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THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

Journal

Number 41

2017



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EDITORIAL

Readers may find this edition of the journal rather slimmer following the ‘bumper’ editions of 2015 and 2016 which reflected the important bicentennials respectively of Gurkha service to the crown and the Treaty of Segauli, ending the two year Anglo-Nepal War. The Treasurer may have a quiet smile. The annual Nepali Supper was a particular success in February as pointed out by the Chairman in his report. We were favoured by having Dr Arzu Deuba, a Nepali parliamentarian and wife of four-times Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba who gave a brief and lucid account of the current challenges facing Nepal. She was followed by Lisa Choegy, our guest of honour, who gave us an overview of her time in Nepal and her involvement in the development of tourism from the 1970s onwards. Older members may well have visited Tiger Tops as guests in those early years and had the benefit of Lisa’s advice and help on their travels. Lisa was appointed as New Zealand’s honorary consul in 2010 taking over from Elizabeth (Liz) Hawley. Hawley’s recent death, since the supper, is reported by Lisa elsewhere in the journal. The Society also had the opportunity to congratulate Lisa on her award in the 2017 New Year honours list of New Zealand’s Order of Merit for her service in Nepal and in particular the assistance she was able to render both to the Nepalese government and New Zealand nationals following the 2015 earthquake.

This edition also continues to reflect interest in both the Gurkhas and Mount Everest, both topics that are always associated with Nepal in the minds of most British people.

One of the major aims of the Brigade of Gurkhas was to have a Gurkha summit Mount Everest in 2015. The attempt was foiled by the April 2015 earthquake which hit base camp. It was fortunate that the majority of the Gurkha team was at Camp 2 and sustained no serious casualties but in the event were able to help with the subsequent rescue operations (see Journal No. 40 p 42 et seq.). Chris Boote has written a piece for us and I know that a few of us were able to attend the presentation by the successful 2017 team at the RGS were most impressed with how the team went about the climb and how once again they were drawn into a rescue event on this trip too. The new (relatively) Director of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, Al Howard, briefed the Society on how he intends to deliver help to veterans as they age now that the work following the earthquake has been completed.

I have been able include in this edition a number of academic articles on both Nepalese history and art through connections with the Britain Nepal Academic Council (BNAC) and one of the more esoteric academic institutions in Cambridge (where else!), the Ancient India and Iran Trust. Professor Coningham who has spoken to the Society (and the BNAC) about his work in the Nepalese Terai on ancient Buddhist sites looks at developments there with his team from Durham and Stirling Universities and the Nepalese government’s Department of Archaeology. Dr Nina Mirnig from the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna has spent much time looking at the

important UNESCO World Heritage site of the important Hindu temple of Pashupatinath. Her piece looks in detail at the history surrounding this site, so important to the Hindu community both in and India and Nepal.

On a lighter note Tony Schilling relates an amusing anecdote on one of his treks in earlier years to the Everest region to which, no doubt, some members can well relate!

I note that this edition of the journal is the twentieth under my editorship, a similar total to that achieved by my predecessor, Lt Col HCS Gregory. Colonel Greg transformed the early editions from what were largely 'broadsheets' to the current bound format. I have sought to build on this, mainly increasing content gathered from my contacts in various organisations that have interest in Nepal over a fifty year

period such as RSAA, RGS, ZSL the Ancient Indian and Iran Trust and of course from members. However I feel that the baton should be passed on soon. I am very much 'analogue man' and that in the future the journal should benefit from transferring to the digital age. I am currently working on the 2018 edition. It may be if anyone is interested in becoming a future editor, he or she, may wish to contact me and we could initially work in tandem. The editor's contacts are key, and I am sure that now there are members who would be able to continue at this stage of the Society's existence. I am also conscious that for many members, especially those living far from London, the journal is their main contact with the Society.

Once again may I take this opportunity to thank all the contributors for their time and patience?

DISCLAIMER

Responsibility for opinions expressed in articles and reviews published and the accuracy of statements contained therein rest solely with the individual contributors.

THE SOCIETY'S NEWS

(This is an edited version of the Chairman's report delivered at the AGM on 7th December 2017)

The Chairman opened the proceedings by welcoming everyone to the 57th AGM. He went on to hope that it was not a diplomatic solecism to welcome His Excellency to his own Embassy. He went on to state that it is always an honour to have Dr Subedi with us on these occasions and very much hoped that His Excellency was aware of how very much the Society appreciated his generosity in allowing us to meet from time to time in such prestigious surroundings. He further stated that the Society greatly valued the warm and constructive relationship that exists between the Embassy and the Society and is delighted that you have agreed to become an ex officio Patron of the Society. I am also delighted to welcome on your behalf Al Howard who has recently taken over as Director of the Gurkha Welfare Trust and who will bring us up to date with the Trust's activities following the formal business of the evening. A fuller introduction will follow.[The Ambassador then briefly addressed the meeting before having to leave for another diplomatic event.] The Chairman then stated that he was delighted that the Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr Sharad Aran, was able remain for the rest of the meeting. The Chairman's detailed report on the Society's activities continues below:

Once again Nepal has had to face natural disaster this year with the devastating monsoon flooding. As a Society we have not specifically responded to this event and perhaps we should have done. However, we are beginning to get underway with a review of our donations strategy. The Treasurer will have more to say in his report about this as well as our intention to

build up a reserve fund for charitable purposes.

It is always sad to report to the Society news of the death of members and this year is no exception. We think particularly of Maurice Armytage, Sir Simon Bowes-Lyon, Margaret Dean, Colonel Jimmy Evans, Susie Dunsmore, Major (QGO) Bhupal Gurung, Brigadier Tony Hunter Choat, David Jefford, The Countess Mountbatten and Primrose Reynolds.

I would particularly wish to pay tribute to Jimmy Evans who, with Jenifer, was for so long a stalwart of the Society including a stint as Chairman. As well as his commitment to the Society, Jimmy also founded the Britain-Nepal Chamber of Commerce.

On a more cheerful note I know that you will be pleased to hear that Jenifer Evans has agreed to become a Vice President of the Society, as has Field Marshal Sir John Chapple. Both are and have been fantastically loyal and supportive members of the Society.

Reverting to the year's events I am delighted to report that we held a highly successful Annual Supper in February attended by substantially greater numbers than we had seen for several years. We were greatly honoured to have as Chief Guest on a brief visit to London Dr Arzu Deuba, a Nepali parliamentarian and wife of four times Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. Dr Deuba gave a brief and lucid account of the challenges facing Nepal.

Lisa Choegyral (née van Gruisen) was our

Guest of Honour and principal speaker. She gave a fascinating and most entertaining account of her forty years of living in Kathmandu. As well as the speeches, guests enjoyed a slide show of wonderful photographs of Nepal by Johnny Fenn. More recently he gave a hugely appreciated talk and slide show as part of our evening lecture programme. We are hoping to persuade Johnny to repeat this presentation as it is one that many more members than were able to come on this occasion would greatly enjoy. Copies of Johnny's book *Light and Life in the Middle Hills* are available at the front desk or can be ordered at £20 each.

Other talks during the year were given by Nick Kershaw and a double-header by Mr Indra Prasad Bhandari and Professor Doctor Shanker Thapa whom His Excellency had invited from Nepal. The former's talk entitled *Impact Marathon Nepal* described Nick's brainchild – a global programme of marathon events to raise money for local causes. He was just back from the Nepal run which raised well over £100,000 for projects in Nepal.

Our two visitors from Kathmandu took part in the first of a planned series of events jointly sponsored by the Embassy and the Society. Both speakers gave fascinating insights into the cultural dimension of relations between Britain and Nepal and attracted one of our largest lecture audiences with excellent representation from both communities. It is intended to hold two such events each year with the Embassy and the Society alternately arranging speakers. On this occasion the Embassy generously sponsored a welcoming reception and drinks for the supper that followed the talk. This new venture should further strengthen the

already close relationship between the Society and the Embassy.

During the summer a small group visited the Gurkha Museum in Winchester where the Museum's Director and Society committee member, Gavin Edgerley-Harris, gave a highly polished and riveting talk on Gurkha Memorials around the world. The talk was followed by an excellent curry lunch in the Museum's impressive McDonald Gallery.

Also in the summer the committee gave a reception for recently joined new members. Around thirty new members gathered with some committee members in a private house in Holland Park for a most congenial drinks party. The new recruits seemed to enjoy the friendly atmosphere and it has been good to see some of them at subsequent events. I hope that a steady flow of new applicants will enable us to repeat the event before too long. Many thanks are due to those of you who have encouraged friends and relations to join the Society. Do please keep up the good work.

At last year's AGM I mentioned that plans were afoot to establish a network of charities and NGOs with projects in Nepal. The idea is, amongst other things, to share best practice, to avoid duplication of effort and to form alliances in the pursuit of funding from government and other sources. Some progress has been made and the new organisation, called BRANNGO an acronym for Britain and Nepal NGOs, is in sight of producing a draft constitution and criteria for membership. BRANNGO would clearly value the support of the Britain-Nepal Society and the Society committee is examining the nature of any possible relationship with BRANNGO which could be very advantageous to us in terms of

influence and of new members. The committee is interested in pursuing this initiative with the clearly understood proviso that the Society should not expose itself to potential reputational risk from the activity of rogue members.

Amongst other things, association with BRANNGO should allow us to develop our own schools programme initiated so successfully by Ashley Adams a couple of years ago but not yet capitalised upon.

Looking ahead we have moved the Annual Supper to a little later in the year to take advantage of lighter evenings and, we hope, less risk of wintry weather. Next year's Supper will take place as usual at St Columba's on Tuesday 27th March with the distinguished Himalayan climber Doug Scott as Guest of Honour and principal speaker. It would be marvellous if we could beat the excellent turn-out achieved this year.

The lecture programme arranged so far for 2018 will include a talk in May by Professor Michael Hutt from SOAS who will bring us up to date with restoration work in Kathmandu with particular reference to the Bhimsen Tower. Later in the year Dr Maggie Burgess will give her postponed talk on the leprosy work in Nepal of her charity Promise Nepal. I do hope that you will be able attend these talks and others still to be arranged. On the whole audience numbers for our lectures have been steadily increasing. Do come if you can and bring guests particularly those who might decide to become members themselves. And please let a committee member know if you have recommendations for speakers.

The Treasurer will report in more detail

about membership numbers and the Society's finances. We have had a steady trickle of new members but these are offset by the number of lost members and those who run the risk of being 'struck off' following a failure for at least two years to pay their fees. It is sad that this is the case but I would like to pay tribute to Rupert Litherland for his time-consuming efforts to regularise the membership list.

Again, Rupert will report shortly on our finances. Suffice it for me to say that with the caveat just mentioned they are in pretty good shape. We are concentrating on building up our reserves and are beginning to draw up a clear donations policy. As well as to Rupert our thanks are also due to Colonel Roger Willsher for acting as assessor of the accounts.

I hope that you have all visited the Society's website recently. Visually it is extremely attractive and is becoming ever more informative with links to other social media which are, I am afraid to say, rather beyond me. The lion's share of work on the website is undertaken by our indefatigable secretary and web mistress MJ Streather. To help her in this limitless task we have taken on some professional help.

Whilst we continue to mail information to members who wish to receive our communications through the post we are increasingly using email to send out information about lectures and other events. Clearly this makes us more environmentally friendly and saves us a good deal of money. Members who have elected to receive notifications by email no longer receive postal duplicates for most events. It is crucial that they open Society emails and we do know that a significant number of members do not always do this which may

account for the drop in audience numbers at a recent lecture. By the same token, please do keep the Secretary informed of any changes in your contact details.

Committee Meetings have been extremely well attended this year and I would like to thank all those who have given up much time in support of the Society. Mrs Minu Chhibber, Colonel Peter Sharland and Andy Sparkes have joined the committee during the year and are up for election this evening. After several years of elected or co-opted service Frances Spackman and Jenifer Evans are standing down at least for the time being. Jenifer was, of course, Secretary for a while and is a fount of knowledge on all things BNS whilst for a number of years Frances fulfilled the thankless task of minute-taker at meetings. We are very grateful to them both and I know they will continue to be as involved as ever in 'meeting and greeting' at our events.

Also retiring from the Committee is Major Nigel Wylie-Carrick who as Secretary of the Gurkha Brigade Association has been an ex officio member of the Committee for several years. Nigel has done unobtrusively sterling work in arranging such things as attendance of Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers and pipers for the annual supper and has been an excellent conduit to the Brigade. Nigel's successor is Major Manikumar Rai MBE whom we very much look forward to meeting at committee meetings and Society events. Sadly he cannot be here tonight. A final change on the Committee is that Alison Marston has decided to step down as Chairman of the Younger Members Committee. Discussions about a possible successor are underway. In the meanwhile it is hoped to bring Alison

on to the main committee in recognition of the sterling work that she has done over the last few years. This news came too late for inclusion in tonight's papers.

And now to finish with, a few more thanks, firstly to Gerry Birch who has produced another full and fascinating journal; these things take up a huge amount of time and we owe him a considerable debt of gratitude. And secondly to Monty Shrestha and Prashant Kunwar who once again have most generously sponsored the Kukhri Beer for this occasion and all our Society events. It is very much appreciated.

Finally, many of you will be familiar with the writing of Colonel John Cross. Of his latest book '*Operation Janus*', John le Carre has written: "Nobody is better qualified to tell this story of the Gurkhas' deadly jungle battles against communist insurgency in 1950s Malaya". High praise indeed – fliers for the book are available in the hall. Do take one.

The Chairman then made a presentation to Major Nigel Wylie-Carrick on his retirement following a short appreciation given by Colonel Litherland.

The chairman then introduced the new Director of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, Al Howard, who has held the post since April 2016. Prior to that he had worked for 26 years in Asia first as a serving officer with the 6th Gurkha Rifles and then with Airbus selling aircraft to Nepal, Bhutan, Mongolia, Macau and Hong Kong. He was then appointed Director of the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association, an implementing partner of GWT based in Pokhara. Even more adventurously he rowed across the Atlantic in 2005 to raise funds for the Trust.

NEW MEMBERS PARTY 7TH JUNE 2017

In what was a first for the Society or at least a first in recent years, a new members' party was held on 7th June 2017. The idea was to enable members elected over the last few months to meet one another along with members of the Committee.

Some forty new members had been recruited over the previous eighteen months and in the event some twenty were able to attend the party – no mean turnout bearing in mind that several new members live abroad or in far flung corners of the UK. Their attendance was matched by that of fifteen committee members.

The evening drinks party was held in the convivial surroundings of Ilchester Place, London W14 by kind permission of the chairman's sister-in-law Mrs Julia L'Vov Basirov, who has hosted similar Society events in the past. By all accounts the evening went off very well and the consensus was that a similar gathering should be held once there is a sufficient number of new members to justify it.

The final stragglers left well after 9.00pm and everyone felt fortified for the rigours of the following day's General Election.

WEBSITE & EMAIL CONTACT

Members will have noticed considerable changes & improvements to the Society's website: www.britainnepalsociety.org

In addition the Secretary is increasingly using email to contact members about events and Society news. This makes it much easier, cheaper and faster to pass information. However members are asked to ensure that the Secretary's email address:
secretary@britainnepalsociety.org
is firmly listed in members' safe contact list.

THE GURKHA WELFARE TRUST – AN UPDATE

By Al Howard, Director GWT

(This piece is based on the talk given to the Society by Al Howard following the AGM on 7th December 2017.Ed.)

The last year has been a transitional one for the Trust. We saw a change of Chairman, the conclusion of our earthquake response programme and a review of the way we help our pensioners live with dignity.

Conclusion of our earthquake response

Last year saw the conclusion of the Trust's earthquake response; a project which consumed much of our time and resources over the last two years and brought huge benefits to veterans and widows in the hills of Nepal. In total, following the widespread destruction of homes in 2015, we rebuilt over 1,000 homes to a new quake-resistant standard, in addition to schools, community centres and water projects that were damaged. Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) John White MBE worked as Head of our Earthquake Response Team last year:

"While I was taken aback by the scale of the devastation the earthquake caused, as a former officer in the Brigade of Gurkhas, I was not at all surprised at the forbearance and stoicism of the Nepali people.

"Our pensioners, their widows and communities had no expectation of help, but rather displayed a grim determination to pick themselves up and get on with life as best they could. I can assure you that your support has brought, and continues to bring, relief to a people who have suffered so much, yet ask for and expect so little."

Fundraising

Throughout the year we were continually amazed at the incredible effort our

supporters have gone to in helping Gurkha veterans, their families and communities in Nepal. We've witnessed runs, cycles, swims, dinners, treks and much more. Unfortunately we can't mention them all though we extend our sincere thanks to all of the Trust's supporters.

April saw a very special day for Trust supporter and current serving Gurkha Private Jiban Tamang. After training vigorously for the London Marathon last year, he was downhearted to have to pull out with a knee injury shortly before the event. At the time, he said:

"This is a huge disappointment for me. I was proud to be representing my Brigade and to raise funds to help my country and fellow Gurkhas recover from the earthquakes."

On 23 April 2017, he was back with a vengeance and completed the race in an amazing 3 hours and 46 minutes. His efforts raised the Trust £2,995.

"Running a marathon is something I've always wanted to do. This is my first marathon and I feel so honoured and privileged to represent the Trust."

New Chairman

Mid-way through the year we had a change of Chairman. General Sir Peter Wall GCB CBE DL came to the end of his tenure with the Trust and was replaced with Lieutenant General N A W Pope CBE in June. In his

first Samachara newsletter as Chairman, General Pope commented:

“I want to begin by paying testament to the achievements of my predecessor, General Sir Peter Wall. Throughout his tenure, he gave the Trust his undivided attention. And the charity flourished under his assured stewardship. He has left us well set to exploit opportunities as and when they arise.

I was lucky enough in January to revisit Nepal and see first-hand the incredible work that our field staff are doing to implement the many initiatives that your support has made possible. Our long established and respected presence in Nepal means we’re in a fantastic position to reach Gurkha veterans in some of the most remote and difficult terrains in the world. For 200 years the Gurkhas have fought valiantly alongside us. Now, we fight for them.

I am proud to be your Chairman and will commit ‘heart and nerve and sinew’ to help to take the Trust forward in the years ahead.”

Floods

In August our staff faced an altogether different challenge when Nepal faced its worst monsoon season in 15 years. We worked quickly to support those affected by the subsequent flooding. At the time, our Deputy Field Director in Nepal, Maj Hemchandra Rai MBE BEM noted that:

“Our absolute priority is ensuring that our Gurkha pensioners are safe, secure and as comfortable as possible. We won’t rest until everyone is accounted for.”

We were fortunate that there were no fatalities amongst the communities we support though many required extra support and emergency materials in the immediate aftermath.

Prince Harry celebrates our work

We saw out 2017 with a Remembrance Dinner hosted by His Royal Highness Prince Harry at Kensington Palace. The event was attended by some of our long-standing supporters and major donors, who very kindly made a significant contribution



One of our Pensioner Support Teams prepare to deploy

to the Trust in order to attend. Also present at the black-tie fundraising event were GWT Vice Patrons Joanna Lumley OBE and Field Marshal Sir John Chapple GCB CBE DL. Making a speech before the dinner, His Royal Highness said:

“The men of the Royal Gurkha Rifles are some of the most dedicated, caring, humble and courageous soldiers I have ever had the privilege to meet. They are an inspiration to me and to anyone fortunate enough to meet them. I am honoured to call them my friends.”

“The Gurkha Welfare Trust provides the most incredible support to these men, their families and the communities in which they live; the charity doesn't pretend to have all the answers but listens to what its beneficiaries need and provides it in the most efficient way possible.”



Prince Harry celebrates the work of The Gurkha Welfare Trust

Our year in stats (16/17):

- We paid a Welfare Pension to 5,798 Gurkha veterans and widows across Nepal
- We provided advice or treatment for over 130,000 medical cases
- The Water and Sanitation team built 70 new projects for villages across Nepal (34 in the East and 36 in the West)
- Our schools programme benefited over 40,000 children
- Our two Residential Homes housed 57 veterans or widows
- We hosted 6 medical camps which treated 10,514 people
- We employed over 400 staff across Nepal
- We advised over 600 Gurkha veterans and widows as they relocated to the UK

Changes for next year:

Pensioner Support Teams

Since our inception as a charity almost 50 years ago, Welfare Pensioners have been at the heart of everything we do. These are the brave veterans or the widows of those who served as a Gurkha in the British Army but did not reach the 15 years required to receive a British Army pension. Instead, as you've read in these pages, we pay them a monthly allowance to enable them to live their lives with dignity in Nepal. Over the next year our work with our pensioners will change slightly. Following a detailed review of how we need to deliver welfare to these ageing and increasingly less-mobile people, we've decided to focus more on bringing aid to their homes as opposed to them having to travel to receive things like medical care or pension payments. We've recently launched our Pensioner Support Team model. These teams journey into the

hills to visit our pensioners and are made up of drivers, doctors, other medical staff and welfare staff. By operating in this way we're confident we're acting on the changing needs of our beneficiaries and adapting to the ever-changing environment of Nepal.

Changes to our medical scheme

We've recently teamed up with International SOS, the world's leading medical and travel security assistance company, to help us to develop and improve our Medical Programme. On their recommendation, our brand new medical clinic in Pokhara is establishing a whole new standard of care in a country that has always suffered from inadequate healthcare

provision.

To continue our efforts to improve healthcare access, we will refurbish a further four clinics by June 2018, equipping them with everything from medicines to life-saving equipment so that Gurkha veterans and their widows can receive a high standard of medical care. We will also recruit additional medical staff to better address the needs of a less mobile and ageing beneficiary population. Our aim is to improve the delivery of primary healthcare and in doing so reduce the need for hospital admissions.



92 year-old widow Manisara Thapa outside her new quake-resistant house

BRITAIN NEPAL SOCIETY SUPPER 15 FEBRUARY 2017

By Lisa Choegyal

(This is the draft of the talk given by Lisa Choegyal at the Nepali Supper in February 2017. Lisa Choegyal is New Zealand's honorary consul in Kathmandu and she was awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2017 New Year's Honours List. Ed.)

**Namaste and good evening your
Excellency, ladies and gentleman**

What a great pleasure it is to be here with you tonight, amidst many familiar faces and some new ones. And daunting as well, knowing how much collective knowledge there is in this hall about Nepal and the Britain Nepal relationship, now a very respectable 200 years old.

The historical background of the relationship has been well remembered, discussed and published during this past year, by others far more qualified than me, not least our former Nepal Ambassador to UK Dr Suresh Chalise. I'm not much of a political animal either, so in contrast to the state of the nation address that I understand is customary at this august annual evening, I thought instead it might be interesting to share some more personal perspectives from my over forty (nearly forty-three) years as a Brit living in Nepal, and how a good Northumbrian 'gal' ended up being there in the first place.

The short version is that I came trekking in 1974 and never left. My Nepal time divides almost exactly into two, the first half working with Jim Edwards and Tiger Tops Mountain Travel and the second since 1997 working independently under different hats too numerous to bore you with tonight, but all in the tourism, wildlife and cultural heritage conservation fields that remain my passion.

Officially I'm a foreign investor with Marcus Cotton in Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge which many of you know, and I work as consultant with the New Zealand

based firm, TRC Tourism. I might mention that I serve on a number of committees, and was on the founding boards of the Nepal Heritage Society, Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust as well as ITNC and Chance for Change. Since 2010 I have been New Zealand Honorary Consul to Nepal, replacing the then-85 year old but still reluctant Elizabeth Hawley, the former Reuters Time Life correspondent. If you are confused as to why I as a UK national with a Tibetan husband and two American sons represent New Zealand in Nepal, you are not alone – it took a Cabinet decision to approve my appointment and I'm proud to be the only non-Nepali honorary consul in Kathmandu.

Of course the bicentenary year has been a big one for us, following on from the Gurkha celebrations in 2015. We have achieved a whole list of activities in Nepal, some more successfully than others. I know you have also done a huge amount here in the UK, and the online profile has also been impressive. Pratima Pandey and our Nepal Britain Society have been tireless in their determination, overcoming the FCO financial constraints and the inconvenient detail that Nepal's view of the Treaty of Segauli is not as enthusiastic as that of the British. Reflecting on the facts, this is perhaps not surprising as 1816 marked the year that Nepal relinquished what amounted to nearly half of its land area, albeit of recently acquired territory.

Our Nepal celebrations included the opening by the President of the Godavari Biodiversity Garden developed by Royal

Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, with the director Simon Milne and Dr Mark Watson. The annual Everest Marathon was rebranded with the Bicentenary logo and Ambassador Richard Morris ran a symbolic 8,848m (the height of Everest), no mean feat at that altitude, before presenting the prizes in Namche. With only a couple of days to spare the Nepal Post Office launched their bicentennial first day cover, and very handsome it is too.

The pinnacle was undoubtedly the hugely successful visit by Prince Harry who not only charmed us all, but dominated the international media, and helped greatly to restore much-needed visitor confidence for Nepal tourism after all the various disasters. There were a few funny moments such as when the local CDO failed to be informed of Harry's "surprise" volunteer school-building visit to his District following the official tour.

The activities spill into next year and we still look forward to the major BIE X at the Nepal Arts Council in April and a couple of Nepali likely lads driving from Kathmandu to London under the bicentennial banner. Of course, we also had a range of receptions, talk programmes, Shakespearian productions, cricket matches, music and rock concerts, scholarships and an unlikely black tie dinner at the British School hall. I even launched my most recent book 'A Journey Through Time' at Dwarikas as part of the 200-year celebrations. (*See elsewhere in the journal. Ed.*)

Encouraged to write from my personal perspective, it is not an exhaustive history of tourism in Nepal, but rather an evocation of those far off days and the cast of characters that inhabited the Valley. Many of you will have known of them. I was fortunate to work with so many of these remarkable people, and it is startling to

realise that they are not only dead and gone, but also their pioneering roles are in danger of being completely forgotten – Tony Hagen, Boris Lissanevitch, Desmond Doig, Jimmy Roberts, Jim Edwards, Chuck McDougal, Barabara Adams. They laid the groundwork for much of Nepal's development, conservation and tourism today.

In an effort to preserve this legacy I have taken on a bi-monthly column for the 'Nepali Times' (entitled: 'So Far So Good') and a more comprehensive book about my time in Nepal. Provisionally titled 'The Unsuccessful Hippy' in recognition of my first arrival in the spring of 1974, before I was rescued from stoned indolence (which I was never very good at) by Jim Edwards and what became over twenty years of working for him and the Tiger Mountain Group.

As mentioned, I first arrived to trek the amazing network of trading trails that cobweb the Nepal Himalaya – it was part of a wider overland wander that began in Bali, through South East Asia via Burma ending up in Kathmandu, then a hippy haven. The trail from Pokhara to Jomsom had just reopened for trekkers, and tourism was still in its infancy – only 90,000 visitors that year which represents just over 10 per cent of what we receive today.

After the trek, it wasn't long before a chance meeting in a Freak Street pub resulted in a trip to Tiger Tops. The excitements of exploring the jungle on elephant back, deep in tiger country, captivated me from the start. I was charged by a rhino and calf while out on foot, only saved by a tourist-laden elephant named Rup Kali and her heroic driver, Sultana. The delighted guests thought this incident was part of the Tiger Tops 'show', oblivious to the fact that this was a perilously close

encounter. As for me, I was hooked on the wild thrill of jungle life. Having talked Jim Edwards into giving me a job ('If you can talk me into that, you can talk anyone into anything!' was his memorable line) Chitwan was to be my home for the next three years, and thereafter Kathmandu-based as director of marketing and quality control. During my first month I bonded with the Lodge staff when the kitchen thatch caught fire, and my height helped them hoist up the chain of water buckets from the river to the team working on the roof.

I learned how to identify every audible engine sound, whether motor vehicle or aircraft. With the Indian and Nepali naturalists I studied the sounds and behaviour of the wildlife - birds and animals, very different from my native north of England countryside. I loved the complex logistics required to manage a safe up-market wildlife enterprise in the heart of a national park, even though we were actually deep inside potentially hostile tiger and rhino country. I found it really useful to have hands on operational knowledge of how the Lodge worked. Everything had to run smoothly for the guests, and my colleagues were former Gurkha army engineers, Tharu elephant drivers, Bote boatmen and Tamang cooks. Together we achieved apparently effortless precision timing, which in fact required meticulous behind-the-scenes planning.

At the height of its success in the 1980s, Tiger Tops' elephant safaris, nature walks and guided boat trips were an iconic 'must-see' of Nepal tourism, attracting not only regular punters but also hosts of celebrities, royalty, movie and rock stars. Highly skilled naturalists and Chuck McDougal's drawling evening talks gently educated guests about environmental issues. This was

the beginning of nature tourism in Nepal, a responsible tourism initiative rooted in conservation and community, and recognised as one of Asia's best wildlife experiences, and long before the term 'ecotourism' was invented.

My job included monsoon sales trips to Europe and North America - we needed to not simply market ourselves, but also to put destination Nepal on the world tourism map. Other ingenious and cost effective ideas to promote Nepal included wildlife and other films, fashion shoots and elephant polo.

One of my roles in those days was to travel between our lodges and camps throughout India and Nepal, (actually even to Tibet, Bhutan, Mongolia and Far East Russia) checking on operations to ensure quality control and monitor training. Of course in Nepal the kids came too – Tenzin and I had married in 1986. Sangjay's first word was not mama or papa but hatti (elephant) - what does that tell you! One unforgettable moment came in Bardia when our elephant safari unintentionally cornered a tiger. With a heart-stopping roar it charged my elephant with baby Rinchen sleeping tightly clasped on my knee, but swerved into the undergrowth at what seemed like the very last moment – Rinchen didn't even wake. It's hard for me to analyse objectively the highs and lows of twenty years working for someone like Jim Edwards, but in those early years he was entertaining, innovative, challenging, and inspired a zeal and commitment that totally captivated those of us in his orbit. I think he and I made an effective team, with him having the brilliant ideas and trusting me to make them happen. I well recognise there are definitely aspects to Jim that are harder to admire, and those perhaps got worse in later life, especially after his strokes. But things were never dull

around Jim. Working for him meant I was in the centre of a web of dazzling development and tourism pioneers, and other sundry hangers-on. Everest hero Sir Edmund Hillary, universally known as ‘Sir Ed’ or ‘Burra Sahib’, was just one of the regulars. Boris Lissanevitch’s restaurant was the magnet for many celebrations, and Sundays would often feature sumptuous picnics on his and Inger’s land in the southern part of the Valley, usually with writer, painter & designer Desmond Doig, development guru Toni Hagen, journo Dubby Bhagat, Bernadette Vasseux and many others. I was young, it was a golden time, and we all felt we were doing something useful for Nepal. I’m not sure how many of you are familiar with the background, but in February 1972 Jim and Chuck had taken over Tiger Tops from its Texan owners who first built the then-four roomed treetop lodge in 1964. A winning partnership of entrepreneurial energy and wildlife acumen, Jim and Chuck realised it was time to abandon hunting and embrace conservation. They were joined by Elizabeth Hawley who had lived in Nepal since 1960 (and is still going though increasingly frail at 92). (*Sadly she died on 26th January 2016. Lisa has written an appreciation of her life elsewhere in the journal. Ed.*). Soon after Jim’s younger brother John joined from the UK, along with the Nepali team mainly from villages adjacent to Chitwan, many of whose relatives and descendants stayed with Tiger Tops for decades. It was also back in 1965 that Nepal’s first commercial trekkers arrived — a small group of three intrepid American women heading out to the Everest region, organised by Colonel Jimmy Roberts, former Defence Attaché and mountaineer, and his new company Mountain Travel. This was the

birth of the Himalayan trekking industry, the term ‘trek’ adopted from a 19th century South African-Dutch word meaning a long arduous journey on foot. Providing employment for his beloved Sherpas, a typical trek would last at least two or three weeks and the market source was exclusively Westerners.

Today the patterns are changing, trends moving to shorter treks and younger travellers, many from Asian countries, as well as increasing numbers of urban Nepalis exploring their own hinterland. Chains of mountain lodges offer accommodation one-day’s walk apart in the more heavily trekked Annapurna, Langtang and Sagarmatha regions, that together receive over 95 per cent of today’s 170,000-or-so trekkers. I have been involved with the Great Himalaya Trail concept, a 100-day, 1000-mile route first devised in 2001 as a marketing and development concept to spread benefits to the more remote communities of Nepal.

When reflecting on my early Tiger Tops life, I am keen to avoid the traps of romanticism, nostalgia and the illusory “good old days”. Actually there is lots of interesting stuff going on today, and what I most treasure about Nepal and its amazing people are the independence, resilience, pragmatic responses to changing conditions, and often under-rated abilities and innovations, certainly in my areas of tourism and conservation.

Unsung examples of where Nepal excels might include leading work in ecotourism such as the Annapurna Conservation Area, Great Himalaya Trail, and pioneering the use of tourism as a development tool for the reduction of poverty, much of it funded by DFID. We are still just about hanging on to our zero poaching status for the rhino (with its population increased 48% in the past 10

years) with assistance from ZSL via UKTNCN amongst others. Buffer zone legislation, tiger conservation (63% increase per WWF) and community forest management (forest cover up 5% now to 44.7% of the country) continue to set international benchmarks.

The strengths of Nepali people were especially apparent following the earthquakes, avalanches, accidents and other natural catastrophes that have recently rocked us, literally. In addition we suffer the 'normal' annual droughts, floods and landslides (significantly more than usual after the earthquake) not to mention what I call the man-made disasters which include the perceptions of political instability (22 governments in 25 years), on-going corruption (NEA), and the entirely avoidable blockade last winter that made everyone's life a misery, and so cruelly slowed down the post earthquake relief.

I don't want to dwell on the earthquakes but I would just like to mention that it was the most extraordinary experience to be there. Once you feel the earth moving like that, you realise that everything taken for granted as being solid and secure, such as one's house and home, really isn't. On 25th April 2015 I had just got home to our house in Budhanilkanta from the Australian Embassy ANZAC Day service with the Gurkhas and Nepal Army. It was midday and I was sitting on the veranda having kicked off my new smart beige shoes that pinched my toes. The rumbling sounded like a truck as the ground began to tremble, but it kept on coming. I was aware of my dogs scattering in panic as tiles started to rain off our roof onto the grass lawn. I ran outside barefoot into the open garden, and had to hold onto a solid wrought iron chair to keep my balance as the ground heaved and bucked. I was aware of my little red car

rocking violently, backwards and forwards. Away in the distance below, a pall of grey dust could be seen rising upwards above the buildings of the city below us, an eerie and unnatural sight. I became aware of Nepalis across our hillside shouting to frighten away the evil earthquake spirits.

It sounds strange but from that (very long) minute we realised how lucky we were and how much worse it could have been.

Timing and temperature helped. The greatest blessing was that neither the airport nor bridges connecting Nepal to India were damaged. We never lost communications. Shortage of water and food was not an issue. Electricity was switched off so there were no fires. Exhausted staff kept the airport running 24 hours, and hardly any international flights were cancelled, just delayed. The army and police heroically pulled out survivors from the debris, the UN led the crisis coordination, and donors pledged US\$4.1 billion and 134 search and rescue teams arrived from 34 countries, though many ended up being more hindrance than help.

And most remarkable of all in the context of Nepal's castes and creeds was the overwhelming display of community spirit. Two days after the big one, at Patan Durbar Square with my New Zealand consular team we watched the Nepal army soldiers take a break and drink from the ancient Licchavi waterspouts which never ceased to flow. Locals were collecting the fallen sculptures and carved beams so they could be stored safely for reconstruction. Students caked in dust cleared the debris with shovels. "Are you from around here?" I asked one lad "No" he said. "We have come from the other side of the Valley to help. We just felt it was the right thing to do."

In the tourism sector we have also suffered a number of self-inflicted blows, partic-

ularly ones that have damaged high-end markets. These include problems with the Nepal Tourism Board, mountaineering regulations, and a protected area concessions policy that have together resulted in a reputation of a degraded destination that is not fulfilling its potential. For the last 10 years, ever since the end of the insurgency, we have only succeeded in attracting budget end travellers with an average visitor spend lower than in the 1990s. Stuck in this low-yield spiral, Nepal

is still dependent on our neighbours, and almost entirely on the Chinese for tourism growth.

Having said that, visitor numbers have outpaced the post-earthquake recovery predictions, and are just about back up to normal. The trickier question is can we “build back better” and get the yield per tourist back up as well as the numbers. I’m sure you agree that Nepal’s beautiful mountains, rivers, jungles and historic monuments deserve better, and quality rather than quantity should be our goal.

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Mrs Jenifer Evans has kindly taken on the sale of the Society ties and scarves which cost £15.00 each including postage. They are available from her at: Bambers 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 GURKHA EVEREST EXPEDITION 2017

By Chris Boote

The Gurkha Everest Expedition 2017 was the culmination of a five year journey for the Brigade of Gurkhas. On 15th and 16th of May 2017, 13 members of the Brigade stood on the summit of Mount Everest, the first serving Gurkhas ever to do so. In turn, it is also the most successful mountaineering expedition on Everest in some time, having fixed ropes to the summit for the first time by non-Sherpas, achieved a 100% summit success from the summit team and returned all members without any serious injuries. It is also the start of something bigger and more

enduring; the Gurkha Exploration and Mountaineering Society will be launched shortly, providing more opportunities for Adventurous Training to members of the Brigade and more remarkable achievements by Gurkha soldiers. Most readers will be aware of the earthquake that struck in April 2015, which happened to coincide with the first iteration of this expedition. It caught the expedition stranded between Base Camp and Camp 1, astride the notorious Khumbu Icefall; over 20 people (not from the Gurkha expedition) were killed by a huge



The trek to base camp

avalanche striking Base Camp. At the time, the team played a leading role in assisting casualties and organising the rescue of the stranded climbers and turned a failure to climb Everest into tangible contribution to the post-earthquake response. Nonetheless, the goal remained and the 2017 attempt was born. The journey from the South Col (Camp 4, 8,000m) to the summit (8,848m) defines

way. Passing people is no mean feat; it demands determination, risk and stamina as one must leave the rope in often exposed places. In short, our climbers were better as a result of the same professionalism and diligence that prepares us for operations. We had prepared for this climb in a military fashion the focused on teamwork and mastery of the basics, built upon the individual professionalism and



In the icefall

the expedition and Gurkha 'kaida', our spirit and culture. Despite having had only a few hour's 'sleep', little food and squeezing five men into 3-man tents in freezing conditions, the main team of 10 climbers started for the summit at 2200 on the 15th May with a determined attitude and in good spirits. Despite getting stuck behind a few slow teams on the way to the Balcony, we were able to use the mountaineering skills developed in build-up training in Scotland and our better fitness to pass these teams and be on our

diligence of each member of the team. There is only one chance to get a summit bid right, as fatigue, altitude and body degradation all take a heavy toll on the climber. The margins between success and failure are extremely fine, and in an environment above 8,000m failure equates to dire consequences. For those in any doubt, the first body we encountered was just 5m from our tent, with more on the route. Our team dealt with all of this, with the first member arriving at the top of the world shortly before 0700 on the 16th. As

each member passed another climber, it was only encouragement, support and congratulations for those on their way down. In all, members from both Royal Gurkha Rifles battalions, the Queen's Gurkha Engineers, Queen's Gurkha Signals and Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment were all represented; absolutely a Brigade team and effort.

Although 13 team members summiting is a remarkable feat, it is the result of nothing more than Gurkha professionalism applied to a new skill and environment. All the preparation was in place; excellent equipment, training and planning, coupled

with thinking soldiers able to execute in style. That other teams, some with considerably more Everest experience, relied on our judgements on weather and summit planning is a testament to this; our base camp tent became busy with people eager to hear what we had to say. We have left the mountain with a strong reputation as leaders, mountaineers and people.

Moving forward, it is now incumbent on those of us lucky enough to climb to bring on the next generation, and prepare them for the next challenge through the Gurkha Exploration and Mountaineering Society. Jai Brigade of Gurkhas. Jai Nepal.



Climbers and the Buddhist cairns

GLIMPSES INTO THE PAST THROUGH INSCRIPTIONS:
THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF NEPAL'S NATIONAL SHRINE PASHUPATINATH
By Dr Nina Mirnig, Austrian Academy of Sciences

East of Kathmandu, in an area called Deopatan, stands the well-known Hindu temple Pashupatinath, one of the seven inscribed monument zones of the Kathmandu Valley UNESCO World Heritage Site. With its golden rooftops towering over the sacred river Bagmatī, it marks one of the most important sites in the Valley's religio-political landscape as the home to Nepal's tutelary deity, the Hindu God Śiva Paśupati. (Fig. 1) Since the early seventh century through to recent times monarchs declared their allegiance to this deity, and even today donative acts and formal visits to the temple are important public gestures. Flocks of pilgrims, from inland and abroad, pay their

respects to Śiva Paśupati in order to receive his blessing at least once in a lifetime. The temple grounds too constitute an important stage for a multitude of religious activities. These range from the tantric worship of goddesses, festivals parading indigenous deities, Brahmin priests performing Vedic fire sacrifices, to Śaiva ascetic practitioners living there in pursuit of their soteriological path. One of the very first things, however, a visitor will notice upon entering the grounds, are the billows of smoke rising from the cremation pyres aflame at the river site. The sanctity of the temple area is as such that dying and being cremated close to Śiva Paśupati is believed to promise safe



Fig. 1. Pashupatinath Temple along the Bagmatī River, Kathmandu. (Photo Nina Mirnig)

passage to heaven or even liberation. One of the many remarkable aspects about Pashupatinath and its temple grounds is their long history. Few religious sites in South Asia can claim to have enjoyed such a long uninterrupted period of worship, not to mention such a persistent link with political power, spanning over more than a millennium. The earliest testimonies to this exceptional history are the inscribed stone objects on site, currently amounting to twenty-nine known pieces. These date to the so-called Licchavi Period (ca. 4th–8th centuries CE) named after the dynasty of Licchavi kings ruling at the time. As such, they tell us about the earliest phase of recorded religious activities in this area, as well as the rise of the Pashupatinath temple to Nepal’s tutelary shrine. Amongst these records, we also find the first extant written reference to the temple area in an inscription from 533 CE: on a square stone platform now located in Bhashmeshvaraghat, south of the temple area, a certain high officer Dhruvasaṅgha recorded his donative activities and details that he has set up five Śaiva shrines within the precincts of the Pashupati temple (*paśupatiḥsetra*).

The cult object of such Śaiva shrines, even today, is the Śivaliṅga, which is considered to be (for some) the un-iconic representation of the Hindu God Śiva. Numerous such Śivaliṅga shrines are found today scattered across the site, some of the Licchavi-period pieces also featuring the deity’s face (Fig. 2). Dhruvasaṅgha’s inscription thus speaks to a popular practice that emerged in middle of the first millennium, namely the foundation of Śivaliṅga shrines for the benefit or in memory of a particular individual. The names given to these shrines reflect this link to the beneficiary and are a blend of

his or her name and that of the Lord Śiva (Sanskrit *tīvara*). For instance, in 540 CE, Abhīrī, mother of the powerful minister Bhaumagupta, set up a Śivaliṅga shrine in memory of her deceased husband Anuparama, naming it in his honour Anuparameśvara. Similarly, the wealthy merchant Ratnasāṅgha set up two Śivaliṅga shrines, namely Ratneśvara in his own name in 477 CE and Prabhukeśvara for the benefit of a relative called Prabhusaṅgha in 480 CE (Fig. 3). The foundation of these Śaiva shrines in Pashupatinath was accompanied with permanent land donations in order to ensure a steady income for their worship. In this way, many assets linked to the



Fig. 2. Ekamukhalinga, Licchavi-period Śivaliṅga shrine, Eastern Bank, Pashupatinath Temple, Kathmandu. (Photo Nina Mirnig)

temple area accumulated in the fifth and sixth centuries and are likely to have contributed towards increasing economic independence of local religious groups, and thus perhaps foreshadowing and facilitating Pashupatinath's growing influential position. A century later, for instance, we find for the first time that organized Śaiva ascetic groups – the so-called Pāśupatas – occupy the site and take up public roles, with a certain Pāśupata Ācārya Dakṣiṇatiludaka administering donations to build an infirmary on site in 645 CE. The early religio-political significance of Pashupatinath is highlighted by the rulers that left their traces there throughout the entire Licchavi period. An inscribed fragment dating to 459 CE bears testimony to king Mānadeva's presence, the first Licchavi king who recorded his deeds in Sanskrit inscriptions. This particular artefact – now lost – contains fragmentary passages of an invocation to the god Śiva as well as an account of the king's own lineage. Once upon a time this piece may have been part of a royal stele inscription similar to the one still standing next to the entrance of the Vaiṣṇava Chāṅgu Nārāyaṇa temple, which tells about Mānadeva's early accession to the throne due to his father's premature death and the ensuing military campaigns Mānadeva undertook with his maternal uncle to consolidate the kingdom. In fact, Mānadeva's act to set up such a royal inscription in Pashupatinath may indicate to us that the site was already strategically important around his time. To the left of the western entrance to the temple area, a small stone slab inscription with Śiva's bull carved on top bears witness to the religious activities of king Aṃśuvarman's family. First a powerful minister under the Licchavi king Śivadeva, by 605 CE Aṃśuvarman usurped the

throne for some decades, successfully governing the kingdom through a prosperous period. At the time, the Valley emerged as an important node in the trade and diplomatic networks that extended from the subcontinent to the newly emerging Tibetan Empire under Songtsen Gampo and the Tang Dynasty of China. It was this ruler Aṃśuvarman who had a pivotal role in elevating Śiva Paśupati to Nepal's tutelary deity, as he was the first to publicly declare himself as "blessed by the Venerable Lord Paśupati" (*bhagavatpaśupatiḥaṭṭārakapādānudhyāta*) in the inscriptions he issued, using a formula that would become frequently used by the ruling elite of Nepal from thenceforth. Also in his stone slab inscription in Pashupatinath, Aṃśuvarman styles himself in this way. The edict itself, however, concerns the management of private shrines in the locality, set up by his mother, sister and other female ancestors, thus indicating an existing deep link between Aṃśuvarman's family and the area.

One of the most famous inscribed pieces



Fig. 3. Prabhukeśvara, Śivaliṅga shrine with inscribed pedestal, 480 CE.

in Pashupatinath is the famous royal stone slab inscription of the Licchavi king Jayadeva, still preserved in the inner temple area. In 733 CE, a few years before the mysterious and abrupt decline of the Licchavis in Nepal, Jayadeva donated a massive silver lotus to Śiva Paśupati. Starting with an extended eulogy of his royal lineage, the inscribed text features a long poem about the donated silver lotus, with five verses the king explicitly composed himself. Issued a century after Aṃśuvarman initiated the link between Paśupati and the ruling line, the temple site must have already been firmly established as the religio-political centre of the Kathmandu Valley's sacred landscape in Jayadeva's time. We find an allusion to this central position in the poem itself, which allegorically described the entire Valley as the lotus throne for Lord Paśupati, with the surrounding mountain range representing the white lotus petals:

The pedestal on which the Lord rests shines forth like a golden rock from mount Meru and is surrounded by the snow-topped mountain range, as if they were the white petals of a lotus in full bloom. Upon contemplating this image, [of the entire Valley and its surrounding mountains likened to a lotus throne for the god], the king himself made this shining silver lotus [in imitation] for the worship of Lord Paśupati.

These inscriptions thus constitute an integral part of Pashupatinath's cultural heritage, the inscribed letters capturing episodes of a distant past that show us how the area held an important place in the sacred landscape from the very beginning of our historical records. Sadly, in the course of time, inscribed objects and other

Licchavi-period artefacts have been lost – not only in Pashupatinath but also across the Kathmandu Valley. Some lost inscriptions are only known to us thanks to the rubbings and editions of epigraphists and historians from Nepal and abroad in the last centuries. One of the pioneers to collect Sanskrit manuscripts and inscriptions in Nepal was the English scholar Cecil Bendall, who taught at University College London as well as at the University of Cambridge, which is still home to his invaluable collection of Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts, with samples dating back to the end of the first millennium. In his account *'A Journey of Literary and Archaeological Researches in Nepal and Northern India during the winter of 1884–85'*, he included the publication of three inscriptions and in many ways drew attention to the rich literary and historical material in Nepal. Another milestone in Nepalese history was Sylvain Lévi's three-volume *'Le Nepal'*, published at the beginning of the 20th century between 1905–1908, in which he made available the inscriptions known to him at the time, now kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Some decades later, the Italian scholar Raniero Gnoli also visited the Kathmandu Valley to collect inscriptions, which he published in his volume on *'Nepalese Inscriptions in Gupta Characters'* (1956). The rubbings collected at the time are still preserved at the National Archives in Kathmandu. Around the same time in the early 1950s, Nepalese Sanskrit scholars and historians came together and founded the *Itihasa Samshodhanamanḍala* under the direction of Nayaraj Pant. With the aim to study the ancient history of Nepal, this group collected and published a vast number of inscriptions throughout the Valley,

eventually culminating in Dhanavajra Vajrācārya's comprehensive volume of inscriptions in 1973 (*Licchavikālakā Abhilekha*).

Many of the inscriptions recorded in Vajrācārya's collection cannot be located anymore today. Continued loss through rapid urbanization as well as damage through natural disasters such as the devastating 2015 Gorkha Earthquake and associated reconstruction and rehabilitation activities pose an immediate threat to this cultural heritage. In response to such challenges, since 2014, joint survey and documentation activities have been undertaken with focus on Pashupatinath's cultural heritage by Nina Mirnig (Austrian Academy of Sciences), Shyamsundar Rajbansi (Chief Epigraphist at the Department of Archaeology Kathmandu) and Rewati Adhikari (Pashupatinath Area Development Trust) in the framework of a series of archaeological investigations on site under the direction of Robin Coningham (Durham University), Kosh

Prasad Acharya (former Director-General of the Department of Archaeology Kathmandu) and Bahadur Kunwar (Chief Archaeological Officer at the Department of Archaeology Kathmandu). Newly found pieces are currently being edited and translated by Diwakar Acharya (Oxford University) and Nina Mirnig (Austrian Academy of Sciences). It is hoped that these surveys and studies will not only serve to preserve the documentation of these invaluable artefacts, but also facilitate the development of monitoring schemes to protect Pashupatinath's outstanding cultural heritage for future generations.

The research and surveying activities of the inscriptions in Pashupatinath since 2014 were sponsored by the Pashupatinath Area Development Trust, Arts and Humanities Research Council's Global Challenges Research Fund (AH/P006256/1), the British Academy (Stein-Arnold Fund), and the Austrian Science Fund (P-29838).

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EARLY HISTORIC CITY PLANNING IN SOUTH ASIA: A FRESH PERSPECTIVE FROM TILRAKOT

This joint report has been prepared by Professor Robin Coningham and his team from Durham University, Kosh Prasad Acharya former Director General of Archaeology Government of Nepal and Iain Sampson of the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, Stirling University.

The team: Professor Robin Coningham, 2014 UNESCO Chair in Archaeological Ethics and Practice in Cultural Heritage, Durham University with Mark Manuel & Christopher Davis; Kosh Prasad Acharya & Ram Bahadur Kunwar Department of Archaeology, Government of Nepal and Ian Simpson, Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, Stirling University.

Abstract

Archaeological investigations sponsored by the Government of Nepal and UNESCO at Tilaurakot, the primary candidate for ancient Kapilavastu - the childhood home of the Buddha, are unearthing evidence that is re-writing the history of this important ancient site. Under the co-direction of Professor Robin Coningham of Durham University and Kosh Prasad Acharya, former Director-General of Archaeology (Government of Nepal), the project team comprises a multidisciplinary team of Nepali and international archaeological experts who have been applying a variety of traditional and cutting-edge archaeological techniques to explore the ancient city. Building on previous work at Lumbini, where the team identified the earliest Buddhist shrine in Asia - constructed of timber and dating to the sixth century BCE - the team are beginning to provide an enhanced understanding of the development of ancient Tilaurakot, including its sophisticated urban layout.

Introduction

After his birth at Lumbini, Siddhartha Gautama lived a princely life at Kapilavastu, the capital of the Sakya Kingdom. After a prophecy that Siddhartha would either become a great king or religious teacher, his father - King Suddhodana - confined the young prince within the palace, surrounded by luxury. At the age of 29, Siddhartha ventured out and viewed Four Sights: an old man, a sick man, a dead man and an ascetic. Following these observations, he renounced his family and worldly life and, departing through Kapilavastu's Eastern Gate, began a quest for enlightenment. At the end of his life, the Gautama Buddha instructed his followers that pilgrimage should be undertaken to the key sites associated with his life; Lumbini, where he was born; Bodhgaya, where he achieved enlightenment; Sarnath, where he preached his first sermon; and Kusinagara, where he passed away. Although not explicitly cited as a place of pilgrimage, monks and lay folk also began to visit and venerate Kapilavastu and it featured within the travel itineraries of the Chinese monks Faxian, Xuanzang and Yijing. However, the location of the city was lost towards the end of the first millennium CE and its monuments were claimed by the jungle. Using the descriptions contained within the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims Faxian (fourth-fifth century centuries CE) and Xuanzang (seventh century CE), archaeo-

logical pioneers began to rediscover long-lost sites in the nineteenth century, including the four major Buddhist destinations of Kushinagar, Sarnath, Bodhgaya and Lumbini. Exploring a wooded mound to the west of Lumbini in 1899, P.C. Mukherji of the Archaeological Survey of India reported the discovery of a rectangular fort. Having cleared much of the site of jungle, Mukherji began to trace and plan the remains of a major walled and moated city, measuring 518 by 396 metres, complete with a hinterland of monuments including Buddhist stupas and *viharas*. Comparing the monuments and their locations with the descriptions of ancient Kapilavastu by the Chinese pilgrim monks he asserted that *“no other ancient site has so much claim...as being situated in the right position and fulfilling all other conditions”*.

Despite being accepted by most of his contemporaries, Mukherji’s identification did not lead to sustained campaigns of excavations at the site, rather three separate periods of investigation over the last 119 years, including excavations directed by Debala Mitra of the Archaeological Survey of India, Zuiryu Nakamura of Rissho University and Nepali archaeologists B.K. Rijal and T.N. Misra in the 1960s and 1970s. These scholars prepared more detailed topographic maps of Tilaurakot as well as adding new structures to the buildings already identified but, despite the new knowledge presented by these projects, little more has been revealed about the actual town plan of the ancient city with more focus on the depth and antiquity of the site, which is under the management of the Lumbini Development Trust.



Monastery to the South of the Eastern Stupa

Multi-disciplinary archaeological investigations at Lumbini and Tilaurakot

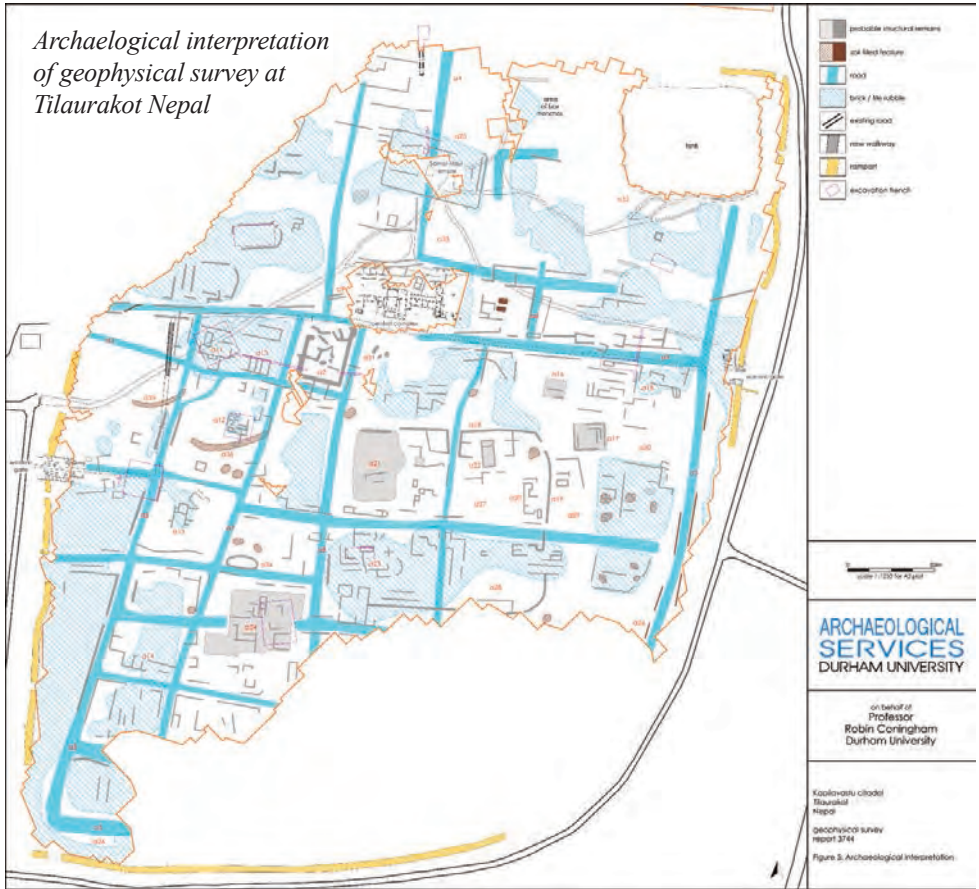
In 2011 an international team of experts, co-directed by Professor Robin Coningham and Kosh Prasad Acharya was invited to undertake archaeological excavations at Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha. In partnership with the Lumbini Development Trust and the Department of Archaeology, Government of Nepal, and sponsored by the Japanese-Funds-in-Trust through UNESCO, with additional funds from the National Geographic Society, one of the team's most spectacular discoveries was the identification of a previously unknown sequence of early timber and brick structures within the Maya Devi Temple. The earliest of these dated to the sixth century BCE and was discovered deep beneath the foundations of the Emperor Asoka's own temple. (*See the story of the excavations at Lumbini, written by Professor Coningham, at p. 51 et seq of edition No. 39 of the journal, 2015. Ed.*) This success led to an invitation to apply a similar multi-disciplinary archaeological approach to the nearby site of Tilaurakot. Funded by the Japanese-Funds-in-Trust through UNESCO, with additional funds from the National Geographic Society and the Hokke Shu, the team has begun to answer a number of research questions through a combination of archaeological excavations, and cutting edge techniques such as geoarchaeology, topographical mapping and geophysical survey. One major aim was to provide a scientifically dated sequence for Tilaurakot to understand when human settlement began and also when the site was abandoned. After three major seasons of excavations, we can confirm that the dating of our deep sequences near the Samai Mai Temple

suggest that Tilaurakot was first occupied in the eighth century BC and continued to host monumental constructions up to the middle of the first millennium AD. Our other major aim was to understand the urban plan of ancient Tilaurakot and its immediate environs. Ancient planning treatises, such as Kautiliya's *Arthashastra*, suggest that a city should be rectangular, surrounded by moats and a rampart, with gates at each cardinal direction. Internally, the city should have cardinally-orientated roads, a central palace area, with religious institution located outside the ramparts. We wanted to investigate whether such descriptions were ideals or a reality and our multi-disciplinary approach at Tilaurakot is helping us to answer this from above and below the soil.

Tilaurakot's Urban Plan

During the last four years, we have completed the most comprehensive mapping of any Early Historic city in South Asia. This has been undertaken through total station survey in combination with photogrammetry from an airborne drone and has provided detailed measurements of the topography of the site and its hinterland, which has been tied to our archaeological discoveries as well as previously exposed remains at Tilaurakot. With this detailed base-map in place, we conducted geophysical survey across the entire interior of the city, as well as several locations outside the rampart.

Archaeological geophysics was first developed in the 1970s and now is frequently utilised by excavations teams across Europe, the Middle East and the Americas. Particularly favoured by commercial units in the UK to evaluate the potential of subsurface archaeological



remains prior to planning development, magnetometry offers a quick and relatively cheap alternative to the excavation and processing of extensive trial trenches. This technique is particularly successful as material that has undergone a firing process, such as brick, usually provides a more positive magnetic signal compared to the surrounding soil and using devices that measure the magnetic properties of the underlying soil. By taking readings every 50 centimetres and downloading the results onto a micro-processor, it is possible to record and present the subsurface features of an area as large as five hectares a day if suitably cleared of vegetation. Often

penetrating to a depth of one metre, alignments of walls and streets can be discerned within urban areas. Through geophysics, we have made an impressive set of discoveries at Tilaurakot without needing to dig into the ground. Projecting the results of our geophysical survey onto our detailed topographic base-map we have revealed a grid-iron city layout. A clear network of cardinal-oriented roads, lanes and buildings throughout the walled city that link-up with a number of the larger conserved monuments, such as the Eastern and Western Gateways are identifiable. The streets were not paved but appear to have

been unmetalled and probably served an additional function for drainage during the monsoon. There is also an apparent variation within the breadth of streets with some, such as that running from the Eastern Gate westwards, measuring at least 10 metres wide whilst others were narrower. The street plan also appears to have included the provision of a 20 metre wide space between the fortification wall on the eastern and southern sides of the city and the buildings within.

In addition, we have also used the resultant geophysics to target the placing of exploratory excavation trenches, including across several cardinaly-orientated brick structures with internal divisions and courtyards. As many of these brick built complexes are located only 20 centimetres below the ground surface, we have been able to expose larger portions of their layout. Offering insights into their architectural construction, many of these buildings used low brick foundations walls and cut slots into them for timber superstructures and the absence of roof tile suggests that most were thatched and had mud floors. We have also successfully identified previously unknown monumental constructions, including a 30 by 30 metre quadrangular feature to the centre west of the site. Fitting into the grid-iron layout revealed by the geophysics, a portion was excavated and revealed a large brick-faced pond within the city. With 26 surviving courses of individual bricks measuring 42 cm in length, this feature is reminiscent of the central water tanks of the later medieval cities of the Kathmandu Valley, which might suggest that such features developed in the Terai as an integral part of city planning before moving up to the Valley. Established in the third century BC, it is one of the earliest examples of civic

infrastructure in the Early Historic Period. Most intriguingly, a large walled enclosure, measuring 100 by 100 metres has been identified in the centre of the site, with curved edges to its exterior walls. Representing a walled enclosure within the walled city, we suspected that it represented a central palatial complex and exposed a monumental gateway and tower complex in the middle of its northern wall in 2016. We exposed its western entrance in 2017 as well as a monumental compound measuring 40 by 20 metres. Unlike the buildings outside the enclosure, it was surrounded by three metre high walls and its rooms were all paved in brick – highlighting the special nature of the enclosure. We have also focused on the cardinaly-aligned outer walls of Tilaurakot, first surveyed by P.C. Mukherji and then excavated by Debala Mitra. Famously dismissed by Mitra as being a relatively late addition to the settlement and no earlier than the third century BC, we opened a large trench across the city's northern rampart and identified four major construction phases. The earliest two dated back to the sixth century BC were represented by timber palisade, wooden fence-lines of large timber posts on an east to west alignment, which were later replaced by a smoothed clay rampart running on the same orientation. This clay rampart was later embellished with a brick fortification wall with towers, much of which has been conserved by the Lumbini Development Trust. As earlier noted by Mukherji, the monuments and structures extended far beyond the ramparts and include several archaeological features, intrinsically linked to the ancient settlement. An area outside the northern rampart has been identified as a suburb and, a little further to the north, there are twin

brick stupas. Outside the Eastern Gate, a further stupa is located and to the south of the city, beyond the rampart, is a large mound scattered with waste from iron-working. We have directed our own investigations to this southern mound and around the Eastern Stupa.

On the southern mound, our excavations highlighted that this was a major industrial zone with almost 8 tonnes of slag from iron smelting recovered from trench measuring 4 x 3 metres, providing evidence of large scale smelting, dating to 400 BC based on radiocarbon determinations. It is interesting to note that while smithing continued within the city, the polluting process of smelting was clearly located outside the city walls. We drilled a series of soil cores between the industrial mound and the southern rampart and its profile revealed a second moat running to the south of the rampart and previously identified moat. Geophysical survey around the Eastern Stupa also

demonstrated that this was not an isolated monument but formed one part of a vast monastic complex. Excavations conducted in 2015 evaluated the geophysical signatures and we identified monastic walls, just below the ground surface, including the edges of formalised tanks that would have provided water for the monks that inhabited this ancient complex. We also excavated a hoard of 497 silver punch-marked coins sealed below a pavement within the monastery, which we believe represents a foundation deposit and demonstrates the sanctity and importance of this location to the ancient communities of Tilaurakot. Our dating sequence suggests that this brick-built monastic complex was established in the third century BC.

Future Perspectives

It is immediately apparent from our new fieldwork at Tilaurakot that the city plan is remarkably similar to that recommended by



Pilgrims visiting Tilaurakot

texts such as the *Arthashastra*. On reflection, it is also extremely reminiscent of Faxian and Xaunzang's descriptions of ancient Kapilavastu. Indeed, the Chinese pilgrim monks recorded a central palatial complex and a city defined by a rampart and moats, with gates at the cardinal directions. Furthermore, they noted stupas to the north of the city in addition to a stupa located adjacent to the Eastern Gate. Such features have been identified during fieldwork at Tilaurakot and further the claims of Tilaurakot as Ancient Kapilavastu but additional work is still required to confirm such an assertion. This is particularly important, as the brick-built structures on the surface date to the later occupation of the settlement, and post-date the life of the Buddha himself by many centuries. Irrespective of these debates, our research has shown that Tilaurakot exhibits a shared concept of pan-South Asian urban design with other ancient city sites, such as Mahasthangarh, Bhita and Sisupalgarh. Our multi-disciplinary archaeological approach has begun to identify successfully the urban layout of Tilaurakot during its final phases of occupation and we now hope to expand our work to further sites. This includes Araurakot, a fortified settlement to the north east of Tilaurakot which has never been excavated but geophysical survey indicates that it conforms to a late Kushana plan as also found in the Taxila Valley at Sirsukh. We hope to explore its urban plan through a similar methodology and see how this relates to Tilaurakot, textual descriptions contained in treatises such as the *Arthashastra*, and other ancient urban forms in South Asia. We will also seek to relate our findings from investigations of these settlements to major religious sites, including Lumbini, Kudan and Ramagrama, providing a regional view for the

development of society in the Natal landscape of the Buddha. Whilst we are making discoveries about the past, we are also aware of the need to protect and promote heritage for the present as well as for future generations. At Tilaurakot, archaeological remains were usually encountered only 20 cm below the soil and whilst this can be managed by the Lumbini Development Trust in government-owned land, this is a challenge outside such jurisdictions. For instance, in the government-managed land, mainly defined by the ancient ramparts of the city, enhanced management plans can be introduced, such as the new non-intrusive and reversible walkways that are being created to protect sub-surface archaeological remains, whilst also guiding visitors around the site to areas of interest. However, the majority of the monastery discovered around the Eastern Stupa is within private fields rather than under government stewardship and therefore at risk from unchecked development. Rather than blocking all development, the internationally significant heritage of Tilaurakot and the Natal landscape provide an opportunity for sustainable development as long as it is sympathetic to both the long term preservation of the heritage and the needs of local communities. We are currently in the middle of our 2018 season at Tilaurakot, funded entirely through the generosity of Dr Tokushin Kasai of Kasai Hotel Lumbini, and anticipate a further three years of fieldwork at Tilaurakot when phase three of the Government of Nepal and Japanese-Funds-in-Trust through UNESCO programme recommences later in the year.

(The Project team comprises archaeologists from the Lumbini Development Trust,

Department of Archaeology (Government of Nepal), Durham University and the University of Stirling. The Project is generously sponsored by the Japanese-Funds-in-Trust through UNESCO, the Lumbini Development Trust, Dr Tokushin Kasai, the Hokke Shu, National Geographic Society and Durham University and would not be possible without the support of the

UNESCO Kathmandu Office, the Rishshon Shanti Vihar, the staff and students of Tribhuvan University, Lumbini Buddhist University and the communities of Tilaurakot. For more information about the Project please visit:
<http://community.dur.ac.uk/arch.projects/lumbini/>)

[There has been interest in what Professor Coningham describes as 'the Natal landscape of the Buddha' since the late 19th century. Charles Allen has written two books on this subject, 'The Buddha and Dr Fuehrer: an archaeological scandal' and 'Ashoka – The search for India's lost Emperor'. Both works have been reviewed in the journal, editions 2010 and 2014 respectively. There are archaeological, political & financial (tourism) implications for this area which stretches across the Nepal-Indian border near Lumbini. Ed.]

DEVELOPING ASPECTS ON NEPALESE PAUBHĀ PAINTING:
THE PICTURESQUE CASE OF RAJ MAN SINGH CITRAKAR

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(Paubha paintings are mainly representations of Bhuddist gods and mandalas with some Hindu paintings as practised by the Citrakars (caste of painters). This paper looks at the influences of traditional art and more modern artistic developments. The author is currently studying for a PhD in Nepali art and its relevance to more recent politics. Ed.)

The definition of Nepal as a kind of ‘Shangri-La’ began to evolve shortly after the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-1816 that took place on the southern borders of Nepal and East Indian Company areas of influence in Oudh and parts of Kumaon and Garwhal that had been the annexed by the expansionist Nepal Durbar. Fighting took place in the Terai and the jungle-clad Siwalik hills. This led in time to the establishment of the first British hill stations along the range, of the middle hills such as Darjeeling, as well as the British Residency in Kathmandu. Since those times coincided with a period in which portrayal of landscape was highly appreciated by western society, the works of those foreign poets and painters who started to represent Nepal and the Himalayas, were very much influenced by the picturesque trend which appeared on the scene as a useful means to define the chromatic effects, luminous changes and narration of a romantic style of landscape painting. Such idea was defined in the late 18th century by William Gilpin as “something in between the beautiful and the sublime”, thus the enchanting way to represent the roughness, or the uncanniness, of either a landscape or an architectural scene¹. Nevertheless, the picturesque concept

applied to the Himalayas sheer landscape corresponded to a later interpretation, in accordance with Ruskin’s manual *Modern Painters*. Here the author combined the picturesque idealism with a more critical and aesthetic appreciation of the environment. The concept of landscape painting was thought up to be something to be felt rather than seen; hence this imagery introduced a new approach to the representation of the Himalayas, more in accordance with the Shangri-La point of view². Consequently, British painters started to introduce additional elements such as romantic pastoral scenes, as well as transforming the mountains’ roughness into vaporous formations, diverting the Himalayas into dynamic spectacles frozen in time. Therefore, dense layers of white clouds concealed the sheer scenario and blocked the viewers’ sight, whose only alternative was to imagine what could be behind those mystical mists³.

¹William Gilpin, *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape* (London: R. Blamire, 1972).

²John Ruskin, *Modern painters* (Boston: Dana Estes, 1990).

³Romita Ray, “Misty Mediations: Spectral Imaginings and the Himalayan Picturesque,” *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 3, no. 11 (2012), <http://www.19th-century-artworldwide.org/autumn12/ray-spectral-imaginings-and-the-himalayan-pictures>

After World War I the resentment against modern societies, industrialism and progress, increasingly popularized the Himalayas as a retreat to solitude and reconnection with nature. Travellers would abandon the safeness of distant observation and picturesque depictions, for a more adventurous and closer approximation. It was in this context when adventurous figures, such as Lama Govinda or Alexandra David- Neel, diverted popular thought through their exotic novels and accounts of their illuminating experiences in the Himalayas. Walking into the mist they intended to discover what was really behind it, but subconsciously their views were conditioned by determining spiritual and oriental thoughts. For instance, Lama Govinda describes his journey as “dream-like” where “...rain, fog, and clouds transformed the virgin forest, the rocks and mountains, gorges and precipices into a world of uncannily changing, fantastic forms, which appeared and dissolved with such suddenness that one began to doubt their reality as well as one’s own”⁴. Particularly after Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay’s conquest of Mount Everest in 1953, rushes of expeditions followed up along with film crews and photographers. The ‘highest mountains of the world’ started to be featured in western books and films while imaginative tales on Asian mysteries were increasingly demanded by western society. One of the earliest and more famous was *Lost Horizon*, written by James Hilton in 1933⁵, where for the first time the idea of Shangri-La was conceived in a lost enchanting city in the middle of the Himalayas, and whose

⁴ Anarika Govinda, *The way of the White Clouds* (London: Overlook Books, 2005), p. 42.

⁵ Hilton, James. *Lost Horizon*. United Kingdom: Macmillan, 1933.

imagery would later be adopted as part of Kathmandu’s international symbolism⁶. It was due to the increasing foreign demands on the Himalaya’s exotic culture that Nepalese *Citrakar* artists, located in tourist areas such as Thamel, found a new promoter in the tourism industry and consequently started the massive production of mountaineering kitsch oil and acrylic paintings, while apparently trying to follow the picturesque parameters established by the British landscapists in the previous century⁷. In such a way, while controlled European images of the Himalayas were produced transforming the landscape into a sort of souvenir, Nepal framed her own definition as an oriental Shangri-La re-absorbing eastern exotic views for her own commercial interests in a gradual process of international possession of the Himalayan Range⁸.



Market at Swayambhunath., 2015, Kathmandu. (Author)

⁶ William Gilpin, *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape* (London: R. Blamire, 1972), pp. 14-16

⁷ In Calinescu’s words, the Kitsch as a false imitation is an “aesthetical way of lying” according to the middle-classes ideas of beauty as something that can be sold and purchased. Matei Calinescu, *Cinco caras de la modernidad. Modernismo, vanguardia, decadencia, kitsch, postmodernismo*. Trans. Maria Teresa Beguiristain (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), pp. 222-236.

⁸ Sandeep Banerjee, “Not Altogether Unpicturesque: Samuel Bourne and the Landscaping of the Victorian Himalaya,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 42, (2014): p. 362.

Initially, western realistic concepts, techniques and picturesque ideals were introduced in the *Citrakars*' creative mind-set through the British presence in Kathmandu, due to their collaboration as illustrators for the scientific studies on flora, fauna and cultures of the Himalaya pursued by the Residents through the first part of the 19th and into the 20th century. Such custom had already started years before in British India with the 'Company Painters', local artists, who worked with the British East India Company for similar studies⁹. Within the Himalayan area, an early example of such creative collaboration is the case of Dr Francis Buchanan-Hamilton (1762-1829), who spent a year in the Kathmandu Valley between 1802-1803' as a pioneer in botanical research. He was assisted by an unknown artist from Bengal¹⁰. Later the British East India Company Resident, Edward Gardner (1784-1861), started a collection of Himalayan plants along with a small team of assistants from India, even creating a garden of native trees and shrubs. But it was not until the 1820's when Brian Houghton Hodgson (1799-1894) initially appeared in Kathmandu as Assistant Resident¹¹, when the Valley's *Citrakar* painters would start working for the British researchers. Indeed Hodgson, who by 1833 had become Resident, would

employ a local staff of ten to twenty of various tongues and races for his studies on Nepalese zoology, ornithology, language, religion and Buddhist culture. Among these he counted on a group of *Citrakars* trained by him in western techniques. To gain accuracy of their depictions of animal and bird species, plants, tribal ethnicities and Buddhist monuments, Hodgson even provided them with a *Camera Lucida* in order to facilitate their comprehension especially for their architectural drawings.

Since most of Hodgson's illustrations are unsigned these artists remain unknown. Nevertheless, within the context of Nepalese traditional art, the process of making a religious object is considered an act of devotion and a means to obliterate the ego; the art work is never signed by the painter¹². The anonymous character of the maker of a piece is something common because the merit of creation is never granted to the painter, but instead to the patron or priest who visualizes the work. The sculpture or painting is usually done as a religious way of gaining spiritual merit and the holy favour of the divinity represented, thus Nepalese traditional art should not be seen as a mere aesthetical purpose, but instead a creative collaboration between the guru who created the work in his imagination and the painter who materializes it. In such context, the *Citrakar* is conceived as a mere instrument who produces the work, even having to go through a series of purifying rituals before pursuing the holy task of depicting the divine being. When extrapolating this context to contemporary times, it could be

⁹ Marika Sardar. "Company Painting in Nineteenth-Century India," *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. Met Museum (blog), October, 2004*, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cpin/hd_cpin.htm

¹⁰ His drawings recorded more than a hundred species of Nepali plants and published in 1825 in *Prodromus Florae Nepalensis*. Mark F. Watson, "Dr. Francis Buchanan-Hamilton: Pioneer for Nepalese Biodiversity," *The Britain-Nepal Society Journal*, no. 37 (2013): 31-37.

¹¹ William.W. Hunter, *Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson* (London: John Murray, 1896), p. 244.

¹² Staneshwar Timalisina, "Time and Space in Tantric Art." In *Nepal. Old Images, New Insights*, 2004, ed. Pratapaditya Pal, 21-35 (Mumbai: Mara Publications).

stated that while in ancient times the artists or patrons used to be high-class members of the Royal Family, nobles, merchants or even Tibetan monks, now the merit of creation is seemingly attached to Brian Hodgson himself.

In spite of this, a clear step forward towards the introduction of western ideas regarding the figure of the artist, thus an increasing acknowledgement of the Citrakar as such, is taken when among Hodgson's paintings some works appear signed in *Nāgarī* script by the well-renowned Raj Man Singh Citrakar. The reason behind why, amongst all Hodgson's painters, the only one allowed to sign his works was Raj Man Singh, remains a mystery. Apparently, once Hodgson left Kathmandu in 1843 Raj Man Singh Citrakar kept on working for the British Residency being employed by Sir Henry Lawrence until 1846, before following Hodgson to Darjeeling¹³. In addition, there seems to be further recognition in Turismoney Citrakar, whose signature appears in a single painting located in the Natural History Museum of London. Such a challenging attitude, up to that point, unthinkable within Nepal's strict social system, was possibly a consequence of Hodgson's open admiration for the superb accuracy and skill of his Citrakar painters¹⁴:

"... 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"¹⁵. Nevertheless, it has to be highlighted that their outstanding capability of drawing with such minuteness, was also a result of



*Chandra maṇḍala, late 14th-15th century.
(The Metropolitan Museum, New York.)*

the *Citrakars'* own background as *paubhā* painters. When analyzing the aesthetical aspects of a *paubhā* while comparing them with those of Raj Man Singh Citrakar's realistic depictions, or even with the contemporary paintings representative of the Himalayan landscapes as souvenirs, the similarities between both traditional and actual style of painting is much closer than it seems at first sight.

The *paubhā*, cotton painting in Newari, appears in Nepal in the 14th century as a portable way to represent Buddhist divinities or *maṇḍalas* exported through the Himalayan passes towards Tibet. Mainly Buddhist, these paintings consist

¹³ J. P. Losty, "The architectural monuments of Buddhism," in *The Origins of Himalayan Studies: Brian Houghton Hodgson in Nepal and Darjeeling*. Ed. David. M. Waterhouse, 77-111 (Royal Asiatic Society Books: Routledge, 2004), p. 99.

¹⁴ Diana Wooldrige, "Painting Nepal: Dr. Henry Ambrose Oldfield and Raj Man Singh," *The Britain-Nepal Society Journal*, no. 38 (2014): 19.

¹⁵ David. M. Waterhouse, *The Origins of Himalayan Studies: Brian Houghton Hodgson in Nepal and Darjeeling* (Royal Asiatic Society Books: Routledge, 2004), pp. 137, 138

of figurative representations of the divine . The *paubhā* was done with the commitment to serve as a tool in the self-divinizing tantric ritual; hence every one of its aesthetical aspects is always created following certain rules. On the process of creation, the Citrakar must be extremely precise in following such norms, written on manuscripts and verbal descriptions, through which the divinities' attributes and attitudes are faithfully indicated¹⁶. One of the most important aspects in traditional art is the theory of *rasa*, which consists of enhancing of feelings through the aesthetics of the art work. The first Indian texts that spoke about *rasa* were the *Śilpaśāstras* and the *purāṇas*. Dating from the 7th century, the *Viṣṇudharmottara purāṇa* constitutes an early analysis of the visual arts in its *Citrasutra* section, which states that every work of art has to represent particular *rasas* to evoke particular feelings in the spectator during the ritualistic practice. The *rasas* are visually represented through colours, facial gestures and postures. Accordingly, the *Citrasutra* states that every artist should have an adequate knowledge of dance or drama, being such



*Citrakar, Raj Man Singh.
A group of Newar types, 1843.*¹⁷

¹⁶ Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Nepal: a catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum Art Collection* (California: Los Angeles County Museum, 1985).

¹⁷ Charles Allen, *The Prisoner of Kathmandu. Brian Hodgson in Nepal 1820-43* (Great Britain: Haus Publishing, 2015).

expressions of common features between visual and performing arts.

One of *paubhā*'s main characteristics is the brilliance of its colours and lack of shadowy scenarios, since there should not be dark areas in the divine world of illumination. Maybe due to such idea, Raj Man Singh Citrakar seems to have real difficulties in the implementation of shadows or dull colours in his colourful paintings.

In addition, the artist seems to have difficulties in understanding the realistic theories of proportion, as sometimes he seems to apply differing sizes to the figures according to his will and not to the concept of perspective. In Nepalese traditional aesthetics the theory of proportions classifies the figures into different kinds according to their status, with precise instructions of proportions applied to each of them. Indeed, the principal deity would always be depicted in a larger size while Kings and donors would be depicted in sizes according to their status¹⁸.

Concepts of perspective are somehow applied in these two *vihāras*, painted by Raj Man Singh at different times. In the first one, painted in 1825, we see the further end of the building painted significantly wider than the nearest one; while on the second, painted in 1830's, even if perspective seems to be slightly better resolved, the further end is still wider than the entrance¹⁹. It is likely that the artist followed here the Nepalese custom of painting the Divinity in a larger size, as it is in this area where the holy shrine is located.

¹⁸ Pal, *Art of Nepal*, 34.

¹⁹ Waterhouse, *The Origins of Himalayan Studies*, pp. 90-97.



*Citrakar, Raj Man Singh
Vihāras 1825 & 1830.*²⁰

The sense of perspective may also be applied through drawings of leaves or temples on a third plain, but nevertheless its plain sense is clearly perceptible to the eye. Hence, even if Raj Man Singh's paintings represent a clear process of hybridization towards realistic landscape forms, his environments are still conditioned by the Rajput style. Landscape elements started to appear in *paubhā* paintings as background towards the end of the Malla period, when tibeto-chinese environments appeared as decorations. As the *Citrasutra* indicates:

“...the sky should be shown colourless and full of birds, celestial dome with stars. Earth should be shown with forest regions and watery regions with their traits. A

²⁰ Waterhouse, *The Origins of Himalayan Studies*.

mountain should be shown with assemblages of rocks, peaks, minerals, trees, birds and beasts of prey. Water is to be represented with innumerable fish and tortoises, with lotus-eyed aquatic animals and with other qualities natural to water.”²¹ The Nepalese mountain kitsch paintings seem to be following Raj Man Singh Citrakar's colourful parameters rather than the shadowy picturesque ones. Regarding



*Citrakar, Raj Man Singh. Hodgson collection.
(Zoological Society of London.)*

the application of clouds and mists, these paintings of the Himalayas do so but in a slightly different way, as instead of concealing the Himalayas they enhance them while emphasizing their divine aura. In these souvenirs, perspectives are simply applied through the depiction of some objects on the first plain, such as trees or porters. But as well as the god always being emphasized in *paubhā* painting, here the holy mountain is powerfully brought to the front through the use of snow white colour.

To conclude it could be said that the West's contribution to the development of Nepalese painting aesthetics is to be analysed through the building of Nepal as Shangri-La and the introduction of new techniques, such as oil or acrylic painting. But, as it has been demonstrated, when

²¹ Pal, *Art of Nepal*, p. 87.

thinking about these contemporary works from the aesthetical point of view, the parameters of *paubhā* painting are necessary as a basis. Therefore, both Raj Man Singh Citrakar's paintings and the kitsch Nepalese landscapes are to be considered as developments, not breaks, with the traditional aesthetics growing towards secular representations, although the divine sense is always implicit in them.

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CONFESSIONS OF A HIMALAYAN TREK LEADER
(or how to hijack an airport without being arrested)
By Tony Schilling VMH

(For experienced Himalayan trek-leader, Tony Schilling, organising an expedition to Base Camp Everest was a routine exercise. In the autumn of 1976, however, to secure his party on the return flight from Lukla to Kathmandu, he was obliged to trust to luck and 'organised anarchy'...)

After an exhilarating 40-minute flight from Kathmandu the plane – typically a Twin Otter – banks north and descends below the peaks which flank the sides of the Dudh Kosi gorge. On the approach, Lukla airport's landing strip – which is around one tenth of a standard runway's length – looks no larger than a slightly elongated tennis court. Set at right angles to the valley on the eastern flank of the mountainside, the strip is raked on a steep 1:10 incline, with a 1,500-foot (457m) drop at its lower end and a 19,000-foot (5,791m) mountain rising hard against its upper end. Passengers are either thrilled or terrified by the uphill landing, and the downhill take-offs are equally stimulating. Moreover, this high-altitude airport is regularly subject to afternoon wind turbulence and poor visibility – due to heavy rain and cloud cover – which result in, at best, erratic flight scheduling and at worst delayed or cancelled flights.

In the autumn of 1976 I led an expedition to Base Camp Everest. As we began the long descent from that wild corner of Nepal I set my sights on a timely journey down to Lukla and hoped that our return flight to Kathmandu would, also, run on time.

It normally takes some four days to reach Lukla, via the Sherpa villages of Pheriche, Pangboche, Phortse and Namche Bazar. We were fit, fulfilled and happy and our

pace quickened as thoughts focused increasingly on the cold beers and hot baths for the taking once safely back at our hotel in Kathmandu. We were on schedule and this, I reasoned, was no time to mention the notorious dearth of bath plugs in the capital's hotels.

But as we strode along the trail into the pine-clad Dudh Kosi gorge below Namche Bazar we were met with rumours of chronic delays at Lukla airport. Almost a week of poor weather had seen all flights cancelled and among the ever-growing number of trekkers waiting to fly out, frustration was turning to anger. Should nothing improve, a full-scale riot was said to be the most likely development. Would the weather clear before we reached the airport? And, if it did not, how far down the flight pecking order would we be? We were concerned, of course, but our only option was to carry on to Lukla and hope for the best.

An audacious enterprise created originally by Sir Edmund Hillary as the most practical way of transporting materials into the Everest region for the building of schools, hospitals and bridges, Lukla's tiny airstrip is perched at a dizzy 9,383 feet (2,860 m) and serviced solely by small, fixed wing, short take-off and landing (STOL) aircraft and helicopters – nothing else can cope.

Lukla is frequently described as 'the

world's most dangerous airport', mainly because of its extraordinary topography and the critical approach, and in spite of which Lukla has no radar or navigation system. Flights are restricted to daylight hours as a successful take-off or landing relies entirely on what the pilot can see from the cockpit.

It all began in 1964 when local farmers stated an interest in selling a plot of land by the village named Lukla. One third was rough pasture, one third was heavy scrubland and the remaining third comprised terraced potato fields. The rise from top to bottom amounted to more than 100 feet (30.48m) but would not pose a problem for STOL aircraft. Negotiations for the land proved relatively straightforward and the purchase price was just US\$635 (equivalent to £228 in 1964). Creating the airstrip itself, however, involved a considerable amount of hard, physical labour and effort.

More than 100 Sherpas were recruited who, armed with kukris (a machete-like knife) and mattocks, cut down the bush, removed roots and levelled the site. In the course of re-landscaping the terraced potato fields, many tons of earth had to be removed and many very large boulders had to be manhandled into previously dug pits and buried.

But the cleared ground proved too soft to support the weight of an aircraft, so, some 50 Sherpas were persuaded to perform their traditional foot-stamping dance. Fortified by liberal quantities of *chang* (locally brewed beer) the men linked arms and danced non-stop for two days, pounding the ground hard under their bare feet. The completed 1,150 feet long by 100 feet wide (350.5 x 30.5m) landing strip was clearly marked by white-painted boards and Lukla airport came into being.

The entire project cost a little more than £2,000 for land and labour.

Two Civil Aviation representatives came in on the first flight to pass judgement. The Pilatus Porter required full power to taxi to the top of the steeply raked airstrip but the officials deemed this to be of no consequence and Lukla rapidly became and remains the busiest mountain airfield in Nepal. Compared to the seven-day walk-in from Jiri, it provides a quick, convenient, accessible gateway to Everest attracting thousands of trekkers to the region year after year.

On arrival at Lukla our worst fears were realised. There had been no flights for more than a week, the airport was jam-packed with tired, frustrated trekkers and airline staff had, it seemed, no interest in attempting any kind of control over the mounting chaos.

Despite the crowd, one could not fail to notice the extrovert American – his wacky Stetson was encrusted with a jangle of badges, his voice was loud, and this Himalayan trekker version of John Wayne was heading straight for me. He had overdosed on swagger but, to give him credit, he had managed to organise a trekker-style rebel action group intent on sorting out the mayhem by whatever means necessary. All the trek leaders would meet, he told me, and formulate a plan.

We duly gathered. There was a wide mix of nationalities among our number alongside several Sherpas, including Pertemba who was the sirdar on Chris Bonington's 1975 expedition – the first to successfully climb the South-west face of Everest. Pertemba was typical of an emerging generation of Sherpa: he had been educated at one of Ed Hillary's schools, was well accustomed to Western

ways and our current predicament did not seem to faze him in the least.

Many of the leaders – some in charge of very large parties – had, of course, been stuck in Lukla for more than a week and clearly felt that enough was enough, they wanted out at the first opportunity. My party, on the other hand, was booked on and, in theory, entitled to take the next scheduled flight out. Although if that flight was cancelled – which as things stood was a certainty – we would be relegated to back of the very long queue. Either way, if by some miracle our flight was not cancelled, one had to consider that entitlement was one thing, reality was something else. To put it bluntly, I decided that we would probably be lynched if we tried to board, and fair enough – after a week stuck in Lukla how would *we* feel? In the interest of fair play, it was suggested that when flights resumed, the parties who had suffered the longest delays should leave first and the rest of us should toss our party's names into a hat and take a 'lucky-dip' to determine the flight pecking order. I went with the consensus and agreed, albeit hesitantly: how, I wondered, would my party react? But, then, anything was better than being lynched!

In the draw, our name came out well down the list but also well away from the bottom and I was left with a sense of moderate relief. It could have been worse. And, importantly, we had a plan: the passenger list was agreed and we knew how to ensure it would be followed to the letter. The meeting had been a success, and with a positive plan in place the out and out anger at first expressed was now tempered. Rumour had it that a special flight was scheduled to bring in Nepalese military personnel with instructions to quell any risk of a riot. Mistrustful of what this

might entail we intended to circumvent any such interference and, instead, instigate our own plan of action. Convinced that we had come up with a workable solution we would ignore the authorities and, in effect, hijack the airport. Quiet, organised rebellion was our best bet.

The afternoon wore on and the weather did not improve but a light aircraft suddenly appeared overhead, clearly intending to land in spite of the threatened turbulence. Its approach could only be described as highly eccentric and we watched in disbelief as the Pilatus Porter swept in at an incredulous angle to land on the upper half of the airstrip. Who on earth...?

The pilot was none other than the Swiss airman Captain Emil Wick, famous for his skill in the mountains of Nepal. He stepped out of his plane smiling broadly – he would obviously be on our side – and was followed moments later by two Nepalese army personnel in a state of abject shock. Much to the grief of his passengers, mischievous Emil had been demonstrating his flying dexterity. He was a living legend in Nepal and had been listed in the *Guinness Book of Records* for making the highest landing of a fixed-wing aircraft (on skis) when he set down at 17,200 feet (5,242 m) on the snows of Mount Daulagiri (26,795 ft; 8,176 m). The mid-70s was an era when one could still get away with untrammelled adventure, romance and, best of all, a subtle yet deliberate disregard for illogical bureaucracy. Emil Wick was in the right place at the right time, as were a number of other larger-than-life characters then living in Kathmandu. These included the much-loved, multi-talented Russian émigré, Boris Lissanevitch, Willi Unsoeld the renowned American mountaineer who

was a director of the U.S. Peace Corps in Kathmandu, Father Moran of Ham Radio fame and Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy Roberts, father of Nepalese trekking. Alas, that era has now gone but reputations such as these live on.

As soon as our military visitors regained their composure we presented our ultimatum: either we would take over the Nepal Airlines office and board passengers according to our list, or every trekker in Lukla would sit out on the airstrip bringing flights to a standstill until we were given our way. Being so heavily outnumbered both army men agreed almost immediately. We had hijacked Lukla airport!

Captain Wick was keen to take off before the weather deteriorated further. We hurriedly arranged a multinational delegation of trek leaders who would return with him to Kathmandu in order to bend ears at their respective embassies alerting as many officials as possible to the gravity of our situation at Lukla.

So far so good, although at breakfast the next morning I had to steel myself and confess to my party that, having thrown our name into the hat, we were now fairly low down the pecking order for a flight out. Two extremely waspish ladies from Edinburgh fired back that I had had 'a damned impertinence'. But they were quickly overruled by the rest of the party who agreed that I had taken the fairest option. I breathed a sigh of relief.

Leadership on an expedition to Everest's base camp can, and often does, require handling events outside the advertised itinerary but, oh, what is it to live dangerously.

Then, to our great surprise, the rattle of breakfast plates was drowned out by the noise of aircraft engines. The sky was

abuzz with Twin Otters. Spurred into action by our delegates' reports to their embassies, the Nepalese tourist authority was redirecting all available STOL aircraft to Lukla.

The time had come. We presented our plan as a *fait accompli* and Nepal Airlines had no choice but to let us get on with it and, working down the list in strict order, trek leaders took over and organised the departure schedules.

Planes came and went with trekkers boarding by turn while airport office staff watched in meek disbelief: to them, our unique brand of organised anarchy was beyond comprehension. Nevertheless, humiliation was not on our agenda and as the morning progressed and the passenger list grew shorter we gradually relinquished control to the regular staff.

With the boarding routine well established I had a chance to take stock and it was then that I realised 'John Wayne' was nowhere to be seen. At the previous evening's meeting he had boasted that, 'come what may', he would be the 'last man to leave Lukla'. He had obviously had a change of heart. Fortune favours the bold and the brash fellow had apparently seized the moment, grabbed his Stetson, and flown.

My own party's name crept slowly up the list until, in the late afternoon, the two Twin Otters standing on the airstrip were ours. Strapped into my seat, eager for the thrilling downhill take-off, it was hard to believe how much excitement had been packed into a little less than 24 hours. Events had ricocheted between the bizarre and the surreal yet now, as suddenly as it had begun, the drama was over.

Within a couple of hours we were comfortably ensconced at our hotel in Kathmandu, quaffing cold beer in

tantalising anticipation of that long awaited hot bath. We may not have had much luck in Lukla but we did strike lucky in Kathmandu – every bath had a bath plug!

Neck-deep in steaming hot water, lazily allowing four weeks of trekking grime to soak away, these words from the poet Juvenal drifted to mind: 'Dare to do something worthy of transportation and imprisonment, if you mean to be of consequence...'. Food for thought?

(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. (See his article 'Nepal - A Personal Reflection' in which he describes his work there in edition no. 34. 2010.). He was curator at Wakehurst Place (1967-1991) and had the job of clearing up and reorganizing 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. He has retired and now lives in Ullapool, Ross-shire. From his garden he can see four of the Scottish 'Munros'. Ed.)

Honours and Awards

Liza Choegyral Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZOM)

Members will be pleased to learn that Lisa Choegyral was recognised in the 2017 New Zealand New Years honours list for her work as the New Zealand Honorary Consul in Kathmandu, in particular following the earthquake. The citation reads:

‘Ms Choegyral has been New Zealand’s Honorary Consul in Nepal since 2010. Ms Choegyral has assisted many New Zealanders with various consular difficulties, including injuries and deaths. Principally she has provided consular services in response to three major disasters to affect Nepal in 2014 and 2015: the Everest icefall avalanche, the Annapurna trail storm and the Nepal earthquakes. She helped identify and locate New Zealanders reported missing by relatives through her local connections. Drawing on her network of Nepal government and NGO contacts this helped New Zealand authorities target and increase the impact of New Zealand’s post-earthquake assistance. Prior to becoming Honorary Consul she has had involvement with New Zealand mountaineering and development communities in Nepal. She has supported the numerous New Zealand expeditions and rescues, organised film crews and their operations and has been a pioneer of sustainable tourism through her Tiger Mountain ventures and TRC Tourism consulting roles. Ms Choegyral has had a long association with Sir Edmund Hillary

and the Himalayan Trust and has contributed to the welfare of communities in Nepal through her advocacy, raising scholarship funds for education opportunities and for the conservation of heritage monuments and ecotourism sites.’

Professor Surya Subedi OBE QC

Members will be delighted to learn that Professor Subedi has recently been made a Queen’s Council. He is a distinguished academic who has made a major contribution to international law and human rights. He has published extensively in international law and human rights. He served for 5 years between 2010 and 2015 as a member of the Advisory Group on Human Rights to the British Foreign Secretary.

During his tenure as UN Special Rapporteur for human rights he produced four substantive reports published by the United Nations focussing on judicial, parliamentary, electoral, and land reform in Cambodia. A number of his recommendations were implemented by the government. Collectively, these four reports provided an analytical point of reference for democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the country and became a primary source of reference for human rights defenders, UN agencies, and donor agencies that continue to be drawn on today. The work he carried out as Special Rapporteur was undertaken in addition to his full-time job at his university in England. It is an appointment based on substantive knowledge and integrity of experts serving in their individual

capacities.

He was awarded an OBE in 2004 for services to international law, and he has continued to make an exceptional contribution over a sustained period at the international level to develop international law and to advance human rights. He was admitted to the Bar of Nepal in 1981 and called to the Bar of England and Wales in 2007. He currently is Professor of International Law at the University of Leeds and a member of Three Stone Chambers, Lincoln's Inn, London.

Nepali Mela

Ashley Adams writes:

“The Nepali Mela 2017 took place on 27th August at Kempton Park racecourse.

The event was organised by Tamu Dhee in co-operation with the Nepalese Embassy.

Up to some seven thousand Nepali residents in the UK and their guests attended the hugely successful and enjoyable day, which showcased the colourful costumes, dance and cultures of a diversity of ethnic and tribal groups.

In addition to the displays, music and march-pasts, there were Nepalese food, culture and activity stalls. The organisers, Thamu Dhee, are to be congratulated on their initiative to bring the various Nepali communities together for the event.

It was a pity that not many of the wider British community attended this celebration of Nepalese culture to which they would be very welcome. Note for your diary; this event takes place annually on the last Sunday of August at Kempton Park, and is well worth a visit. ”

New Bird Species for Nepal

A new species of birds has been discovered in the high mountainous region of Nepal, bringing the total number of avian species in the Himalayan country to 866. A Rufus-tailed Rock Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*), considered an autumn passage migrant bird species in Pakistan and India, was first seen and photographed by an expedition last year near the Shey monastery within the Shey-Phoksundo National Park. Researchers from an NGO Friends of Nature (FoN) Nepal spotted the bird while studying Himalayan wolf, wild yak and snow leopard last year.

The identification of the bird reported by the team was confirmed by the bird experts Carol Inskipp and Hem Sagar Baral. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) and Bird Conservation Nepal authorised the presence of a new bird species in the country, said Naresh Kusi, from FoN. Rufus-tailed Rock Thrush is considered an autumn passage migrant bird species in Pakistan and India. ‘The Kathmandu Post’ reported: “The sighting location was very remote and rarely visited by ornithologists. More research is needed to ascertain the status of Rufus-tailed Rock Thrush in Nepal,” said Yadav Ghimirey, director, Wildlife Research at FoN

Solo and disabled climbing in Nepal

The Nepalese government have introduced a policy to ban solo climbing on major peaks including Mount Everest. There has been a big increase in solo attempts on major peaks in recent years leading to deaths and dangerous rescues as a result. This policy is in line with one of the well-understood principles of mountaineering

that one should not climb alone. Further, the cabinet has endorsed a ban on double amputees and blind climbers attempting such peaks to reduce the loss of life on the mountains. This has become a blow to Hari Budha Magar, a former Gurkha soldier who fought alongside HRH Prince Harry, and lost both legs in Afghanistan. He was raising funds to launch his attempt on the mountain. (I believe this policy has been revisited.Ed.)

Elizabeth Hawley 1923 – 2018

Elizabeth Hawley, who died in Kathmandu on 26 January 2018 aged 94 years, was an American journalist living in Nepal since 1960, regarded as the undisputed authority on mountaineering in Nepal. Born 9 November 1923 in Chicago, Illinois and educated at the University of Michigan, she was famed worldwide as a “one-woman mountaineering institution”, systematically compiling a detailed Himalayan database of expeditions still maintained today by her team of volunteers, and published by the American Alpine Club.

Respected for her astute political antennae and famously formidable, Miss Hawley represented Time Life then Reuters since 1960 as Nepal correspondent for 25 years. She is credited with mentoring reporters and setting journalistic standards in Nepal, competing to file stories from the communications-challenged Nepal of the 1960s. She worked with the pioneer adventure tourism operators, Tiger Tops, from its inception in 1965 with John Copeman, until she retired as AV Jim Edward’s trusted advisor in 2007.

First female Sherpa guide

Dawa Yangzum Sherpa (aged 27) has now qualified as the first female Sherpa guide certified by the International Federation of Mountain Guides and is now able to escort climbers on the highest peaks. It took some five years training to achieve this. She summated Everest in 2012.



For Sir Edmund Hillary, she managed the Himalayan Trust since it started in the mid-1960s, dispensing funds to build hospitals, schools, bridges, forest nurseries and scholarships for the people of the Everest region. Generations of Sherpas remember being overawed by the rigor of Miss Hawley’s interviews, and quake at the memory of her cross-examinations when collecting their scholarship funds. Sir Edmund Hillary described Elizabeth Hawley as “a most remarkable person” and

“a woman of great courage and determination.” She served as New Zealand Honorary Consul to Nepal for 20 years until retiring in 2010.

Elizabeth first came to Nepal via India for a couple of weeks in February 1959. She was on a two year round the world trip that took her to Eastern Europe, the Middle East and South Asia.

Bored with her job as researcher-reporter with Fortune magazine in New York, she had cashed her savings to travel as long as they lasted. Nepal had been on her mind since reading a 1955

New York Times article about the first tourists who visited the then-Kingdom. Because of her media contacts, the Time Life Delhi bureau chief asked her to report on Nepal’s politics. It was an interesting time - as one of only four foreign journalists, she was present when King Mahendra handed over the first parliamentary constitution, which paved the way for democracy in Nepal. Fascinated by Nepal’s politics and the idea of an isolated country emerging into the modern 20th century, she returned in 1960 and never left, living in the same Dilli Bazaar apartment, the same blue Volkswagen beetle car, and generations of faithful retainers.

A diminutive figure of slight build with a keen look, Elizabeth was bemused at the universal attention she received. Her Himalayan Database expedition records are trusted by mountaineers, newswires, scholars, and climbing publications worldwide, published by Richard Salisbury and the American Alpine Club. She was one of only 25 honorary members of the Alpine Club of London, and has been formally recognized by the New Zealand Alpine Club and the Nepal Mountaineering Association. In 2004 she received the Queen's Service Medal for Public Services

for her work as New Zealand honorary consul and executive officer of Sir Edmund Hillary’s Himalayan Trust. She was awarded the King Albert I Memorial Foundation medal and was the first recipient of the Sagarmatha National Award from the Government of Nepal.

Elizabeth’s career in the collection of mountaineering data started by accident:

“I’ve never climbed a mountain, or even done much trekking.” As part of her Reuters’ job, she began to report on mountaineering activities and in those pioneering days of first ascents and mountain exploration, there was strong media interest in Himalayan expeditions. She relied heavily on the knowledge of mountaineer Col Jimmy Roberts, founder of Mountain Travel.

Since 1963 she has met every expedition to the Nepal Himalaya both before and after their ascents, including those who climbed from Tibet. Her records contain detailed information about more than 20,000 ascents



of about 460 Nepali peaks, including those that border with China and India. Over the course of some 7,000 expedition interviews, her research work has sparked and resolved controversies. Elizabeth has seen the Nepal mountaineering scene transformed from an exclusive club to a mainstream obsession. Elizabeth did not suffer fools gladly. Though some mountaineers were intimidated by her interrogations - sometimes jokingly referred to as an expedition's "second summit," - serious alpinists greatly admired her. "If I need information about climbing 8,000-meter peaks, I used to go to her," says Italian climbing legend Reinhold Messner. Nepali trek operator and environmentalist Dawa Steven Sherpa underlines the point: "Although it's the authorities that should have been doing this, they're not as strict or accurate as Miss Hawley. One of her biggest contributions is keeping mountaineers honest."



Elizabeth applied her trademark scrupulous precision to summarizing the political and development events in Nepal in her monthly diary, published in 2015 in two volumes as "The Nepal Scene: Chronicles of Elizabeth Hawley 1988-2007". They stand as a faithful and unique historical record of the extraordinary changes that took place in Nepal over nearly two

decades. Her enviable journalistic sources were based on long friendships with the political, panchayat and Rana elite. She had the confidence of a wide range of prominent Nepalis, and shared a hairdresser with the (then) Queen. Educated as an historian, Elizabeth regarded herself as a reporter not a writer, stringently recording Nepal's political and mountaineering facts with minimal opinion or analysis. Although there is no disguising her liberal bent and her admiration for the force of democracy. Former American Ambassador Peter Bodde said, Elizabeth Hawley was one of Nepal's "living treasures" and "her contribution to the depth of knowledge and understanding between Nepal and the US was immense."



Elizabeth Hawley's achievements have featured in many books and articles about Nepal, and her biography by Bernadette McDonald, *I'll Call You in Kathmandu*, was published in 2005, then updated and reprinted as *Keeper of the Mountains*. In 2013, to mark the 60th anniversary of the first ascent of Everest, Elizabeth was featured in the awardwinning US television documentary of the same name, produced by Allison Otto. On screen in *Keeper of the Mountains*, her straightforward manner and fearless modesty made her something of a cult classic. In 2014 the Nepal government named a 6,182 meters (20,330 feet) peak in

honour of her contribution to mountaineering. Elizabeth was not impressed: "I thought it was just a joke. Mountains should not be named after people."

Miss Elizabeth Hawley is the last of the first generation of foreigners who made their life in Nepal, single and determinedly independent. She is survived by her nephew Michael Hawley Leonard and has bequeathed her library and records to the American Alpine Club. As both a successful woman in a man's world and a highly visible foreigner recording Nepal's history, we are all in her debt. She defied the conventions of her time, and determined to live life on her own terms and in her own incomparable style.

Lisa Choegyal
Kathmandu Nepal

Miss Maggie Dean 1932 - 2017

Margaret Kathleen Dean was born in Cefn Mawr, North Wales on 3rd September 1932, the younger of two sisters. Margaret excelled at school, being top in her class. At a very young age Margaret knew she wanted to travel. She took the Civil Service Exam and passed with high marks (129 out of 3000 applicants) and was offered a position in the Foreign Office. In 1949, at the age of 17, she moved to London to work in the Foreign Office. Up to the time that Margaret left for London she was always known as Margaret, but after joining the Foreign Office she was called Maggie. She began her career in London in 1949 where she worked in various Foreign Office registries until 1954. At the age of twenty-two she began her career abroad. Her first posting was to Paris in the UK NATO registry in 1954 until 1955. A posting to Washington followed in 1955 to 1958, working with cyphers. In 1959 –she was posted to Moscow, again working with cyphers.

Her next posting was to Singapore in 1960 where she was promoted before moving to Peking (now Beijing) 1961 – 1962, to become Head of the Registry. Then a three year tour to Bonn followed as Deputy Archivist from 1962 to 1965. After ten years abroad, Maggie was posted back to London in the Registrar's Branch as a training officer from 1965 to 1968. This allowed Maggie to take the Consular Training Course with attachments to Hamburg, Düsseldorf and Innsbruck for several months. From 1968 – 1971 Maggie was posted to Warsaw as Vice Consul, and



then promoted to HM Consul for Poland (first time for a woman). A posting to Kathmandu followed from 1971 – 1973 as 2nd Secretary Commercial / Aid / Economic. Maggie was always proud of her work in Nepal in the areas of UK aid and commercial projects. She considered this her most satisfying posting, through which she made many life long friendships in Nepal, which would draw her back many times after her retirement. Back to London from 1973 – 1979 in the Cultural Relations Department (specifically China, Korea & Japan educational and cultural exchanges) followed by a short posting to Mauritius in 1979 – 1980 as 2nd Secretary of Immigration. Maggie's final posting before retirement was back to London from 1980 – 1989 as 2nd Secretary Registry Examiner with a promotion to 1st Secretary Registrar – Head of Branch.

In 1989 Maggie retired from the FCO. She had always enjoyed her postings around the world and took advantage of all that each location had to offer (architecture in Poland and Germany; ballet in Russia; jade in Beijing; trekking in Nepal; snorkelling in Mauritius). But rather than settle down in retirement, Maggie felt the call of the open road and promptly began to travel. There was always some corner of the world that called to her. Over the years she travelled to Iceland to see the northern lights; the Arctic Circle in Norway; the great plains of Mongolia (before it became trendy); India (to meditate in a monastery); a trip to Egypt that required armed guards; Zimbabwe to see wild game; a trip to the ancient city of Petra (Jordan) by camel; a 9 month backpacking trip throughout several countries in southeast Asia; Churchill (Manitoba, Canada) to see the polar bears; several trips to Dawson City (Yukon, northern Canada) known for its gold rush history; yearly trips to Madeira for a month of sun and to Switzerland for the hot air balloon festival in January; and all these travels interspersed by many trips back to her beloved Nepal, which had captured her heart so many years ago, and where she maintained many deep and enduring friendships.

Maggie passed away suddenly from pneumonia at Charing Cross Hospital on January 23rd, 2017 at the age of 84 years. Some years ago, she had spoken about how she wanted her friends and family to celebrate her life, not mourn her death. Maggie had an amazing career, lived life to the fullest and had a love of life, especially travelling. She is loved and she will definitely be missed.

(I am grateful to Maggie's nieces, Marlene Pakrastins & Kathleen Weich, for this piece. She was a society member from 1995. Ed.)

Susi Dunsmore 1926 – 2017

Susi Dunsmore, née Heinze, was born in Germany in 1926. After attending art school, in 1958 she obtained a post at a Teachers' Training College in Kuching, Sarawak. These were eight productive years for her, driving a red MG, teaching batik to future well known artists and writing books on art education for the Borneo Ministry of Education. Most importantly it was in Kuching that she met her husband, John Dunsmore, who was working in the Department of Agriculture. Here she also developed her appreciation of indigenous cultures, especially weaving and basketry about which she published several articles. This interest grew as she accompanied John to postings in Belize and The Gambia culminating in their work on sustainable development in Nepal. Seeking ways to alleviate the poverty of subsistence farmers in the Kosi hills area of Eastern Nepal they came into contact with the strong local weaving traditions. In Dhankuta women produce a colourful inlay fabric, Dhaka cloth, and in Sankhuwasabha they weave sacks, jerkins and so on from yarn they handspun from allo, the Himalayan Giant Nettle, *Girardinia diversifolia*. Susi worked with the women to develop their skills and to introduce products which could be sold to give much needed cash income. To this day she is remembered for her assistance and friendship as 'Allo Didi', Auntie Nettle. Demand from the women was so great that at their request a weaving centre was established in Sisuwa in 1985 with financial help from the British Embassy. It was in 1984 that Susi and John met Ang Diku Sherpa who became a lifelong friend and the main intermediary between the UK and the weavers. Susi recorded these Nepalese textile traditions in two books, published in

her handwritten text with her own line drawings. *Weaving in Nepal* 1980, reprinted 1983 and 1990, mainly about Dhaka weaving, and *The Nettle in Nepal* 1985, new edition 2006. She also mounted a small exhibition, *Himalayan Rainbow*, at the British Museum (Ethnographic Section) which ran from late 1983 to 1985.

On John's retirement they moved to Great Bookham, Surrey where Susi became a mainstay of the United Reformed Church and produced her book, *Nepalese Textiles* published by the British Museum Press in 1993. At the age of 72 she was requested by the European Union to lead a workshop in Qinghai Province, in China and set off on an arduous journey via Beijing to a remote area 3,200 meters above sea level. This was meticulously recorded in her detailed report.

John Dunsmore sadly died in 2001 and Susi concentrated on her support for the weavers of Nepal. (*See obituary in Journal No 25, 2001*). A long time member of the London Guild of Weavers she organized a competition to produce new designs for nettle fibre. This led to a group of weavers, knitters and felters going to Kathmandu in 2004 to run a workshop for fifteen women from Sankhuwasabha. This culminated in an exhibition attended by the British Ambassador and reported in the local press and TV thus securing one of Susi's objectives, to promote nettle products as high status items, not as local curiosities. In order to continue this work Susi set up a charity 'The John Dunsmore Nepalese Textile Trust' in memory of her husband. The Trust continues to pay for training and assistance for weavers, knitters and embroiderers in Nepal and has links with students from the Royal College of Arts for whom Susi established a travel scholarship enabling selected students to go to Nepal to

work with the craftswomen.

Susi also supported the *Nepal Leprosy Trust* which uses nettle fabric in some of their products. She arranged concerts to benefit them at the United Reform Church with students from the Yehudi Menuhin School and others. Other church activities included commissioning a window from the glass artist, Sabrina Cant, and wall hangings from Angus Williams which she wove with Ang Diku Sherpa, members of the congregation and her wheelchair bound sister, Gisela. Latterly she had begun to go through her papers and found materials on basket weaving in Nepal which she turned into a book, *Notes on Nepal's Creative Basketry*, which was published in 2016, again in Susi's handwriting and with her own diagrams.

Craft communities across the world have been mourning her loss with tributes being published in Sarawak and Nepal.

(Susi Dunsmore has addressed the Society on her work with the Nepalese nettle ['allo'] project and Journal No 28, 2004 contains a full description of her work in Nepal. A review of 'Notes on Nepal's Creative Basketry' is elsewhere in the journal. Ed.)

**Colonel JM (Jimmy) Evans MC
1922 – 2017**

James Morgan Evans was born on 7th October 1922 at Ambleston in Pembrokeshire where his father, the Reverend William had the Living. His mother was a devoted and supportive vicar's wife and adored by her children. Jimmy was the third of four boys. The oldest, Douglas was followed by Eric, Jimmy and the youngest Hubert. At the age of three Jimmy moved with his parents to Lamphey also in Pembrokeshire and whilst at school in Wales he came across the need for the first time to be able to speak a different language in order to communicate better with the locals. In later life Jimmy would still remember words of Welsh and spoke regularly in Urdu, Hindustani, Gurkhali, Arabic and German. His

childhood with his brothers was one of humour and adventure in equal quantities and one studded with all the usual impish mischief-making associated with children of a certain age. A frequent jape was to clamber onto the back bumper of the local village taxi to hitch a free ride down to the beach. Cousins and other family members would spend holidays together and there developed a deep affection and close bond between them. This upbringing set the character of Jimmy throughout the rest of his life.

At the age of nine Jimmy joined his two elder brothers at Christ's Hospital School at Horsham, but by the time his formal education ended, Britain had been at war for two years. Jimmy having been in the school Cadet Force, was able to apply for a commission in the Indian Army and having seen the qualities of the Gurkha soldier on



Colonel Jimmy Evans and Jenifer Evans with Prime Minister Koirala

arriving in India, he was determined to join a Gurkha Regiment. He attended the Officer Training School, Bangalore, learned Urdu and was commissioned in October 1942 into 4th Prince of Wales' Own Gurkha Rifles, joining its Regimental Centre at Bakloh in the foothills of the Himalayas. Here he now set about learning Gurkhali. The British and Indian armies had just been pushed out of Burma by the Japanese and with a need to replace battle casualties, young 2nd Lieutenant Evans was soon sent to join his Regiment's 1st Battalion in the Chin Hills to the south west of Imphal. At that time 1st / 4th Gurkhas were part of the famous 17th 'Black Cat' Division of the Indian Army. In November 1943, as Signals and Intelligence Officer he found himself in action on a feature called Pimpi. Here, in command of a small intelligence platoon he fought with "resolute confidence" and although wounded and with casualties mounting he assumed command of two rifle companies when both their commanders were seriously wounded. Now with complete disregard for his own safety he set about inflicting heavy damage on the enemy and re-established control of the feature. The citation for the immediate award of the Military Cross for this action refers to his "exceptional personal courage, leadership and resource".

In April the following year, at the height of fighting during the Siege of Imphal, Jimmy was himself seriously wounded in an action at a feature that would, for some reason, be subsequently named after him as Evans' Knob. He always maintained that had he not been wounded at that time he would not have survived the war due to the exceptionally high losses of those killed in action. You may not be aware but 20 years ago Jimmy joined the Burma Campaign Fellowship Group whose aim was reconcil-

iation between previous enemies and he latterly met with two Japanese veterans who he was sure had been bitten by the same mosquitoes as had bitten him at Imphal in 1944. In 2005 he returned to Burma on a Veterans Return pilgrimage with Jenifer and Penelope.

By the end of August 1947, the war was over and India was independent and partitioned but Jimmy was keen to continue soldiering with Gurkhas and develop his relationship with Nepal and her people. In October 1946 he was fortunate to become one of the first non-Nepalese nationals to visit the closed country of Nepal when he trekked from India to Kathmandu with a fellow 4th Gurkha Officer. He wanted to see, first hand, the homeland of the Gurkhas.

Following the war 4th Gurkhas stayed with the new Indian Army so Jimmy transferred to British Service being attached to the Royal Army Medical Corps with the Guards Brigade in Malaya. He secured a posting to 6th Gurkha Rifles in 1950 and a year later joined 1st Battalion, 10th Gurkha Rifles and served in Malaya during the Emergency gaining a Mentioned in Despatches.

In 1958 there was a meeting that would profoundly affect Jimmy's life. Whilst he was serving on the staff of 17th Gurkha Divisional Headquarters at Seremban in Malaya he attended a cocktail party and across the room he spied Jenifer, who was the Senior Medical Officer's daughter. They met and Jimmy at once decided he wished to marry this special girl and within months he proposed at the Lake Gardens in Seremban. They were married in Jan 1959 at St Michael's, Chester Square. From 1956 he had held several regimental and intelligence staff appointments before serving with British Army Staff in

Washington in 1961. By now Amanda and Penelope had been born and Jenifer set off to America with young Amanda and baby Penelope on the Queen Mary. Gail was born during Jimmy's posting to the US and while there, he was seconded to the US Army Defense Intelligence Agency in the Pentagon and acted as Liaison Officer during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. It was Jimmy who sent back to the UK the now famous photographs of soviet missile deliveries. Following a further intelligence appointment with General Sir Walter Walker at Headquarters British Forces in Borneo, he then found himself in the middle of the Arab-Israeli Six Day War while serving as Military Attaché in Damascus. This appointment followed learning yet another language, this time Arabic. It was during this period that his niece Erica, recalls accompanying Jimmy and Jenifer to Damascus to help look after the girls. Jimmy was aware that there was trouble brewing but would not let on about his concerns. Erica thought it odd that following innocent suggestions to go on family picnics he would choose locations that always had a good view of some military activity or other. Six weeks after arriving, the Israeli air force bombed Damascus and Jimmy was to be found up on the roof of the British Embassy taking photographs of the planes before burning all top secret paperwork. Assisting in the evacuation of the British community overland to Beirut, the family subsequently arrived safely back to the UK. His final posting was as British Defence Attaché in Beirut from 1968 to 1971 where again he was busy with intelligence gathering. The picnics resumed, with many family photographs being taken, posed in front of strategically important features. On 31st July 1971 Col Jimmy Evans MC

retired from the army after nearly 30 years' service.

Shortly afterwards, he set up a business in Covent Garden called Britorion (from the words Britain and Orient) supplying military uniforms to such countries as Brunei, Swaziland and Nepal, which he ran for a further 30 years. With this company he developed the famous 'Britor Boot' which graced the feet of many grateful soldiers around the world.

In 1973 Rupert, his son, was born and Jimmy was very proud to be able to say that he was 50 years his son's senior. His children recount how, when young, discipline was maintained on long car journeys and on the rare occasions they had been naughty, Jimmy would administer a deft flick with his middle finger or would recount cautionary tales which would always involve the story of what happened to a Gurkha in similar circumstances and the fate that befell him.

It is hardly surprising that with such involvement with Gurkhas and Nepal, Jimmy joined The Britain Nepal Society and having been an enthusiastic supporter, became Vice Chairman in 1985 and Chairman in 1987. He served in that role for 6 years when he then became a Vice President. During his tenure he was one of a number of Society members who were instrumental in HRH The Duke of Gloucester agreeing to become the Society's President in 1989. It is perhaps a measure of the regard that His Royal Highness had for Jimmy that he asked Mr Roger Potter, the current Society Chairman, to officially represent him at Jimmy's funeral.

His many business interests and contacts with Nepal led him to establish the Britain Nepal Chamber of Commerce in 1994 and was its founder Chairman. Sir John Nott,

who was its first President, remembers Jimmy's determination and commitment to make the BNCC a success. Jimmy was later to become President himself.

To add to the Nepalese cultural, diplomatic and business links that Jimmy had developed he also sought to help promote the heritage of the Brigade of Gurkhas and in 1976 he became a founder Trustee of The Gurkha Museum. Whilst other Trustees had experience and skills relevant to their military service Jimmy also had the commercial skills and business acumen so necessary when setting up a new Museum in Winchester. He dedicated himself to supporting and promoting the Museum in the same way as he conducted himself with his other enterprises.

His work in connection with Anglo-Nepalese trade and relations was recognised in 1998 with the award by the King of Nepal of the Gorkha Dakshina Bohu and such was his relationship with the Nepalese Royal family at the time that Jimmy was able to arrange a visit to the Gurkha Museum in 1999 by His Majesty King Birendra, Queen Aishwarya and other members of the Nepalese Royal Family. The goodwill generated by Jimmy within the Nepalese community led to many Nepalese Ambassadors, Military Attachés and other diplomats, soldiers and businessmen visiting the Museum.

I personally have much to thank Jimmy for in the 23 years I have known him: his untiring work and support of the Museum and its Staff and Volunteers, his sage advice, opinion and encouragement and above all his infectious "can do" enthusiasm. Jimmy finally stood down as a Trustee in 2011.

Jenifer has throughout their marriage been a tower of strength and support to Jimmy in all his undertakings. I have witnessed the

work achieved and opportunities fulfilled by Jimmy and Jenifer working together on every cause they undertook. Indeed it is rarely that Jimmy's name is mentioned without Jenifer's when hearing about their work and achievements. Whether it be The Gurkha Museum, The Britain Nepal Society, The Britain Nepal Chamber of Commerce, Britorion, The Gurkha Welfare Trust, or the current 4th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association of which Jimmy was Chairman since the former Association disbanded in 2007 - the same year that Jimmy, Jenifer, Gail and Amanda accompanied a party from 4th Gurkha Regimental Association to his old regiment in India.

Jimmy and Jenifer moved to Lower Froyle in 1989 and very quickly a special bond grew up with the village and those who lived around them. His family and neighbours talk of his love of his garden, walking, Morris Minors, his Mercedes Estates, village life, healthy eating, keeping fit and convivial parties. At one of these parties a neighbour hearing that Jimmy had been a military attaché, asked "Doesn't that mean a spy?" After a long pause, Jimmy just nodded. Villagers talk of him as a man curious to find out more about people, genuinely interested in what they had to say and hungry to learn. He was a rare male member of Better Balance group in the Village Hall and he enriched not only this group but all, with whom he came in contact. He had lived in Lower Froyle longer than he had lived anywhere before.. Whilst compiling this tribute I was told of many attributes that Jimmy possessed. Here is a small selection;

He had a "Steely determination to get things done"

Jimmy was "Modest, very, very modest"

A man of "Enormous charm"

He was “so full of pride, appreciation, love and happiness with having such a close and loving family around him.”

Colonel JP Cross from Nepal speaks of his “Quiet, tolerant sense of duty and humour”. The Society has lost a much valued member who contributed so much and for which he will be long remembered.

Gavin Edgerley-Harris

David Jefford 1936 - 2017

A keen Society member, David spent a full Civil Service career in the Ministry of Defence, reaching the grade of Assistant Secretary. After tours in Germany and London, he took over from Ashley Adams, our Vice Chairman, as Civil Secretary to British Forces Hong Kong in 1980. He undertook a number of duty trips to Nepal, developing affection for the country and people. He joined the Society on return to UK and was a regular at events. He served for a number of years on the Committee and looked after the sale of ties and scarves. David was a keen sportsman and won the Combined Services tennis singles championship.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Notes on Nepal's Creative Basketry. By Susi Dunsмор. 2016. This is a fully coloured paper back. Pp 37. Published by The John Dunsmore Nepalese Textile Trust (reg charity 1107232).

Cost £3.50. ISBN 0 9552900 1 5. This booklet is available through The John Dunsmore Textile Trust, 13 Eliot Place, Blackheath, London SE12 0QL. (The note below was sent to me a few months before Susi's death. Her obituary is elsewhere in the journal. Ed.)

Nepalese basket-makers are still affected by the aftermath of the horrendous earthquakes of 2015: homes were destroyed, access roads damaged and the number of tourists and buyers declined. As a result the trade in basketry suffered. This basketry booklet might help to evoke new interest from buyers when they see the amazing variety, skill and beauty revealed in Nepalese basketry work which could enhance homes anywhere: the baskets can be used to display bread, snacks or fruit – or for storage or shopping. The mats made in any size, can become coasters, place mats, screens, seat pads, wall hangings or floor coverings. The sale of these unique basketry items and the booklet may bring some of the essential income to the basket-makers of Nepal and help to ensure the survival of this ancient traditional craft.

Susi Dunsmore

The Dharma Expedient and Devlin's Chakra. By Neville Sarony.

Neville Sarony is currently a practising QC in Hong Kong, but he has also managed to find the time to write two novels, both extremely exciting thrillers. As a national service officer he served with 2/7GR in Malaya and Singapore, and since then most of his working life has been in Asia and the Far East.

'The Dharma Expedient' is set in the indefinite future focussing on the escape of an infant 15th Dalai Lama from Tibet. A retired Royal Gurkha Rifles Officer, Max Devlin, who is trying to make a living in the trekking world in the Himalayas, suddenly finds himself at the centre of events. He becomes the focus of a highly complicated scenario which has tentacles linking Nepal, China, and India. From the high mountain passes, the fast-moving plot takes a number of dramatic twists and turns before coming to an enthralling climax in the Nepal Terai. Retired Gurkhas play a part and there is also a wee bit of romance.

In 'Devlin's Chakra', Devlin finds himself in the midst of another international tussle, this time for the ownership of the Dalai Lama's treasure which has been left for safe-keeping in a Sikkim monastery. Buddhism, the Gurkha world and again the competing interests of China, India and the Dalai Lama's government in exile come into the mix; and once more the action is frenetic before coming to a fascinating conclusion in a Hong Kong court of law. The pace in both books is frenetic, as Neville weaves his plots in a style which

flows easily. In short these are two 'rollicking good' reads just the tomes to take on holiday, and which would make an extremely good film. Those readers who buy into the project will be delighted to know that Max Devlin will appear again in a prequel, and may be later in a sequel too. Both books are published by Vajra Publications, Jyatha, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal. They are obtainable from Amazon and the Gurkha Museum.

(A budding JPX?. Ed.)

Bob Couldrey

The Tears That Never Dropped. *The author, Mr Mangal Narayan Pradhan (late CSgt 10GR) is the current General Secretary of the British Gurkha Ex-Servicemen's Association Kurseong. All profits of his first novel will be used in the Kurseong area to alleviate hardship for ex Gurkhas in the area. Copies of this book are priced at £5 including postage and can be obtained from Maj J Patchett by phoning 01540 661800.*

There have recently been published some very impressive autobiographical accounts by Gurkha soldiers about their war fighting and other operations. Here, for a change but equally welcome, is a short romantic novel by a Gurkha Colour Sergeant who has been retired for some time. I knew Mangal Pradhan when we were both posted to Brunei many years ago. He served his writing apprenticeship with carefully crafted magazine articles, based on his military experiences and his home life in Kurseong in Darjeeling District. This is his first work of fiction. 'The Tears that Never Dropped' sets out to make us reflect on the military life we live and its

impact on others, particularly our families and others we love. Mangal does not adopt a moralizing tone and he desists from elaborating on the barracks existence of Gurkha soldiers overseas. He safely assumes the reader will know enough about that literally uniform experience. He expends his energy instead on relating how one individual finds that love and army life can often make difficult bedfellows. Here is the joy and hope of youth, offset by the sorrow and regret of later years. In both action and appearance the main characters are convincingly developed, and their dialogue is well thought out. The rural setting is brought to life with a local artist's eye, whilst the hubbub of the towns passed through also rings true. The author shows with the end result that he spent a long time devising the strands that form a plot with considerable tension and true surprises. His use of idiom puts many native English writers to shame. Mangal confused me by giving the hero his own first name. Once I realized it was clearly not an autobiography, I felt some relief and began to enjoy the story. My only other criticism is at the proliferation of minor characters whose role is sometimes unclear. But as a first novel this is very promising indeed. I thoroughly recommend it to all who want to read of the trials of a distant love and the pressures of separation, set in a wild and wonderful part of the world. Mangal had this attractive little book printed in Kalimpong. All profits will be used in the Kurseong area to alleviate hardship for ex Gurkhas, who are constantly repairing the damage caused by earthquakes and other natural disasters. As the long standing secretary of the Kurseong branch of the British Gurkha Ex Servicemen's Association, he is regularly involved in providing advice and

assistance over a large area, along with Captain Tendup Lama and the other committee members.

John Patchett

Nepal Himalaya A Journey through Time

Below is the report on the book launch of '*Nepal Himalaya A Journey through Time*' written by Sujov Das and Lisa Choegyral with an introduction by Reinhold Messner

The launch was held on 18th September 2016 at Dwarikas Hotel in Kathmandu, graciously sponsored by Mrs Ambica Shrestha. The well attended event included a welcome by Mrs Pratima Pandey MBE, President of the Nepal Britain Society, who spoke about the 200 year relationship and bicentenary activities. This was followed by an address from Lisa Choegyral about the book and how it came about, and a wonderful presentation of historic photographs, people and mountain images of Nepal by Sujoy Das. The publisher, Bidur Dangol of Vajra Books, said a few words, and Dr Paula Sengupta who contributed the unique line drawings was also present. .

'*Nepal Himalaya A Journey Through Time*' is available in all Kathmandu bookstores and can be purchased directly from Vajra Books

<bidur_la@mos.com.np>.

GDB

CD

A Gurkha Remembers – A Lifetime in Asia. By **JP Cross.** *A Chromeaudio production. December 2016. An audio CD/RRP £12 + p&p. Available from office@chromeaudio.com . £1 donation per copy sold goes to Kulbir Thapa VC Home, Pokhara.*

This CD has been produced by Chromeaudio Production by Catriona Oliphant. Catriona's father was the late Lt Col 'Jumbo' Oliphant 7th Gurkha Rifles. The CD has been beautifully recorded and the speech quality is first rate. Colonel John Cross recounts a series of incidents throughout his unique career in the Brigade of Gurkhas and his life in Nepal following his retirement there. Cross tells the tale as only he can in his own inimitable style. This CD is a 'must' for those who know him and those who have read his autobiographical works and historic novels, many of which have been reviewed in the journal.

GDB

SHORT NOTICE

Evolving Narratives of Hazard and Risk – The Gorkha Earthquake, Nepal, 2015. Edited by Louise Bracken, Hanna Ruszczyk & Tom Robinson of Durham University Geography Department, Institute of Hazard Risk & Resilience. 2018. Hb £44.99. Palgravemacmillan. Available via springer.com/shop, or contact the university.

The editors have drawn together multi disciplinary perspectives written by some twenty-six experts that include academics, engineers, architects, archaeologists. Chapters include: preparedness & response; risk reduction; initial response; health; forecasting; post earthquake communities; archaeology- protecting sub-surface heritage. The Geography department of Durham University has had a long connection with Nepal from their initial 1976 expedition/ project (18 months) to Langtang resulting in the national park management plan.

SOCIETY ARCHIVES & JOURNAL

The Society has an archive of papers, documents and other ephemera relating to its work since it was founded in 1960. This archive is currently lodged at The Gurkha Museum in Winchester. Anyone who wishes to view the BNS Archive should first make an appointment by contacting the Curator on 01962 842832 or e-mail curator@thegurkhamuseum.co.uk

Duplicate copies of the journal can be obtained from the editor and a limited number of back editions may also be purchased for £3.50 per copy plus p&p.

Contact the editor at email: gerry.birch3@btinternet.com

Past editions can also be viewed on the Digital Himalaya website:
www.digitalhimalaya.org

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
www.soas.ac.uk

The Britain Nepal Otolaryngology Service
(BRINOS)
Greensand Cottage
Puttenham Road
Seale
Farnham GU10 1HP
Tel: (01252) 783265
www.brinos.org.uk

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

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

The Britain-Nepal Chamber of Commerce
35 St Philip's Avenue
Worcester Park
Surrey KT4 8JS
Tel: 020 8241 0313
www.nepal-trade.org.uk

The Gurkha Museum
Peninsula Barracks
Romsey Road
Winchester
Hampshire SO23 8TS
Tel: (01962) 842832
www.thegurkhamuseum.co.uk

The Royal Society for Asian Affairs
1a St Martin's House
Polygon Road
London NW1 1QB
Tel: (020) 7235 5122
www.rsaa.org.uk

Bird Conservation Nepal
PO Box 12465
Lazimpat
Kathmandu
Nepal
Tel: + 977 1 4417805
Email: bcn@mail.com.np
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, students, teachers, returned volunteers, aid workers, doctors, business people, members of the Diplomatic Service and Armed Forces. 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 £20, joint (same address) members £30 per annum. Life membership is a single payment of £350, joint life membership a payment of £550; corporate business members £75 per annum. Concessionary membership of £15 per annum is available to those under 25 or over 75 on production of proof of age. 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 in the early part of the year and in the autumn we hold our AGM. The Society also holds receptions and hospitality for visiting senior Nepalese.

Those interested in joining the Society should contact the treasurer, Col Rupert Litherland at: rupertlitherland@gmail.com

Website: www.britainnepalsociety.org

THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

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

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Colonel JM Evans MC

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