
THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

Journal

Number 22

1998

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 EDITORIAL

The prime aim of the journal is to keep the members informed of the Society's activities. In this respect it also acts as a record of events. Additionally, it is a medium for articles of interest to members, either extracts from the lectures or features and articles provided by those with an interest in Nepal and its people. Soon after the formation of the Society in 1960, it became apparent to one of the founding committee members, Mrs. Mayura Brown, that a newsletter was needed to keep the then emerging Society informed of developments and activities. It is in these early newsletters that the origin of the journal lies. As the newsletters became larger, and the Society grew in size and stature, the need for a journal to inform and record became apparent. A journal needs an editor and one of the members, Lt. Col. H.C.S. Gregory volunteered for the task. Whether he realized that he was taking on an appointment that was to last twenty years, I doubt. However he has been able to bring to the journal his unique experience of the Gurkhas and Nepal with over 30 years service in the Brigade of Gurkhas followed by his subsequent appointment to the then office of Liaison Officer Brigade of Gurkhas as a Retired Officer in the Ministry of Defence. He has worked with quiet efficiency in his own inimitable manner to produce a journal of which the Society can be justly proud. The Society owes him a large debt of gratitude for his painstaking work in assembling such a journal over the period since its inception.

Readers will also notice that the new logo has been introduced to this issue, reflecting what, through the ties, was the

'de facto' Society logo. Another change has been the move of the processing and printing of the the journal to Manns Printers in Mildenhall, closer to the Editor's village. I know the Society, and especially my predecessor, would like to thank Glenburns, and in particular Nikki, for all their support in recent years in the production of the journal.

Despite the Editor, the journal can only be as good as the articles provided by the contributors. I extend my sincere thanks to them all. This could be described as a memorial issue recording as it does the unveiling by H.M. The Queen of the Gurkha Memorial on a rightfully prestigious site in Whitehall, and the story of the establishment of the Sir Horace Kadoorie Memorial Garden in Hampshire. Mayura Brown with the Gurkha Brigade Association was one of the instigators of the Gurkha Memorial. She describes the ceremony which took place on a cold crisp afternoon with the excellent military precision that one has come to expect of such events. Tom Spring-Smyth writes about the inception of the Memorial Garden and its eventual siting at the Sir Harold Hillier Garden and Arboretum. Tom, originally an officer of the Bengal Sappers and Miners served with the Maharajah of Sirmoor's Field Company in Burma. He transferred to the British Army and spent most of his subsequent service with the then newly formed Gurkha Engineers. On retirement in 1960 he spent some seven months plant collecting in Nepal, reaching such remote places as Tope Gola. He joined the UN and was on the Karnali project in the early 1960's and also worked for two years with Brig. Gordon Richardson on Gurkha

resettlement on Nepal. He has had a lifetimes interest in plants, especially those of Himalayan origin.

Christine Russell describes her work and that of GAP in supporting the Hindu Vidyapeeth schools in Kathmandu and the Terai. The experience GAP can provide for British volunteers is of value both to the volunteers and to the school communities they support. Projects such as these serve to maintain the links between our two countries in a very practical way. We hope that these young volunteers will continue their interest in Nepal. One way of doing this is to join the Society and meet other like-minded people. The committee, mindful of the need to attract younger members, formed a group specifically to look at this problem. John Brown reports on this work.

We were treated to an excellent lecture by Dr. Robin Coningham on the work taking place at Lumbini, the birth place of the Gautama Buddha. This is a site of international significance connected with one of the world's major religions. The antiquity of the site and lack of any documentation has made the work extremely difficult. I am grateful for the resume he has provided for the journal. Dr. Coningham and his team are to be congratulated on their efforts, which with the help of UNESCO and HMG Nepal, seem set to continue. We look forward to hearing of progress in due course.

This has been 'Visit Nepal Year 98'. At one of our earlier meetings the Royal Nepalese Ambassador, HE Dr. Basnyat, explained that the aim was not only to publicise Nepal to increase tourism but to emphasise the need for sustainable eco-friendly tourism so essential to maintain an environment that tourists will wish to continue to visit. In

February, HRH Prince Charles paid an official visit which was well reported. As Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Gurkha Rifles he has a very strong connection with Nepal and with those who have served in the Brigade of Gurkhas. The visit will have provided him with an opportunity to meet old friends, to paint and to relax in a very friendly atmosphere. VNY 98 was publicised by a number of events around UK. Mayura Brown reports on the reception held at the British Museum.

Pat Mellor reports on the Society's activities. We were both delighted and honoured that HM Queen Aishwarya and HRH Prince Dipendra were able to be with us following our AGM. The annual Nepali supper was, as is usual, well supported. The summer outing to Hatfield House turned out to be one of the most successful of recent years. This was due to the support of our friends in the Yeti Association and all who went enjoyed the joint picnic. Our thanks go to the staff of Hatfield House who were extremely helpful and supportive.

The final event of the current round was the reception held for our Patron HRH Prince Gyanendra at the House of Commons. This was another very successful event and is reflected in the Secretary's report and the letter that His Royal Highness graciously wrote to the Chairman which is published in full.

And finally returning to the theme of a memorial issue there are the obituaries. This year has seen the passing of a number of senior and well known officers of the Brigade of Gurkhas or connected strongly with the Brigade. Not all those listed were Society members, but all made significant contributions to Anglo-Nepali relations and were known, often personally, to a large number of Society members.

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THE SOCIETY'S NEWS

by Pat Mellor
Honorary Secretary

Lectures

It was decided to arrange two extra 'Talks' at the Society of Antiquaries this year to give members an additional opportunity to get together during the summer. One was held in May and the other in June. These two extra talks have both been well attended and I hope will become a regular feature of the Society's agenda.

In October 1997, Michael Wilmore, from University College London, gave members a talk about television and its effects on the town of Tansen. This was a most interesting address which was rather different from past lectures and gave members an insight into bringing the 20th century to far away places. This, as usual, was accompanied with colour slides.

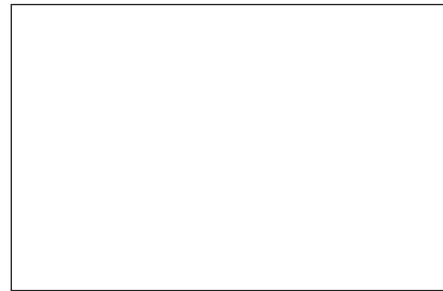
To support 'Visit Nepal Year 1998', Mr. Peter Burrell of Exodus Travels gave a talk in January entitled 'Trekking and Adventure Tourism in Nepal' illustrated with the most beautiful slides. This subject was very popular, and was graced by the attendance of HE The Royal Nepalese Ambassador and HRH Princess Jotshana. His Excellency also spoke to the members urging everyone to take up the challenge and visit Nepal during the year.

On the 7th March 1998, Christine Russell of the Hindu Vidyapeeth Schools in Nepal gave the Society an enthusiastic talk entitled 'Keeping Nepali culture alive - the Hindu Vidyapeeth Schools'. There was much interest in this subject, and members certainly appreciated the obvious enthusiasm of all who are involved in this venture. Christine's slides also helped to show the way the schools are moving forward.

The 5th May was the first of the extra talks, and was given by Mr. Neil Howard on the 'Forts of Central Nepal from Butwal to Kagbeni'. This talk was attended by a large number of members, particularly the military element who were especially interested in this subject. The slides were amazing and many people recognised the grassy mounds as places they had visited, but had not realised that they had in the past been forts.

Dr. Robin Coningham of the Department of Archaeological Sciences at the University of Bradford, gave the talk on the 23rd June entitled 'Bradford, UNESCO and the birth place of the Buddha'. This talk was fascinating and the slides gave everyone an idea of the lake and the birth place of the Buddha at Lumbini in the Terai region of Nepal.

Our grateful thanks goes to all of these excellent speakers who gave their time and knowledge to show us such beautiful slides. We look forward to entertaining them at the Annual Nepali Supper in February.



Members at the AGM held at the Royal Nepalese Embassy

AGM

The AGM in November 1997, was held at the Royal Nepalese Embassy, by kind permission of His Excellency The Royal

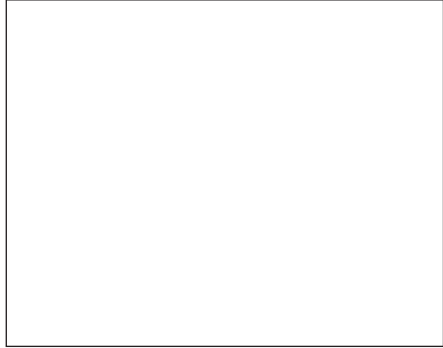


Her Majesty the Queen of Nepal at the AGM and the Chairman

Nepalese Ambassador, who was sadly unable to attend being abroad on diplomatic duty. However all the members were deeply honoured by Her Majesty the Queen of Nepal and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince granting an audience to all of the members attending the AGM. They graciously spoke to everyone present, which lasted for about an hour. The meeting was followed by an excellent curry supper, once again supplied by Mr. Ranamagar of the Munal Restaurant, 393 Upper Richmond Road in Putney. The Ambassador's secretary, Nelia Ranamagar, looked after all the members during the supper which was laid out in the Embassy dining room adjoining the meeting room.



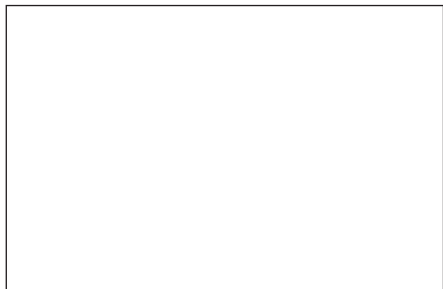
The Annual Nepali Supper



*The Annual Nepali Supper
Lord Weatherill, FM Sir John Chapple,
The Chairman*

The Annual Supper

This was held earlier than usual at St. Columba's Church Hall, Pont Street. This venue is ideal for holding this event so we will probably continue to go there. Our Guest of Honour this year was Lord Weatherill who gave the members a wonderfully entertaining after dinner speech. His Excellency The Ambassador of Nepal and Her Royal Highness Princess Jotshana also attended. Mr. Manandhar and his family from the Natraj Restaurant, 93 Charlotte Street provided an excellent Nepalese Supper, which was enjoyed by everyone. This event was extremely well supported by many members.



RGR Pipers at the Annual Nepali Supper

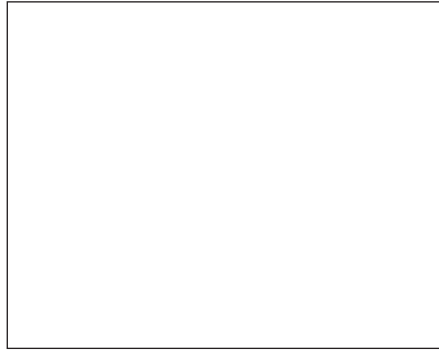
The Summer Outing

This year took the form of a visit to Hatfield House in Hertfordshire, where

we joined with the Yeti Association. Your Secretary is extremely pleased to be able to report that this was a most successful and happy day. The weather was perfect, the setting beautiful and ideal for picnics. Approximately 60 people joined in and the picnics produced by both the Yeti members and the BNS members were absolutely delicious. My personal thanks go to Margaret Kenny, Curator of Hatfield House, and Bijay Thapa, Treasurer of the Yeti, without whose cheerful and helpful support the day could not have been the success it was.

Reception

On the 16th September the Society was pleased to be able to hold a reception in honour of our patron, His Royal Highness Prince Gyanendra, during his



HRH Prince Gyanendra talking to members at the reception at the House of Commons

visit to London. The reception was held in the House of Commons IPU room and was supported by an excellent turn out of some 130 members. All those present were able to meet and talk to His Royal Highness in a relaxed and informal manner. A number of other guests visiting from Nepal were also able to attend and meet some of their UK friends. This was again a very successful event which underlines the strength of the society and its objectives.



The 'flower ladies' at the reception

General

Finally, I am pleased to say that Members of the Society have had another eventful and successful year.

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17 September 1998

Sir Neil Thorne
Chairman
The Britain - Nepal Society
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London W5 3 NH

Dear Sir Neil,

I thank you and through you, the Vice-Presidents, the Committee and Members of the Britain - Nepal Society, for the very kind invitation and most enjoyable reception on Tuesday 15 September, 1998.

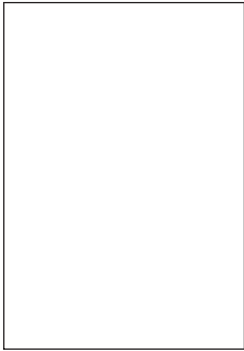
As ever, it was a pleasure and delight to meet so many Members of the Society as well as friends and well-wishers of Nepal. I have always maintained that the Society has from the time of its inception played a pivotal role in further expanding the so happily existing ties between Nepal and Britain. It is a matter of great satisfaction, that under your Chairmanship these ties have been so constructively consolidated. Let me congratulate the Society for the very fine endeavour it has undertaken to bring the people of Nepal and Britain closer. I take this opportunity to wish the Society all success in the future.

Sincerely,

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE GYANENDRA BIR BIKRAM SHAH

THE GURKHA MEMORIAL

by Mayura Brown



The Gurkha Memorial in Whitehall

Wednesday 3 December 1997 was one of the most eventful days of my life. Her Majesty the Queen was to unveil the Gurkha Memorial, a very great honour indeed. The morning was grey and cold, but by 2pm when we had assembled at Horse Guards Avenue the skies had brightened. The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, resplendent in their white uniforms, marched on at their traditional fast rifle regiment pace, followed by the Guard of Honour from the 1st Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles. HRH the Prince of Wales was the first of the Royal Party to arrive, then came Her Majesty and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. The Queen looked so relaxed and happy when she inspected the Guard of Honour accompanied by Major Udaibahadur Gurung MBE.

When the statue was unveiled, there were tears in my eyes to see this tribute to undying loyalty and heroism. When the ceremonies were over, all adjourned to the marquee which had been erected in the courtyard of the Old War Office where tea was served. This afforded us an excellent opportunity to pay our respects to Her Majesty, the Duke of Edinburgh and our dear Prince Charles.

My sincere gratitude goes to HRH Prince Charles for all he has done to bring about this important event. On 8 July 1994 I wrote to him as Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Gurkha Rifles, begging for a memorial to be built to commemorate the courage of these men and their fidelity to the British Crown and was delighted to receive a reply some two weeks later from Major Patrick Tabor saying that His Royal Highness was interested to hear my thoughts. I had also requested that the plaster statue of a Gurkha rifleman in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, (sculptor Richard Gordon - 1924), should be used for the memorial. I am deeply indebted as well to the Brigade of Gurkhas, and particularly Field Marshal Lord Bramall, for the amount of work entailed to produce the memorial, and my thanks also go to the sculptor of the present figure, Philip Jackson. It is to my deep regret that Colonel Guy Pearson did not live to see this memorial. He always kept me informed of its progress, and his sudden loss was a devastating shock to us all.

There is one other person of great importance in this matter. In 1960 when I was a humble, newly-elected Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society, I used to meet at tea before the lectures, the highly distinguished Fellow of the Society and its past President, Professor Sir Ralph Turner. On these occasions we would talk about his much loved Gurkhas. Dear Sir Ralph, who could have praised your loyal comrades better than you have done with your immortal words:

“Bravest of the brave, most generous of the generous, never had a country more faithful friends than you”.

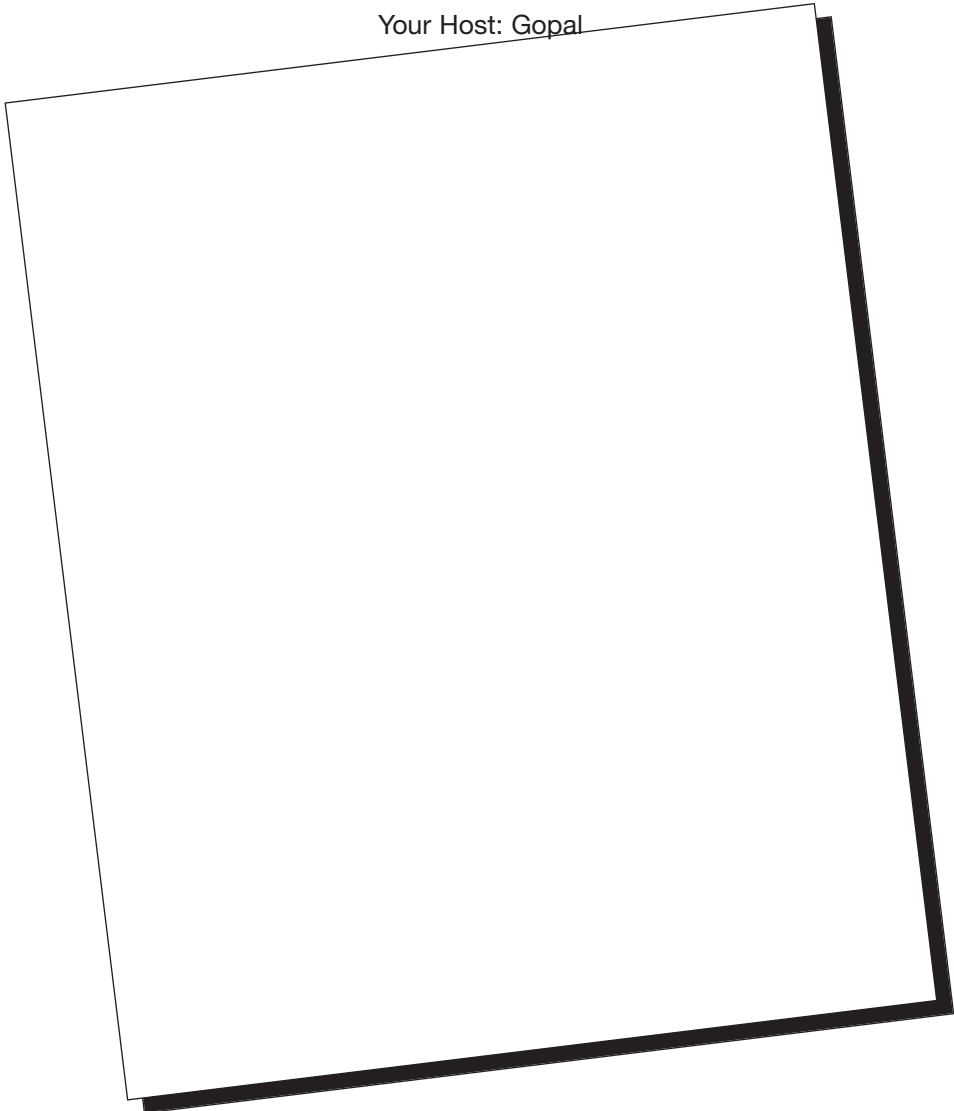
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KEEPING NEPALI CULTURE ALIVE - THE HINDU VIDYAPEETH SCHOOLS

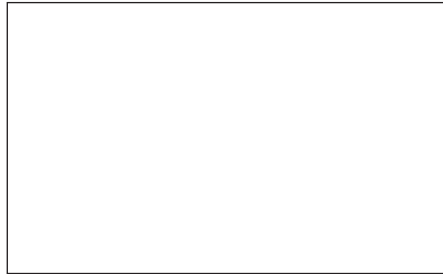
by Christine Russell

“Hindu Vidyapeeth” means “Hindu place of learning”, and there are three schools in Nepal which bear this name. The central school is in Kathmandu, another is in the village of Indrayani, about one hour’s drive from the capital, and the other is in Ghorahi, a small town in the Dang Valley in the south-west of the country. The schools were established between 1985 and 1992 by Matribhoomi Sevak Sangh, a Nepali voluntary social service organisation whose members are dedicated to maintaining and promoting Nepali spiritual, social and cultural values through education and community service and to fostering the ideals of peace, tolerance and international fellowship. The schools are Hindu foundations but are open to all, and the children learn to respect all religious traditions as being different paths to the one God.



‘Class 9’

My involvement with the HVP schools began in 1991, when I became GAP Project Manager for Nepal. GAP volunteers had started to work in schools in Nepal, and I was sent out with a brief to get GAP registered as an NGO with the Social Welfare Council. Dr. B.L. Shrestha, the Chairman of Martibhoomi Sevak Sangh, and Mr. C.M. Yogi, the Principal of the HVP school in



The school at Ghorahi in the Dang Valley

Kathmandu, were immensely helpful to me in what was a difficult but ultimately successful struggle, and we have been sending GAP volunteers to the HVP schools ever since. The Gappers find these placements very rewarding and on their return a number of them have founded a support group, called HVP-UK, to maintain contact with the schools and to give them financial help. The relationship is very much two-way, as the Gappers feel that they have gained much more from their experience than they have been able to give. Since giving up the job of GAP Project Manager, I have remained in contact with the schools and am now Co-ordinator of the support group, going out to Nepal once a year to visit the schools and to collect information.

Whilst recognising that a good academic education is essential, the philosophy of the HVP schools emphasizes educating the whole child and developing individual potential and leadership qualities. Whereas much education in Nepal is still based on rote learning, students at HVP learn to use their own initiative and to think for themselves. As a result, students at the Kathmandu school are increasingly carrying off the top prizes in the many

speech, essay and poetry competitions organised in the Valley. They bring a freshness and originality which distinguishes their contributions from those of other participants. I have been impressed by the encouragement given to girls to take a leading role in the schools, and I was pleased to see at the Kathmandu school's Annual Parents' Day this year that girls were confidently acting as announcers. Virtually all private schools in Nepal are English-medium, but at the HVP schools there is equal emphasis placed on Nepali, and the students learn to be proud of their own historical, literary and cultural traditions. On my last visit I went on a delightful picnic with the Dang school, and after the obligatory outpourings of Western pop from the ghetto-blaster, the drums and harmonium were brought out, and everyone took part in a spontaneous display of traditional dancing and singing.



Central School, Kathmandu

Individual success is of course celebrated, but the students are made aware that it is their responsibility to use their talents for the benefit of the community, the nation and ultimately the whole world. The sense of service is very apparent in the schools, and with the help of the HVP-UK sponsorship programme the schools are able to bring in increasing numbers of disadvantaged and handicapped children. The

Kathmandu school is becoming known in the Valley for its environmental education programme, and the teachers were asked to organise this component for a recent United Nations Volunteer Programme. On the picnic with the Dang school I was most impressed with the nature walk led by the science teacher, who began it by holding a short meditation to get the children to feel that they were part of the natural environment and therefore had a duty to care for it.

The schools are in my view achieving



Indrayani School

impressive results in educating just the kind of citizens which Nepal needs if it is to develop at the same time as retaining a sense of its own identity, but their expansion is hampered by lack of financial resources, leaving them stuck in inadequate rented buildings with poor facilities. However, with the help of Nepali and UK support, things are looking up. Last year the Dang school was able to buy a school bus and a piece of land on which they hope to erect a new building. This led to a large increase in enrolment, and the school is on the way to becoming self-financing. The Kathmandu school has raised enough money to buy land and start constructing what will eventually be a four-storey building. This has boosted morale enormously and also led to an increase in the number of students. More help is still needed, but what is very important to me

and to the UK support group is that we are supporting a project initiated and run by Nepalis themselves and to which they expect to contribute financially as far as possible. Through our very close contact with the schools, the teachers and the students, we too are inspired by their philosophy and at times led to re-

evaluate our own lives. One of the graduates of the Kathmandu school wrote to me that 'HVP teaches us that joy lies not in material possessions but in ourselves', which I think is a lesson for all of us.

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DAPHNE BHOLUA 'GURKHA'

by Major T. le M. Spring-Smyth

If you happen to be walking in the foothills of the Himalayas in Nepal in January/February a delicious scent will lead you to an upright growing bush in full flower. It is *Daphne bholua*.

On the Milke Danra, Dhankuta District, East Nepal, you can walk for miles through this deciduous *Daphne* standing up out of the snow and flowering freely in the sunshine. The Milke Danra is a long ascending ridge leading in the north to the alpine area of Topke Gola. The ridge is a watershed between two river systems and is much used by villagers travelling to market in the plains below. I knew this ridge well.

Coming to the end of a wonderful seven months of seed and plant collecting, I was determined to add this *Daphne* to the list before returning home. On 18th March 1962, at 10,000 feet on the Milke Bhanjyang (saddle) I dug up three six inch seedlings on their own roots. This was very difficult as many seedlings turned out to be suckers and had to be rejected.

With their own soil, plus some moss, the plants were sent immediately by runner on a two day journey to the British Gurkha Depot at Dharan. From there they went by hand of a British Gurkha soldier by night train to Calcutta and delivered the next day to the office of the British Deputy High Commissioner. He at once despatched the plants to London by British Airways and they were collected at Heathrow by the British Museum (Natural History), who sent one plant to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (TSS 132A) and two plants (TSS 132B and TSS 132C) to my mother's garden in Hampshire, where they grew strongly.

Some years later in the 1970s the late Sir Harold Hillier visited my mother's garden and asked if he could take propagation material off TSS 132B. This, and a further collection from the same plant about 18 months later, by Peter Dummer (retired propagator of Hillier Nurseries Ltd), led to the introduction of *Daphne bholua* 'Gurkha' as a garden plant.

There is a picture of the collector and *Daphne* TSS 132B on page 53 of Roy Lancaster's book, *Garden Plants for Connoisseurs*. Robert Pearson referring to it in the *Sunday Telegraph* wrote 'I was quite bowled over by the heaviness of the fragrance permeating the air around it'. Alas the original plant is no more, but its descendants are giving great pleasure to many who have not had the luck to enjoy a winter walk on the Milke Danra.

(The Gardens no longer contain the original plant from the cuttings mentioned, however two young specimens are currently growing in the Propagation Unit).

(Note: this article is taken from the *Friends of the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum Newsletter* - Ed)

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A NEPALESE ADVENTURE

by Major T. le M. Spring-Smyth

THE SIR HORACE KADOORIE GURKHA MEMORIAL GARDEN

Some years ago, when the Gurkha Museum opened in Peninsular Barracks in Winchester, Hampshire, some thought was given to enhancing its appearance with a small garden. This came to nothing because of difficulties in getting planning permission on a listed site and, besides, the subsoil is solid chalk. I saw no answer to the problem at the time.

Then at the beginning of September 1996 I suddenly thought of the obvious answer. Why not site the garden in the steep-sided small valley behind Jermyns House in the Sir Harold Hillier Garden and Arboretum, which is only twenty minutes down the road from the museum. They would complement each other. The acid soil would be absolutely right, the terrain was right, and the environment of the garden and arboretum could not be better.

My aim was the creation of a Gurkha Memorial Garden which would pay tribute to the debt we owe to the courage of the many Gurkha soldiers who died in many wars. The garden would also express our appreciation for many wonderful plants from that mountain kingdom, which have enhanced the beauty of British gardens for a hundred years or more. Gurkhas love flowers. This was a combination that had to happen.

Brigadier Christopher Bullock, late 2nd Goorkha Rifles and Curator of the museum, responded with enthusiasm. The next step, in a letter of 30th September, was to persuade the garden and arboretum Directing Officer, Bernard Payne, and the Curator, Mike Buffin, that the project was a good idea.

They responded immediately. They liked it. More details were worked out at a meeting with Brigadier Bullock, who had a brilliant idea concerning the actual form of the Memorial itself. This was to be a stepped stone platform, a chautara', a traditional Nepalese resting place. Chautaras are four-walled roofless platforms built on steep mountain trails for travellers to rest their loads, carried in 'dhoka' or bamboo baskets, and are often donated as memorials. The vertical face of the chautara would carry the badges, cast in stone, of the fourteen Gurkha regiments.

Things began to move. With the garden and arboretum Management Committee in support, the project got the approval of Hampshire City Council who are the owners, thanks to the generosity of the late Sir Harold Hillier who created it all. As authenticity has been a guiding factor, the stone for the chautara had to look like Nepalese stone. Happily I found an excellent look-alike, Devonshire slate, in a quarry near Yeovilton, Devon. In the end, the stone came from Wales.

Then came the problem of how to pay for the chautara. This was overcome when Brigadier Bullock contacted the Kadoorie Foundation Trust in Hong Kong, who agreed to sponsor the garden in memory of Sir Horace Kadoorie, a very great benefactor of Nepal and Gurkhas.

The lights were now at green. Site clearance began in the summer. The Hampshire County Council Surveyors Office managed contracts for the purchase of stone and construction, and a blueprint for the chautara was received

from the Royal Engineers Works Section, Headquarters British Gurkhas, Nepal, in Kathmandu. Meanwhile the various Gurkha Regimental Associations raised money to pay for sculpting Regimental badges above the words 'in memory'. The 15th of November was chosen for the official opening.

On site, the Curator, Mike Buffin, took up the challenge, designing the landscape, selecting plants, organising drainage and irrigation, constructing a small pool and incorporating a retaining wall in the same stone as the chautara. Wild-collected plants by Roy Lancaster, Tony Schilling, myself and others were assembled, sticking strictly to the principle of Nepalese origin. There are promises of more plants from far and wide and it is hoped the garden will contain the most comprehensive collection of Nepalese plants on one site in the United Kingdom.

The garden will be on two levels, separated by a retaining wall of the same stone as the chautara. The lower level includes a small pond - chautaras are often near streams to enable travellers to wash and cook a meal. Where possible, wild-collected plants have and will be used, such as Himalayan white birch (*Betula utilis*), *Sorbus micophylla*, *Magnolia campbelli*, *Pinus wallichiana* for the upper canopy, with a shrub layer beneath of *Rhododendron* and others, including *Daphne bholua* 'Gurkha'. I first saw this daphne standing in the snow with its wonderful flowers and gorgeous scent and, just like a Gurkha, it was at its best in the most inhospitable conditions - hence the name it was given. Ground cover plants include the Himalayan poppy (*Meconopsis villosa*), *Hedychium densiflors*, *Euphorbia longifolia*, *Astilbe rivularis* and various other Nepalese plants. It would also

include a number of interesting maples, such as the majestic *Acer campbelli*, the Himalayan equivalent to the European sycamore, *A. sterculiaceum*, *A. acuminatum*, possibly the doubtfully hardy *A. oblongum* and the lovely snake-bark maple, *A. pectinatum*. *A. sikkimense* also grows in Nepal but is too tender for this area.

The site was soon blessed, appropriately, with 'monsoon' conditions. Very heavy rain in the days before the opening made planting extremely difficult on the steep slope. The young garden staff rose magnificently to the challenge, working like true professionals, while the two stone masons, who loved their work, finished the last details of the chautara with impressive competence.

So we came to the opening day on Saturday, 15th November, when some 100 invited guests assembled at Jermyns House for coffee, before forming up in front of the chautara at 11.00 am in light rain - not that anyone noticed. A Gurkha piper played as Mrs. Rita McAuley, the niece of Sir Horace Kadoorie, unveiled the badges and the central plaque in honour of her uncle. Among those attending were HRH Princess Jyoti Shah of Nepal, Field Marshal Sir John Chapple (a noted tree expert and formerly of the 2nd Goorkha Rifles), Lieut-General Sir Sam Cowan, Colonel Commandant, Brigade of Gurkhas, Colonels of Regiments and former officers of Gurkha Regiments with their wives, together with representatives of the Garden and Arboretum Management Committee, Hampshire County Council and, of course, Lady Hillier herself with her son John Hillier.

Back in Jermyns House for refreshments, many complimentary remarks were passed about the garden

and the chautara by the many present who knew Nepal. Some were talking about future reunions and many were congratulating the stone masons for their expert work.

The only item missing on the day were the religious trees normally planted for shelter on the top of a chautara, the pipal and banyan trees, *Ficus religiosa* and *Ficus benghalensis*. It is said Buddha sat under the pipal to receive enlightenment and the God Vishnu was born beneath the banyan. According to Gurkha legend, the pipal is female and the banyan is male, so they 'marry' them on each new chautara. Two other *Ficus* plants were temporarily substituted. However, cuttings of *Ficus religiosa* and *benghalensis* are being obtained from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. These trees are too tender for year round exposure, so they will be grown in

containers sunk into the top of the chautara for the summer only.

So an interesting and worthwhile project was completed in only fourteen months from inception, with no hitches and carried out in a remarkable atmosphere of enthusiasm and involvement by all those taking part. This was a project in which all who participated felt inspired to do their best and its success was their reward. Already thoughts are being given to planting the opposite face of the valley. There is no doubt that the Gurkha Memorial Garden is going to be a very special feature in the Sir Harold Hillier Garden and Arboretum.

(This article has been reproduced by kind permission of the editor of the Maple Society Journal - Editor)

Yak & Yeti

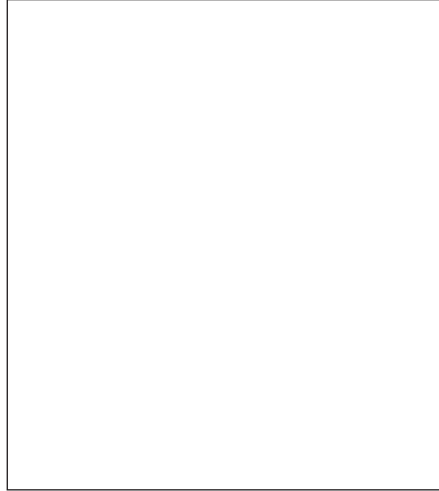
NEPALESE ART AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

by Mayura Brown

The British Museum mounted an Exhibition of Nepalese Art (3 to 31 May) to promote "Visit Nepal Year". On 6 May a reception was held at the Hotung Gallery of Oriental Antiquities in the gracious presence of HRH Princess Helen of Nepal supported by HE the Nepalese Ambassador, HRH Princess Jotshana Basnyat with the Trustees and Directors of the British Museum. There was a large and very distinguished gathering which included our President, HRH the Duke of Gloucester, a most welcome guest.

This, the first exhibition by the Museum devoted entirely to Nepal, was to present the artistic talent of the people of this Himalayan Kingdom. The show-piece was a silver replica of the Krishna Temple in Lalitpur (Patan), on loan to the Museum from the Royal Palace, Kathmandu. It was presented to His Majesty King Birendera on the occasion of HM's Coronation in 1975 by Nepalese Institutions. A charming watercolour of the same temple by Dr. Henry Oldfield (1855) was displayed nearby (courtesy of the British Library). These Oldfield paintings, made in the last century, reveal to advantage the unique architecture of the Kathmandu Valley and the unrivalled skill of their craftsmen. The medieval gems, both Hindu and Buddhist, that

*Krishna Temple of Lalitpur (Patan),
Nepal*



*Presented to His Majesty the King on
the occasion of His Majesty's
Coronation in February 1975 by
Industrial Units & Institutions of the
Ministry of Industry, HMG of Nepal.*

survive in the Valley towns, require devoted attention for their continued preservation. The immense pollution caused by the introduction of motor vehicles will lead to the eventual destruction of these delicate structures and diminish the cultural heritage of Nepal. Let us hope there will be enough of ancient Nepal left to encourage visitors for the next "Visit Nepal Year".

Lord Hunt

Members will be saddened to learn of the recent death of Lord Hunt, the first President of the Society. A full obituary will appear in the 1999 Journal.

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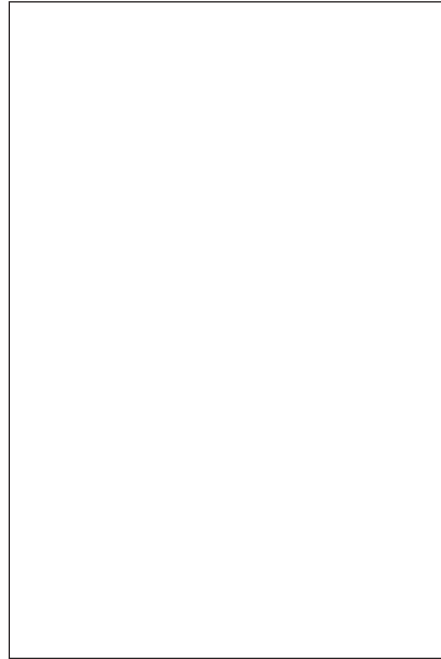
THE NEPALI TERAI AND SITES ASSOCIATED WITH THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF THE GAUTAMA BUDDHA

by Robin Coningham

In 623 BC Queen Maya Devi travelled from her husband's capital at Kapilavastu, one of a number of small sites in the Terai, to visit her parents in the neighbouring kingdom of Devadaha. Heavy with child, she stopped on her way to bathe in a pool at a garden known as Lumbini. Emerging from the pool, she walked twenty paces and catching hold of the branches of an overhanging tree gave birth to a son - Prince Gautama Siddhartha. The prince was raised in his father's palace at the city of Kapilavastu, and he later married Princess Yasodhara, and together they had a son, Rahula. At the age of 29 he renounced his princely life at Kapilavastu, and abandoned his wife, child and family in order to achieve enlightenment. Shortly before his *parinirvana*, or passing away, the Buddha identified Lumbini as one of the four great sites of Buddhist pilgrimage, the others being Bodh Gaya, Sarnath and Kusinagara. Certainly by the third century BC, the site was of enough significance to be visited by the great emperor Asoka in person who erected a commemorative stone pillar with the following inscription:

'Twenty years after his coronation, King Priyadarsi, Beloved of the Gods, visited this spot in person and offered worship at this place, because the Buddha, the Sage of the Sakyas, was born here...'

Lumbini remained a key centre of Buddhist pilgrimage and was enlarged under the Kushan dynasty in the early centuries of the present millennium. Indeed, the site was a major focus of international pilgrimage as testified by the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen-Tsaing, who



*The Shrine of Rupa-devi at Lumbini -
1977*

noted during his visit in the seventh century AD that Maya Devi's tree and pool were preserved beside the pillar. The site was still venerated in the fourteenth century AD as indicated by the inscriptions left by Tibetan and Nepali personages who had undertaken pilgrimage to this sacred Buddhist site. However, after this date the location of Lumbini, the birthplace of the Gautama Buddha, was lost.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, attempts were made by the newly created Archaeological Survey of India under its first Director-General, Sir Alexander Cunningham, to identify the location of many of the subcontinent's ancient cities and sacred places. Using

the topographical descriptions contained within early Buddhist texts and the travel records of Chinese pilgrims the identification of many such sites were confirmed, however, Lumbini remained elusive. In 1896 the Archaeological Survey of India's surveyor for the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, Dr Alois Fuhrer, applied to the Kathmandu Durbar for permission to investigate reports of ancient Buddhist sites within the Nepali Terai. Having been granted the necessary permissions he started his survey and in late November, during his second tour, met the Governor of the Palpa Province, General Khadga Shamsher J.B. Rana, at the latter's camp beside a small shrine to the smallpox goddess, Rupa-devi, at a site known as Rummindei. Together, they were struck by the site of a broken pillar rising 3m from a mound of brickbat debris surrounding the shrine. Clearing the base of the pillar exposed the inscription of Asoka and realized the enormity of their discovery - they had discovered the birthplace of the Buddha!

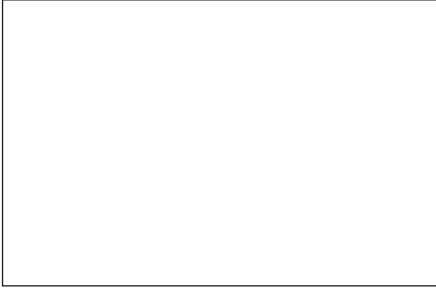


The archaeological reserve at Lumbini

Although confirmed as the land of the Buddha's nativity and childhood, Lumbini and its associated sites in the Terai, were not raised to an international status until 1967 when U-Thant, the UN General Secretary, visited the site and launched a campaign to establish an international centre of Buddhist culture and learning there. The campaign

achieved notable success with the launching of the Master Plan for Lumbini's development in 1978, designed by the architect, Kenzo Tange. This plan which is now being realized by the Lumbini Development Trust, which is transforming three square miles of paddy land into a "landscape to make the teachings of the Lord Buddha accessible to all humanity" and is divided into five linear zones: (a) the archaeological reserve; (b) the sacred garden; (c) the monastic zone; (d) the research zone; and (e) the residential zone. In line with other monuments of major international significance, Lumbini was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1997. His Majesty's Government of Nepal, together with UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, proposed the further nomination of two other sites associated with the life of the Gautama Buddha, Tilaurakot and Ramagrama, and invited members from the Department of Archaeological Sciences of the University of Bradford to join the team of archaeologists from His Majesty's Government of Nepal and the Lumbini Development Trust. In particular, due to the sensitive religious nature of the sites, we were requested to use a combination of surface and non-destructive archaeological survey. The former survey was undertaken with an electronic distance meter and the latter with archaeological geophysical equipment.

Tilaurakot was first surveyed in 1899 when Mukherji was ordered to discover the remains of the Kapilavastu, the Buddha's childhood home. Investigating a tiger-infested jungle mound, some 28km west of Lumbini, he identified a substantial walled and moated site measuring 500m by 400m. Within the walls the site was covered with a series of overgrown mounds, which he proved



Surveying at Tilaurakot

to be the remains of overgrown structures. He also excavated a gateway in the centre of the city's eastern wall and surveyed the immediate vicinity and identified a number of Buddhist stupas. Using a combination of his own topographical notes, Buddhist textual descriptions, the records of Chinese pilgrims and the site's close proximity to a further two Asokan pillars, one at Gotihawa and the other at Niglihawa, Mukherji had no hesitation in identifying the site as the ancient city of Kapilavastu - the childhood home of the Buddha. Investigations were renewed in 1960 when a joint Nepali-India team excavated the northern wall, and this was followed by a series of excavations between 1967 and 1975. This latter work greatly enhanced our knowledge of the site by excavating the western gateway complex, recording two stupas some 400m to the north of the site, and cutting a series of 5m deep sondages to natural soil within the city as well as exposing a series of buildings close to the surface. It is now clear that the site's sequence begins in the early part of the first millennium BC and ended with abandonment in the first half of the first millennium AD.

The size of the site, in combination with its sequence, mark Tilaurakot as one of the largest archaeological sites in the Terai. Our work consisted of a

topographical survey of the site and its surrounding monuments, as well as an archaeological geophysical survey of the area between the central buildings and the eastern gateway. Whilst no structures were visible on the surface of the latter area, once the survey data was processed, we identified the line of a main street running from the eastern gateway towards the western gateway. The street was 7m wide and provided with smaller streets at right angles. As our survey was likely to have only recorded the final phase of occupation, it is probable that we have identified the city layout of the first half of the first millennium AD. The grid-iron plan is similar to that of other important Kushan settlements such as Sirkap and Shaikhan Dheri in modern Pakistan, suggesting that the site was even then a key urban centre. Our topographical survey confirmed that shallow channels on the city's southern and eastern sides marked the city's silted moats and that an area of approximately 3 hectares immediately to the north of the city, was most likely a fortified suburb. As only the fortified core of the city is protected we were keen to ensure that the agrarian environment of the site was preserved, thus we have recommended that the silted moats and the northern suburb are acquired to form a monument buffer zone and that the land within a radius of half a kilometre is restricted to agricultural use to prevent detrimental development. In this way we hope to ensure the survival of one of the best preserved provincial Early Historic cities and environments in south Asia.

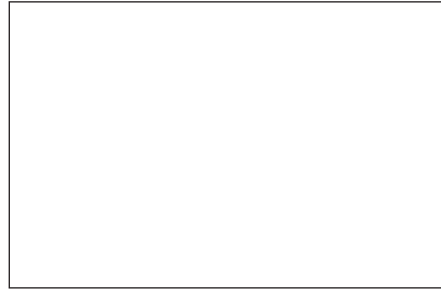
Our second site was first recorded in 1898 and consists of a large stupa, measuring 10m in height and 25m in diameter, on the bank of the River Jharai some 40km north-east of Lumbini. The size of the monument indicates that it

was a very important site and a number of Nepali archaeologists have identified it as the stupa of Ramagrama. According to Buddhist tradition, following the Buddha's passing away in Kusinagara, his remains were divided into eight parts which were then enshrined in stupas. The Koliyas of Ramagrama took their portion and built a stupa close to their city. During the third century BC the Emperor



View of the stupa mound at Ramagrama

Asoka travelled to many of these sacred Buddhist sites, and opening the stupas, redistributed the relics. According to the Chinese pilgrim Fa Hsien, when Asoka reached Ramagrama, he was prevented from opening it by its guardian and thus it remains the only stupa to contain the original share of the Buddha's relics. As the site has never been excavated nothing is known about its archaeological sequence, we were asked to survey and study the site. Our survey of the stupa's immediate vicinity failed to identify any structures inside the site's protective fence, but an area of brickbat fragments was noted close to its south-west corner. This area was further differentiated by being slightly higher than the surrounding area and having crops of lentils and maize, whilst elsewhere paddy was being grown. In particular, we were attracted to a small uncultivated field in this vicinity, which local farmers told us was unlucky to cultivate. We



A stupa in the monastic zone - Lumbini

therefore started our survey in this field and were rewarded when the data was processed, with the very clear outline of a square structure within an approximately 10m square enclosure wall. We surveyed two fields adjacent to our 'unlucky field', and identified the outline of a further two structures. We have tentatively identified them as votive stupas of the Kushan period, perhaps mistaken for a diabolical residence by local farmers, thus giving the field its unlucky reputation! These were extremely promising results and we have recommended that the farmland immediately surrounding the monument is purchased to protect the monuments beneath. We have further recommended that a larger survey is conducted to record the plan of the entire complex with the use of non-destructive techniques. Whilst the results of the mission are still preliminary, we have helped to confirm that the monuments of the Nepalese Terai offer an almost unbroken tradition of Buddhist devotion and pilgrimage from the seventh century BC to the present day and we will be returning to Nepal this year to continue this work.

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BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY
YOUNGER MEMBERS

Good progress has been made in our endeavours to encourage more 20-35 year olds with a genuine interest in Nepal to become members. The aim is to expand our membership whilst retaining the Society's unique traditions, atmosphere and friendliness.

We have formed a New Membership Sub-Committee which has been meeting since February 1998 bi-monthly, comprising Roger Potter, Pat Mellor, Antonia Derry, Timothy George and myself from the main Committee, together with Pamela Wignall, James Yeats Brown, Philip and Elizabeth Rutter, Paul Soffe, Fiona and Jerry Williams, all being younger members.

Our work has focused on developing personal contacts with organisations from where potential younger members may come such as the R.G.S., GAP,

V.S.O., S.O.A.S., Trekking/Tour companies plus others. This has necessitated improving our promotional literature and marketing ourselves a little better. Whilst it is early days yet, we have so far recruited a dozen new younger members.

This group is also working on two specific ideas for the Society's programme in the coming year - a Photographic Competition to be incorporated in the next Annual Supper and the arrangement of a talk evening in March 1999 - entitled "Near Misses".

Your own views on attracting new members will also be welcome as would new member proposals. Please do not hesitate to call me if you can help expand our Society's membership.

John Brown
(Telephone - 01892 862223)

Johnnie Gurkha's

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NOTES ON THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

Patron: HRH Prince Gyanendra of Nepal

President: HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO

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

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

Ordinary members pay a subscription of £10 per annum. Life Members, a single payment of £150, and Corporate Members £25 per annum.

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

We keep in close touch with the Nepal-Britain Society in Kathmandu, and their members are welcome to attend all of the Britain-Nepal Society's functions. However we do not have reciprocal membership.

Members of the YETI Association which provides equally for Nepalese

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

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

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

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

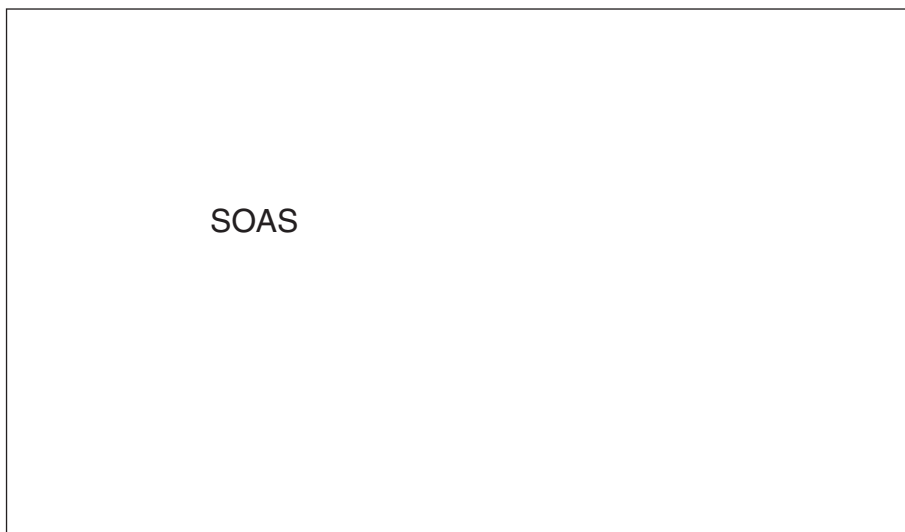
The Committee are actively seeking suggestions from members for ways of expanding and developing the programme.

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

Mrs Pat Mellor
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THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

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 OBITUARIES

Col. J.S. Bolton DSO

Col. J.S. Bolton died in September 1997 aged 84. He was born in Rawalpindi, his father was in the Army, and was educated at Kings School, Bath before going to Sandhurst in 1930. It was here that an NCO, seeing a young cadet and not knowing his name called out "Come here you, George". The name stuck, and it was as "George" that he was known for the rest of his life. He was commissioned into the 9th Gurkha Rifles, first spending a year with the Dorset Regiment on anti-terrorist operations in East Bengal. He joined 1/9 Gurkha Rifles in Comilla and soon became a company commander and took part in the operations against the Fakir of Ipi on the NW Frontier. After helping to raise the 3/9 Gurkha Rifles he attended the short staff course at Quetta and then saw active service on the staff of 4 Corps at Imphal and later as Brigade Major 4th Indian Infantry Brigade. He joined 1/9 Gurkha Rifles again, this time in Italy in 1944, after the severe losses the unit had suffered at Monte Cassino. On evacuation of the CO, George took command of the battalion. His leadership at this stage was vital to prepare for the next bout of severe fighting at the Gothic Line. It was for these operations that breached the line that George was awarded an immediate DSO. In 1945 George was posted to command 2/10 Gurkha Rifles in Haifa. The unit went to India via Syria where they were involved in peace keeping operations. During the transfer of power in India in 1947 the battalion at Lahore was responsible for the movement and protection of some

million and a half Hindus evacuating to India. With the selection of 10th Gurkha Rifles for British service, George found himself in Hong Kong in 1948.

However with peacetime reorganization George had to revert to the rank of Major, but was posted to Sandhurst as a company commander, this first such post-war appointment. In 1951 he returned to command 1/10 Gurkha Rifles in Malaya, and was soon involved in a series of very successful anti-terrorist operations. It was in Malaya that George first met Iris, daughter of Maj. Gen. Perowne, whom he subsequently married. In 1954 George became Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas. He retired in 1961 having ended his exciting and adventurous service as military attache in Prague. On retirement he joined the staff of the Save the Children Fund where he had a very successful second career, raising the Fund's income from local branches by tenfold in fifteen years. Later, for a year, he ran the Fund's activities in Nepal. There have been many personal tributes to George, all speak of his aura of command but also of his ability to listen and to inspire confidence in others and his personal modesty. However shining through all his exciting and often dangerous experiences was his own sense of humour with which he was able to lighten the most severe and trying circumstances. George was a great supporter of his wife's activities in the Society and of her interest in Nepal and the Gurkhas. We extend our deepest sympathy to her.

Brig. G.S.N. Richardson DSO* OBE
 Brig. Gordon Richardson died in June 1998 aged 86. He was born in July 1910, the son of Lt. Gen. Sir Charles Richardson. He was commissioned in 2nd Gurkha Rifles in 1930 and served in the Waziristan campaign in 1937. He was awarded both his immediate DSO's with 1/2 Gurkha Rifles during the Italian campaign in 1944, firstly at Monte Cassino and secondly at the Gothic Line. In 1945 he briefly commanded 7th Indian Brigade in Greece where the Greek communists had attempted to seize power following the withdrawal of the Germans. On return to India the Gurkhas were involved in internal security operations. On partition in 1947 he moved with his battalion to Singapore. During the Malayan emergency he was mentioned in dispatches. In 1952 he took command of 2/2nd Gurkha Rifles and hence had command of both battalions of his Regiment. He commanded 63rd Gurkha Infantry Brigade from 1957 to 1960. By this time the British Gurkha Recruiting organization was moving from bases in India to Dharan in east Nepal where he took command. This included the British Military Hospital in Dharan, the Transit Camp in Barrackpore, Calcutta and the western depot at Paklihawa. At this time the Brigade of Gurkhas numbered some 15000 and the annual required intake was 800-1000 recruits per year. Dharan was considered to be a remote posting but it was one that Brig Gordon and his wife thoroughly enjoyed. It was surely the last bastion of the old Indian cantonment life. On retirement in 1964 he worked for the Overseas Development Aid Corporation in Nepal until 1973 when he was awarded the OBE. Tragically his first wife Maria was killed beside him due to

a rock fall as they were driving along a mountain road. He was possibly the most experienced operational battalion commander that the Brigade of Gurkhas ever produced, and one who knew his soldiers so well. The editor, as a very young subaltern, will remember him as a kind and understanding mentor in Dharan and particularly his characteristic fly whisk which he carried in the monsoon period and the shikari parties that he was so keen to lead in the surrounding Terai jungle.

Lt. Col. J.O.M. Roberts LVO, MBE, MC

Lt. Col. Jimmy Roberts died in Nepal aged 81 on November 1st 1997. He had a distinguished military career with the Brigade of Gurkhas, but became more widely known for his exploits as a climber and an explorer in the Himalayas of Nepal. He was born in India and commissioned into 1st Gurkha Rifles in 1937 and served on the North West Frontier. Even at that time his main motivation was to climb in the Himalayas. In 1938 he took part in his first major expedition to Masherbrum in the Karakorum Range. He was awarded the MC when serving with 153 Gurkha Parachute Battalion whilst carrying out a daring reconnaissance mission in northern Burma. Following partition in 1947 he transferred to 2nd Gurkha Rifles and was awarded the MBE for service during the Malayan Emergency in 1955. Throughout this time he sought opportunities to climb and explore. He was on the recce to find Saser Kangri in the Karakorum in 1946-7 and with the opening up of Nepal in 1950 he explored the Annapurna massif with Bill Tilman. Although disappointed not being chosen for the 1953 Everest

expedition, he continued climbing and exploring with low-key expeditions in Nepal. In 1957 he led a team to climb the famous Fish-Tail Mountain that so dominates Pokhara. His lead team had to turn back just short of the summit due to the dangerous conditions. His last appointment in the Army was a Military Attache in Kathmandu. He accompanied HM King Mahendra of Nepal to the UK in 1960 and was heavily involved the following year when HM The Queen visited Nepal. He was awarded the MVO (later converted to LVO). On retirement in 1962 he decided to remain in Nepal to continue climbing and trekking. He founded Mountain Travel, the first trekking and climbing firm. It is for this work as the 'father' of the developing tourism industry of Nepal that he will be best remembered. For almost the last 40 years of his life he devoted himself to mountaineering, the Gurkhas, photography, conservation and ornithology. It was fitting that his ashes were scattered in the Seti Khola following his funeral in Pokhara. He will be long remembered both in Nepal and around the world by so many climbers and trekkers.

Maj. F.N. Potts MBE TD

Maj. 'Guy' Potts died in June 1998 aged 83. He was christened Fawkes after his distant ancestor Guy Fawkes. Born in America he returned to Huddersfield at a very young age where he was brought up. His legal training was cut short by the war and he was mobilized with 7th Battalion Duke of Wellington's Regt, the TA unit in which he had already been commissioned. Initially posted to Iceland, he then fought through the North African and Italian campaigns. At Anzio he was mentioned in dispatches

as a platoon commander. He assisted at the Nuremburg War Trials in 1947 on the basis of his pre war legal training. Subsequently he was granted a regular commission in the RAOC, serving in Korea and Cyprus. He joined the HQ of the Gurkha recruiting organization in Nepal in 1962, when Brig. Gordon Richardson was in command. It was his idea to revive the local industry in Dharan and Pakliharra to make Kukris for the Brigade of Gurkhas. He was horrified that the contract for these was in fact let to a firm in India! For his enthusiastic work in Nepal that stretched for over 7 years, he was awarded the MBE. Subsequently he was seconded to the Abu Dhabi Defence Force, retiring in 1976. It was whilst he was serving there that he and his family were hijacked by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine on a journey back to England. Although his family were released after three days, he and others were kept on board for three weeks before being released by the Jordanian Army. Such an event would happen to Guy. The editor remembers him from Dharan as an ebullient officer with his characteristic cigarette holder, full of fun and ready to make the best of any situation. He had a fund of stories, and was never at a loss. We extend our sympathy to his two daughters who have fond memories of their holidays in Nepal.

Brig. E.D. Smith CBE DSO

Brig. 'Birdie' Smith died aged 74 in March 1998. He will be known by many members for the books he wrote about the Gurkhas, reviewed in the Journal, and in particular that definitive work entitled 'Britain's Brigade of Gurkhas'. He was awarded an immediate DSO at Taroleto in Italy

when in command of C Company 2nd Battalion 7th Gurkha Rifles where he initially destroyed a machine gun post. Although wounded, he skilfully continued to lead the attack and ensured that the subsequent enemy counter attack failed. His post war service included tours of Malaya and Cyprus, and it was whilst on operations during the Borneo Confrontation with Indonesia that he lost his right arm. The helicopter in which he was travelling with six Gurkha riflemen and, by chance, the battalion Medical Officer,

crashed in the jungle. All got out unhurt except 'Birdie' who was trapped by his arm. There was an imminent danger of fire. The result was that the Medical Officer, Capt. Pat Crawford, had to amputate immediately, his only instrument being a clasp knife. Without any anaesthetic the operation was performed, during which 'Birdie' fully conscious never complained. 'Birdie' rose to the rank of Brigadier, his last tour was as Commander of the HQ and recruiting organization in Nepal.

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