Jim Edwards joined forces with Col Jimmy Roberts and Mountain Travel, the pioneer of Himalayan trekking in Nepal. River running on Nepal's mighty rivers was started with the formation of Himalayan River Exploration, and Adventure Travel Nepal coordinated visitor itineraries. Over the years, Tiger Mountain tourism projects stretched into India, Tibet, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Iceland and even Russia's Far East. In India, Jim started tourism operations in the national parks of Bhandavgarh, Corbett and Nagarhole, in Ladakh and Kashmir, and Fish India to indulge his lifelong passion for the sport. In 1998, Sir Edmund Hillary opened the award-



winning Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, a complex of stone bungalows with stunning views of the Annapurnas whose local construction was supervised by Jim's eldest son, Kristjan. More recently, Fish Nepal offers mahseer fishing expeditions to remote west Nepal, led by Jim's second son, Timothy.

The World Elephant Polo Association (WEPA) championships are played annually on a ground adjacent to Meghauly, hosted by Tiger Tops. This unique event has attracted much media coverage and drawn teams and celebrities to Tiger Tops from all over the world since its inception in 1981 by Jim and his Scottish landowner friend James Manclark. The original concept is said to have been designed on the back of a bar menu in St Moritz between Cresta runs, inspired by the cartoon of Jaipur's invincible polo team mounted on elephants. Four elephants per team use a regular polo ball attempting to hit it into goal with 100-inch polo sticks, the players roped onto a *ghaddi* (padded saddle). As well as polo players, guests including James Coburn, Billy Connolly and Ringo Starr have all had a go over the years. Tiger Tops first devised the event to fill a low occupancy period, but elephant polo has taken on a life of its



*Elephant ride at Tiger Tops*

own, sometimes threatening to distract attention from Tiger Tops core wildlife and conservation image. Tournaments have been spawned in India, Thailand and Sri Lanka, and profits support conservation and community projects.

Philanthropic projects have always been part of Jim and Chuck's original concept. These include community projects with local villagers such schools, clinics, conservation education centres, agricultural programmes and wildlife research supported by our associated International Trust for Nature Conservation (ITNC) usually in partnership with the Nepal government and other development organisations. For example, Orlando Bloom visited Tiger Tops and Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge in 2008 as UNICEF goodwill ambassador and WWF brought Cameron Diaz and Eva Mendes to raise awareness of climate change issues. In early 2010 Leonardo DiCaprio stayed at Tiger Tops Karnali Lodge in a successful bid to solicit his support for WWF's Save Tigers Now campaign.

In addition to numerous Nepali Royal visits, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip cemented long-standing Britain Nepal ties during a second State visit in 1986. Their previous visit in 1961 caused Meghauly airstrip to be carved out of the thick Terai jungle for one of the last royal tiger hunts. Although Royal Bengal tigers were shot, Prince Philip's diplomatically bandaged hand prevented him taking part, thereby avoiding international conservation controversy. The Princess Royal has visited twice in her role as President of Save the Children Fund UK.

During the 1980s, the word was out that Nepal and Tiger Tops is the place to relax and enjoy that rare commodity of undisturbed peace

and privacy. Henry Kissinger visited Tiger Tops in 1986 but declined the elephant ride due to his phobia of heights, and ex-President Jimmy Carter spent several days at the Lodge after his trek to Everest Base Camp. John J. Kennedy Jr. hung out in the Khumbu, Kathmandu and Tiger Tops but had trouble cashing his mother's travellers' cheque which was signed both Jackie Kennedy and Jackie Onassis. Rolling Stone Mick Jagger came with Jerry Hall and their children in 1990. Hillary Clinton stopped by with her press corps for a break during her 1995 South Asia tour, during which I introduced her to Sir Edmund Hillary, allegedly her namesake though she was born six years after he climbed Everest!

By the mid 1990s, the effect of the Maoist insurgency had damaged Nepal's reputation as a fashionable destination. Visitor arrival numbers plummeted by more than half, and tourism businesses struggled to stay solvent during those difficult years. The peace accord of 2006 has restored both confidence and visitor numbers, and recent Governments have all pledged their support to tourism as essential to Nepal's economy.

Tiger Tops has had to adapt to modern times and a changing world, the biggest blow being the death of Jim Edwards in March 2009 at the untimely age of 72 (*See obituary in Edition No. 33, 2009. Ed.*) Today the next chapter is in the hands of his four children. Meanwhile a strong team of Nepali staff led by Marcus Cotton and Yadav Bantawa are managing the daily operations. Apart from complexities posed by the Government's lack of clarity on lease concessions in Chitwan and Bardia, other big challenges lie ahead as Nepal evolves into a mature tourism destination whilst juggling some crippling political realities. The core

conservation and tourism legacy so powerfully established by Jim Edwards, Chuck McDougal and Col. Jimmy Roberts will continue to mould the future development of Tiger Mountain. As a veteran conservationist commented on a recent visit, "I fear that Tiger Tops out of the Park will mean poachers in. Tiger Tops leads the field in delivering excellent wildlife experiences and promoting conservation awareness. The magic is as potent as ever." And I for one say, "Bravo!"



*British-born Lisa Choegy has made Nepal her home since the 1970s. She worked for much of that time with Jim Edwards and Tiger Mountain Nepal, based first in Chitwan*

*then in Kathmandu as Director of Marketing and Public Relations for the group. Still associated with Tiger Tops on the Advisory Board, she is currently a Director of Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge and a Vice President of ITNC. From the 1990s Lisa has worked as tourism consultant on development programmes throughout the Asia Pacific region with Tourism Resource Consultants of Wellington, New Zealand, specialising in pro-poor sustainable tourism planning and marketing. Lisa is involved in film production and books, including writing "Kathmandu Valley Style" that was published last year by Serindia. She is a Committee Member of Nepal UK Trust for Nature Conservation and is a founding director of the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust. Lisa has recently been appointed New Zealand Honorary Consul to Nepal.*

# HIMAL SOUTHASIAN

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

**www.himalmag.com**

Subscription: 1 year US\$ 40 2 years US\$ 72

Mailing address: GPO Box 24393, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: + 977 1 5547279 Fax: + 977 1 5552141



## *Britain-Nepal Chamber Of Commerce*

**Patron: H.E. Mr Murari Raj Sharma. President: Rt. Hon. Sir John Nott, KCB**  
**Vice President: Colonel J.M. Evans MC. Chairman: Mr Anthony Wieler**  
**Vice-Chairman: Mr Mahanta Shrestha**

*The Chamber encourages two way trade between the United Kingdom  
and Nepal.*

*It acts as an interface through formal and informal meetings, for those  
seeking to develop contacts and trade and always welcomes new members with similar aims.*

**The Secretary**  
**Britain-Nepal Chamber of Commerce**  
**Tamesis House Tel..**  
**35 St Philip's Avenue**  
**Worcester Park**  
**Surrey KT4 8JS**

**+44 (0)20 8330 6446 Fax: +44 (0)20 8330 7447**  
**Email: bncc@tamgroup.co.uk**  
**Website: nepal-trade.org.uk**

## A TREK TO LANGTANG – 1962

(This article first appeared in Newsletter No. 2 dated August 1962)



A Tamang house

© GDB, 1988

Lord and Lady Glentworth (*later the Earl & Countess of Limerick. Ed.*) and four other members of their expedition had a most successful two month trip to the Langtang and Satsaekhola regions of central Nepal. The party, accompanied for the first fortnight by Mr Alfred Gregory (*a member of the 1953 Everest team. Ed.*), walked for eight days, covering over 100 miles, to reach Langtang village, which is 11,250 feet high and lies some 60 miles due north of Kathmandu. The route led west of the capital to Trisuli Bazaar, north up the Trisuli River gorge to Syabrubensi and then due east into the Langtang valley.

Owing to the unusually heavy snowfall, the season was abnormally late. Mr Bowes Lyon and Mr Stainton therefore decided that their botanical work must be carried out at lower altitudes and travelled to the Satsaekhola area west of the Trisuli River. The botanical collection they made between 4,500 ft and 12,500 ft can be divided into three parts. First there were live specimens consisting mostly of Orchids,

Primulas and Iris Kumaonensis. Dr Herklots has selected some plants for cultivation at the Royal Botanical gardens at Godaveri, about 10 miles outside Kathmandu, and it is hoped to introduce some species of Primula into cultivation in Britain. Secondly, a small selection of seeds was made. Finally, some 400 plant specimens were collected and dried. Mr Stainton, who has returned to the area, hopes to double this figure by the end of the season. A representative selection of these is to be the start of the herbarium at Godaveri.

Meanwhile Lord and Lady Glentworth, Mr Anthony Bertram and Miss Jane Knudtzon made a base camp at the Swiss cheese plant at Kyangchin at 12,500 ft whence they made a series of excursions to the high grazing grounds at Yalla, up the Traipaku glacier and finally up the main Langtang glacier which runs north to the Tibetan border. For five weeks the party was camped most of the time above the snowline. Colonel Charles Wylie, military attaché in Kathmandu, joined them for a fortnight on local leave. Some new ground was explored and first ascents were made of two minor peaks, the highest being 20,00ft.

During this period over 230 entomological specimens were collected for the Glasgow Museum, mainly butterflies, moths and beetles; the highest butterfly capture was at 17,000ft,

although some were seen above 18,000 ft. A special group of insects was collected for the British Museum from above the snowline, the highest being obtained at 19,000 ft. Soil samples were also taken between 11,000 ft and 17,000 ft and soil fauna extracted from them.

The party travelled back to Kathmandu via the Gosainkund lakes. Everywhere the people were friendly and curious and persistently asked for medical assistance. Miss Knudtzon and Lady Glentworth treated a variety of ailments such as leg wounds, boils, skin sores, infected eyes, coughs and, we must confess, a number of undiagnosed complaints for which the sovereign remedy was Disprin. The most prevalent complaint in the Langtang is goitre which seemed to affect at least 50% of the inhabitants. Neither we nor the Swiss incumbent at Kyangchin, Mr Heinz Eleganti, who renders valuable medical assistance, were able to do anything about his; it struck us that with a small expenditure on the necessary iodine compounds it would be possible to eliminate this unsightly disease.

*(Editor's Note: Botanical work carried out on this expedition was part of the research done by Adam Stainton who, with Oleg Polonin, co-authored 'Flowers of the Himalaya' published in 1984 by*



*Kyangchin Gompa*

© GDB, 1988

*Oxford University Press, the definitive guide to Himalayan flora. Later Adam Stainton wrote 'Flowers of the Himalaya – a supplement' published in 1988.)*



*Glacier above Kyangchin* © GDB, 1988

## MOHANSINGH TAMANG, THE ORIGINAL COOK OF THE FIRST NEPALI SUPPERS

By Anthony Wieler

Sir Edmund Hillary had arranged for the newly formed Britain-Nepal Society to hold their annual Nepali supper at New Zealand house, a privilege that was to continue for many years. However we were not permitted to move in to start cooking and laying tables until the New Zealand House staff had departed at around 5pm. This left us with a bare two hours to prepare for the arrival of the Society members and guests for their supper.

When I finished my national Service with 1st /7th Gurkha Rifles in 1960, an edict from the War Office had encouraged each Gurkha Regiment to pension off soldiers who had not been promoted above the basic rank of rifleman by the age of 40. This was intended to make places for new recruits and smooth the career structure of the battalions.

The 7th Gurkha Rifles recruited mainly from the eastern *jats* (or tribes), the Rais and Limbus. However one of the Officers' Mess orderlies was a Tamang - a Bhotia or Tibetan *jat*, who had attended and passed a course on cooking British rations so that he could cook British rations for the British officers on operations or exercises in Burma and Malaya. He knew how to look after the British officers and had been employed as a personal orderly (ie a batman in a British regiment). However as such, and being a Tamang, he had not been promoted.

At this time my father was Resident Governor of the Tower of London, involved with endless entertaining of both official and personal guests. These included Heads of State, of particular

note were Bulganin and Kruschev, also various Arab Sheiks. However the Government only provided a small entertainment allowance and no staff to assist.

It seemed therefore a good idea for me to bring home an orderly to help out. Mohansingh was an ideal candidate; he knew how to cook British food and had experience of looking after officers in a mess environment and he had to go on pension under the latest scheme.

He wanted to provide an education for his family in Darjeeling, so he was prepared to come to England with me if I could look after his family. In the event this is what happened. Mohansingh was more than twice my age. His eldest son, Purna, was only three years younger than me and he became one of my best friends. He joined us at Feathercombe in 1965 and two of his younger brothers followed a few years later.

Mohansingh was truly 'the salt of the earth' and was much loved and respected by all my family and friends as was Purna.

To return to the suppers, my mother with the help of Mohansingh would do the initial preparation at home, pre-boiling several chickens prior to departing for London. Mohansingh would then finish off the cooking, adding the curry spices at New Zealand House, providing a delicious supper for the Society. This system continued for some years until the numbers attending grew to around 150 which required my mother to prepare about thirty chickens. This produced a rather difficult logistical problem, not only in getting the pre-boiled chickens to New Zealand House

but then Mohansingh had to cook the curry for 150 in two hours. While not actually going on strike he pointed out that the difficulties with these numbers really were beyond the call of duty and practicality!

Those early suppers were great fun and the ladies of the Society always helped Mohansingh with the preparations, laying tables and washing up. By this time he had become a widower and had married again, this time a Nepali widow, Maya, whom he had met in England. Maya used to bring along some of her friends and Purna and his brothers all supported the supper. However with the increased numbers the Society committee decided that they would have to bring in professional staff to cook for the event, recognising that costs would have to rise. The Society invited the 'Natraj' restaurant, then in Charlotte Street, "the first" Nepalese restaurant in London to do the catering.

At Feathercombe Mohansingh and his family were employed by 'Feathercombe Gardens', a wholesale horticultural nursery project. This enabled us to send flowering plants and shrubs to decorate the tables at the supper. Sometimes

*Nobleianum Rhododendrons* were in flower by February so that we could provide red rhododendrons

('Lali Gurans) for the top table. Later we sent polyanthus and after we had wound up our nursery we sourced plants from the 'Secrett Garden Centre' in Milford as a contribution to the event.

Looking back on those early suppers at New Zealand House, they had started as informal occasions and were great fun. I remember Mr Ishwar Raj Pandey, then first secretary at the embassy and later ambassador, singing Nepali songs to us. Later the suppers became more formal with one particular highlight when HRH The Duke of Edinburgh honoured us by attending the supper where he met Mohansingh who became an honoured guest himself.

Mohansingh retired to live in Birmingham with his second son Jagat and Jagat's wife Lata. When he died in 1994 a piper from the Brigade of Gurkhas was sent to his funeral – an honour for a rifleman, but Mohansingh and Purna had been my inspiration in my work for Nepal and the Gurkha Welfare Appeal.

## ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE JOURNAL

Why not advertise in the Britain-Nepal Society Journal

There is a membership with a large range of interests related to Nepal

You never know who may be interested!

Please contact Dr Peter Trott, Treasurer/Publicity Manager  
[petertrottmarylebone@MSN.com](mailto:petertrottmarylebone@MSN.com)

---

## HAPPY MEMORIES

By Jean Inglefield  
(formerly Jean Gomme-Duncan)

My connection with the Society really started in 1967. I was Secretary of the Victoria Cross & George Cross Association at the time and, thanks to a generous present from a godfather, had a year touring the world looking up holders of the VC and GC. Of course this involved some time trekking in Nepal. Bridget Kellas, wife of the British Ambassador, came with me when my old flatmate and travelling companion was ill. Together we contacted several holders of the VC, usually meeting half way. This trek was kindly organised by Colonel Charles Wylie, the Brigade of Gurkhas Liaison Officer and Chairman of the Society. On my return to the UK he persuaded me to join the Society and the committee.

In those days the Society was much smaller. We knew virtually all the members. Committee meetings were great fun and often included supper afterwards. In 1971, Mary-Rose Hickey (now Mrs Cooney) and I - with Charles in command- organised a Society trip to Nepal. We left London on the 30th October and returned on the 20th November - a lovely time to visit. Mary-Rose and I had quite a business keeping everyone together at the right place and at the right time with passports, visas etc. With Bales Tours helping in this country and Jimmy Roberts and Mountain Travel helping us in Nepal, we couldn't go far wrong but it was quite a task! Thankfully, everyone, including my husband David and my sister-in-law who were in our group, returned safely.

In 1974 I was about to succeed Eric Mercer as Secretary but produced a baby instead! I have always been very grateful to Cynthia Stephenson for taking my place at rather short notice.

Our summer outings were always fun, well attended and usually to most interesting venues. The Committee did the lunch in those days and I do remember an awful lot of hard boiled eggs! As a family we were thrilled to entertain the Society at Eggington House, the home of my parents-in-law, Sir Gilbert & Lady Inglefield following a visit to Woburn Abbey. We had a wonderfully warm and sunny day so we made sure we enjoyed ourselves.

I have marvellous memories of the Society with so many friends and so many interesting lectures and events. Sadly now we are living in Nottinghamshire, it is not always easy to attend but I look back on my early days of life on the Committee with great affection and I consider myself so lucky that I was given the chance of becoming a member. I know the Society will go from strength to strength and I wish it well.



---

 NEPAL – A PERSONAL REFLECTION

By Tony Schilling VMH

*“And the wildest dreams of Kew are the facts of Kathmandu ...” - Rudyard Kipling*



*Glasshouse under construction at Godavari*

Early in 1965 I found myself flying out of London Heathrow bound for Nepal. At that time I was seconded from the Royal Botanical Gardens Kew as a UK Colombo Plan Advisor to the Nepalese Government in order to develop the newly established National Botanical Garden at Godavari on the southern edge of the Kathmandu Valley.

The previous Advisor, Dr Geoffrey Herklots, had originally selected the site and had laid the foundations for the project and it now fell to me to take things forward and to train the staff in order for them to eventually secure its future management.

Having a passionate relationship with mountains, and of course with plants, this mission was for me one made in heaven and I could barely believe my good fortune. However, because of hazy weather conditions I was obliged to wait for several days before the incomparable Himalayas gave me my first glimpse of their immensity. That first sight of Ganesh Himal, seemingly floating above the

morning mist, has remained indelibly printed on my memory to this day.

As I gradually settled into my responsibilities and realised the unique opportunities the task entailed, I also began to appreciate the everyday domestic aspects of my new found life in Asia. Fellow British residents were soon encouraging me to join in the social life including the Nepal-Britain Society and so began my association with this bi-national fellowship which on my return to

Britain has continued as a member of the Britain-Nepal Society to this present day - some 45 years no less!

Kathmandu was and possibly still is today, a magnet attracting many interesting and charismatic characters and during my time there, I was privileged to meet more than a few; the place was nothing less than a ‘name-droppers delight!’

Looking back more than four decades later, those experiences and events seem to have developed an air of unreality about them as so many of these individuals were truly exceptional personalities. How could I possibly forget or take for granted the warm friendship I developed with the White Russian owner of the amazingly eccentric Royal Hotel, Boris Lissanevitch? Boris was the absolute epitome of a larger-than-life character and to this day I cherish his generosity, humour and joie de vivre. He was the ultimate entrepreneur and, as a result, sometimes found himself in what might be gently termed, unexpected circumstances! I well remember during

one of my frequent returns to Nepal, how I somehow managed to smooth-talk my way past some senior army officers in order to visit him in his open prison. Apparently, nobody except his wife and the British Ambassador had clearance to see him and the look of disbelief on his face was a real picture. He told me his biggest problem was one of boredom so I glibly suggested he swatted the all too numerous flies in the room and kept count of his successes. He did.

Michael Peissel's book *Tiger for Breakfast* (I still have Boris's signed copy) sums him up in exemplary fashion, although Boris once told me whilst reading the galley-proof that 'this Frenchman has only written one other book about Peruvian ruins and I am considered to be another one!' (*Boris was not to know then that Peissel would go on to write 'The Cavaliers of Kham, and 'Mustang: a lost Tibetan Kingdom', relating the story of the 'Khampa rebellion against the Chinese in Tibet. Ed.)*

I also had the chance to spend time with the shy and unassuming Austrian Peter Aufschnaiter. He was an enigmatic person who had, in the company of Heinrich Harrer, (author of *'Seven Years in Tibet'*) escaped from a British prisoner-of-war camp and made his way to Lhasa. He actually spent longer in Tibet than his extrovert companion (nine years in all) and became a great authority on that country.

When I met him he was an engineer working for the Food & Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and was forever devising ways of aiding the Tibetan refugees in Nepal. In 1939 Aufschnaiter was the leader of the Austro-German reconnaissance expedition to Nanga Parbat and his internment came about when his party came down from the mountain to Karachi. A more charming, reserved and mysterious person was hard to imagine.



*Rock Garden construction at Godavari*

My bookshelves also hold another treasured book - *'Birds of Nepal'* - one of its authors being Dr Robert (Bob) Fleming Snr. He and I spent numerous days plant hunting on the forested slopes of Phulchoki, in his case focussed on ferns which were his particular specialism. He generously wrote 'to my botanical guru' on the title page of his book which, now long out of print, is not easy to come across. (*See Journal No.25 of 2001, pages 39-40 on bird books for Nepal. Ed.)*. I could continue name-dropping ad nauseam; supper with Sir Edmund Hillary (hosted by Dudley Spain), an audience with King Mahendra, another with the Duke of Edinburgh as well as a meeting with the much travelled Swiss geologist Toni Hagen. Father Moran and I once dramatically outran a horrendous active stone-avalanche on the monsoon-ravaged Raj Path, a road which an Indian engineer once informed me 'had not yet found its angle of repose!' During my time in the valley, I enjoyed meeting and getting to know the father of Himalayan trekking Lt Col Jimmy Roberts. I even took on the ownership of one of his Labrador puppies and brought her home to England when I left in December 1966. I suppose it was predictable that I named her Schima after one of Nepal's many trees.

Leopards were an occasional problem to the villagers at Godawari and one particularly troublesome cat created a call for the royal hunters to take action. Instead our bungalow was honoured with the presence of Prince Basundhara who arrived late one afternoon with a goat (chauffeur driven!) which was tethered to a tree close to the bungalow in the hope of an explosive conclusion. Fortunately for the leopard, it decided to take the evening off and so, after several whiskies, his Royal Highness returned unrequited to Kathmandu. Several nights later the leopard returned and, after various attempts to scare it away, by banging kitchen pots together etc, I finally despatched it by playing traditional jazz at full volume on the battery operated record player- unconventional, but obviously effective.

Yes, these were interesting times, but the stories don't end there. In addition to projects at the Botanic Garden, I was fortunate enough to join two separate botanical expeditions – one to the Langtang Himalaya in 1965 and the other a year later to what is today, the Everest (Sagarmatha) National Park. Anyone who



*Signage at Godawari*

chooses to trek through the leech-infested forests of Nepal at the height of the monsoon is generally considered to be either mad or a botanist, but hardships and discomforts aside, both experiences were, especially in retrospect, unforgettably fulfilling.

When my 2 year contract came to an end I returned to Britain in order to pick up on more normal life at Kew where I almost immediately found myself ensconced as Curator of the now famous 500 acre Wakehurst Place (aka Kew in the Country). Situated in the High Weald of C. Sussex, it boasts fine topography and a wealth of rare plants. Be that as it may, my links with Nepal continued as trekking in the Himalayas was fast becoming a growing arm of tourism. In consequence, my mountain experiences coupled to my botanical knowledge made me a willing candidate to lead specialist groups to Nepal in my spare time. Over the years, I had the opportunity to take parties to the Langtang Valley, the Gurkha Himalaya, Milke Danda and Kangchenjunga as well as around the Annapurna circuit on three occasions and to Everest no less than five times. Inevitably, Nepal continued to be an intricate part of my life as did the Britain-Nepal Society. Over the years I gave numerous illustrated talks to the Society in London, the most memorable being a fund-raising lecture held at the Royal Geographical Society in Kensington which was chaired by Lord Hunt.

Having created a Himalayan Glade and an Asian Heath Garden at Wakehurst Place the Society chose to bring an 80 strong group on their summer outing down to Sussex in order to see the results for themselves. Shortly afterwards BBC Overseas radio came to record an interview entitled 'Gurkha UK' which gave me the chance to reminisce on my days at Godawari etc. In May 1991, after a chance

meeting at the President's Tea Party at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, I suggested to the Nepalese Ambassador that he might like to have an afternoon seeing the Himalayan features at Wakehurst Place – a suggestion which (after advice I gave on orchid conservation) he readily accepted. It turned out to be a warm and sunny summer's day and after the walk a typically English tea table was laid out in the Mansion complete with cucumber sandwiches!

During my various times roaming the Nepalese Hills, I took many photographic records both scenic and botanical (some 5000 or more) and these were recently donated along with my numerous personal papers to the archives of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh - they've even got my Nepalese driving licence!

When I left Godawari in December 1966, I must admit I had some reservations regarding the future of Nepal's National Botanical Garden, but I need not have worried. Development has continued apace under the auspices of the Government's Department of Plant Resources.

Today, the 82 hectare garden can boast an annual visitor figure of 180,000 including students, researchers, naturalists, and foreign tourists. Some 45 years on, I must admit to some degree of quiet satisfaction for the modest part I once played in its early development.



*The Fern Garden*

Sitting as it does at the northern foot of the 2,715 metre Phulchoki (how many times did I climb to its summit?) with extensive views towards the Gurkha and Annapurna mountains, it is indeed a very special corner of the Kathmandu Valley. Even though I now live in Ullapool in the N.W Highlands of Scotland, I feel a part of me remains in Nepal. I wonder if the occasional enigmatic leopard still wanders through the Rose Garden at dusk?

*(Tony Schilling is a long-standing member of the Society who has given a number of lectures to the Society over the years. He was awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour (VMH) by the Royal Horticultural Society for services to horticulture which included his work in Nepal, both plant collecting and the establishment of the botanical garden at Godawari. He was curator at Wakehurst Place (1967-1991) and had the job of clearing up and reorganising the gardens after the gale that swept across southern England in the autumn of 1987. The VMH is the RHS's highest award and the number of holders is restricted to 63, the number of years that Queen Victoria was on the throne. Holders of the VMH likely to be known to members include Alan and Adrian Bloom, JG Hillier, CR Lancaster, Penelope Hobhouse and Dame Miriam Rothschild. He has retired and now lives in Ullapool, Ross-shire. From his garden he can see four of the Scottish 'Munros'. Ed.)*



*The Pond*

THE FOUNDATION AND WORK OF  
THE BRITAIN NEPAL OTOTOLOGY SERVICE (BRINOS)

By Neil Weir MD MA FRCS, Founder Director, BRINOS



*Mr Puran Tharu, senior community ear assistant, with a patient*

**The origin of BRINOS**

At the end of a holiday in Nepal in March 1987 I asked to visit a hospital and was directed to the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH) which was a twenty minute walk from our hotel. I found the ENT department but had great difficulty in getting to the door as the corridor was filled with waiting people all jostling for position. There I met Rakesh Prasad who had quite recently returned to Nepal from Delhi where he had gained his MS. He, at the time, was the only person in Nepal who was trained in modern microsurgical ear techniques. The following day I met his legendary father Dr L.N. Prasad who had trained in the

UK and had obtained diplomas in ophthalmology and ENT from the Royal College of Surgeons of England. Returning to Nepal he became the only eye and ENT surgeon in the country. Gradually others started to practise ophthalmology and L. N. Prasad concentrated on ENT and led the ENT Department at the state Bir Hospital in Kathmandu for many years.

He told me of the survey of disability in Nepal which he had directed in 1981 (the Year of the Disabled). It had produced the surprising result that of the major disabilities the greatest was deafness. The government turned to Dr Prasad to ask what could be done to alleviate and prevent this disability. He and his colleagues came up with the idea of reaching out to the deaf beyond the Kathmandu valley by providing outpatient and operating camps. Sadly, though, they had neither the manpower nor the equipment to put this plan into action.

I was invited back in 1988 and during a trek up to the Sacred Lakes at Gosainkund (where mythically the god Shiva, in a rage, thrust his trident into the ground resulting in the formation of the three lakes which enabled him to cool down) I wondered how we could help them. On returning to Kathmandu I offered to bring a British team of two surgeons, an anaesthetist and two nurses to join with a Nepali team in order to reach out jointly twice a year to the extremes of the country. This idea was met with great enthusiasm and thus exactly one year later after setting up a



*Neil & Sue Weir operating*

charity (No: 800453) and a limited company (No: 2280073) and raising the funds for sufficient equipment to run two operating tables, we returned to Nepal for the first BRINOS ear surgery camp which was held in Pokhara at the Western Regional Hospital.

We travelled there by road and set up the operating theatre after dark. The next morning to our delight we saw Macchapuchhare (Fishtail Mountain) out of the window. It was a spectacular sight. Our only request to hospitals where we work is for two operating tables, two stools per table and a reasonably reliable supply of electricity.

We have worked at both eastern and western ends of the country. For sometime in the early 1990's we went to Dharan where the British Military Hospital was established. This beautifully laid out campus, carved out of a part of the jungle in the Terai, was handed over to the Nepalese Government on the first day of January 1990. We witnessed a significant downturn in the hospital until it was rescued by the BP Koirala Institute of

Health Sciences (BPKIHS) and became a new medical school supported by the Indian Government and linked with the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), Delhi. We moved off when the ENT Department was formed with staff from India and after two camps in Dolakha (north of Kathmandu in the hills) and one in Birgunj (in the mid Terai) we settled in the southwestern Terai at

Nepalgunj.

Initially we worked in an old 'Victorian' palace which had been given by a family to house a Swiss Red Cross eye hospital. The hospital had been rebuilt and thus only the ground floor of the palace was occupied. It proved to be an ideal location. The wards on the first floor were adjacent to the theatre and the outpatients. The electricity supply was supported by a generator but there was not running water, instead two large plastic vats were supervised by a waterman who managed to make the supply last all day.

The November camp of 2001 saw another venue. This time we moved out of Nepalgunj town to the newly built hospital of the Nepalgunj Medical College (another joint venture with India) sited on the east/west highway which runs along the Terai. We performed the first operations in the new theatre suite and whilst not having the charm of the old palace, the ENT theatre was large enough to accommodate a third table and thus our

camp numbers exceeded 100 cases per camp. Since 2008 we have returned to the eye hospital but have found space for the third table.

These camps have provided an ongoing surgical training programme for young Nepalese ENT surgeons, nurses, and technicians.

### **A survey and primary care**

It was pointed out to us early on that we were treating the end product of ear disease and that we should be concentrating on prevention. Apart from the survey in 1981 we really had little idea of the extent of deafness and ear disease in Nepal. A nationwide survey of deafness and ear disease was conducted in 1991 in which 16,000 people were surveyed by a joint British and Nepalese team. The main findings were: 2.7 million out of a population of 19 million were significantly deaf and 1.5 million had abnormal ear drums indicative of preventable ear disease. 32% of hearing impairment is associated with middle ear infection or its sequelae and 70% of these sufferers are in the school age group. 61% of individuals aware of ear problems had never

attended their health post and of the 39% who had received treatment, 66% were unsatisfied.

It was clear from the survey that around 50% of the ear disease was preventable but how could this be achieved?

Initially we thought that by training general health workers in ear disease and providing them with the necessary equipment we could reach out to the people at village level. After a four year programme (1993-1997) we concluded that although parts of the pilot scheme were successful the people were slow to seek advice from the general health workers.

There was a vital link missing which we recognised in 2000, when we started training Community Ear Assistant (CEAs), who are health workers trained exclusively in ear disease. They are equipped with examination instruments, portable re-chargeable suckers and field audiometers. Each CEA in turn trains a number of volunteer ear care assistants who are usually respected women living in the villages covered by the CEAs. The care is 'bottom up'. The volunteers, who teach ear care and disease

prevention, find the patients and call in the CEAs who diagnose and treat the common conditions. Those more difficult cases they take to their ENT trainer for advice. Those cases considered for surgery join our 'waiting list' which is never longer than six months. The aftercare of the operated patient is entrusted to the ENT trainer and the CEAs. It has been so successful that the CEAs have now moved on from their original villages to



*Patients awaiting operations*

others as they have cleared up ear disease. They nevertheless retain contact with their volunteers who receive annual refresher courses. This form of primary ear care delivery has been accepted as the model for the country by the Society of Nepalese ENT surgeons.

### Conclusions

- BRINOS has held 41 ear surgery camps in Nepal since 1989.
- 35,500 patients have been seen and treated in the surgical camps.
- 3500 operations have been performed to prevent the development of life threatening complications and to restore hearing.
- 130 British surgeons, anaesthetists and nurses have taken part in the camps, some several times.
- Our Nepalese colleagues have recognised our contribution to the health of those suffering from ear disease and deafness and have made two important points:

- a. That the people of the country are now much more aware that their ear disease can be treated.
- b. That there has been a marked increase in young doctors wishing to study ENT. (**There are now 74 ENT surgeons in Nepal capable of using modern microsurgical ear surgery techniques**).

### Future plans

#### A BRINOS Ear Hospital

BRINOS is currently involved in drawing up plans for an Ear Hospital to be built in the campus of the Fate-Bal Eye Hospital in Nepalgunj. This project will provide increased space for the primary ear care programme and will also give room for a three table operating theatre and 16 beds. This project will be the major focus of our fundraising in 2010/11.  
[www.brinos.org.uk](http://www.brinos.org.uk)



*Post op patient*



---

## THOUGHT, WORD AND DEED

By John Cross

### I THOUGHT

They came to the inn at dusk, three tired and foot-sore men. It was cold and the strong wind was like ice. They had been on the road for a month, so were used to long and hard walks. They had, that day, walked since dawn. Now they searched for a place to spend the night. Of the three, two knew the road well, but the third man did not as he was new to the place, on trek for the first time. They were firm friends and could all speak the same tongue. This was a great help. The third man had, at times, feigned that he could not speak with men he met on the road. This, too, had been of use.

The inn was small and not much more than a large hut, but it had mud walls and a thatch roof and looked, to the tired men, snug. It stood by the side of the track and was there for those whose need was food, drink and rest: at a price. At the door they stopped and asked the man of the house if they could buy drink and a meal as well as have a place to spend the night. He bade them come in and in they went. It was dark in the one room and full of smoke so, for a while, it was hard to see. At least it was warm and a change from the ice-cold wind. The men took off their hats, coats and shoes and groped their way to the wall where they sat and eased their legs. The man's wife came from the one small room at the back and sought their needs. They asked for rice-wine and tea, each to his own taste, and a meal for all three. Drink was brought and with slow sips they soon felt warm once more. The man of the house then joined them.

His talk was coarse, his voice was harsh and he coughed and coughed. He was a loud-mouthed man and looked none too clean. His wife, though plump, was ill-kempt and kept her two small boys at bay with sweeps of her arm while she cooked, brewed and stirred at the fire-place, which was made of three large stones set in the floor. Both small boys were in rags and looked ill. They wept as if they were cold and had scant love shown them. The son and heir, a youth of a score or so years, had been lame since he was a few month's old. He had learnt to walk, with the aid of a stick, when he was nine so was not much use at all, but he could do some odd jobs in the house and in the fields as well, or so he said. He had cut his right hand with a sharp knife that same day when he had gone out to get some food for the goats. He had tried to reach some grass high on a bank by the side of the road. The cut was deep and he had lost some blood, so he would be of no use for a few days as the wound throbbed and hurt when he tried to use his hand.

It was the grown-up girl who seemed to do the most work. She went to the well, she cut the wood for the fire, and she fetched plates, pots and pans. She then cleaned, wiped and stacked them. And all with such poise, grace and ease, and so calm! With no word said, with no haste yet with due speed she did more work than all the rest of her folk. It was her face that was so sweet, so full of charm, bright yet coy, that drew men's eyes to her eyes which knew her to be pure. The man who did not know the road glanced at her, more than once and at last she met

his gaze. Both smiled and her eyes dropped. He tried to talk with her but she took no heed and went on with her chores. Strange, he mused. In this place where all seem to be ill-starred what quirk of fate has sired so fair and sweet a girl from what looks like dross? Give her a chance to get clean, dress her with good taste and she would have no par here nor far nor wide. In that she does not talk to me just shows that she is shy and that she knows her place.

The meal had, by this time, been set in front of them, on the floor where they sat. They rinsed their hands then ate the rice, pulse and bean that had been cooked for them. Mats and rugs were then brought out and they all lay down for the night on the hard floor, full, warm and in need of a good night's rest. They talked a while, then, wrapped in their own thoughts, shut their eyes and slept.

At dawn the tree men rose, drank tea, packed up for a new day on the road, paid their dues and left. There was thick hoarfrost on the ground but the wind had dropped and the sky was a rich, deep blue. As they left those of the house came to see them off. The girl was not there. They saw her at work in the back room and she glanced up and met their gaze. Once more she smiled but said no word, though she joined her hands in front of her and bowed her head. She then went on with her work.

On the road no one spoke for a while then the third man asked his two friends why it was that the girl did not talk, worked so hard and yet seemed so calm? "Oh, we thought you knew," they said, "she has been deaf and dumb from birth.

## II WORD

It was the Stranger's first visit to the Hills. He had served for over twenty years in one or other of the regiments whose ranks are filled with men from these same hills and he could speak their language well, besides knowing about their customs in some detail, yet he wondered if all his knowledge was enough to do justice to his visit. On the way up to a village where he was going to meet one already on pension, he was elated by the crisp, clear and almost heady air as opposed to the muggy, clammy, stuffy atmosphere of places nearer the equator. The long views up to the snows thrilled him as did the sudden, sharp-edged sky-lines met with as a corner was turned or an incline mounted, all so excitingly different. Certain scenes etched themselves on his mind as he journeyed north: the staggering loads carried alike by man, woman and child, who in bare feet and unharmed by sharp stones, walked with shuffling gait as they picked their way with unhurried speed over the rougher patches. Then there was the small boy, no more than six years old, holding a sapling branch that would have merely tickled any tough-skinned dog. The boy was trying to urge on a large and cumbersome buffalo by swipes of the stick, shrieking shrilly, and probably vilely, as he did. The buffalo, unperturbed, turned its head slowly, almost gently and gazed momentarily at its minute oppressor then plodded on, entirely of its own volition, but with the small boy triumphant. The houses, also, coloured red and white, looking spick-and-span on the hill-sides were, from afar, a picture. Nearer by the poverty, the improvisation and, above all,

the industry of the people struck him forcibly. He was fascinated by the row after row of terraced fields, draping the hills now shorn of all foliage and the product of who knows how much sweat, toil and back-ache? And other things caught his eye and fascinated him: the long scar of a recent land-slide; the kites, soaring so lazily in the currents of air with never so much as a flap of a wing, dropping with so sudden a rush onto some unsuspecting fluff of a chick below. There were sadnesses too. A dog dying by the side of the track with grubby-nosed children playing heedlessly around; the coarse-voiced lunatic, chained to the post of a cow shed, stark naked except for his hat; and in another place a cow suffering from a broken leg with a jagged wound unhealed. But, of course, there were also happinesses. Three small girls so sweetly singing as they gathered fire wood in the still evening high up on the hillside; the small, highly-coloured birds playing hide-and-seek in a clump of bamboo and, above all, the infectious smile and laughing responses both men and women gave as the Stranger past them.

He reached the village on the evening of the third day. The last half mile was steep and he followed some of the villagers who were carrying large loads of straw from an outlying field. Only strong, firm legs were visible under each load, so it was impossible to tell who was who from behind. At a stone resting place just short of the village the bales started putting themselves on the ledge set at knee height and, in so doing, turned into dusty and tired men who, relieved of their burdens, stood erect, wiping the sweat and dust from their faces. They stared at the Stranger and asked him whom he sought and where he was going.

"I am on my way to meet one Bhimraj who lives in the village called Cloves, which I believe lies yonder," was the answer and a gleam of understanding flicked in their eyes.

"Follow us, you are expected," said one of them and, rested, burdens were once more picked up. The Stranger followed them up into the village now growing obscure in the gathering dusk. The village was a thick cluster of houses, separated by narrow, winding lanes and each with its own forecourt. By the time they reached Bhimraj's house, it was dark.

It was a happy reunion for they had served together for some time and the Stranger counted himself Friend. Mat and rug were set down and there the Stranger (for it was all rather strange) sat and waited until the excitement had subsided. Then, one by one, mother, father, wife, sons, daughters and all and all were introduced.

Outside it became cold and brilliant stars pierced a jet black night but inside the house it was warm and cheerful. As news of a visitor spread a number of people came to see if they knew who he was or if, by any chance, news of an old friend could be given. Soon the room was full and there was a lot of laughter as conversation flowed to and fro. Shadows from two flickering lamps lit up strong, animated faces, all smiling and bright of eye. In the background, apart from all normal household knick-knacks, stood a row of large ewers. It was explained that they were used only at marriages when many guests were fed and much water was needed to cook for so many. The Stranger found that everybody was delighted to impart such knowledge to him and he looked forward to the next day when it would be light enough to see

it all. After a lot more talk he was shown to a small room above a cattle shed where a bed and blankets had been made ready. After his long walk he was tired and very soon fell fast asleep.

The next day, early, the Stranger and Bhimraj went to the village spring for their morning wash. One flow of water was for the men and one for the women. They, with shy glances at first, but with full face later, bravely spoke and even japed with the two friends. It all augured well for a happy stay. Later on, after a meal, the two men wandered around the village, followed by a crowd of curious but very friendly children. They met all of note; dignitaries, old soldiers, their families and many who were of lesser importance. But kindness was ever present because at all the houses they visited the unbreakable laws of hospitality had to be observed; a little food, a little drink, politenesses and then more normal conversation. It all took time so it was late in the day when they returned to Bhimraj's house, with full heart and fuller belly. A short rest and then the evening meal. If I don't start walking soon, thought the Stranger, I'll burst.

That night many of the villagers assembled in the house and an impromptu sing-song was started:

I was due back from leave on the  
twenty-first

It is now the twenty-fourth  
And because of you my darling  
The Colonel will be wrath.

The woman's answer was:  
Take me if you're going to  
When you go tomorrow  
If you don't I'll kill myself  
To everybody's sorrow.

And the soldier sings:  
My darling says she'll go with me

Whatever else I urge.  
But I have not brought a family  
pass  
They're bound to start a purge.

The chorus, sung between every verse,  
was:

Oh stay you here and make no fuss  
On service I'll not marry.  
In one year's time I'll be right back  
To fetch you I'll not tarry.

An old soldier leaned across to the Stranger and told him that he had been almost stone-deaf for sixteen years and what were they singing? So the song was explained and the Stranger added, "You may be deaf, but your hands and feet are still strong," for he had seen the old man at work earlier in the day.

This was taken as an invitation to get up and join in, so, the old soldier stood up and, in rumbustious style but creaking joints and panting voice, sang:

Oh go my darling fry the fish  
And make a wholesome curry.  
Or otherwise I'll miss my train  
You'll really have to hurry.

There were shrills of delighted laughter as the old man had been known as a 'regular card' in his younger days and all were delighted to see him performing once more. He continued:

A jet black goat with good crisp  
meat  
And we'll all eat a part.  
Yet a woman with looks however  
sweet  
Must have a golden heart.

and after a pause:  
Pure gold needs no touchstone  
And a good man's heart is pure.  
And if only I could raise a loan  
I'd marry that girl for sure.

"Sit down, old man," said the Stranger.  
"You're short of breath. Save what's left

for later on." And even as he finished talking he realised that it was his turn next, that the others were telling him that he and the deaf man must take it in turns. So the Stranger got stiffly to his feet and, clearing his throat a little nervously, sang:

To the village of Cloves high on the hill

An English stranger came.

One night a deaf old man and he  
Danced and sang with great  
acclaim.

On his arrival in the place  
Of fluttering hand and smiling face  
With flowered garlands, as of lace,  
The maidens comely, one by one,  
Gave him a welcome - then were  
gone.

Of course a second verse was  
requested and, after due  
deliberation, it came:

It was in the jungle that we heard  
them

Then we saw the bandit camp.  
I fired a round but my rifle jammed  
And away they all did scamper  
And I realised to my sorrow  
That my gun had played me tricks  
Just like the type of woman  
Who leaves one in a fix.

It was straining it to add a third verse, but it was inevitable. So the Stranger let the chorus be sung several times while he forced himself to think. And this was the result:

Some have to stay and farm the  
land

While others' fate it is to roam.

The life you lead is in your hand  
If in the Regiment or at home.

Despite the way of life you choose  
One thing only can you trust.

There's one command you can't refuse  
And when you're called, then go

you must.

The Stranger was bidding farewell to the people of the Village of Cloves a few days later. As an expression of friendship he was escorted by about fifty people to the village limits, old and young, hale and lame, man, woman and child. Eight garlands had been hung around his neck and many nice things had been said. But none struck nicer than the woman who gave him a hat to wear, saying, "You talk like us and you sing like us, we see you as one of us. Never let it be said that a friend of us all in the Village of Cloves left like a man suffering a bereavement - hatless. We have enjoyed your staying with us. You are ever welcome to return."

### III DEED

On his way south the Stranger went to spend a few short days with a soldier who was finishing his leave. This had been easy to arrange as the two men were serving in the same regiment and they had previously decided to return together.

In the soldier's home lived widowed mother, unwed sister, young wife and small son. There was also a younger brother and a small black dog. The house, made of stone, had a thatch roof, an upper story and boasted a separate kitchen. It was daubed dull red on the outside. Being set on the edge of a main track, there was a constant stream of folk passing both ways, often stopping and asking for floor space to spend the night as it was known over a wide area as being a hospitable house. The soldier's mother was of uncertain years and even more uncertain temper but she nursed her year-old grandson with obvious devotion. He, poor mite, was puny and querulous. His mother

did all the work in the house. The night the Stranger arrived, the village maidens came to sing their welcome. They all sat outside under a bright moon and sang, a drum beat helping to keep the rhythm. Their strong, young voices, the slow, haunting melody with its repetitive chant and warmth of message, all so unusual, made a great impression on the Stranger who sat, a little apart, head bowed, untroubled by a cold wind. Later the tempo quickened and all joined in, singing and dancing, till well into the night.

All too soon came the day when both soldier and Stranger had to leave; the former son, father, husband and brother; the latter, by now, a friend.

"Look after my son," the mother was saying to the Stranger as final preparations for leaving were being made. "I have never spared myself for him since his father died many years ago. I have worked myself thin to provide for him and he has never gone hungry nor have I ever been in debt. Look after him as though he were yours," and a tear rolled down her cheek. The Stranger remembered an old village saying:

A mother's love for her son never dies,  
Nor can a son ever repay his mother's milk.

A little later two brass jars were filled with water and had a marigold bud popped into each. They were then set on either side of the door, on the lintel. There was tension in the air and a little impatience was shown as in all imminent separations anywhere in the world with 'time, so precious, unwanted'. The two men were called forward and, as he came, the soldier picked up his baby boy (who still regarded his father as a complete stranger) and, with a wonderful smile,

said his own farewell in his own sweet way, the infant resisting furiously. Then, the mother to her son and the sister to the Stranger, first a garland round the neck, then a dab of rice, milk and saffron on the forehead and finally a brass bowl, filled with curds, guided to each man's lips without letting go, the age-old ritual of farewell was once more enacted. Four pairs of hands moved, fluttered, joined in salutation, then dropped in poise and counter-poise as the simple ceremony came to a close. The women stepped aside and in two short paces forward son, brother, husband and father bent to the brass ewers by the door. He flicked water all around as well as on his head and over his shoulders, muttering prayers softly as he did. The Stranger stole a glance at the three women. The mother and sister were standing and the mother suckling her baby as she sat on the floor, all eyes were fixed on their man and they wept, silently, effortlessly and forlornly. Then it was the Stranger's turn to cross the threshold and, feeling bogus, he merely bent his head and momentarily clasped his upturned hands together as he stepped outside, slightly at a loss, but relieved when the tension broke as last minute instructions were given about, of all things, a transistor radio licence.

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

---

 DIPLOMATIC APPOINTMENTS AND THE SOCIETY'S OFFICERS
 

---

**LIST OF RESIDENTS / ENVOYS PLENIPOTENTIARY / AMBASSADORS  
TO THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL**

Resident	Edward Gardner	1816 – 1829
Resident (Acting)	Brian Houghton Hodgson	1829 – 1831
Resident	H Maddock	1831 – 1832
Resident	Brian Houghton Hodgson FRS	1833 – 1843
Resident	Major Henry Lawrence	1843 – 1846
Resident	Lt Col C Thoresby	1846 – 1850
Resident	JC Erskine	1850 – 1852
Resident	Lt Col Ramsay	1852 – 1867
Resident	Lt Col RC Lawrence	1867 – 1872
Resident	CER Gurdleston	1872 – 1888
Resident	Edward Law Durand	1888 – 1891
Resident	Maj Gen H Wylie CSI	1891 – 1899
Resident	Lt Col W Loch	1899 – 1901
Resident	Lt Col TC Pears	1901 – 1902
Resident	Lt Col CW Ravenshaw	1902 – 1905
Resident	Lt Col J Manners Smith VC CVO CIE	1905 – 1916
Resident	Lt Col SF Bayley	1916 – 1918
Resident	Lt Col WFT O'Connor CSI	1918 – 1926
Resident	Brig Gen Sir Terence Keyes KCIE CSI CMG CIE	1928
Resident &	Lt Col Sir Clendon Daukes CIE	1929 – 1934
Envoy Ex & Min Plen	Envoy Ex & Min Plen Lt Col FM Bailey	1935 – 1938
Envoy Ex & Min Plen	Lt Col Sir Geoffrey Betham KBE	1938 – 1944
Envoy Ex & Min Plen	Lt Col Sir George Falconer KBE CIE	1944 – 1947
& Ambassador		1947 – 1951
Ambassador	Sir Christopher Summerhayes KBE CMG	1951 – 1955
Ambassador	RB Tollington CSI	1955 – 1957
Ambassador	Sir Leonard Scopes KCVO CMG OBE	1957 – 1964
Ambassador	Guy Clarke	1964
Ambassador	Rt Hon Sir Anthony Duff GCMG CVO DSC PC	1964 – 1965
Ambassador	ARH Kellas CMG	1966 – 1970
Ambassador	TJ O'Brien CMG MC	1970 – 1974
Ambassador	Sir Michael Scott KCVO CMG	1974 – 1977
Ambassador	JB Denson CMG OBE	1977 – 1983
Ambassador	Sir Anthony Hurrell KCVO CMG	1983 – 1986
Ambassador	REG Burges Watson CMG	1987 – 1990
Ambassador	TJB George CMG	1990 – 1995
Ambassador	LB Smith CMG	1995 – 1999
Ambassador	RP Nash LVO	1999 – 2002
Ambassador	K Bloomfield CMG	2002 – 2006
Ambassador	Dr AR Hall OBE	2006 – 2010
Ambassador	J Tucknott MBE	2010 – Present

*(This list does not include a number of acting Residents who officiated whilst the incumbent was on leave out of Nepal.)*

### **DEFENCE & MILITARY ATTACHÉS**

Lt Col JOM Roberts MVO MBE MC 2GR	1958 – 1961
Lt Col CG Wylie 10 GR	1961 – 1964
Lt Col Kemmis Betty MC 2 GR	1964 – 1966
Lt Col BG Hickey OBE MC 6 GR	1966 – 1968
Lt Col TC White RE	1968 – 1970
Lt Col DF Neill OBE MC 2 GR	1970 – 1972
Lt Col JA Lys MC 6 GR	1972 – 1975
Lt Col PT Bowring 2 GR	1975 – 1978
Lt Col JH Edwards RE	1978 – 1979
Lt Col KG Robinson 7 GR	1979 – 1982
Lt Col MG Allen 10 GR	1982 – 1985
Lt Col CA Lees 10 GR	1985 – 1986
Lt Col FD Scotson 2 GR	1986 – 1989
Col MG Allen late 10 GR	Jul 89 – Jan 92
Lt Col GD Birch QG Signals	Jan 92 – Sep 92
Col MH Kefford OBE late 7 GR	Oct 92 – Nov 96
Col CP Lavender MVO late 2 GR	Oct 94 – Nov 96
Col AW Blackett OBE late A&SH	Nov 96 – Oct 98
Col M Dowdle late GTR	Oct 98 – Dec 01
Col PR Sharland late LI	Jan 02 – Jan 05
Col RJJ Ellis late QG Signals	Jan 05 – Dec 10
Col A Mills late RE	Dec 10 – Present

### **NEPALESE MINISTERS / AMBASSADORS ACREDITED TO THE COURT OF ST JAMES'S**

Minister	General Bahadur SJB Rana	1934 – 1936
Minister	Krishna SJB Rana	1936 – 1939
Minister	Singha SJB Rana	1939 – 1947
Ambassador	General Kaiser SJB Rana	1947 – 1949
Ambassador	General Shankar SJB Rana	1949 – 1954
Ambassador	Mr Daman SJB Rana	1954 – 1957
Ambassador	Professor Ram Prasad Manandhar	1957 – 1961
Ambassador	Mr Kali Prasad Upadhaya	1961 – 1965
Ambassador	Mr Ishwa Raj Mishra	1966 – 1969
Ambassador	Colonel Upendra Bahadur Basnyat	1969 – 1974
Ambassador	General Kiran SJB Rana	1974 – 1978
Ambassador	Mr JharendraNarayan Singha	1979 – 1983
Ambassador	Mr Ishwari Raj Pandey	1983 – 1988
Ambassador	Major General Bharat Keshar Simha	1988 – 1992
Ambassador	Mr Surya Prasad Shrestha	1992 – 1997
Ambassador	Dr Singha Bahadur Basnyat	1997 – 2003



Ambassador	Mr Prabal SJB Rana CVO	2003 – 2006
Ambassador	Mr Murari Raj Sharma	2007 – 2009
Ambassador	Dr Suresh Chandra Chalise	2009 – Present

### DEPUTY HEADS OF MISSION

Subba Gunjaman Singh		
Mr Manmohan Singh		
Mr Narendramani Acharya Dixit		
Sardar Bhimbahadur Pande		
Mr Ram Prasad Manandhar		
Mr Jharendra Narayan Singha		1957 – 1961
Mr Bharat Raj Rajbhandari		1961 – 1965
Mr Kedar Prasad Koirala		1971 – 1975
Mr Bhanu Prasad Thapalia		1975 – 1979
Mr Mohan B Pandey		1979 – 1982
Mr Prabal SJB Rana		1982 – 1987
Mr Badri P Khanal		1987 – 1991
Mr Madhab P Khanal		1991 – 1995
Mr Prahlad K Prasai		1995 – 1999
Mr Hari K Shrestha		2003 – 2007
Mr Jhabindra P Aryal		2007 – 2011

### DEFENCE ATTACHÉS

Col Sovag Jung Thapa		1934 – 1937
Lt Col Yagya B Basnet		1937 – 1946
Maj Padam B Khatri		1947 – 1949
Col Surya Jung Thapa		1949 – 1951
Maj Gen Sridhar SJB Rana		1951 – 1957
Col Rabi SJB Rana		1957 – 1961
Col Singa Pratap Shah		1961 – 1964
Lt Col Bharat Keshar Simha		1964 – 1967
Lt Col Samundra B Thapa		1967 – 1970
Lt Col Narayan Chandra Malla		1970 – 1973
Lt Col Madan Krisna Kharel		1973 – 1976
Lt Col Digamber SJB Rana		1976 – 1980
Lt Col Shankar Bikram Shah		1980 – 1983
Lt Col Chitra B Gurung		1983 – 1986
Lt Col Bajra Gurung		1986 – 1989
Lt Col Lilijang Gurung		1989 – 1983
Lt Col Chhatra Man Singh Gurung		1993 – 1996
Lt Col Indra B Karki		1996 – 1999
Lt Col Mohan Basnyat		1999 – 2002
Lt Col Amod Rana		2002 – 2005
Col Himalaya Thapa		2005 – 2008
Brig Gen Gyanendra Jung Rayamajhi		2008 – 2011

**SOCIETY OFFICERS****PRESIDENTS**

Sir John Hunt (later Lord Hunt of Llanvair Waterdine KG CBE DSO DCL)	1960 – 1976
Mr ARH Kellas CMG	1976 – 1980
Sir George Bishop CB OBE	1980 – 1989
HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO	1989 – Present

**PATRONS**

HM King Mahendra	1960 – 1973
HRH Prince Gyanendra of Nepal	1973 – 2002
HRH Princess Jotshana Rajya Laxmi Devi Basnyat	2002 – 2008

**FORMER AND SERVING VICE PRESIDENTS**

(Note: Traditionally the Society's vice presidents are drawn from former chairmen or members who have made significant contributions to the Society.)

**FORMER VICE PRESIDENTS**

Field Marshal Viscount Slim KG GCB GCMG GCVO GBE DSO MC KStJ  
 Lord Nelson of Stafford  
 Lord Bossom  
 Lord Hunt of Llanvair Waterdine KG CBE DSO DCL  
 Maj Gen JAR Robertson CB CBE DSO DL  
 Mrs TT Brown  
 Mrs HOH Coulson  
 Lt Col CG Wylie OBE  
 Mr Paul Broomhall  
 Mr ARH Kellas CMG  
 Lt Col HCS Gregory OBE KSG  
 Mrs Winifred Coulson OBE  
 Mr Peter Leggatt MBE

**SERVING VICE PRESIDENTS**

Brig AB Taggart MC  
 Mrs Celia Brown  
 Colonel JM Evans MC  
 Sir Neil Thorne OBE TD DL  
 Mrs Pat Mellor  
 Sylvia Countess of Limerick CBE

**CHAIRMEN**

Mde Bhuban Singha  
 Sir Christopher Summerhayes KBE CMG  
 Sir Anthony Duff GCMG CVO DSC PC  
 Lt Col CG Wylie  
 Mr Paul Broomhall 1977 – 1978

Brig AB Taggart MC	1978 – 1984
Lt Col CJ Scott	1984 – 1986
Lt Col HCS OBE Gregory (acting)	1986 – 1987
Col JM Evans MC	1987 – 1993
Sir Neil Thorne OBE TD DL	1993 – 1999
Mr PA Leggatt MBE	1999 - 2003
Lt Col GD Birch	2003 - Present

### SECRETARIES

Mrs Ruth Rhodes	
Lord Camoys	
Mr Christopher Cox	
Lt Col Eric Mercer	1974 – 1977
Miss CM Stephenson	1977 – 1979
Mrs Celia Brown	1979 – 1991
Mrs Joanna Thomas	1991 – 1994
Mrs Pat Mellor	1994 – 2004
Dr Neil Weir	2004 – 2008
Mrs Pat Mellor (acting)	2008 – 2010

### TREASURERS

Hon Francis Stonor	
Mrs TT (Mayura) Brown	
Lord Glentworth (later the Earl of Limerick)	
Lt Col HCS Gregory	1977 – 1984
Mr RJ Turk	1984 – 1987
Mr BWE Smith	1988 – 1990
Mr Alan Durston	1990 – 1996
Miss Antonia Derry MBE	1996 – 2002
Dr PA Trott	2002 – Present

### EDITORS

Mrs Mayura Brown – was the initial editor of the Society's newsletters, the first issue was March 1962. News letters were issued by the committee until a journal was instituted in 1977.

Lt Col HCS Gregory	1977 – 1997
Lt Col GD Birch	1998 – Present

*(Note: The lists above have been compiled from published embassy lists. Those relating to the Society are derived from newsletters and journals, and contain the best information that the editor has gleaned. He apologises for any mistakes and omissions. He would be grateful if any member has further information relating to former Society officers which can be included to a more definitive list.)*

---

FROM THE EDITOR'S IN-TRAY

### Honours & Awards

Following the successful tour of duty in Afghanistan, the 1st Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles, the commanding officer, Lt Col GM Strickland MBE was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO). Cpl Dip Prasad Pun was awarded the Conspicuous Cross (CGC) and Rfn Sunil Limbu the Military Cross (MC). Six other officers and soldiers received mentions in dispatches or commendation.

### Professor Surya Subedi OBE

Professor Subedi has been appointed by Mr William Hague, the Foreign Secretary to the Foreign Secretary's Advisory Committee. This is a high profile committee that advises the Foreign Secretary on UK's foreign policy and priorities. Professor Subedi, already a UN Special Rapporteur for human rights in Cambodia, will bring his valuable experience on international law and human rights to this forum. The Society offers him their congratulations on this prestigious appointment.

### Possible road & railway developments

A short piece appeared in the March 2010 edition of *Himal Southasian*:

#### OF TAR AND TRACKS

'When it comes to rail and road projects in Nepal, nearly every major construction work has been carried out in collaboration with another country. Of late, Chinese participation in these projects has been particularly significant. But another country is now making a renewed effort in this regard – India. Last

involved in building the East-West Highway in 1997, India is now back to dole out some INR 17 billion on an initiative to be launched in Nepal's southern Terai plains.

Of this, New Delhi is dispensing INR 8 billion to upgrade 660km of all-weather roads in the area, with an eventual vision to work on some 1400km of roads. Concurrently there are prospects of an integrated checkpost in Birgunj, a major border point. Meanwhile, India is also keen to work on connecting Bihar with Biratnagar and Janakpur in Nepal through railway tracks.

While trains are a major mode of transport for both passengers and cargo in India, tracks are virtually non-existent in Nepal, with the exception of some lines in the India-Nepal frontier. Now a significant extension of Nepal's first tracks is on the official bilateral agenda. In mid-february, travelling to New Delhi for his maiden international visit, President Ram Baran Yadav presided over the signing of a pact on India building railroad tracks in the Nepal Terai, among other agreements.'

### The height of Mount Everest

*Himal Southasian* featured an article in the May 2010 edition concerning the official height of Everest. The major points in the report are as follows: The first measurement was taken during the Great Trigonometrical Triangulation Survey in 1856. Since that time the official height has been in dispute. While the widely accepted height has been 8848

metres in 'new money', (*At school I thought it was 29029 feet! Ed.*) endorsed by the Nepalese, the Chinese however record the 'rock height' as 8843.43 metres whilst the 8848 figure includes the snow cone. Apparently there has been an acceptance of 8848 m with the 'rock height' agreed at 8844 m. A recent American team with satellite technology have calculated the height as 8850 m. Although this is the height used by the National Geographic Society, this is as yet an 'unofficial' figure. Whatever is the now agreed height, it is said that the due to the action of the tectonic plates, the Himalayas are rising at two centimetres per year.

### **Gap year schoolboy climbs Everest**

A report in *The Daily Telegraph* claims that a British mountaineer, George Atkinson, aged 16 years is the youngest Britain to have succeeded in climbing Everest in May 2011. He has done this whilst on his 'gap' year. The previous youngest Britain to have 'summitted' Everest was aged 19. The youngest successful climber so far is an American, Jordan Romero, aged 13 years and 10 months who climbed Everest in May 2010.

### **First bird observatory in Nepal**

Himalayan Nature

([www.himalayannature.org](http://www.himalayannature.org)) is planning to open an observatory and field centre on a 10 hectare site just to the north of the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve at a cost of £25,000. This will be a great asset in raising the awareness of the local population concerning the wildlife in this important area for migrating and wintering birds. It is planned to have programmes for local schools as well as a centre for visitors to Koshi Tappu. Himalayan Nature has started a bird ringing programme using its own rings that has Nepalese government support. The UK registered charity (No: 296531) The Wetland Trust, is administering the appeal funding for the centre. Donations may be sent to The Wetland Trust, Elms Farm, Pett Lane, Icklesham, East Sussex TN36 4AH. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Wetland Trust' and marked 'KBO' on the back. UK gift aid applies.

---

 EVENTS AT THE GURKHA MUSEUM - 2011
**The Summer Exhibition - 2011**

The 2011 Summer Exhibition runs from Saturday 5th August to Sunday 5th September.

Title: *"The Scottish Connection, Pipes, Tartans, Kukris and Courage"*.

7 October 2011 - Lecture & curry lunch  
*"Training Local Lashkars in the North West Frontier*

*Province & Afghanistan in 19th/20th Centuries & Today"*

Colonel Ian Rigden, Mr Jules Stewart  
 Author/Military Historian.

Meet at 10.30am for coffee. Lecture in Library at 11am followed by drinks at 12.15pm.

A buffet curry at 1pm. Cost: Friends: £25.00. Visitors: £30.00

Booking essential. For details see below.

**LUNCHTIME LECTURES**

13th October 2011

Subject: *"Military Knitting Patterns from 1853 to the Present"*. The talk will cover the designs, patterns and associated items, and garments used by the Military since 1853.

Speaker: Joyce Meader, Collector and Authority of Military Knitting Patterns.

17th November 2011

Subject: *"Gurkha Recruiting into the British Army Today"*.

Speaker: Major Gerald Davies, Curator Gurkha Museum, Winchester

8th December 2011

Subject: *"Italy's Sorrow"*.

Speaker: James Holland studied history at Durham University. He has worked for several London publishing houses and has also written for a number of national newspapers and magazines. Although known as a land of beauty and for the richness of its culture, Italy's suffering in 1944-1945 is now largely forgotten. This is the first account of the conflict there to tell the story from all sides and to include the experiences of soldiers and civilians alike. Offering extensive original research, it weaves together the drama and tragedy of that terrible year, including new perspectives and material on some of the most debated episodes to have emerged from the Second World War.

All the above lectures take place at the McDonald Gallery, Gurkha Museum at 12.30pm.

Tickets: £5.00 per head including sandwich lunch.

Booking essential: By phone 01962 842832 or email:

curator@thegurkhamuseum.co.uk

---

 BOOK REVIEWS
 

---

**The Buddha and Dr Fuehrer: an Archaeological Scandal.**

By Charles Allen. Haus Publishing Ltd. London. 2008. Pp 292. Hb. Maps. Illust. Colour Plates. B&W Photos. Notes. Index. £17.99. ISBN978-1-905791-93-4. (A revised paperback edition is under publication)

Charles Allen is a well-known author and broadcaster who has addressed the Society a number of times. His latest book, about which he spoke in 2010, looks at a late 19th century attempt at defining Buddhist sites on the Indo-Nepal border in the Gorakhpur area and the academic rivalry that resulted. Allen sets the scene with a prologue that outlines early history of the area and the Buddhist connections. He also outlines, in the preface, the contemporary political situation of Nepal and of the two Indian states that border Nepal at the time during which he was carrying out his own researches for the book, the winter of 2007/2008. In a previous work, *The Buddha and the Sahibs*, Allen touched on the discovery of Buddhism's Indian roots by Western Orientalists, including the German archaeologist Dr Anton Fuehrer, at the old city of Kapilavastu. Allen has a wide knowledge and interest in Buddhism acquired over his years of writing and researching his previous works.

In 1898 William Claxton Peppe, the owner of the Birdpore estate just a few miles south of the Nepalese border, set about excavating a large brick Buddhist stupa known as Piprahwa Kot which he

felt had considerable significance. The product of this was the discovery of a large stone coffer and an inscribed casket said to contain the ashes of the Buddha and a collection of jewels. This event followed the then recent discovery of the nearby birth place of Buddha at Lumbini and the ancient city of Kapilavastu. The archaeological world was soon interested following the earlier work that had already taken place in the area. Allen undertook the research into the Piprahwa Kot excavations having been interested by the discovery of the collection of some of the remaining Piprahwa jewels held by the Buddhist Society. He contacted Neil Peppe a descendent of William and from there started his detailed research. A conference of interested academics and historians was arranged by Allen under the auspices of the Royal Asiatic Society at Harewood house in 2006. Although the argument about the details of the finds is still ongoing, carbon dating puts them into the correct time-frame of when the stupa was constructed. The story that unfolds surrounding the 1898 excavations is complex involving not only William Peppe at whose initiative the work took place but also Dr Fuehrer, a local district judge, Vincent Smith, another German, Professor Buehler of Bombay University, Dr LA Wadell of the IMS (a Tibetan scholar, later to be a member of the Younghusband expedition to Tibet in 1902/3), an exiled member of the Rana dynasty Maj Gen Khadga Rana, governor of the local province and many others in the academic and archaeological scene of

the times. Colonel H Wylie, (later Maj Gen) grandfather of the late Lt Col Charles Wylie is the British Resident in Kathmandu over this period and is mentioned in respect of the various permissions needed for the adjacent authorities from the North West Province & Oude (NWP&O) to enter Nepal. The story of how those characters were involved with the excavations and how their interpretation of the findings interacted and the rivalry and falsification involved is very detailed. Allen has done his homework well and in his description of these 19th century events one has a feeling of being there. There are however continuing political, religious and academic connotations even today after several thousand years surrounding the ownership and interpretation of such important religious sites. The book is well illustrated with maps photographs and artistic images. This book does require concentration to take in the twists and turns of the arguments that continue to this day and is a work that will appeal to the more specialist reader.

*Gerry Birch*

**From Missionaries to Mountaineers – Early encounters with Nepal.**

By RR Jordan. Published by Giridhar Lal Manandha. Kathmandu. 2010. Pp 195. Pb. Map. Illust. Bibliog. £10. ISBN 978-9937-2-2119-1. (For UK sales contact: [earlyencounters@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:earlyencounters@hotmail.co.uk))

Jordan was a member of the British Council staff for a period of four years, arriving there in 1965. His main task was the training of Nepalese teachers in English. At that time Nepal was still a relatively unknown destination for many

people. There were a few westerners in the diplomatic and aid communities, and although climbing expeditions were visiting, the tourism and trekking industry had hardly begun. Nepal made a lasting impression on Jordan who has maintained a lifelong interest in the country. After further service with the British Council, he joined the staff of Manchester University. He is now a full time writer and researcher in the English language and has published a number of books on the subject. His *English All Over the Place* was reviewed in Edition No 25 (2001) of the journal. In Edition No 27 (2003) he describes his meeting with Sir Edmund Hillary in 1968 and Jordan's subsequent visit to the Hillary schools in the Solu Khumbu. With his deep interest in Nepal he has amassed a collection of books on Nepal, both antiquarian and recent, and it is from this collection that he has put together a selection of extracts and information that forms this work. The result is 'vademecum' of the outline history of Nepal. Jordan chronicles the early travellers to Nepal including the missionaries and later the contacts with the east India Company. There are themed chapters that deal, amongst other topics, with the 'Gurkha War', the British Residents, the rise of the Rana dynasty, exploration and mountaineers, the Gurkhas and the recent political events in Nepal. This is a handy reference to anyone with more than a passing interest in the country and a good starter manual for anyone embarking upon more serious research. Society members would find this work a very useful addition to their libraries.

*Gerry Birch*



### **Life as a Curious Traveller.**

*By Freddie Rawding. The Memoir Club. Durham. 2009. Pp 697. 50 illustrations, 10 of them in colour. 6 maps. £22.50. ISBN 978-1-84104-198-8.*

This book is the memoirs, thoughts and opinions of an army officer travelling across the world over 35 years and very interesting it is too. It is in two parts, the first covering 12 years of army service and the second as a civilian when he attends a meeting of The Britain-Nepal Society in 1968 to meet a Nepali friend who accompanies him on a journey by land rover that ends in Kathmandu.

Freddie Rawding was commissioned into the Royal Army Educational Corps after completing his national service. He is the fourth generation of an army family that were connected primarily with the Green Howards whose depot in Richmond was near the family home. He was educated at Roman Catholic schools and one senses his strong affinity to religious traditions particularly service and education. He also has a poetic streak both in the Wavell tradition of being able to quote lines that are apt and appropriate for the story as well as the ability to compose poems. How many men doing officer training could include "Satirical poem published in *Punch* 1952" in their curriculum vitae?

He was posted abroad when commissioned and found himself attached to 48 Gurkha Brigade in Hong Kong in the early 1950s. His face to face discovery of post war latter day imperial Britain appears to have had a mind expanding effect on him so that experience and thoughts were conscientiously recorded in a journal.

However, this book is no dry account of visits to colonial outposts most of which had seen better days, as the chapters are embellished by relevant historical facts that provide another dimension to his writing. For example, in his description of his Japan posting he includes a very useful potted history of the region that includes particular social habits and the tribal origins of the people.

Following his army service at the age of 40, with financial support from a charitable fund set up by Field Marshal Smuts, he goes up to Cambridge and does a degree course in Indian studies at King's College. Consequently he wrote three books on the subject for the Cambridge University Press. After this heavy exposure to academia Rawding returns to his former eastern haunts as a civilian taking on jobs in teaching English, journalism and administration in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Oman and the Yemen as well as his old stamping grounds in Nepal, India and Malaya. He spoke fluent Nepali and joins the group of Westerners intellectually seduced by the spirit and temperament of the indigenous people of Nepal that is personified by the Gurkhas. Incidentally, profits from the sale of this book are shared by the Gurkha Welfare Trust and the Army Benevolent Fund. This book is whole heartedly recommended to those interested in the East, particularly Nepal.

*PA Trott*

*(Some members who are former officers of the Brigade of Gurkhas may well remember the then Captain Freddie Rawding RAEC as their Gurkhali instructor with the late Major Malcolm Meerendonk RAEC in the Language*

*Wing of the Gurkha Training Depot at Sungei Patani in north Malaya. Ed.)*

#### SHORT REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Nepal's Peace Process at the United Nations.** *Ed Ian Martin, 2010. Pp xiv+188. Cost \$22. Available at [www.himalbooks.com](http://www.himalbooks.com).*

Ian Martin worked successively from 2005 for the UN in Nepal as Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Personal Representative of the Secretary General for the peace process and then Head of the UN mission in Nepal (UNMIN). This book is a collection of reports and briefings for the UN on political and human rights developments put together by Martin. His 'afterword' provides an in-depth narrative of Nepal's political evolution during the initial phase of its transition towards peace while also serving as a valuable record of that crucial period in Nepal's history.

**Post cards from Kathmandu.** By F Selby, reviewed in Edition No. 32 (2008) is now available from UK Amazon. This work is a personal memoir of Selby's time working whilst in the American Embassy in Kathmandu as a commercial attaché in the early 1960s. He describes meeting many of the early 'expat' characters such as Boris of the Royal Hotel, Toni Hagen, Father Moran, members of the Royal family and many others.

**The Restless Quest.** By John Cross, reviewed in Edition No. 29 (2005) Blenheim Press has now brought out a UK edition of this work, retailing at £15 + £3 p&p from Blenheim Press, Codicote Innovation Centre, St Albans Road, Codicote, Herts, SG4 8WH. General Sir Sam Cowan stated in his review of this novel: '...a gripping tale. Readers interested in the origin of the British Gurkha connection will be richly rewarded.' Colonel Jimmy Evans noted '....The background is the sweep of history over the seventy years which saw the Honourable East India Company extend its sway inexorably westwards from Calcutta. Parallel with this was the seemingly unstoppable advance of the burgeoning new Kingdom of Nepal, leading inevitably to a collision of interests with the British.'

**The Crown of Renown.** By JP Cross. This is the third in his proposed quintet of historical novels, chiefly about Gurkhas. It is set in the period 1819 to 1857/8. It should have been published in 2007 to mark the Indian Mutiny 150 years before. The publisher was dilatory in the extreme, but the company had been sold. The new company owner eventually published the book on 4 December 2009, however due to the high price and the financial climate, sales have been almost zero. Cross has contacted the publisher and the book is now available via its own website: [www.jpccross.co.uk](http://www.jpccross.co.uk) at cost of £14.95 incl p&p.

---

 OBITUARIES
 

---



*The late Maj Dudley Spain (left) & Lt Col Alistair Langlands at the House of Lords*

**Lieutenant Colonel AM Langlands OBE**

The Society was sad to learn of the death of Alastair Langlands who died on 14th June 2010 at the age of 88. He was a quiet and unassuming man who had devoted his life to the service of the Brigade of Gurkhas, his country and Nepal. He was a long-standing member of the Society and whilst he was abroad for much of his life he maintained contact with Society and on his retirement regularly made the journey from his home in Bournemouth by rail, often in the company with his friend and colleague the late Major Dudley Spain. I am sure many members will have their own memories of Alastair both in Nepal and UK. I feel that I can do no better than quote in full the tributes given by Colonel Dennis Wood and Major Labbahadur Gurung at the memorial service at Aldershot on Saturday 17th July:

“Alastair’s father - Brigadier Eric Langlands was in the 8th Gurkha Rifles – and Alastair was born into his military world at Bannu on the North West

Frontier of India in December 1921. As a child he was sent to schools in England – the last of which was The King’s School, Canterbury, and it was as a teenager that he returned to his family in India. He went on to the Officers’ Training School in Belgaum and in March 1941 he became an officer in the regiment in which he had been born. He went back to its 1st Battalion at Kohat.

For a year Alastair was a PT instructor at the Army School of Physical Training at Ambala, before spending the remainder of the War with the 1st/8th as a rifle company commander, and later as Adjutant, in Assam and Burma where he was mentioned in despatches. After the War he commanded a rifle company in the operations in Java and on the North West Frontier where, once again, he did a spell as Adjutant. For a few months he commanded the battalion both on the Frontier and in the Punjab. And in the chaos and slaughter which followed the partition of India he led his men in their hugely difficult task in Lahore - desperately trying to keep the peace and escort refugees flowing both ways between India and Pakistan. It is touching that more than fifty years later one of those refugees came to England to find this officer - whose name he did not know – to thank him personally for saving his life.

After handing over his beloved 1st/8th to Indian Officers, Alastair joined the 1st Battalion of the 2nd Goorkhas in Poona in December 1947. Then, on and off for the next ten or eleven years, he commanded all but one of the companies on operations in Malaya and in peacetime in Hong Kong.

He also did another spell as Adjutant. Photographs of him in 1951 when commanding Guards of Honour for distinguished Commanders-in-Chief show how dapper and extremely smart he was. By then he was also a very experienced operational Adjutant who thoroughly deserved his second mention in despatches in Malaya. In 1953 and 1954 he was away from the Regiment commanding Boys Company in the Training Depot and he returned there in 1958 as Second in Command.

In 1959 Alastair began a spell of 14 years of service on the Gurkha Lines of Communication in India and Nepal. First he took command of the transit camp at Barrackpore. Then he became a Recruiting Officer who commanded in turn the Depot at Dharan, and the Recruiting Centre at Paklihawa. It was a spell which lasted until December 1973, broken only by leave to England and a year in which he was the Brigade Welfare Officer, and it was acknowledged by a very well deserved MBE for his expert and tireless work.

After Alastair's last military command at Paklihawa, he remained in Nepal for a further 23 years as a civilian. For the first ten of those he worked for the Overseas Development Agency in Lumle Agricultural Centre. His work there in training many hundreds of Gurkhas in modern methods and techniques for their crops and animals, his unstinting help to the local farmers and his genuine contribution to Agriculture in Nepal earned him promotion to OBE in 1983. It is not common to find someone who can wear both a Civil Division OBE and a Military Division MBE and no one merited that distinction more than Alastair.

For 13 years after that Alastair lived in

Pokhara and worked as the Kadoorie Representative for British Gurkhas Nepal. The Kadoorie Charity is very well known in Nepal for its impressive help to village communities by providing piped water and building bridges and schools and giving much other valuable help. Working closely with Sir Horace Kadoorie in all those tasks Alastair became even better known throughout the country. There are very few men who have gained such vast knowledge of Gurkhas and other Nepalis and of life in the hills and towns of Nepal.

Although he had lived in Nepal for 36 years, when the time came to retire, Alastair decided to settle in England where his father, step-mother and sister were growing old and would need his help. But he did not cut himself off from Nepal. As a Trustee and committee member of the King Mahendra UK Trust for nature conservation, he delighted in visits to Nepal. Being a member of the Britain-Nepal Society gave him more links and friendship too. He loved the Nepal countryside and some of his tales of his trekking and bird-watching there are preserved in our regimental newsletters.

As a bachelor Alastair lived frugally and managed his investments carefully. But he was always willing to spend large sums of money on good charitable causes. Of these his greatest pleasure was to pay for the education of numerous children of Gurkha soldiers and to watch their progress until they qualified in their chosen professions. He paid for his protégés to study at schools and universities in Nepal, Thailand, The Philippines, Australia, Switzerland and the USA as well as here in Britain. It pleased him enormously that most of those boys and girls are now professional

people who make a useful contribution to society. Moreover, when those children grew up he took on several of their children for many years until they too acquired professional qualifications. He was a benefactor par excellence.

To digress for a moment - the only thing about Alastair which I never cared for was his driving. In his younger days he was fascinated by cars with large, gleaming, silver headlights perched on top of the front mudguards. The attraction was so strong that he once forgot his frugality and bought a very large Citroën - a car much too powerful to be driven by someone gazing lovingly at his headlights instead of the road, or looking at tropical birds through the side window. One had to be a very stoical passenger not to cry out in alarm.

Alastair found driving in England to be tricky too. But, with a twinkle in his eye, he told me that whenever he made a bad mistake he was cheered up by other drivers being kind enough to open their windows and wave to him.

Alastair did sometimes adopt an air of naivety. But in truth he was shrewd and sensible and had a very keen sense of humour. He was a most honourable man, straight as a die, patient and tactful, dependable and tremendously kind and generous to the end of his life. It can truthfully be said that Alastair Langlands was a saintly man whose life was largely devoted to helping others. Privately many Gurkhas and their wives and children called him *Baje* - Grandfather. It was a term of reverence and endearment which fixes him for ever in my memory."

Major Lalbahadur Gurung also spoke movingly at the same service. He had been 'adopted' by Alastair Langlands as a boy as is made clear below and with his family looked after Alastair once he

became unable to look after himself:

"Because I have been very close to Col Alastair Langlands for some 47 years since 1963 till his last breath on the 14th of June 2010, I think I am pretty well qualified to describe or define his character in three simple words. That is - I have found him to be a man of sheer principles consistently sticking to the universally accepted ways for pure ethics, morals and values.

It was in 1963 at the age of 13 when I first met him, myself bare-footed and clad in my loincloth (*Bhoto*). At the time, I was playing around with a few friends of mine in my village Khilang in the foothills of Annapurna II. Unexpectedly, a saintly looking tiny white man appeared in my house. As it was the first time to see a white man, villagers quickly and curiously congregated around my house. When he saw me and my group of friends whispering to each other cheerfully, he approached us to join into our conversation. Just at that point, all my friends got scared and ran away; but somehow something inside me urged on to strike a conversation, which I did; but not fully understanding each other. Anyway, I now come to realise that perhaps a long-lasting father/son relationship was to be established.

In 1963, one of my brothers, who was also Ex-1/2 GR, had been instructed by Col Langlands to bring me along to Paklihawa, the Recruiting Depot in the hope of joining the British Army as a Boy Soldier. As soon as we arrived in Paklihawa, I was taken into his office, stood against the wall where he had marked the height measuring scale. He instantly said - "I'm sorry you don't qualify the height criteria by ½ an inch, but next year you should be OK." He then enrolled me into Paklihawa School

in class V. After about two months, I was again instructed to report to his office. I became a bit apprehensive thinking “could something have gone wrong at home?” Fortunately, it was none of that. Instead he offered me two options, which were: to wait until next year to join as a Boy Soldier? Or to go to St Xavier’s Godavari School in Kathmandu, the Nepal equivalent of Eton in those days. It was the only private school that had the full credential and resources to cater for Overseas Cambridge “O”-levels. So I became one of the lucky ones to get access to it. How? Purely because of Col Langlands. At the time, I could hardly string a sentence together; however I put in full effort and managed to catch up; finally graduating in 1969. He then enlisted me into the British Army in 1970, and because of my good English education background and further influenced by his principles of ethics, morals and values, I quickly rose through the ranks and became a Major (GCO). And here I am today standing in front of you – a village boy now a man clad in a suit. All because of Col Alastair Langlands!

Including me there are no less than 15 other student scholarships of Col Langlands who have become doctors, engineers, pharmacists, chartered accountants, hotel directors and teachers.

Our Dear Col Alastair Langlands, thank you ever so much for your love, kindness, generosity as well as guidance you have shown to the hundreds of thousands of Ex- Gurkhas and including other Nepalese people.”

*(I am grateful to Colonel Wood and Major Lalbahadur Gurung for permission to use their tributes. GDB)*



*Peter Leggatt with Mrs Pat Mellor*

### **Mr Peter A Leggatt MBE**

As reported in the last edition of the journal, Mr Peter Leggatt died suddenly and unexpectedly at his home in Lower Belgrave Street on Sunday 29th November 2009, just days before the 2009 AGM. Peter was a senior and long-standing member of the Society, a vice-president and former chairman from 1999 to 2003. He had strong family ties and business connections through the Lawrie Group of Companies (now Camellia PLC) to Asia, in particular India and Nepal. Business was largely through tea with company estates in Darjeeling and the Duars and also interests in Nepal through the former Nepalese Royal family’s tea estates in east Nepal. The former Prince Gyanendra was the Society’s patron. Following the assassination of King Birendra in 2001, Gyanendra then ascended to the throne and it was through Peter’s contacts with the Royal family that he was able negotiate a new Patron for the Society. Hence the former Princess Jotshana became the Society’s Patron until the fall of the Shah dynasty in 2008.

Peter’s father, Harry Leggatt, served in

the Indian Army in World War I, both on the North West Frontier and in Mesopotamia. Peter was born to Harry's second wife in 1942. Sadly his father died at the early age of 54 in 1952, leaving his mother to bring up a family six children (three were from Harry's first wife). By the age of 17 Peter was already working in London as an executive. The early death of his father had a deep effect on him and meant that he had to take on family responsibilities early in life and possibly was the reason that he did not go to university but went to Inchcapes from school. Even at that early stage it seemed that he was developing a style which was to be one of his trade marks. His nephew remarked at his memorial service that his was the high life, and that he was generous to all his friends and contacts, always ensuring that things were done properly and with style. This was reflected in his tenure as the Society's chairman particularly in the organisation of the fund-raising event at the Kensington Library for the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation in 2002. It was his idea that the Society should allocate funds annually to deserving causes associated with Nepal which it has done annually since then. Unusually for today, Peter only worked for two employers, Inchcapes and the Lawrie Group. He continued to work full time for Lawries after retirement which demonstrates both his interest and loyalty to his work and friends. That he was held in such high esteem was very much in evidence when, at his instigation, my wife and I were able visit two of the Goodricke's tea estates in Darjeeling and their offices in Calcutta. He was greatly respected and clearly held in high esteem by everyone we met. We were treated with great generosity and in style, and we

remain ever grateful for the opportunity that Peter gave us but it was just a typical example of his kindness and generosity. Undoubtedly Peter had a great affinity with Asia and its people. He was made an MBE for his charity work in Thailand where his company also had strong connections. His other charities included Leonard Cheshire, Help Tibet, and the British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia (BACSA) of which he was president. Latterly he had been working with one of his major interests as a trustee of the Camellia Foundation. A quote from Arun Singh of Goodricke's is typical: "Peter would go out of his way to help our young children for higher studies with a grant from the Foundation...[He] was a friend, philosopher and guide for them." It is hard to do justice to Peter's life and work as he was at home rather shy and quiet and very much his own man. He had a very wide circle of friends, especially in Asia who held him in very high regard. For the Society, as chairman, he was very much the right man at the right time. Following him as chairman, I have much to thank him for all the subsequent generosity and support that he showed in the cause of the Society.

*(I am grateful to Peter's nephew, Mr Anthony Blackstock and Lord Sandwich for permission to use extracts from their tributes. GDB)*

---

 USEFUL ADDRESSES
 

---

The UK Trust for Nature Conservation  
in Nepal  
c/o Conservation Programmes  
Zoological Society of London  
Regent's Park  
London NW1 4RY  
Tel: (020) 7449 6304  
Fax: (020) 7483 4436

The Gurkha Welfare Trust  
PO Box 2170  
22 Queen Street  
SALISBURY SP2 2EX  
Tel: 01722 323955  
Fax: 01722 343119  
www.gwt.org.uk

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

The Britain Nepal Otolaryngology Service  
(BRINOS)  
Greensand Cottage  
Puttenham Road, Seale  
Farnham GU10 1HP  
Tel: (01252) 783265

Yeti Association  
(Nepali Association in UK)  
66 Abbey Avenue  
Wembley  
Middlesex HA0 1LL  
Email:  
yetingnepaliassociation@hotmail.com

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  
Hampshire SO23 8TS  
Tel: (01962) 842832

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

Student Partnership Worldwide  
17 Deans Yard  
London SW1P 3PB

The Royal Society for Asian Affairs  
2 Belgrave Square  
London SW1X 8PJ  
Tel: (020) 7235 5122  
www.rsaa.org.uk

Bird Conservation Nepal  
PO Box 12465  
Lazimpat  
Kathmandu  
Nepal  
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 Chairman:

Lt Col (Retd) GD Birch  
33 Abbey Street  
ICKLETON  
Saffron Walden CB10 1SS

---

## THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

---

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

*Vice-Presidents*

Brigadier AB Taggart MC  
Mrs Celia Brown\*\*  
Colonel JM Evans MC  
Sir Neil Thorne OBE, TD, DL  
Mrs Pat Mellor  
Sylvia Countess of Limerick CBE

*Committee (2010/11)*

*Chairman:* Lieutenant Colonel Gerry D Birch\*

*Vice-Chairman:* Colonel John SK Swanston

*Honorary Secretary:* Position vacant

*Honorary Treasurer:* Dr Peter A Trott

Dr Raghav Dhital OBE  
Mr Gavin Edgerley-Harris  
Mrs Jenifer Evans  
Sir Robert ffolkes Bt OBE  
Mr Harish Karki  
Miss Jane Loveless  
Mr IP Manandhar  
Mrs Sneha Rana  
Mrs Maggie Solon

Mr Jhabindra Parsad Aryal, (Minister Counsellor), the Nepalese Embassy (*ex officio*)

Miss Rosalind Corrigan, FCO (*ex officio*)

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

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

*Archivist:* Mrs Celia Brown \*\*