

---

**THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY**

---

*Journal*

Number 38

2014

---

# A LEGACY OF LOYALTY



A TGR Welfare Pensioner

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

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

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

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

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



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

---

# THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

---

## **Journal**

Number 38

2014

---

### CONTENTS

- 2 Editorial
- 3 The Society's News
- 7 Gurkhas in the First World War
- 12 Raid into Tibet
- 17 Painting Nepal: Dr Henry Ambrose Oldfield and Raj Man Singh
- 26 The Brian Houghton Hodgson Award for Nature Conservation (BHANC)
- 29 Lt Grant VC and the 1903-04 Mission to Tibet
- 33 Britain - Nepal Youth Contact
- 41 Defeated by the Monsoon
- 44 Update on Nepal
- 46 From the Editor's In-Tray
- 48 Review Article – 'Operation Four Rings'
- 50 Book Reviews
- 54 Obituaries
- 62 Useful addresses
- 63 Notes on the Britain – Nepal Society
- 64 Officers and Committee of the Society

---

## EDITORIAL

The year 2014 is the one hundredth anniversary of World War One which has been much in the news as events in the media and across many organisations have demonstrated, culminating in the planting of the more than 880,000 poppies in the moat of the Tower of London. This event really caught public imagination and poppies planted include those in memory of the Indian Army which played major parts on both the European and Middle Eastern fronts. The Brigade of Gurkhas was in both theatres of operations. To mark this anniversary in the journal, Major Gordon Corrigan, who had a distinguished career in the Brigade and has since become a well-known and respected author and historian, has contributed an overview of Gurkha participation in World War One. Those readers who attended the Society's AGM last December will have had the privilege of hearing the talk by Major Corrigan on this subject. Thanks to research by Gen Sir Sam Cowan I have been able to continue the Tibetan theme into this edition. His researches look into the pressures on Nepal at the time of US support for the Tibetan Khambas in their raids on Tibet from bases in Mustang. We were fortunate to have a lecture given by Diana Wooldridge on the work of Dr Oldfield, residency surgeon over the period 1850 to 1864. In the 2010 silver jubilee edition of the journal I was granted permission by the editor of *Asian Affairs*, journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, to publish a piece written by Kanak Mani Dixit concerning the exhibition of some of these paintings displayed in Kathmandu in 1999. Diana's article based on her MA dissertation and considers the paintings by Oldfield and other Nepalese artists of that time. I am grateful too that both the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Asiatic Society have permitted their images to be published gratis. The Victoria Cross is this country's highest award for gallantry and is, to say the least, sparingly

awarded. The VC awarded to Lt Grant 8th Gurkha Rifles during the 1903/04 Younghusband Expedition to Tibet came on to the market in 2014. The firm entrusted with the sale of the medal, Morton & Eden Ltd, kindly gave a presentation to the recruits of the Gurkha Training Company in The Rifles Club whilst they were on their familiarisation visit to London prior to the sale and they were given the opportunity to see and handle the medal group, a rare privilege. Our chairman, with his educational background, has asked that the committee try to encourage younger members to join the Society. Ashley Adams carried out some research and discovered that a number of schools in his area have established contacts with schools about which he has written. Dr Hem Sagar Baral has explained his newly set up Brian Houghton Hodgson Award for Nature Conservation. Mark Temple describes monsoon trekking in east Nepal and Nick Morrice has written an update of his adopted family in Kathmandu. The chairman has written a review of his book *Discovered in Kathmandu*. Other reviews include the work written about the 1963 American attempt on Everest (also published *Asian Affairs*). Sadly obituaries in this edition record the passing of distinguished members of the Society and the wife of the late Boris Lissanevitch of the old Royal Hotel. Richard Burges Watson was a former ambassador to Nepal. Mr Ishwar Manandhar was probably best known to members for his restaurant in Charlotte Street. Major Pottinger was known to older members of the Brigade of Gurkhas who settled in Australia after retiring to work in Hong Kong. Major Bill Towill, whilst not so well-known to members maintained his Society membership after an interesting and unusually distinguished war record, and lastly Rodney Turk a former Society treasurer and stalwart of 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles. I am, as always, grateful to all the contributors to this edition.

---

## THE SOCIETY'S NEWS

*(This is an edited version of the Chairman's report delivered at the AGM)*



*Clearly anticipating a good supper*

The Chairman opened the meeting by thanking Mr Tejbahadur Chhetri, the Chargé d'Affaires for once again allowing the Society to hold the AGM at the Embassy. He also took the opportunity to welcome the new Defence Attaché, Colonel Pradeep Jung KC to the meeting. He then invited Mr Tejbahadur Chhetri to address the meeting as he was unable to stay for the whole period due to other commitments.

The Chairman then invited the meeting to stand for a short period of reflection in memory of those who had lost their lives in the two major disasters, the Sherpa tragedy on Everest and the more recent events on the Thorung La and also in memory of a number of members whose deaths have been reported this year: Barbara Boissard, Richard Burges Watson, Jonathan Kaye, Bill Towill, Rodney Turk and John Tyson.

On a happier note the programme of events has followed the customary pattern. Two lectures were held at the Medical Society of London and one postponed due to a threatened rail strike. The Committee held a most enjoyable farewell party for the Ambassador, HE Dr Chalise and Madame Adhikary, and the Annual Supper was much enjoyed – especially the surprise performance of a set of Nepali folk songs by one of our guests, Yogeshwar Amatya.

We did not hold a summer outing this year as we were unable to identify a location that would have appealed to enough members at a reasonable price. The future and shape of this event is something that the Committee is considering.

The editor of the journal hopes to have the 2014 edition out in early 2015.

Looking ahead, the Annual Supper

will take place as usual at St Columba's Church, Pont Street on 19th February. The Chief Guest will be Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers, whose immensely distinguished legal career includes appointments as Master of the Rolls, Lord Chief Justice, and first President of the Supreme Court, having supervised its transition from the House of Lords. He also has the distinction of being a long-standing member of the Britain-Nepal Society.

The programme of lectures for next year is taking shape. In May Professor Robin Coningham will talk on *Excavating the Birthplace of the Buddha at Lumbini*. In October Craig Holliday will give his postponed talk on *Water Aid in Nepal*. We are hoping that our third lecture in November will feature some dramatic climbing events and pictures.

During the year the Committee has worked hard to deliver the developments promised in the follow-up to the questionnaire circulated earlier in the year. Alison Marston's younger members committee is up and running. It has already promoted a lunch with the captain of the Nepal cricket team and posted a Facebook site. Alison and her colleagues are actively seeking new younger members for the Society. We are



*HE Dr Chalise and friends at the farewell;  
Dr Dhital, Sir Neil Thorne and Mr Joshi*

also endeavouring to establish reciprocal membership with the Nepal-Britain Society in Kathmandu.

We are increasingly using email to alert members to events of interest which are not necessarily arranged by the Society. If you would like to receive these notifications please ensure that we have your email contact details. We are also considering the production of a new and more effective website

The process of transferring the Society's archive to the Gurkha Museum in Winchester has begun. If you have any items that would be appropriate for the collection please let Gavin Edgerley-Harris or myself know.

The Society is looking ahead to the 200th anniversary in 2016 of the signing of the Anglo-Nepal Treaty in 1816 which marked the end of the Anglo-Nepal War 1814 – 1816. Ashley Adams is spearheading the planning for a Sixth Form convention on Nepal and we are looking at the possibility of a Society trip to Nepal in spring 2016 to overlap with the projected Royal Visit to Kathmandu. We are also discussing with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office a jointly hosted event at the FCO to celebrate the bicentenary. It has also been suggested that we might help with the restoration of the apparently somewhat dilapidated grave in Brookwood Cemetery of Edward Gardner the first Resident in Kathmandu. More details of all these events will be circulated in due course but please contact me or a Committee member if you would like any further information at this stage or have other suggestions for Sugauli related activities.

In our drive to increase the membership we have produced an attractive flier which is being circulated as widely as possible including through

the Visa Section of the Embassy. Considerable efforts are being made to attract new members through the various Gurkha networks and such organisations as the British Council and VSO.

Perhaps, inevitably, as we try to break new ground more and more work is being done by a small handful of people. I have to say that appeals for help from the membership have not yielded results. For example, we are still looking for someone to take on the relatively minor task of seeking advertisements for the Journal - a potential source of valuable revenue for the Society.

Far more important is the urgent need for a new secretary to take over from Jenifer Evans who has so brilliantly stepped into the breach for the last three and a half years. Without a secretary it is difficult to see how the Society can function. We are exploring ways of easing the secretary's burden but urgently need someone to take on this role as Jenifer feels, for totally understandable reasons, that she cannot carry on. If no-one comes forward soon we will have to consider a paid position – something that we have never done before.

Before asking Gordon Corrigan to speak I have just one or two completely unrelated announcements. Those of you who know or have heard of John Cross, who has lived in Pokhara for many years, will be delighted to hear that he has finally been granted Citizenship of Nepal – only the second Briton, I believe, ever to achieve this distinction. John is also a prolific author and a number of his books are currently in print and available from the Gurkha Museum shop.

Finally, I would like on your behalf to thank Mahanta Shrestha and Prashant Kunwar of Khukuri Beer for so generously providing the Khukuri beer for us this evening.

*(Major Gordon Corrigan addressed the meeting on 'Gurkhas in World War One'. An article on this topic is elsewhere in the journal. Ed.)*



*Farewell to HE Dr Chalise and Madame Adhikary with the Chairman and Mrs Potter*



*The Supper: Dr Dhital, Lady Chapple, the Chairman and Mr Tej Bahadur Chettri, Charge d'Affaires*

# THE BRITAIN - NEPAL



## medical trust

Registered Charity No: 255249

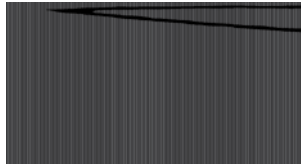
BNMT has over 40 years of service improving the health of the people of Nepal

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

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

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

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



## THE GURKHA MUSEUM

PENINSULA BARRACKS  
ROMSEY ROAD, WINCHESTER  
HAMPSHIRE SO23 8TS

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

### THE UNIQUE AND EXCITING GURKHA STORY

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

*Registered Charity No. 272426*



---

## GURKHAS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

By Gordon Corrigan

In the early years of the twentieth century the British population at large were largely ignorant of the gathering war clouds. With the largest navy in the world, a huge empire and a standard of living that had never been higher, few members of the public, despite the craze for novels warning of a German invasion and occasional German espionage scares, seriously thought that a European war was in the offing. Some politicians and most generals were of a different view. They thought that, given growing German ambitions and French revanchism, war was inevitable and while many of those politicians who accepted the likelihood of war hoped that Britain could remain aloof, it was generally accepted that when it came Britain would support France - although not necessarily on land. Direct negotiations with the French high command had been in progress since 1905 and with the appointment as Director of Military Operations at the War Office of the Francophile Major General Henry Wilson, these negotiations began to crystalize into an agreement to commit British forces on land – something that was opposed by the Royal Navy who advocated a ‘blue water’ strategy relying on the traditional weapon of blockade. It was said that when Wilson asked his great friend the French general Ferdinand Foch how many British soldiers the French would want deployed to Europe in the event of war, Foch replied ‘One – and we will ensure that he is killed on the first day’. The French wanted a commitment. In the event, when war did break out, the British government dithered but accepted that the traditional

avoidance of a ‘Continental Commitment’ could not be adhered to and British forces would be deployed on the European mainland.

It was said at the time, and it has been said many times since, that the British Expeditionary Force that crossed the channel in August 1914 was the best led, the best equipped and the best trained body of troops ever to have left these shores, and that is probably true, but it was pitifully small: four infantry divisions and a cavalry division, compared to the French sixty two infantry and ten cavalry divisions. Even the Belgians managed to field more than we. If Britain was to play any meaningful part in the war on land then massive reinforcement would be required. The Territorial Force, established by Haldane and Haig in 1908 to provide a reserve for the regular army, was as yet lacking in the equipment and training needed for modern war, and while the fledgling armies of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa would eventually expand and play their part that time was not yet. In 1914 the only source of trained regular manpower was the Indian Army.

As the law stood at the time, once the king declared war then all of the empire was automatically at war, but successive Secretaries for India had emphasised to the Indian government that in the event of a European war the Indian army would not be involved. This was a budgetary issue, rather than a statement of principle. If India was to prepare for European warfare against a first class enemy then she would have to be armed and equipped to do so, and while the Indian

army had plentiful mountain artillery it had no field or heavy artillery units, its infantry were armed with the Mk II SMLE rifle rather than the Mk III and it had no wheeled transport. Neither the British nor the Indian government was prepared to spend the money that would be needed – the Indian Army was perfectly well equipped to deal with tribal unrest on the frontiers and to intervene in India's 'near abroad' and that would suffice. Fortunately the Indian army paid little heed to political penny pinching: it was obvious that the British would have to call upon them if the war was to last for any length of time – and whatever civilians and politicians said about a war being over by Christmas, the soldiers knew better – and Indian units had been earmarked for overseas deployment when required. That requirement came very quickly: a division was despatched to Persia to protect the oil fields and on the 6th and 7th of August the Lahore and Sirhind Infantry divisions and the Secunderabad cavalry brigade were mobilised for the Western Front and began to move to the embarkation ports of Bombay and Karachi. By September they were landing in Marseilles. Their baptism of fire would not be long in coming.

Of the twenty-four infantry battalions in the two Indian divisions that arrived on the Western Front in September, six were British (each Indian brigade was established for one British battalion and three Indian or Gurkha battalions), six were Gurkha and twelve were Indian. These latter twelve were a mix of class battalions, where the VCOs and men were all of the same race, and class company battalions which contained a number of races each in their own company. As an example, while all

Gurkha regiments were class regiments, composed only of Gurkhas, the 15th Sikhs and the 47th Sikhs were entirely Sikh, while 57th Wilde's Rifles had one company of Sikhs, one company of Dogras, one company of Pathans and one company of Punjabi Mussalmans, and the 92nd Burma Infantry fielded two companies of Sikhs and two of Punjabi Mussalmans.

Initially the plan had been for Indian units to spend some time in Orleans to get accustomed to Europe, to zero their newly issued Mark III Lee Enfield rifles and to reorganise from the Indian Army eight company order of battle to the British four company system. This was not to be – the first Battle of Ypres was raging with the Germans trying to break through to the Channel ports, and the only troops available to fill the gaps were those of the Indian divisions. Thrown into the line as they arrived, often by companies and battalions separated from their parent formations, with no time to zero or to adjust to the very new and strange environment that they found themselves in, they were just in time and in just enough strength to stop the German advance. The immediate crisis averted, the Indian Corps were allocated their own sector of the front, about a quarter of the total British front. Moving into the firing line on the night of 29/30th October 1914 the 2/8th Gurkhas were the first to feel the full force of the next German onslaught. Positioned in what was a fifteen feet wide drainage ditch deepened to provide a rudimentary fire trench, they had only been in position for a few hours when German artillery opened up and continued all night, with many shells falling into the precarious and far too wide trench. At first light German infantry assaults began,

interspersed by mortar bombardments, and although the battalion held, just, by the end of the day of the eleven British Officers present at the beginning of the battle five had been killed, three wounded and one was missing believed killed. Two hundred and twelve Gurkha officers and men were killed, wounded or missing. Of the 111 Gurkha ranks posted as missing, it was later discovered that most had been killed by shellfire collapsing the drainage ditch on top of them.

Soon it was the turn of the 2/2 Gurkha Rifles. They arrived in Marseilles on 12 October 1914 and went into the Trenches near Neuve Chapelle on 29 October. On 2 and 3 November they were bombarded by German artillery and mortars and attacked time and again by infantry. Seven British Officers, the Subedar Major (Gurkha Major) and four Gurkha Officers were killed, and one British Officer, one Gurkha Officer and 97 Gurkha Other Ranks wounded and missing (most of the missing actually dead). When the First Battle of Ypres drew to a close, with the German attempt to get to the Channel thwarted, it was said that the Indian Army contingent had saved the Empire, and while this was perhaps an exaggeration, they had certainly saved the BEF.

One of the major weaknesses of the Indian Army at the time was a lack of a reserve of British Officers, and it says much for the innate professional ability of the Gurkhas that they often had only one or two British officers to lead them, and often found that officers sent up to replace those killed or wounded were not necessarily from Gurkha regiments and hence did not speak Gurkhali (as the Nepali language was then known). As all officers of the Indian army, both King's

and Viceroy's commissioned, were required to qualify as Urdu speakers (Urdu being the lingua franca of the Indian army) then these officers could communicate with the Gurkha officers who could pass on information to the men, but it was not an ideal situation.

Gurkha battalions took part in all the major battles of 1914 and 1915 on the Western Front, and were largely responsible for what was at least a partial victory at Neuve Chapelle when, after the British division which should have also been involved was held up, all six Gurkha battalions participated in the capture of the village, the first time that the German line had been broken and the resultant ground held. Until 1911 only British ranks were eligible for the award of the Victoria Cross and the Indian Army had its own system of gallantry awards. The first Gurkha VC was won by Rifleman Kulbir Thapa of the 3rd Gurkha Rifles at the Battle of Loos in 1915, for rescuing British and Gurkha wounded under intense enemy fire. The 3rd Gurkhas won a second VC in Egypt, when Rifleman Karanbahadur Rana took out a Turkish machine gun post with a Lewis gun when the other crew member was killed.

In 1915 the only troops who knew what they were doing in the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign were those of 29 Indian Infantry Brigade, one Sikh and three Gurkha battalions, but sadly one brigade just was not enough, given that the British and ANZAC troops were barely trained and inexperienced. General Hamilton, the Commander in Chief, said afterwards that if only he had had more Gurkhas in Gallipoli he would never have been held up by the Turks.

In late 1915 the Gurkha battalions on the Western Front, along with the rest of

the Indian Corps less the artillery, was transferred to Mesopotamia. There they found they had exchanged one dangerous location where the administration worked for an equally dangerous one where the administration did not work. Although ultimately victorious it was an appalling campaign against heat, flies, disease and a tenacious enemy. In Egypt the defence of the Suez Canal against determined Turkish attacks was largely in the hands of Gurkhas and they fought in Palestine (including a platoon of camel riding Gurkhas attached to TE Lawrence's Arab contingent) and in the little remembered Salonika campaign. The armistice in November 1918 did not mean the end of fighting, for three Gurkha battalions were in Russia as part of the Allied Intervention Force supporting the White Russians against the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War.

By 1916 it was calculated that nearly every Gurkha of military age was serving the British war effort, whether in the British Indian army or in the Nepal army, units of which were sent to India to allow British and Indian units to be sent to the war. From a population of around four million, only a minority of them Gurkhas, around 100,000 Gurkhas were mobilised for the First World War and about twenty percent of them were killed. In whatever campaigns they fought they served cheerfully, loyally and with that irrepressible Gurkha humour in a war not of their making.

### **SOCIETY TIES SCARVES AND LAPEL BADGES**

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.



# WorldWide Volunteering



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

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

T. 01935 825588

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

F. 01935 825775

*“You are never too old to volunteer”*

---

## RAID INTO TIBET

By Sam Cowan

A recent study of two Foreign Office files in the UK National Archives [371/176118 and 371/176120] shed interesting light on events in Kathmandu in July 1964 which put Antony Duff, the recently arrived British Ambassador, in a predicament, seriously discomfited the monarch and caused major problems for Panchayat ministers and officials.

The man at the centre of the events was a dedicated supporter of the Tibetan cause called George Patterson. He was a former missionary in Kham and spoke the Kham dialect fluently. He arrived in Kathmandu in March 1964 and was later joined by Adrian Cowell, a gifted documentary film maker, and Chris Menges, an experienced TV cameraman. Their ambitious mission was to make contact with Khampa fighters in Mustang and film them carrying out a raid so that the world could see that Tibetans were still actively fighting the Chinese.

The build-up in late 1960 of Khampas in Mustang and their later dominance in the area was a badly kept secret. An article in the New York Times on 3 March 62 quoted a Nepalese foreign ministry spokesman as saying that unidentified aircraft had been dropping arms to about 4000 Khampas in Mustang. The same article said that official Indian sources were expressing strong concern that the build-up of Tibetans on Nepal's northern border could lead to China sending troops into Nepal. There were 2000 Khampas in Mustang and the first two air drops to them, organised by the CIA, had taken place in April 1961 and December 1961. In each case, two Hercules aircraft had delivered the

weapons to a drop zone 10 kms inside Tibet, just across the border from Mustang. The weapons dropped were mainly of Second World War vintage

The CIA's intention from the outset was for the Khampas to establish positions astride the roads within Tibet but despite sustained pressure [which increased considerably after a third and final air drop into Mustang in May 1965 by one DC-6] such a move never took place. Setting up bases in Tibet would have led to heavy casualties on the scale suffered by those Khampas parachuted into Tibet between 1957 and 1962 after the PLA had fully mobilised to meet the threat. Of the 49 men inserted, 37 were killed, most of them in pitched battles against the PLA. Lightly equipped guerrilla forces simply cannot stand and fight conventionally equipped armies supported by artillery and fighter ground attack aircraft.

The same heavy attrition occurred when the CIA shifted their point of effort in early 1964 to infiltrating small groups of Khampas into Tibet on intelligence missions. Four members of one of these groups were arrested in Kathmandu in June 1964 following a brawl. One of Duff's dispatches gives the detail of this arrest as told to him by the Inspector General of Police, PS Lama. Lama told Duff that the Khampas were trained abroad and were on their way to the border. He also gave Duff a list of sophisticated surveillance and communication equipment taken from the Tibetans which, they said, had been given to them in Kathmandu by Hugh McDevitt who was employed as the

manager of "Air Ventures" which operated two helicopters for the United States aid mission.

All of this indicates that from an early stage the Nepalese authorities knew what was going on in Mustang, and who was backing the Khampas there with money and material. There was therefore no chance that the Nepalese authorities would allow Patterson anywhere near Mustang but they underestimated the man's guile and determination.

In his book, "A Fool at Forty," Patterson describes the web of deceit he spun in Kathmandu to cause maximum confusion about his real aim beneath the cover of making "a TV film about Nepal." King Mahendra was travelling in the far west, but Patterson saw most of the key people: Tulsi Giri, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Prakash Thakur, the Chief of Protocol, Mr Banskota, the Director of Publicity, and General Padma Bahadur Khatri, the Foreign Secretary. He also had a two-hour meeting with Mahendra's brother, Prince Basundhara.

Patterson clearly pulled the wool over all their eyes as he quickly got permission to start filming in and around Kathmandu. His application to go Mustang was refused but on a visit to a Tibetan camp near Trisuli, Patterson was informed about a small Khampa group in Tsum. After some delay he obtained a permit for "a trek to Pokhara." He had a further slice of luck when three separately nominated liaison officers all found some excuse not to go. At the last minute, a young college student was nominated and accepted. Soon after getting the permit, the group headed to Arughat at which point they left the trail to Pokhara by turning north up the Buri

Gandaki. After passing the police check post and Indian wireless station at Setibas, (One of 17 established along the northern border by secret protocol in 1950 and withdrawn in 1969) they left the line of the river to head north east up the long, steep trail to Tsum.

Contact was quickly made with the small Khampa group of 17 men. They had been dispatched from their main base in Mustang two years earlier to establish an outpost in this distant location. They had one Bren gun and eight rifles between them, and no means of communication. Tendar, their commander, had led reconnaissance sorties across the high snow passes which marked the border to monitor traffic on the Dzonkha to Kyrong road but, with supplies from Mustang having to come on a long and tortuous trail across the Thorung La and Laryka La passes, little offensive action had taken place.

At the time there was also apparently a lull in cross border raids from the main Khampa group in Mustang. A July 1964 dispatch from Duff reported a meeting he had with Michael Peissel who "recently had spent two months in Mustang getting material for a book." Peissel gave him a detailed account of where the Khampa camps were located and told him that there had been no raiding across the border since early 1963 "after the Dalai Lama had sent word that the raiding was to stop and the Tibetans were to settle down peacefully where they were and cultivate the land". CIA sources also report this lull but give different reasons for it.

Patterson lost no time in putting his proposition to Tendar. With no means of checking with his superiors in Mustang, Tendar had his doubts. To decide the

issue, he went to the gumpa to cast the dice. The result was a clear indication to carry out the raid. On 7 June 1964, Tendar, with his eight lightly armed men, the three foreigners and three Khampa-provided porters, crossed the high snow passes which marked the border. Two days later at 14.10 hours, having been in the ambush position since before dawn, they attacked four unescorted PLA vehicles travelling on the Dzonka to Kyrong road. Three vehicles were damaged and 8 PLA soldiers killed. Patterson subsequently gave a detailed account of the raid to Charles Wylie, the Defence Attache in the UK embassy, and listed all the weapons carried. All except one were of the type dropped by the CIA. The exception was "one British rifle marked LSA & Co Ltd, 1919, which the Khampas claimed had been officially supplied to Tibet". (In 1947, acting on a request for military aid, Britain supplied a substantial amount of arms and ammunition to the Tibetan government.)

In his book, Patterson's detailed description of the raid closely follows the account he gave to Wylie, including how they left the student minder behind under the pretext that they were going to film refugees. The ambush was successfully filmed and the team returned to Kathmandu on 27 June 64. Various lurid accounts have appeared of what happened next, including stories about the team being pursued to the border by the police and the Khampas misinterpreting a CIA order to retrieve the footage as a directive to kill them. Duff's dispatches are clear and generally tie in with what Patterson says.

On the morning after they returned, Cowell dispatched the footage of the raid on the first plane out which happened to

be going to East Pakistan. A few days later, the three of them went to see Duff to confess all, mainly on the grounds, Patterson says, that they thought it was the proper thing to do. (Duff had entertained them to dinner prior to their departure but they had said nothing about their true intentions.) Cowell and Menges were dubious but Patterson agreed that Duff could pass the information to Mahendra at an audience already fixed for the evening of Friday 3 July 64. Duff waited to the Friday morning to alert London to what had happened. One of his two telegrams that day stated that he was going to inform the US ambassador. It would be reasonable to assume that this is when the CIA would have been first alerted. At this stage the UK was still accepting categorical denials from the US that it was involved in support for the Khampas. Subsequently the CIA blamed Baba Yeshe, the Mustang commander, for ordering the ambush to get publicity. He was reprimanded and the flow of funds to Mustang was stopped for six months. Tendar was recalled to Mustang and reassigned to administrative duties.

Mahendra's first reaction was to tell Duff that the film would be "a big headache for us and for you." In a later audience, Mahendra told him that the Khampas constituted one of his major problems though many considered that he was at best ambivalent on the subject. However, such apparent sympathy clearly counted for nothing given what Patterson was now about to expose to the world. Immediately after meeting Duff, Mahendra summoned the Foreign Minister, Kirti Nidhi Bista. He lost no time in transferring the monarch's ire to his subordinates at a meeting he called at



08.30 on Saturday. Duff reported that "the main brunt fell on Padam Bahadur Khatri who took it especially hard because he would much sooner not have known anything about it all."

That same morning, as previously planned, Cowell and Menges left Kathmandu to drive overland to India via Rauxal, accompanied by their student liaison officer. Patterson stayed on in Kathmandu as his wife, a surgeon, had arrived in his absence to help in the United Mission Hospital, bringing with her their three small children. Cowell and Menges were detained overnight at the border but left the next morning for Calcutta. Some innocuous film footage and audio tapes were confiscated. These were later returned to them; the tapes through the UK embassy in Kathmandu and the film from the Nepalese embassy in London. Duff reported that the palace had given the order to release them without informing the Foreign Secretary. Two days later he thought they were still under arrest and being brought to Kathmandu to face disciplinary action

A week later Duff reported: "Judging by conversations with the King and the Foreign Minister at a reception, I have acquired no merit at all for telling the Nepalese about the sortie over the border into Tibet. The Foreign Minister indeed muttered something about it being sometimes better to conceal things for a while." At the same reception Mahendra said that the film ought to be stopped. Duff told him this was not possible. Patterson and Cowell had told Duff that they would wait for three months before showing the material. In the event, the finished film called "Raid into Tibet" was not shown on British TV until 9 May 1966. It was widely acclaimed but,

contrary to many reports, there is no record of it winning the Prix Italia. Cowell did win it in 1971 for his documentary about a remote Amazonian tribe: "The Tribe that Hides from Man."

Patterson was clearly not prepared to sit on his story for 18 months. In March 1965 he wrote a lengthy propagandist-style article on the raid in "The Reporter," an American biweekly news magazine published in New York. It described the ambush in graphic detail and made it clear that the action had been filmed for TV. Large extracts immediately appeared in the Hindustan Times, under the heading: "Nepal-based Khampas harass Chinese". The files show that the articles caused concern among British officials which suggests that perhaps ATV, the independent company who finally transmitted it in UK, had been persuaded to delay showing the film. An earlier note in the files indicates a determination to do this if pressure on Patterson failed.

Throughout the furor in Kathmandu over the filming of the raid, Duff had argued that some control over the film's final content might be achieved by taking a conciliatory approach with Patterson. Only Mahendra and the palace were receptive: Padam Bahadur Khatri and his cohorts wanted some measure of retribution. This manifested itself at the airport two weeks later when, without producing any authority, the police prevented Patterson from leaving on his booked flight. When Duff complained, no one in Kathmandu could or would identify who had given the order. Three days later Patterson was allowed to leave having signed a five line note saying essentially that he was sorry for any inconvenience caused by visiting Setibas, which was not listed on his permit, and

that he had not visited Mustang.

“Why that curious little statement should have satisfied anyone is merely one of the many mysteries about Nepalese behaviour throughout this affair.” That comment from Duff’s final dispatch on the event seems an apt way to end this tale as it also neatly conveys the opaqueness of government during the Panchayat days which so confused outsiders and so suited the monarch.

[This article first appeared in "The Record," a Kathmandu online news magazine, on 9 May 14.]

*[In addition to the UK archive material and Patterson’s book, other information about Tendar and the Khampas in Mustang comes from the well-sourced book: ‘The CIA’s Secret War in Tibet’ by Conboy and Morrison. Further reading includes ‘Mustang a Lost Tibetan Kingdom’ and ‘Cavaliers of Kham’, both by Michel Peissel. A more recent work, ‘Tibet an Unfinished Story’, written by two American authors, Lezlee Brown Halper & Stefan Halper was published in 2013 by Hurst Publishers. Ed.]*

## ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE JOURNAL

Why not advertise in the Britain-Nepal Society Journal.

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

***You never know who may be interested!***

Please contact the Editor, Lt Col GD Birch

[gerry.birch3@btinternet.com](mailto:gerry.birch3@btinternet.com)

---

## PAINTING NEPAL: DR HENRY AMBROSE OLDFIELD AND RAJ MAN SINGH

By Diana Wooldridge

(Diana Wooldridge recently completed an MA in Art History at the University of Sussex, with a dissertation on the work of Henry Oldfield. She addressed the Society on 7th October 2014.)

Dr Henry Ambrose Oldfield, Surgeon to the British Residency in Nepal from 1850 until 1864, produced over 200 hundred drawings and watercolour paintings during his time in Nepal. At the same time he wrote detailed accounts of the geography, history, religion and architecture of the country, later published as *Sketches from Nepal* in 1880. An illustrated account of his paintings by Kanak Mani Dixit was published in the Golden Jubilee edition of this journal in 2010.

Oldfield is renowned as the only British artist in Nepal at that time, but he was not the first or the only watercolour painter. In this article I want to compare him with a near contemporary, a Nepalese artist, Raj Man Singh Chitrakar. Not much is known about his life. As a result of training in western art techniques he became skilled in depicting the natural history and cultural monuments of nineteenth century Nepal to illustrate the studies produced by British residents in his country. His natural history watercolour illustrations are celebrated for their intricate and accurate beauty and were also featured in the Jubilee Journal in an article by Carol Inskipp. My aim here is to look at Oldfield's work, in the context of Raj Man Singh and Nepalese art and artists.

Nepal in the nineteenth century had a long-standing tradition of religious art, both sculpture and paintings. The most notable paintings were *paubha* (devotional paintings on cloth) and

printed scrolls, depicting Buddhist legends and sacred figures. The patrons and the artists were generally anonymous, but by the seventeenth century a few artists are named, identified as 'chitrakar', the Sanskrit term for an artist. This became synonymous with a caste whose family members became professional artists. The relative isolation imposed by the ruling Shah dynasty encouraged the development of a specifically Nepalese style, but by the later eighteenth century outside influences from both Tibet and India were starting to have an impact on the traditional Nepalese art.

By the early nineteenth century Nepalese art began to be more open to foreign influences. There were two channels of this, each with a very different focus. The first was the Nepali state patronage of artists to portray the ruling dynasty and the court, aspiring to emulate paintings commissioned by the British Viceroy and governing classes in India. The royal household started to look to European styles favouring Western style court and military uniform dress.

Local artists in India were already being recruited by Indian princes to produce portraits in the British style. In the absence of any British artists in Nepal, Jang Bahadur Rana (Prime Minister who ruled from 1846 to 1877, introduced Bhaujaman Chitrakar, one of the Chitrakar artists, to British portrait and oil painting techniques, taking him on his visit to England in 1850. During this visit he presented to the British Government a

full size oil painting of himself, 'taken by one of the members of his suite'. Bhaujaman's painting evidences the shift towards westernised portrait painting, with a more naturalistic 'swagger style' pose set against a landscape background, very different to the more traditional Nepalese royal portraits. Paintings in this style by anonymous artists of the Nepalese School were collected by Henry Oldfield and are now in the British Library India Office collection, including portraits of Gurkha officers and families. One of these is of Oldfield's dogs and his wife's pony, with servants, outside his house, presumably commissioned by him.

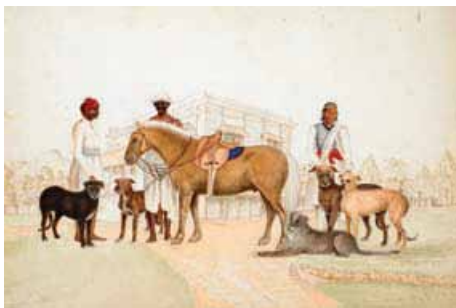


Plate 1 - Anon, Nepalese School, Pony, dogs and attendant servants outside the Residency Surgeon's house, Kathmandu, © The British Library Board, Add.Or.2610.

(Plate 1) This displays a high degree of portraiture skills particularly in the facial expressions of the servants and the realistic depiction of the various animals; it resonates with a British country lifestyle. This suggests it was painted for the Oldfields by an artist exposed to British painters' work, possibly through the influence of Bhaujaman Chitrakar when he accompanied Jang Bahadur to London or of British trained Indian artists. It is certainly very different in style to the work of most of the other

Nepalese artists.

The second influence on Nepalese artists was training as illustrators by the early British residents. Brian Houghton Hodgson, British Resident in Kathmandu from 1820-1843, is known for his initiative in instructing Nepalese artists to illustrate his studies of Nepalese natural history and architecture. This followed a practice originated in India by Dr Francis Buchanan, who used Indian artists in the East India Company surveying offices in Calcutta to illustrate his travel journals. Dr. Buchanan was a predecessor of Oldfield from 1802 to 1803 as Surgeon to the first British political mission to the Court of Nepal and brought with him an unnamed Indian artist to produce watercolour drawings of the plants he encountered in the Kathmandu Valley, which are now preserved by the Linnean Society.

Brian Houghton Hodgson was the first to use Nepalese artists to illustrate his studies of natural history and the Buddhist monuments of Nepal. He wrote to his sister in 1833: 'I have three native artists always employed in drawing from nature'. The quality of these illustrations was exceptionally high and Hodgson was very proud of his native artists, writing of them: 'Are they not wondrous works for a Nepalese? I have some more being executed which I dare any artist working in Europe to excel, and they are rigidly correct in their minutest detail.'

The main artist trained by Hodgson was Raj Man Singh. Not much is known about his life. As a member of the Chitrakar caste of artists, Raj Man Singh would originally have been trained in the traditional conventions of religious paintings and developed great skill in drawing outline brush images. The

natural history watercolours attributed to him show precise details of birds and animals, resulting from training by Hodgson based on scientific study of anatomy and dissection. Raj Man Singh signed many of his works in Nagari script, thus moving away from the traditional anonymity of the Chitrakar caste. His natural history paintings have recently been commemorated in Nepal by the issue of a special stamp (Plate 2).



Plate 2 - Rajman Singh Chitrakar, Nepal Eminent Painter, 2 Stamp Set, Nepal Mint 2013.

His drawings and paintings of Buddhist monuments are less well known but are of particular interest in comparison with Oldfield's work. Raj Man Singh's style evolved between the 1820s and 1840s with an increasingly skilful use of perspective. The sketches in the second series of Raj Man Singh's works, nearly all signed, which were donated by Hodgson to the Royal Asiatic Society in London, show a more developed approach to the depiction of architectural views, with full use of perspective, using the device of the *camera lucida* to project an accurate image of the building. Apart from the significant advance in technical skill which these pictures represent, their composition is remarkably different.

This is also illustrated by his depiction of temple buildings in Patan clustered in a way that evokes the landscape of the city setting, framed in the foreground by

stylised trees. (Plate 3). The foreground in many cases includes rough sketched figures, animals, vegetation or small buildings. These illustrate how Raj Man Singh adopted some of the picturesque conventions of British artists in India.



Plate 3 - Raj Man Singh, *The Nyatapola Temple, Bhatgaon*, © Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

Raj Man Singh remained in Nepal after Houghton Hodgson's departure in 1843.

He may have continued to produce some works for Sir Henry Lawrence, Hodgson's successor as Resident, but then travelled to Darjeeling in 1845 to join Hodgson who continued his Buddhist studies in retirement there until he finally left India in 1857. There is no evidence of what then happened to Raj Man Singh. There was at least one other British trained artist continuing in Nepal; some of the pictures associated with Sir Henry Lawrence during his Residency are ascribed to 'unnamed artists of the Nepalese school'. These vary in the extent to which they followed the style developed by Raj Man Singh, with varying assured use of perspective and realism and some developed an equally distinctive but very different style.

Henry Oldfield, after training as a doctor, joined the Indian Army Medical Service in 1846. The first known

paintings by Oldfield were of scenes in India, during his early army postings in Lahore and Simla, following a picturesque style, typical of British amateurs in India. In 1850 he was appointed to the British Residency in Kathmandu, and in July 1851 he wrote to his mother that he was 'cultivating a taste for drawing, especially sketching from nature'. Between 1850 and 1856 he lived on his own in the Residency Medical Officer's house and his account of his daily life illustrates the scope he had for pursuing his painting. He was up at sunrise and would walk for five miles before visiting the hospital adjoining his house; he would have time to read, write or draw until the afternoon, going sketching when the weather was fine.

His aim in his writings and artwork in Nepal was to create a complete record of the history and culture of the country. The full title of his *Sketches from Nepal* illustrates the range of his interests: *Sketches from Nepal: Historical and Descriptive, with Anecdotes of the Court Life and Wild Sports of the Country in the Time of Maharaja Jang Bahadur, G.C.B., to Which Is Added an Essay on Nepalese Buddhism and Illustrations of Religious Monuments, Architecture, and Scenery from the Author's Own Drawings.*

The major part of Oldfield's work is a record in words and illustration of the Buddhist monuments of Nepal. Drawing on the writings of Hodgson before him, Oldfield himself researched Nepalese Buddhism extensively in the first years of his Kathmandu posting. In his essay on Nepalese Buddhism, he reflected the belief that Buddhism in Nepal was in decline: 'sadly degenerated from the high standard of doctrine and of discipline ... established by the Primitive

*Buddhist Church*'.

This attitude underlies Oldfield's account of Buddhist temple architecture and monuments; in writing about and depicting the culture and monuments of Buddhism he is providing a sympathetic record of what he sees as a declining religion. He was influenced in this by his family background; his elder brother Edmund, a Keeper at the British Museum, was a friend of John Ruskin and a renowned antiquarian. Oldfield deplored the neglect and ruin of temples and public buildings that he saw in the Kathmandu Valley. He wrote of Patan: '*Although a most curious and interesting city – rich in Buddhist monuments and Hindu temples, and full of picturesque views of buildings once profusely ornamented with elaborate carvings and grotesque sculptures in wood and in stone, but now broken into ruins or overgrown with jungle – yet there is an air of sad solemnity, and almost of gloom, hanging about everything connected with the place. ... Patan's glory has departed.*'

These comments by Oldfield are illustrative of the antiquarian approach to the recording of threatened monuments for posterity. The discovery of the objects of past cultures and recording them for posterity before they were lost was increasingly seen as important in Victorian England. An examination of Oldfield's treatment of Buddhist temples illustrates this systematic approach. In his writing he classifies the temples by type: dedicatory temples, memorial temples and small funereal temples, and also covers in detail the various monuments and shrines within them.

His paintings of the temples covered the full range – from major temples in the former royal cities to the more remote

rural temples in the mountains. But this was not just a romantic interest in decaying ruins. He took an interest in the current state of the buildings, and the cultural and social life associated with them. His written account of the Bodhnath temple the largest in Nepal, records the dimensions and structure of the building in mathematical detail. However he also makes other observations about the context and culture associated with the temple, noting that this is an ancient Tibetan temple, continuing to be a pilgrimage centre, and the painting depicts it surrounded by visiting shepherds from Tibet. (Plate 4)



Plate 4 - H.A.Oldfield, *Buddhist temple at Bodhnath - Tibetans & their sheep at the stupa at Bodhnath*  
© Royal Geographical Society.

He describes in the book how crowds of Tibetan pilgrims and traders annually visit Nepal and work to maintain the masonry of the building and its painted decoration, as well as clearing the weeds. His drawing of the architecture in this representation is much less detailed, focusing instead on the grandeur of the temple and its impact on the landscape: *'from its great bulk and the height of its glittering spire, it can be seen from all*

*parts of the Valley'*.

In 1856 he returned to England for a year and was married to Margaret Alicia Prescott, who returned with him to Nepal the following year. This was a point of significant change in personal circumstances for Oldfield, marking almost the end of his painting career. Margaret wrote to Oldfield's mother in 1857 that she would be taking Harry's place as his correspondent because of his deteriorating sight, worsened by eyestrain from his outdoor painting, and that he was no longer able to produce new drawings.

Margaret began to organise his work, framing and mounting his pictures. Like many women of her generation, she did *'a little in the drawing line'* and may have been more competent than she implied; she mentions to Edmund a large book of her husband's sketches *'about a dozen of which I had finished for him.'* The British Library has twenty three watercolour and wash drawings ascribed to Margaret herself, dated between 1857 and 1864 when they left Nepal. One of these, a painting of their house including the children with their Nepalese servants, has a distinctive domestic character which suggests it was Margaret's own work (Plate 5) It is dated 1864, by which time Henry was certainly unable to draw or paint, and was preserved with a pasted on photograph portraying her in their carriage .

Oldfield had a unique opportunity to capture the visual images and record the life of the country because of his good relationship with the Prime Minister Jang Bahadur. This became for a period a close friendship. In his book Oldfield describes elephant hunting expeditions together in 1852 with Jang and the young



Plate 5- Margaret Oldfield , *The Residency Surgeon's House, Kathmandu*, © The British Library Board WD.2865.

King and later in 1857 his wife writes how their dogs and Jang's were taken for walks together, and how she corrected an English letter for him. One aspect of this friendship was Jang's interest in Western medicine; Oldfield describes Jang's use of medical instruments which he could borrow for his own hospital use and Jang was a strong believer in vaccination, paying Oldfield to vaccinate his son in 1850. Oldfield was also asked to provide medical treatment for members of the royal family, including, unusually, the women.

This privileged access to the royal court in Kathmandu gave Oldfield unique opportunities. He and his wife were invited to the wedding of Jang Bahadur's son to the King's daughter and this was described by Margaret Oldfield in a detailed account in her letters home in 1857. The significance of this for Oldfield's artistic activity was the unusual degree of freedom he had to travel around the wider environment of the Kathmandu valley, including trips into the mountains with tents. The most dramatic of these opportunities for travel was in 1855, when Oldfield was apparently permitted by Jang Bahadur to accompany the Nepalese troops on a campaign in the

north-west frontier mountains against the Chinese and Tibetan forces. This enabled Oldfield to produce paintings which show the progress of operations near the town of Keerung (*Kyirong*) at the mouth of an important pass (*Beyond Langtang. Ed.*) which leads to Tibet.

The paintings of buildings were Oldfield's best work – perhaps less successful are some of his landscapes. He sketched and painted a number of mountain landscapes, with a very stylised and basic treatment of the Himalayas and foothills. The mountains in the background illustrate this vagueness in his depiction of geographical features and contrasts with his detailed written descriptions of the individual mountain ranges. His letters record that he spent a lot of his time out walking and sketching in the countryside around his house in the Kathmandu valley and in his correspondence says that he was '*annoyed at not being able to draw landscape as well as architecture*'. It is arguable that he developed a style in depicting mountains derived from the Nepalese painters – for instance the earlier landscape of the Trisuli River by Raj Man Singh (Plate 6). Oldfield's painting of the source of the same river at Gossainkind (Plate 7) is actually entitled by him – '*based on a sketch by Raj Man Singh.*'

Another aspect where Oldfield's painting lacked detail is his depiction of the human form. The figures in the foreground of his paintings are small and not painted with the same detail as the buildings. This is possibly because their purpose is part of the picturesque tradition to indicate the grandeur and scale of the buildings or mountains; possibly also because this was not Oldfield's strength as an artist. It is





Plate 6 - Raj Man Singh, *The source of the Trisuli River*, © Royal Geographical Society.



Plate 7 - H.A. Oldfield, *View of 'Sooriy-Koond' & 'Goosainkoond'* © The British Library Board WD.3331.

that there are at least two different versions of Oldfield's well known picture of the Golden Gate at Bhaktapur, with identical architectural detail but with different colour wash and figures (Plate 8).

So what does this tell us about the relationship between the works of the Nepalese and this British artist? Raj Man Singh's natural history watercolours demonstrate a degree of skilled artistic talent which Oldfield could not match. His technical skill in perspective and architectural drawing was established well before Oldfield came to Nepal. The



Plate 8 - 27 H.A. Oldfield, *Golden Gate in the Durbar at Bhaktapur*, © The British Library Board WD3300.

comparison of Raj Man Singh's pictures and those of Oldfield suggests to me that the latter was influenced by the example of the Nepalese artist; he had pictures by the Nepalese artist in his collection and, as was noted above, he used at least one of Raj Man Singh's drawings as a basis for his own work.

What is interesting is the elements in common between the two artists. Their depictions of the Temple of Bhimsen in Bhaktapur (Plates 9 & 10) are remarkably similar, and we have to remember that the Nepalese artist produced his work ten years before Oldfield. Between them a Nepalese style of depicting architectural monuments seems to have evolved.

### **What was the impact of Oldfield in Nepal?**

Oldfield's significance is his unique position as the only British artist on any scale in nineteenth century Nepal. I have argued that he was not Nepal's 'first secular artist', and landscape painter, by showing that Raj Man Singh and other British trained 'native artists' in Nepal



Plate 9 - Raj Man Singh, Temple of Bhimsen, © Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.



Plate 10 - H.A.Oldfield, Temple of Bhimsen, Bhatgaon © The British Library Board WD2838.

had already established non-religious art in the British tradition and style. Interest in Oldfield was revived by the publication in Kathmandu in 1975 of *Views of Nepal, 1851-1864*, a collection of coloured prints of paintings by Oldfield and his wife, edited in Kathmandu by Cecilia and Hallvard Kuløy. His reputation in modern day Nepal is largely based on their value as historical evidence to inform our understanding of Nepal's cities in the past and this has been illustrated by Dixit in his Asian Affairs article on Oldfield's paintings. It can be argued that Oldfield's contribution to the visual recording of Nepalese cultural monuments was

particularly important because of the precise window of time when he was painting before the advent of photography.

The first known photographs of Nepal were taken by Captain Clarence Comyn Taylor in 1863, the year that Oldfield and his family left Kathmandu. Taylor was a former army officer, transferred to the Political Service. He photographed people of the different tribes in Nepal in response to an official British government directive and also took pictures of Jang Bahadur's family and of the historic buildings of Kathmandu. The Oldfield letters show that they took an active interest in this during their last nine months in Nepal which overlapped with Comyn Taylor's posting. Margaret Oldfield wrote home in May 1863 that she was enclosing a 'likeness of Harry' and that they were collecting a portfolio of Nepal photographs. These are mounted at the back of the bound volume of the Oldfield Letters in the British Library.

This leads to the conclusion that the year 1863 was a turning point in Nepal between the era of visual records in the form of drawings and paintings and the new medium of photographic record. Photographic evidence was beginning to provide a more reliable documentary source for architectural restoration and the first significant collection of photographs was reproduced by the French sociologist Gustav Le Bon as engravings in his *Voyage to Nepal* in 1885. Nepalese photographers did not appear for another generation. As with the introduction of water-colour painting in the mid nineteenth century, the development of photography as a medium was led by members of the Chitrakar family, portraitists in oils as

well as photographers, working mainly for the ruling Rana dynasty. This illustrates again how through the Chitrakar family caste the Nepalese were able to absorb and adapt European innovations to the needs of its own culture.

In parallel there has been a significant revival of Raj Man Singh's reputation as a pioneer in the development of art in Nepal, led by some of the Nepalese cultural community in the Chitrakar family tradition of the artist caste who have produced two commemorative books. Both artists were practising at a time and in a situation outside the norm for their group; first, Raj Man Singh as a Nepalese artist who ended up leaving Nepal to follow his British instructor and patron to Darjeeling and later Oldfield as an expatriate amateur artist in a small isolated British community, yet with strong connections to the Nepalese ruling dynasty

Interest in Oldfield's work has been revived in recent years by European residents working in Nepal. The discovery and publication of Oldfield's paintings by the Kuløys in the 1970s, the architectural restoration work in Kathmandu by Gutschow and the 1999 exhibition of Oldfield's work were all part of the re-awakening international cultural interest and activity in Nepal. It is plausible to argue that our interest in the appeal of Nepal and its cultural heritage as represented by both Oldfield and Raj Man Singh is open to the criticism of being a form of modern orientalism – the appeal of the exotic East. But this interpretation is belied by the real historical and cultural significance of Nepal; its architectural heritage and religious monuments. The

study and restoration of this heritage in the last few decades has been a significant achievement enabled by the contribution of a number of key western expatriates working in partnership with Nepalese specialists.

I hope I have demonstrated the value of looking at Oldfield's work alongside that of his Nepalese contemporaries, particularly Raj Man Singh. This gives us a fascinating example of reciprocal cultural influence between the Nepalese and a British artist. It is arguable that this was facilitated by the fact that Nepal was not a British colony with the direct power relationships of imperialism. This leads to the conclusion that the time is long overdue for the works of Oldfield and Raj Man Singh to be exhibited together in Nepal and Britain to enable us to fully appreciate the interactions between the British and the Nepalese artist.

## NOTES

Main sources:

*Henry Ambrose Oldfield Papers; Letters*, British Library, India Office Collection.

David Waterhouse, *The Origins of Himalayan Studies: Brian Houghton Hodgson in Nepal and Darjeeling 1820-1858* – chapters by Carol Inskipp and J.P.Losty.

Harihar Raj Joshi, *Raj Man Singh Chitrakar: the First Nepali Pioneer Artist of Water Colour Paintings: Who Sketched Illustrations for Brian Hodgson*

Images by courtesy of the British Library, Royal Geographic Society and Royal Asiatic Society of Britain and Ireland.

---

## THE BRIAN HOUGHTON HODGSON AWARD FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (BHANC)

By Hem Sagar Baral, Country Manager, Zoological Society of London Nepal Office and  
Founder President, Himalayan Nature

The name Brian Houghton Hodgson needs no introduction to many people who are involved in studying and enhancing the Nepal-Britain relationship.

During the 1980s when I got involved in bird and wildlife research, I had the pleasure of reading a couple of books on Hodgson and few papers about his life when I was still at the start of my career on birds. It was fascinating to learn about his life and his contributions to Himalayan ornithology, natural history and Buddhism. He was a good-hearted person and had a high regard for the Nepali people. He was a man born in the UK but he belonged to the Himalayas. Perhaps he was more a Pahadi man than a British man!

Many years have gone by but his knowledge and contribution to the natural history of the Himalayas he shared with us is still so valid. Even today we constantly refer to Hodgson's work, and perhaps no other single person could have added so much knowledge of the natural history of the Himalayas as he has done.

He is a forgotten hero in the history of time. So through Himalayan Nature, the NGO I founded in the year 2000, I took the initiative to remember this forgotten hero of natural history conservation in the Himalayas. It did not have to be a British person to honour his knowledge and contribution. Therefore I proposed setting up an award in Hodgson's name to the board members of Himalayan Nature. The award was set up to honour

individual(s) for his/her/their lifetime work. It was named the Brian Hodgson Award for Nature Conservation, in short 'BHANC'. In 2010 criteria were set for the award (see table) and it was open for applications/nominations. A three-member team - Dr Shant Raj Jnawali, Professor Karan Bahadur Shah and I - was formed to decide on the award recipient. A few applications were received and based on the three judges' joint decision Dr Charles McDougal was nominated as the first recipient of the BHANC for his lifelong dedication in helping to conserve tigers in the Himalayas.

The award was officially passed onto its recipient in 2012 in a programme jointly organized by Himalayan Nature and the Nepal - Britain Society at the British Embassy in Kathmandu.. Pratima Pande MBE, President of the Nepal-Britain Society and my long-time friend Marcus Cotton were extremely helpful in the organization of this event. The award was jointly presented to Dr Charles McDougal by the then British Ambassador to Nepal and the Director General of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation. This award included a plaque, a certificate and 1,000 US\$. The plaque carries a logo of the mountains and an abstract image of a Red Panda's head.

We would now like to give this award to another well-deserving person. The frequency of giving the award was tentatively kept to between 3 and 5 years.

The Nepal-Britain Society, the Britain-Nepal Society, the Zoological Society of London, the UK Trust for Nature Conservation in Nepal, Embassies in Nepal and UK, and other Britain-Nepal organisations could potentially be involved in this award. The focus is natural history and should not be diluted. Brian Hodgson's contributions to social and cultural aspects could also be equally valued by setting up another award/scheme to recognize his

contribution in those spheres.

I have shared information of the scheme with various people recently including Field Marshal Sir John Chapple who remains a firm supporter of Nepal and its people and a great ambassador in helping to promote Nepal-Britain friendship. I hope this award is kept as a permanent scheme and sustained for many years to come.

Table:  
Terms of Reference of the Brian Hodgson Award for Nature Conservation

Call for Applications

Brian Hodgson Award for Nature Conservation (BHANC)

This award will be presented to an individual/institution meeting a minimum of two criteria given below.

The award will include an appreciation plaque and cash award equivalent of 1000 US\$.

*Criteria:*

1. Should have a history of long association with the Himalayan region on research / or to promote knowledge on Himalayan flora and fauna. Association to the region should be minimum of 10 years and the applicant can be of any nationality.
2. Should have worked in at least two Himalayan countries\*
3. Should be an individual, charity status organization, government department, private business etc.
4. Should be able to show that local capacity of the region has been improved/strengthened because of the work.
5. Work should include field-based actions and preferably continuation of such actions at the time of applying for the award.

*Nominations:*

Nominations can be made by the proposed awardees or by others. Please submit all credentials electronically to [info@himalayannature.org](mailto:info@himalayannature.org)

*Selection:*

Selection of the candidates will be done by an expert panel designated by Himalayan Nature. Decisions taken by the expert panel will be final.

\*Definition of Himalayan countries for Himalayan Nature: Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and China



# LIGHT OF NEPAL

## TANDOORI AND CURRY RESTAURANT

*(Fully Air Conditioned)*

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



**268 KING STREET  
HAMMERSMITH  
LONDON W6 0SP**

**TELEPHONE: 020 8748 3586, 020 8741 2057**

## British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia

*(Registered Charity no 273422)*

**BACSA was formed in 1976 to protect conserve  
and record old European cemeteries in South Asian.**

BACSA publications include cemetery surveys and books on aspects of European social history in South Asia. The Association's newsletter 'Chowkidar' is distributed free to members twice a year. It contains articles and book reviews, and a section for queries on matters relating to family history or European graves in South Asia. For BACSA publications please contact: Mr T.C. Wilkinson, 76½ Chartfield Avenue, London SW15 6HQ.

BACSA welcomes new members. Application details and lists of BACSA publications can be seen at: [www.bacsa.org.uk](http://www.bacsa.org.uk). The honorary secretary is Dr. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, 135 Burntwood Lane, London SW17 0AJ, England. Email: [rosieljai@clara.co.uk](mailto:rosieljai@clara.co.uk)



---

LT GRANT VC, A UNIQUE VC - THE YOUNGHUSBAND MISSION  
TO TIBET CAMPAIGN 1903 – 04

By Gerry Birch



*Medals awarded to Lt Col Grant VC DSO*

One might think all awards of the VC are unique but in this case the VC awarded to Lt Grant of the 8th Gurkha Rifles has a special claim. It was the only VC awarded in the Tibet campaign and was won in an action on the Tibetan Plateau, so it is the highest altitude action for which a VC has been won. Concern had been growing in the mind of Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, that there was growing Russian influence in Lhasa which in the view of the British Indian government constituted a political and commercial threat to India. Over the nineteenth century Russia had expanded its influence by conquering the Khanates (including Samarkand, Bokhara and Khiva) in a steady move to the east. Curzon had travelled widely in his youth in the Pamirs and Himalayas as had Francis Younghusband. Both shared similar views on frontier policy and the

threat of Russia hence Colonel Francis Younghusband of the Indian Political Service, something of a protégée of Curzon, was chosen to lead the mission. It was not considered to be an ‘invasion’ of Tibet but a diplomatic mission, although a strong military escort, commanded by Brigadier-General Macdonald, was provided. Serious opposition was not anticipated. In the event this proved to be a false premise. The poorly trained, led and armed Tibetan army caused delays and embarrassment to the mission as it advanced and constructed its line of communication. The mission had set out from India in December 1903 and reached the area close to the Gyantse Fort in April 1904. There had already been some fighting and loss of life and the Tibetan authorities were playing for time and, under instruction from the government in

Lhasa, were to refuse to negotiate and to try to stop further advances by the mission. The Abbot and the Depon (the local commander) were told to act in conformance with the directive from Lhasa. Negotiations to proceed beyond Gyantse lasted until July when finally it was clear that letters sent by the Commissioner were returned unopened that military action would have to be taken. Percival Landon, *The Times* correspondent accompanying the mission who witnessed the attack wrote:

“About two o’clock Colonel Campbell, to whom had been committed the the command of the attacking force, sent across to Pala village, where the General was watching (Macdonald) operations with his staff, urgently recommending that an attack be made at once upon the extreme east part of the upper works of the jong. The rock of Gyantse is so steep that it seemed accessible nowhere except along the main approach which was well defended.

But at the point that which Colonel Campbell chose there was just a bare possibility of scaling the rock. It was a fearful climb, and the top of it was crowned by a well-made wall flanked by two projecting bastions. At first the General was unwilling to press forward any further that day, and was in some doubt whether to accede to this request. He determined, however, to be guided by the advice of Colonel Campbell on the spot. At a little past three, a concentrated fire from all points was ordered to be directed upon the wall at the head of this steep climb. The common shell used by the ten-pounders was now employed with terrific effect, and one could see, second by second, a large ragged hole being torn open at this point. Clouds of dust arose and slowly drifted away to the west

in the slight breeze, and whenever a lull in the cannonade allowed a clear sight, the breach was wider by a yard or two. A constant cataract of stone and brick fell down the face of the rock below, which here was almost sheer for forty feet. It was not shell alone that did this work. Magazine fire was concentrated at the same point, and under this whistling canopy of ball and shell, the Gurkhas were soon seen moving upwards and onwards from the houses at the base of the rock. It was a moment tense with excitement, Lieutenant Grant was in charge of the storming party, and soon the first figures appeared over the belt of houses and trees which hem in the rock on this side. Instantly the fire redoubled, and from three points a converging fire hammered and bit upon the wall above the heads.

Absolutely confident in the skill of the gunners, the Gurkhas climbed on. Not a Tibetan was seen on the wall above, but through the loop-holes of the bastions a few shots were fired, at what was becoming point blank range, and caused one or two casualties among the little figures clambering up on their hands and knees.

To those who watched from a distance, it seemed as if more loss was being inflicted when again and again one of the escalating force was knocked backwards by the masses of stone brick dislodged by our shells. The steepness was so great that a man who slipped almost necessarily carried away the man below him. But little by little the advance was made, and conspicuous in front of the small company was Grant, with one Sepoy, who was clearly determined to rival his officer in one of the pluckiest pieces of work ever known on the Indian frontier. The men now reached appoint fifteen or twenty feet



below the level of the breach, and it was no longer safe to allow the cannonade to continue. The guns had been tested with a success which almost surpasses belief. The chief danger lay in striking too low and exploding the shells on the outside, but not a single had struck the rock at the base of the wall. The marksmanship displayed was astonishing; inferiority in the gun itself was the only real danger to be feared, but these new ten-pounders seemed to have reached mechanical perfection for all practical purposes.

Just at this moment, when the General himself was issuing orders that the fire should cease, the thin high piep of the Gurkha bugler cried again and again from the distant rocks in the four shrill consecutive notes which call for silence, and silence reigned. Then, uncovered by our guns, the last desperate climb was made, and up the higher ridges of ascent so sheer that it was almost impossible for our men to protect themselves, one or two of these little figures scrambled. They reached at last the crumbling wreckage of the Tibetan wall. Lieutenant Grant and his faithful follower were the first two men over, and the great semi-circle of the watching British force held their breath for a second to see if they would be at once shot down. For the moment it was two men against all the enemy that were in the jong - for the third man slipped and carried away in his fall his immediate successor – and it was patent enough to us all that if the Tibetans had but reserved their fire and waited in the bastions, they might well have picked off, one by one, each man as his head appeared above the breach.....”

For this action seen by so many including the escort commander resulted in the award of the VC to Grant.



*Gyantse 1904 showing the breach in the curtain*

THE LONDON GAZETTE  
24TH JANUARY 1905:

*‘On the occasion of the storming of the Gyantse Jong on 6th July, 1904, the storming Company headed by Lieutenant Grant, on emerging from the cover of the village, had to advance up a bare, almost precipitous rock-face, with little or no cover available, and under a heavy fire from the curtain, flanking towers on both sides of the curtain, and other buildings higher up the Jong. Showers of rocks and stones were at the time being hurled down the hillside by the enemy from above. One man could only go up at a time, crawling on hands and knees, to the breach in the curtain.*

*Lieutenant Grant, followed by Havildar Karbir Pun, 8th Gurkha Rifles, at once attempted to scale it, but on reaching near the top he was wounded, and hurled back,*

*as was the Havildar, who fell down the rock some thirty feet.*

*Regardless of their injuries they again attempted to scale the breach, and covered by the fire of the men below, were successful in their object, the Havildar shooting one of the enemy on gaining the top. The successful issue of the assault was very greatly due to the splendid example shown by Lieutenant Grant and Havildar Karbir Pun.*

*The latter has been recommended for the Indian order of Merit’.*

This was the last award of the VC prior to World War One.

In 1904 Native Officers and Men were not eligible for award of the VC. This was changed by Royal Warrant in 1911. Grant went on to have a very distinguished career. He was born in India in 1877, his father was a colonel in the Royal Engineers and mother was an Indian Army daughter. Like most of his generation he was educated at boarding school in England and was commissioned from Sandhurst into the Indian Army. After one year in the Indian Staff Corps he joined 8th Gurkha Rifles. After postings in India and attendance at the Staff College in Quetta, he was attached to the New Zealand defence forces. He returned to India and was appointed Brigade Major to 35th Indian Brigade destined for the relief of Kut in Mesopotamia. He was mentioned in dispatches for service in World War One. Later he was awarded the DSO for service with the Waziristan Force in 1920/21. By this time he was CO of 3/11th Gurkha Rifles. His other commands included the training battalion of 13th Rajputs followed by 1/10th Gurkha Rifles. He was promoted to Colonel as Assistant Adjutant General, Army HQ between 1925

and 1928. On retirement in 1928 he was awarded the CB.

Later in 1934 he was appointed Colonel 10th Gurkha Rifles. In World War Two he served in the Home Guard in London. He attended the Gurkha Brigade Association Dinner in 1960 in the presence of HM King Mahendra who was on a state visit to UK. He also attended the fourth VC & GC reunion in 1964 and was possibly the eldest recipient present. He died in February 1967 at the age of 89.

(It is interesting to note that two future Kathmandu Residents/Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary, Major Frank O’Connor on Younghusband’s staff and Lt FM Bailey (known as Eric or ‘Hatter’ Bailey) of 32nd Sikh Pioneers were both on the Tibet Mission. O’Connor was already a member of the Political Service to which Bailey transferred later. Their pictures hang in the chancery of the British Embassy in Kathmandu. The story of the mission to Tibet has been described in two works; *Bayonets to Lhasa* written by Peter Fleming published by Hart-Davis in 1961 and *Duel in the Snows* by Charles Allen published by John Murray in 2004. The latter was reviewed in the 2004 edition of the journal.)

*(I am grateful to James Morton of Morton & Eden Ltd for the use of information from firm’s brochure and for the photographs. I would also like to record my thanks to him for the excellent presentation he gave to the 2014 Gurkha Recruit intake at the Rifles Club and for the chance for them to see and handle the medals prior to the auction. The medal group was auctioned for £340,000 bought by Lord Ashcroft. GDB)*

---

## BRITAIN-NEPAL YOUTH CONTACT

By Ashley Adams



In the 2013 Journal Society news, our Chairman, Roger Potter, wrote that the Society was making contact with schools and colleges in Britain which have active links with Nepal. He also commented on the growing seniority of our membership, and the lack of younger people joining. Of course the Society benefits greatly from the wealth of experience and knowledge of Nepal, its peoples, environment, culture and challenges from within our senior membership and associates. But as we look towards the bicentenary of the Treaty of Segauli, of 1816 which forged the alliance and friendship between Britain and Nepal, we are keen to encourage a new generation of membership, and a blossoming of friendship and contact between young people in Britain and Nepal.

The Chairman writes encouragingly about the creation of a Young Britain-Nepal Society offshoot, as our format and

location of activities do not necessarily provide the right opportunities for young people to attend. Online interaction or regional activities may prove more attractive to young people, especially students.

I have been looking at Youth contact between our two countries. Despite problems of distance, accessibility, and limited internet availability, I have found a very encouraging number of British schools with active links to “twin” schools in Nepal. These contacts vary from ‘pen-pal’ letters and emails, to funding, sponsorships visits to remote parts of Nepal by British students and teachers, joint education projects and staff exchanges. The University of Nottingham has also started an exchange programme with Kathmandu University.

Many Nepal schools lack modern equipment or facilities, but the worldwide web is spreading, often Nepali school

children's handwritten letters are brought to centres such as Pokhara and Dhahran with internet access for onward transmission. Solar powered internet is opening up the remoter areas to modern communications. Nepali children are genuinely enthusiastic about making contact, and British students who have visited Nepal have been spellbound. The future of relationships between the young people of our two countries looks promising, but cannot be taken for granted. Much more can be done to foster and develop such contacts, joint projects and hopefully long-lasting friendships.

My work into schools links has been greatly assisted by Howard Green and Tom Allan of the Pahar Trust. The Trust was formed by two ex-Queen's Gurkha Engineers, Tom Langridge and Chandra Bahadur Gurung, to improve schools in remote hill districts, typical Gurkha recruiting areas. The Trust has built schools, hostels, health posts, and provided computer suites, but also established a number of thriving schools links with Britain.

These links include amongst others:

- Michael School Isle of Man linked with Ghamrang Junior School
- Ample Forth College visiting Gilling Secondary school in October
- Westbury-on-Trym Primary with Singoli School
- St Vincent's School for the Blind Liverpool with Purchandal Gyanchakhasu, Dharan
- Elmfield School for the Deaf, Bristol with Sirjana School for the Deaf
- St Pius X Pre School Preston with Lodge School
- Grange over Sands Primary has recently taken part in the British Council's connecting classrooms programme.

I have also been working on establishing friendship links for schools in my home area of Kent and am indebted to the Pahar Trust and Astrid Smith, the Education Officer at the United Mission to Nepal for finding contacts. As ever, the response from Nepal is enthusiastic as are the local pupils I have talked to. Busy school programmes and distances involved and lack of internet make developing such links a slow process, but very worthwhile. Local schoolchildren in Kent find it unbelievable that link schools in Nepal may have no electricity, let alone PCs and whiteboards and that pupils are not driven in by their parents, but may have to walk many miles over rugged terrain.

### **Schools Reports Extracts**

The schools contacts I have looked at tend to be disparate. There is little sharing of experiences, and a danger that when students or key teachers leave, contact is lost.

The Society is hoping to build up a database of youth contact, and possibly host regional get-togethers of participating schools to share experiences.

This article can only illustrate a few examples, so I have chosen three active schools in my local area of Kent from whom I was readily able to obtain information.

### **Kent College Nepal and Kent College Pembury – Sister Schools** From Carol Davidson:

In 2004 the Parents' Association at Kent College Pembury built a school in Lahachok near Pokhara in Nepal – the school was named Kent College Nepal. Between 2009 and 2011 four more classrooms were added allowing children from the remote local area to stay at the school to complete their education until the



equivalent of Year 9, and also importantly learn English. Kent College Pembury funded this mainly through annual Sponsored Walks by pupils and donations.

Furniture and other resources were also needed so Pembury pupils did more fundraising through a Christmas Appeal. More and more pupils were becoming really interested so at Easter 2012 a party of 24 pupils in Year 11 and above visited the sister school in Nepal. Fourteen girls participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award Scheme were able to complete their qualifying expeditions in the Annapurna foothills – no mean achievement. The trip was rounded off by visits to Chitwan National Park and Kathmandu.

On the second trip in October 2013 it was good to see how the school had developed. The building had been painted and, more importantly, the students had new text books to work from.

The pupils recalled: "When we arrived at the school we all started crying it was so emotional. The welcome was amazing. They gave us flower garlands; face paint and prayer mat things"

"I think it is so important that whatever help we give doesn't mean they lose their identity. "

"Spending time at KC Nepal has really affected me. I have discovered so many new things and feel like I've experienced completely new emotions. I loved meeting

all the children and was happily surprised by how they welcomed us with such open hearts. What worries me is that we saw the very best of them and their lives. We barely got to see the hardest side of it. I asked lots of them if they liked coming to school and they were so excited, jumping up and down, telling me how much they loved it. It makes me happy that we have been able to help a little.

"Teaching was so fun. At first the kids were really quiet and shy but after a while they warmed up to us and were really friendly. They were really interested in our lives at home and our families. They taught us their traditional dance which was really hard".

"Teaching here is one of the most rewarding and difficult things that I have ever attempted. The hardest thing is overcoming the language barrier. The older children speak very good English but the younger classes speak little or none and of course we speak no Nepali. Their speed of understanding was unparalleled. The dancing last night was outstanding. I have never laughed so hard in my life and never had so much fun. The people here are charming and it will be devastating to have to leave this beautiful place."

"I had so many of them saying that they wanted to be doctors so that they could make people better".

"The best thing about these kids is that no matter how you feel; sad; homesick;

sick generally or just plain knackered, they will cheer you up. They're responsive and hardworking in class and they permanently want to play with us. I don't know how I'm going to be able to leave. They'll have to detach me from the walls, kicking and screaming."

### Trekking

For their DofE, the girls trekked to and from Birethanti and walked a circular route via Ullerie, Gorapani, an optional ascent of Poon Hill, then Gardruk and back to Birethanti.

For some girls this was either a DofE practice or qualifying expedition (which meant they carried full packs). For others it was a trek with day packs. It was a varied trek, at times in unseasonal thunder storms, or with the most stunning views of the Annapurna range.

"Today was the hardest day of our lives. We were told we had to walk 600 steps to Ullerie – however we ended up walking 4900 steps, which is no joke, we actually counted! Several times on this trek we thought we were going to die."

"DofE in Nepal was possibly the most physically difficult thing I have ever done, especially the third day – going up and down stairs which killed my legs, the crazy rain in the evening and putting a tent up in the dark. To make it worse I GOT LEECHED! I didn't feel it but my sock was full of blood. The final day was really difficult but we passed!"

A teacher recalled "I was in awe of these young children: students as young as 8 and 9 having views on the politics of the country, eloquently expressed in a second language. The older ones could be left to get on with their work unattended, no talking or messing around, just studying. Like many children in developing countries they are really valuing the

opportunity to learn. The younger ones, of course, run around causing mayhem like little children all over the world.

It is a privilege and a huge pleasure to have such a close link to our sister school.

Our next project is to build more classrooms, work which will soon be underway. A nursery school has been added. Our aim is to have a secondary school as well as a junior school and eventually support some students through to University.

Our commitment to the school is for ever, as they say at KC Nepal "We are sister schools in different countries", and we are always looking for new ways to bring the two schools closer together. Our next trip is planned in October 2014."

### **Maidstone Grammar School**

From Andy Browne:

To develop community links Maidstone Grammar School for Girls (MGGS) made contact with the local Nepalese community in 2008 and in particular the Gurkha Engineers based in Maidstone through Major Richard Walker RE, the Commanding Officer, with a view to establishing links with a school in Nepal.

He linked the school with the Pahar Trust who identified a suitable partner school, the Himalaya Milan Secondary School, Tangting, which was targeted for financial support from MGGS pupils from funds raised through 'Rag Week' 2008. In addition, a second school in Nepal, the Bal Sudhar Secondary School, Sindulpolchok was brought to the school's attention by the mother of the Year 9 pupils, a trustee of the Child Welfare Scheme charity (CWS) which operates in Nepal.

During the school's rag week, senior students raised £2,600 to donate to each school which supported library books, computer and science equipment.

During 2009 about sixty year 7 and 8 pupils started exchanging letters with pupils in Tangting, which continues at the present time. In August 2009 the Head Teacher of the Himalaya Milan Secondary School, Prakash Gurung, visited MGS.

The school in Sindulpolchok is in a particularly poor area of Nepal. A solar power project would enable the school to have internet contact with the outside world. Senior students decided that this was a very worthwhile and green project and it was sponsored in its entirety from Rag Week.

Four staff and partners/son visited the sponsored schools in Nepal in Spring 2010 to look into greater pupil involvement, student and DofE visitors and gap year placements.

Bal Sudhar Secondary School is located in the deprived and neglected area of Sindulpolchok. Sadly child slavery and prostitution is endemic in this area, mainly due to the abject poverty that abounds. A sound education for both sexes is vital to provide the opportunity for individuals to obtain employment in order to combat this situation.

The next visit was to The Himalaya Milan Secondary School in Tangting. It sits perched on the mountainside some 1760m (5771ft) above sea level in the foothills of the Annapurna mountain range.



When they reached the Welcome Gate entrance to Tangting they were met with the most tear jerking and heartfelt welcome possible. In addition to the village musicians there were dozens if not hundreds of villagers to greet them in the traditional Nepalese way. Young and old, male and female, all presenting flowers, some placing cooked rice on their foreheads and most placing scarves around their necks.



*Unveiling the solar power scheme*



*Prize giving ceremony*



*Himalaya Milan Secondary School,  
Tangting*

From abject poverty to magnificent buildings and temples, from spectacular scenery to mountains of rubbish in the roads and rivers of Kathmandu, from an inconsistent power supply to consistent horrendously bad driving, and from a hint of political unrest to the exceptionally tolerant interaction of a multi-cultural society, The hospitality shown to all of us throughout our stay in Tangting was amazing.

Although both very rural, the two partner schools we visited were for the most part very different both house about 500 pupils of secondary school age and both have about ten small classrooms, each with between 40 and 60 pupils.

The Bal Sudhar Secondary School is accessible by road but located in a very poor area of Nepal. Although not carried out overtly, it is known that children are still sold into slavery and child prostitution, mainly into India. There are very few facilities at this school. One large room that serves as the Head Teacher's office, staff room and meetings room, a computer room that contains about 8 computers (one of which is powered by the solar power scheme funded by pupils from MGS), one library with very few books, three toilets (one male, one female and one staff), and an open area for games etc. The classrooms are fitted with locally

manufactured desk/seat combinations and a blackboard. The school is desperate for better links with the outside world.

The Himalaya Milan Secondary School is located in Tangting, a wealthier and more organised area of Nepal but is only accessible by foot. In addition to the classrooms, which are similar in size and contents to those at the Bal Sudhar Secondary School but on two floors, the school has far more in the way of facilities. It has a well fitted out library, a large computer room, a staff room which doubles up as a science laboratory, a kitchen, a boarding facility, and sports pitch with a basketball court, and a new science laboratory under construction.

Support has continued and developed since the visit and initiatives such as contact between schools by Internet Skype link are being pursued.

Maidstone Grammar School for Girls has also developed links with the local Maidstone Nepalese Community Association and hosted Nepali and Service Cultural Charity events.

### **St Gregory's Catholic Comprehensive School**

In July 2013, a party of 16-year old pupils from St Gregory's Catholic Comprehensive School in Tunbridge Wells spent four weeks trekking and doing voluntary work in Nepal.

Nepal was teacher Steve Parker's first expedition. "It was testing at times", he recalls, "but the students showed great strength of character and pulled together well as a team."

Here is one pupil, Jonathan's, account of his experiences:

"Leaving Kathmandu airport was a shock. We saw a big pile of rubbish being rummaged through by some women, huge crowds of people swarmed around (we were warned to protect our bags in such



situations), dogs lay in the middle of the road, goats walked randomly around and it was incredibly hot and humid. We drove 7 hours to Bhubhule. The scenery was incredible; from our small, box-like rooms in a tea house we could see huge rainforests on either side of a ferocious river. That first day was the worst for everyone. We were threatened by a landslide but guides helped us make it safely.

Each day there were new challenges. Once, a landslide blocked a bridge so we used a safety rope to climb down the debris.

As we trekked higher into the mountains, the scenery became more spectacular. On the fifth day, we reached the remote village of Manang (3,540m). The Manang Valley is a beautiful, majestic area, near the Tibetan border, with huge snow-covered peaks. We rested there for a day, preparing ourselves for High Camp (4,833m), which we reached after another two days' trekking. It wasn't too basic either – it was one of the few camps with a television! The next day we had to dress warmly. Looking like astronauts, we set off towards the Thorong La (5,416m) one of the highest passes in the world. It was my hardest day, as I suffered severe altitude sickness and had to be taken over

the pass quickly by our lead Sherpa. After a brief celebration we did the 3-hour descent to Muktinath. The next day we continued to Jomson where we were supposed to pick up a flight to Pokhara. This was cancelled because of the weather, so we ended up in a small bus – for 10 hours!

Then we went to the Chitwan National Park where we rode and washed elephants.

It was then time for us to get down to some work. We travelled to Namobuddha (two hours east of Kathmandu) where we spent the week painting, cleaning and refurbishing a school and building a wall to keep dogs and goats out of the playground. The local people were really warm and friendly and on the last evening we all had a party.

It was a wonderful trip. I did things I never thought I would and saw the most incredible scenery. Thanks to Facebook, we're still in touch with our Sherpa friends and guides and hope to go back some day.

The Society is keen to encourage and foster such wonderful examples of contact and support developing friendships between young people in Britain and Nepal. If members know of other schools links, volunteering or other contacts, do please let us know.

# ***Munal Restaurant***

**Est. 1990**

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

e-mail.munalrestaurant@hotmail.com

## **FINEST NEPALESE CUISINE**

### *FOOD FROM GURKHALAND*

393 UPPER RICHMOND ROAD PUTNEY LONDON SW15 5QL

TEL: 020 8876 3083/8878 9170

TAKEAWAY SERVICE AVAILABLE

10% Discount on collection only

WE GUARANTEE GOOD QUALITY FOOD AT REASONABLE PRICES

RECOMMENDED BY GOOD CURRY GUIDE

WE ALSO DO OUTSIDE CATERING

OPEN

7 DAYS A WEEK

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

WEEKEND TILL MIDNIGHT

### **BRANCHES**

76 CENTRAL ROAD

WORCESTER PARK, SURREY

KT4 8HX

Tel: 020 8330 3511/3711

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

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

### **TAKEAWAY**

205 LOWER RICHMOND RD  
PUTNEY, LONDON, SW15 1HL

Tel: 020 8789 0357/0798

Tuesday-Sunday (5.30-11pm)



---

DEFEATED BY THE MONSOON:  
AN ATTEMPT TO GET TO BAMRANG, DIKTEL DISTRICT, EASTERN NEPAL  
By Mark Temple



*The Bridge over the Arun River at Anterighat*

My wife Chandra's father came from Bamrang. Aishor Man Rai joined the 7th Gurkha Rifles of the British Indian Army on 1 April 1944 and retired as a Captain from the British Brigade of Gurkhas in 1969. His father was also a Gurkha. Chandra was born in Bamrang and her mother comes from a village only 30 minutes walk away. Bamrang is still quite hard to reach although now newly dug un-tarmacked roads make it possible to travel most of the way by vehicle in the cold dry months of winter. I had never been there and Chandra has not been back since she was about 9 years old. My father-in-law moved the family home down from the hills to just outside Dharan cantonment,

then the British Gurkha camp (sometimes referred to as Ghopa camp which closed at the end of 1989) in the hot plains. I knew that the monsoon was not the right time to try and travel to Bamrang but I decided to try as I might not have another chance for two or three years. The Nepali civil war with the Maoists had prevented earlier attempts.

I arrived in Dharan in late July and set about some acclimatisation walks. I discovered that walking for two hours in the heat of the day left me exhausted. The temperature was about 34 degrees C and the humidity extremely high. Some days it rained a lot but on other days it barely rained but got hotter as a result.

The family had made some arrangements for my trip. Chandra's cousin Bakti (a lady of about 47) had decided that she should go home to help her elderly mother with cooking and welcoming me. She was booked on a flight from Kathmandu, where she works as a typist, to Lame Danra which is a day's walk from Bamrang. On two successive days the flight was cancelled (not uncommon in the monsoon) so she set off to travel by bus to Ghaighat, the road-head at the edge of the plains, and walk from there.

A relation, Hastabahadur Rai, aged 65 had been summoned to come and guide me to the village. He walked down to Ghaighat and arrived in Dharan by bus. Bakti's brother, Madan, also aged late 40's decided to join the trip too. They were aware that I did not think I would be able to carry my gear and needed a porter so they recruited a neighbour of Madan's from Ghaighat.

By the time Jitbahadur, Madan and the porter arrived in Dharan I had got concerned that I would not manage the Ghaighat route. Many of the quickest trekking routes in Nepal involve walking along river valleys at altitudes of as low as 500 feet. They are fine in the cold weather but in the monsoon they are extremely hot and airless. The route from Ghaighat is just such a route. If the heat in Dharan exhausted me in a couple of hours I doubted I could walk in it for two days or so. The alternative was to approach Bamrang from the east after a bus ride up to the village of Pakhribas which is at about 6,000 feet. Jitbahadur and I decided we should go that way. It would keep us at higher altitudes except when we had to cross river valleys but would be a harder route because of the amount of ascent and descent and greater

length, at least four days walk.

On Friday 5 August we left Dharan by the 5.30 am bus and were at Pakhribas by 9.30am. We were up in the clouds so the altitude made it cooler – about 26 degrees C. We bought tea and biscuits at a tea shop and set off in light drizzle. From there our route was due west into the gorge of the Arun Khola which we had to cross by a foot suspension bridge. We wanted to get across and up the hill opposite before it got too hot. The path proved quite hard to find in places and was clearly little walked by long distance travellers. It was very steep and at points we were surrounded by cliffs. The descent took us until 2.00 pm by which time it was very hot when we stopped about 20 minutes short of the bridge. By then I realised I was exhausted and weak but Madan was in worse shape than me. We had some instant noodles at a tea shop, rested and then crossed the bridge. Ahead of us was a climb of about 4,000 feet but Madan said he could not start on it. I was also exhausted and doubted how far up I would get. I think I was suffering from heat exhaustion and dehydration. So we decided to stop there beside the river at another tea shop. The landlady was helpful and I managed to have a wash and change of clothes. Walking in the monsoon you soon become drenched by sweat. The dormitory of the tea shop was an open sided affair with a thatched roof and the swollen gurgling Arun River was only feet away. We had a meal of rice, lentils, vegetables etc, and I slept like a log from soon after darkness fell.

I woke at about 5.00 am just as it was getting light. It was clear to me that we could not go on. Madan and I were not fit enough for the journey. If we went on further it would be harder return journey. I agreed with Hastabahadur that we would

have to return to the road we had left the previous day. One of the surreal aspects of trekking in Nepal these days is that it is normal to carry a mobile phone and in places the coverage works well away from the roads. Hence we were able to alert the family in Dharan that we were returning.

Rather than climb the full 5,500 feet we had descended the previous day, we were able to follow a path striking off to the north to a point on the road as it descends into the Arun valley at Diyali Chautara. We set off at 5.20 am in twilight, recrossed the Arun and headed up the hill. It took us until 9.30 am to reach Diyali and I was exhausted after a climb of perhaps 2,500 feet with the temperature rapidly increasing. A bus soon came and we were back in Dharan by about 2.30 pm.

The following four days made clear our decision had been correct since I was painfully stiff. Hastabahadur who is a typical Nepali villager, as hard as nails, went down with a fever for three days and had to see a doctor. If that had happened on our journey it would have been very awkward and worrying. We did not meet

any leeches because we were at too low altitude in too much heat to suit them.

So apart from some wounded pride for me and a lot of inconvenience for Chandra's family, no harm was done. I had bitten off more than I could chew. I shall try to get to Bamrang again but it will have to be in the cold weather. I shall try to fly to Lame Danra and may be able to travel much of the way to the plains by vehicle in the dry season. In general I shall also have to be careful to choose treks with a limited amount of ascent and descent. I cannot do in my sixties what I used to in my twenties!



*Heading back, Madan takes a break*

---

## UPDATE ON NEPAL

By Nick Morrice

*(This is a follow-on from the piece written by Nick Morrice in the last edition of the journal when he returned to Kathmandu in September & October 2014. See also under 'Book Reviews' the review of his book by Roger Potter. Ed.)*

The five boys I wrote about in my book *Discovered in Kathmandu* are now enjoying their independence, following fifteen years in an orphanage. They are joint owners of a three-storey house in a high density residential area on the edge of the city.

If this sounds luxurious, it isn't: planes fly low overhead; there is no mains water supply; the road outside is unmade, full of litter and frequented by cows; there is no heating for the winter and no hot water supply (I am almost getting used to cold showers); the kitchen is a temporary structure on the roof which leaks; there are several damp patches, and a few cockroaches.

But their response is "We don't mind, uncle, we like it here. And we are free now, that is the main thing." And I think they mean it. They are a happy bunch, always joking, often teasing me, and a fortnight in their company is a pleasant relaxing time.

I have been surprised at how successfully this unusual arrangement is working out. They get on well with each other and share in all the domestic tasks such as washing, cooking and cleaning. They spend hours of time locked into their mobile phones, of course, but they do chat and discuss their various projects, their futures, as well as the state of their hair and beards. Girl friends? Well occasionally I pick up short snippets but it does not seem to be a major issue at the moment.

Their lives are very frugal – basically they live on rice and lentils – but they do



*Nick Morrice with his Kathmandu family*

have means of transport. There are two motorbikes and a car to share, essential in an area quite remote from public transport and the city centre. And, rather surprisingly, they have a maid.

Time slows down in Nepal, so for me it is a kind of retreat from the busy Western world. In the evenings, after TV, chess or cards, we sometimes have a time of worship together, following their Christian upbringing. Then we all drift off to bed, sometimes with a vague idea or plan for the next day – but, hey, who cares about tomorrow?

In summary - Ramesh is approaching his internship year at Lumbini Medical College and will graduate in Spring 2016. Niran has passed his first major set of exams in Chartered Accountancy. Anish is continuing to enjoy his course in Catering and Hotel management. Sunil is in his first year of a 3-year Social Work degree. Arun is doing the equivalent of A levels in Science, and hopes eventually to go on to study engineering at college.

Images from 29th BRINOS ear surgery camp - Nepalgunj - March 2005



Richard Olivier - photographer - 020 8567 5629



Images © Richard Olivier 2005



## The Britain-Nepal Otology Service

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



### **The Great Himalayan Trail**

The Great Himalayan Trail consists of a 1000-mile network of trails along some of the highest paths has opened. Although few have so far walked the entire length of the trail, most trekkers choose to tackle parts of it. The trail stretches from near the base of Kanchengjunga in east Nepal to Api-Saipal in the west and crosses 29 high passes. The aim of the trail is to direct trekkers through suitable areas and at the same time provide jobs and income for local Nepalese communities and at the same time conserve the natural and cultural heritage of the area. This project received some UK funding through DFID.

### **One way system on Everest and subsequent disaster**

A report in *The Daily Telegraph* in March stated that the Nepalese government were introducing a one-way system of ropes on Everest to reduce congestion. Separate ascending and descending fixed ropes are to be fixed close to the summit. In addition it is planned to station 'security personnel' to monitor behaviour at base camp. Sadly just a few weeks later sixteen Sherpas lost their lives whilst preparing the route through the icefall as a result of a severe avalanche. Climbing was suspended. It would seem that there are so many expeditions are now permitted that the route on the Nepal side is far too crowded. It is to be hoped that better control can be established by government. As I was preparing this edition of the journal news came of the severe blizzards that affected the Annapurna circuit. Many trekkers and guides were caught in deep snow, not normally expected in October, the height of the trekking season. The full extent of casualties at present is not known. This disaster points up the need for caution

and preparation that also includes the need to ensure that porters are also correctly and properly kitted out for mountain weather.

### **Nepali Mela**

The 6th annual UK Nepali Mela was held at Kempton Park racecourse on Sunday 24 August 2014. Around 7000 Nepalis from all over the country attended. The organisers, Tamu Dhee, a Gurung association, recognise that the 150,000 Nepalis living in UK tend to maintain their diverse cultures in distinct tribal, religious or regimental communities, and the Mela provides an opportunity for them to come together to showcase their unique colourful dress, dance and cultures to a wider British audience. The chief guests were Mr Tej Bahadur Chettri the Chargé d' Affaires from the Nepalese Embassy and Lord Swinfen, whose medical charity is active in Nepal. The Mela was a riot of colour and noise. A rich diversity of tribal, ethnic and religious groups paraded in their traditional costumes.

The event was entertaining, good humoured and colourful. Many of the attendees were retired Gurkhas who proudly wore their medals. There was an emphasis on integration unfortunately there were very few British attendees. The Society is to circulate information about events of interest to members in good time in future by email.

### **Events at the Gurkha Museum**

#### **12 March 2015**

**Subject:** *'Gurkhas on the Western Front.'*

**Speaker:** Mr Gavin Edgerley Harris.

**Time:** 12:30 pm.

**Cost:** £7 to include sandwich lunch





### **10 April 2015**

**Subject:** *'Gurkha200' Celebrating 200 years of Gurkha Service to the Crown*.

**Speaker:** Major Gordon Corrigan.

**Time:** 11:00 am.

**Cost:** £30 to include coffee and curry lunch. Booking is essential by phone: 01962 842832 or by email:

*marybrown@thegurkhamuseum.co.uk*

### **05 June 2015**

**Subject:** "Die in Battle – Do not Despair. Indians on Gallipoli" (*Highlighting Gurkha role*)

**Speaker:** Prof Peter Stanley; Director, Australian Centre for the Study of Armed Conflict. Author and broadcaster on military history. Launch event for his book "Die in Battle – Do not Despair. Indians on Gallipoli"

**Place:** Library, The Gurkha Museum

**Time:** 11.00am followed by curry lunch

**Tickets:** £30.00 per head including coffee, lecture and curry lunch (Friends £25)

**Booking:** By phone 01962 842832 or email: *marybrown@thegurkhamuseum.co.uk*

### **14 June 2015**

**Subject:** "Far Off Pavilions" *Gurkhas, Brighton and the First World War.*

**Itinerary:** Tour Indian Military Hospital Exhibition at Royal Pavilion, attend Annual Chattri Memorial Service on Patcham Down followed by Tea and a

small WW1 Indian Army Exhibition.

**Place:** Brighton, Sussex.

**Time:** Details to be confirmed.

**Tickets:** Details to be confirmed.

**Expression of interest:** By phone 01962 842832 or email

*marybrown@thegurkhamuseum.co.uk*

### **1st August – 6th September 2015 - Summer Exhibition**

**Subject:** "GURKHA 200" *An exhibition of 200 objects telling the story of Gurkha Service to the Crown over 200 years.*

**Place:** The McDonald Gallery, The Gurkha Museum.

**Time:** Normal museum opening times apply.

**Entry:** Free. Included with cost of Museum entry.

### **09 October 2015**

**Subject:** "Our Duty of Care" *Gurkha 200 and The Gurkha Welfare Trust Bi-centenary Appeal.*

**Speaker:** Colonel William Shuttlewood OBE, Director of The Gurkha Welfare Trust

**Place:** Library, The Gurkha Museum

**Time:** 11.00am followed by curry lunch

**Tickets:** £30.00 per head including coffee, lecture and curry lunch (Friends £25)

**Booking:** By phone 01962 842832 or email:

*marybrown@thegurkhamuseum.co.uk*

**Operation Four Rings. JP Cross. Munal Offset Printers. Pokhara Nepal. Pb. xi + 451. Map. ISBN 978-9937-2-51288-8. This can be purchased for £10 from Lt Col JP Cross.**

Many members will be aware of John Cross’s autobiographical works describing his unique military service in the Far East and more recently a series of historical novels set around the British Gurkha connection. ‘*Operation Four Rings*’ is a historical novel set in the time of Cross’s period as the last Defence Attaché in Vientiane, Laos. Below are the comments of a number of reviewers of this work. It is an interesting story around the ‘Cold war’ in the Far East.

Peter Quantril Formerly 7th Gurkha Rifles  
“*Operation Four Rings* is a work of historical fiction by Colonel John Cross. Historical in the sense it covers the period of the fall of the imperial post war regions of South East Asia, in particular Laos. Cross is no ordinary author. Not only did he see active service with the Gurkhas in both Malaya and Borneo, but he also commanded the Jungle Warfare School in Malaya. He served in Laos from 1972-76 as Defence Attaché in Laos. Pre-training for his appointment included language courses in both French and Laotian It was during his watch that he witnessed the defeat of the Laos Royalists by the Communists. Using his insight into the world of political intrigue and murky intelligence operations, we have a novel laced with historical accuracy. The lead character is Colonel Jason Rance, coincidentally in the novel Rance is not only Commandant of the Jungle Warfare School, but was also subsequently posted

to Laos as Defence Attaché to the British Embassy. The story centres around four ethnically connected Lao young boys, who, in 1945 witnessed the brutal murder of their fathers by the communists. The local Abbot, in a sense their surrogate father, took care of them, and, using his powers, forecast their future with unerring accuracy in what would result in their designation as the ‘Four Rings,’ their common bond being their fight against the communist onslaught, not only in Laos, but extended to Vietnam. Into this web is fed the interaction and world of intelligence between principally the Americans, Russians, French and British. The villain of the plot, and arch communist murderer, the ‘Black-Eyed Butcher,’ is at times one step ahead of the ‘Four Rings’ in what is a riveting contest between the rigid philosophy of brutal communism and the world of capitalism.”

Colonel Mark Dowdle (formerly Gurkha Transport Regiment and DA Kathmandu):  
“I read the original ‘*Operation Four Rings*’ some years ago and the re-written tale - much the same as a fine wine - has improved with age and a masterly touch on the tiller. John Cross’ wealth of experience - not least his highly successful command of the Jungle Warfare School and his time as the DA in Laos - have added a ring of authenticity to this intriguing story which engages the reader to the extent that this becomes one of those sought after books that, despite the hour, is very hard to put down! This book is believable, absorbing and, above all, a cracking good read.”

Lt Col Mark Vickers, once DA Albania:  
“I’ve just finished the book and really

thoroughly enjoyed it - truly! You really kept the suspense going right to the end and when I got to the last 20 pages I had a nasty feeling that the DA was going to get killed off! Some of the stories you told brought back memories of my time in Albania, although nothing happened to me quite so dramatically.”

Professor Dhruba Kuma:

The material content of the book is masterpiece so far my knowledge of the area is concerned. Your creativeness has defeated the world of Nepalese scholarship.

Review by Simon Hutchinson, the author’s Desk Officer, published in the January 2013 issue of the Royal Malaysia Police Former Officers’ Association of the United Kingdom Newsletter (Issue no 34):

Here is a story well worth reading. The scene, with occasional forays into neighbouring states, is that extraordinary country Laos, where few people and institutions are what they at first seem to be, and which, like its neighbouring Khmer Republic, survives as a convenient buffer state between more powerful and far from friendly powers. John Cross was himself British Defence Attaché in Laos in the 1970s. He knows its peoples, speaks their languages and could hardly

be better qualified to write a fictional story in a setting which he has himself experienced. The story begins with the selection by a Buddhist abbot, gifted with a form of second sight, of the ‘four ring bearers’, village youths destined to play a strange but vital part in trying to save Laos from complete destruction.

Simultaneously he and his ring bearers witness at close quarters the savage ferocity of the man destined to be the loathsome and very credible villain of the story. The description of a country torn between rival factions and the seat of two rival powers at war with each other to whom the welfare of the Lao people is a matter of no interest or at best, only of interest when they happen to help in the great power’s plans, is sadly correct. The intrigue, double dealing and deception which from the background to the story are admirably conveyed and the description of a particularly long operation by ‘goodies’ against ‘baddies’ is written with all the expertise of a veteran of long range jungle operations. A fictional British Defence Attaché, whose career is based on the author’s own, plays an important and ultimately decisive part in helping the ring bearers. Your reviewer will not spoil the story’s dramatic climax by revealing the outcome of the ring bearers’ mission.

**The Vast Unknown – America’s First Ascent of Everest. Broughton Coburn.** *Crown Publishers, New York, 2013. pp xv + 300. Illust. Map. Notes. Bibliog. Index Hb. \$26. ISBN 9 78 0 307 88714 6.*

The year 2013 saw the sixtieth anniversary of the first successful ascent of Everest. What is far less known in British circles is that this year was also the fiftieth anniversary of the first successful American ascent. The team was led by the Swiss American, Norman Dyrenfurth. The author, Broughton Coburn, felt that this epic expedition merited a reminder and recognition for what it too achieved some ten years later. He is the author and co-author of a number of Himalayan related books and worked for twenty years in Himalayan conservation and development in Nepal, Tibet and India.

The format follows the usual pattern of such books describing the background of participants and expedition planning, followed by the description of the climb and its aftermath. The background takes some thirty per cent of the book. Being American, there is emphasis on the psychology and motivation of the members. Mountaineering takes over the lives of those involved. A number of the potential members dropped out of university to devote more time to their interest, sometimes at the expense of careers and family life.

Mountaineering developed in Europe in the mid nineteenth century in the Alps, spearheaded by many British mountaineers with Swiss and German participation. As the British Indian Empire expanded and with it the Survey of India, eyes turned to the Himalaya. The British held the key as

all possible approaches then were through Indian territory. Early expeditions were mainly British but with Indian independence and the opening up of Nepal post 1950 greater opportunities presented themselves. It was Norman Dyrenfurth, born of Swiss parents, who was the prime driving force. His parents, originally from Germany had become Swiss citizens and had led expeditions to the Himalaya in the 1930s. Dyrenfurth went out to the unsuccessful 1952 Swiss expedition to see their autumn attempt which was abandoned. This experience made him feel he was now on a mission to lead a fully recognized expedition supported and funded by the American establishment. With hard negotiation he succeeded. The expedition took place at a sensitive time. It was at the height of both the Cold and Vietnam Wars. Tension between India and China was high following the Chinese invasion into the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) in the autumn of 1962. In Nepal the Chinese were building the extension of their road from Lhasa from the Tibet/Nepal border towards Kathmandu – “a dagger into the heart of India” as described by Nehru. Also there were CIA supported operations against the Chinese into Tibet just to the north of Nepal. The expedition was eventually granted clearance by the Nepalese government, but was almost scuppered by a maverick group by led by the grandson of Woodrow Wilson which had tried an attempt on Everest, having been granted permission only to climb the nearby Gyachung Kang. They had gone over to Tibet for the purpose, and were lucky to escape with their lives. There were questions too about Chinese claims to have reached the summit of Everest.

Like all expeditions of this nature,

logistics is key and the usual difficulties of importing equipment were encountered. In-country Dyrenfurth secured Colonel Jimmy Roberts, the recently retired military attaché from the British Embassy, himself a Himalayan climber of some repute. The approach to Everest in those days was by an 18 day trek. The party was finally assembled at Banepa, the end of the road and set off under the direction of Roberts, 19 members, 39 Sherpas and around 900 hundred porters. It was quite a sight as this reviewer, being present, well remembers. The expedition on arrival laid siege to the mountain. The first major obstacle was the treacherous icefall which claimed one expedition member.

The aim of the expedition was to put an American on the summit. However there was a breakaway group who felt that the traverse of the West Ridge should also be attempted. Dyrenfurth was torn. If the main aim was to be achieved, would there be time, fit manpower and resources left for such a venture? Coburn describes the stresses experienced amongst team members. A decision was eventually made to try both routes. The team was divided and both the direct and West Ridge parties made it to the summit but had to endure a night on the mountain with the inevitable serious frostbite. It had been an epic attempt but a successful one.

Throughout the 1960s tension between China and India remained high. China had carried out a series of nuclear tests in the Lop Nor region. The CIA and the Indians were anxious for intelligence. Several of the 1963 team were later engaged to help to put listening gear onto suitable high peaks that overlook Tibet. The final chapters describe these operations. The geopolitical aspect adds greatly to this work as well as the description of an epic climb.

GDB

*(This review was published in 'Asian Affairs', journal of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs. Ed.)*

**Discovered in Kathmandu. Nick Morrice. Balloon View. 2014. Pp xi + 213. Paperback.**

*Discovered in Kathmandu* is an engaging and disarmingly honest account of the author's acquisition of a family of five young adult orphans in Kathmandu. This much is suggested by the book's sub-title *How I Found My Nepalese Family*. However, other discoveries are revealed in the book: the author's vivid reaction to the sights and sounds of Kathmandu; his participation in the life of the capital's Christian community; and ultimately the acquisition of a deeper knowledge of himself.

Before 2009 Nick Morrice had never been to Nepal. He had, however, responded to a local charity appeal and begun in a small way to provide financial support for Manish a ten-year old at the Triple Gem School in Kathmandu. Unsurprisingly this commitment leads to a wish to visit Nepal and to meet Manish. Before long Nick has landed in Kathmandu and is making his way to Thamel. He brings with him from home an introduction to Shyam Nepali, the pastor of a Nepalese Christian Church.

Nick wastes no time in embarking on a first tour of the capital, visiting all the usual sights: Swyambunath, Bodnath, Pasupatinath, the Living Goddess. However, during this and subsequent visits to Nepal with the help of a growing band of Nepalese friends he increasingly explores off the beaten track within the city and the valley. He stumbles across butchers and tailors, shoe-shine boys and barbers – getting to know far more about them, their problems and their personalities than the

average tourist ever does. All this is described with a freshness, an eye for detail and an immediacy that will evoke for readers memories of their own first visit. He sees beyond the noise, the traffic chaos, the pollution of today's Kathmandu conveying in a way the atmosphere of a much earlier period.

Nick tracks down the Triple Gem School but there is no sign of Manish who has been confined to his village by the police following a murder - they will only meet two years later. Undeterred Nick, a retired English teacher, agrees to spend a few days teaching at Triple Gem. Little does he know that Santosh, one of his pupils, will play a major part in the story several years later.

Before long Nick meets up with Pastor Shyam Nepali, begins to take part in services at Golgotha Church and is introduced to Indra Maya who runs a small orphanage for five impoverished young Nepalese men. Ramesh, one of the orphans, has an ambition to become a doctor, and this is the start of an astonishingly philanthropic journey of discovery which Nick recounts with self-deprecating understatement.

Reflecting on the chasm between his own privileged background and the deprivation of his new Nepali friends he rapidly decides that he wants to help them if he can. With a substantial legacy from his mother and with no children of his own he has the wherewithal to do so. Things do not get off to a good start. After a tangled saga of missed appointments and moments in which he doubts the wisdom of what he is proposing, he returns to England still undecided as to whether to carry through his plan. An e-mail correspondence with Ramesh follows and eventually Nick agrees to take a risk with this young man whom he scarcely knows and to pay for

his medical course at Lumbini University.

Over a series of subsequent visits to Nepal, Nick's philanthropy extends ever more widely to each member of the orphan family and numerous friends along the way. He buys for them computers and motor-bikes, clothes and equipment, pays for medical treatment and in due course agrees to sponsor other 'brothers' in their own chosen careers. He elaborates on his growing friendship with Indra, the orphans, and her own family describing how they adopt him as their English Uncle and Godfather. Clearly this is emotionally and spiritually rewarding for Nick who sees himself as the true winner in these relationships. His faith in every sense has been rewarded.

At times one wonders whether there is not an element of naivety in Nick's generosity. Is he being taken for a ride? Will his investment in all these young people pay off? Nick wonders this himself and is well aware of the financial and personal risks that he is running. Nonetheless, he feels instinctively drawn towards helping others and is clearly a very good judge of character. There have inevitably been awkward moments but so far things have turned out far better than one could ever have imagined. There have been no disasters.

During the last of the several visits described in the book Nick becomes aware of tensions growing in the orphanage. At first he wonders whether he has spoiled the younger members of his adopted family but comes to realize that in fact they have outgrown the orphanage and the somewhat dominating Indra Maya. They need to spread their wings. To enable them do this in a final act of generosity he purchases a house for the five of them to live in.

*Discovered in Kathmandu* is an

inspiring story of no-strings-attached generosity which provides at the same time a fascinating insight into impoverishment and disadvantage in contemporary Kathmandu. It is shot through with a practical Christian faith that both inspires and rewards the author's outstanding philanthropy. It is only to be hoped that we will learn more of Nick's Nepalese family in a sequel.

Roger Potter

(The book is available via Amazon or directly from the author, cost £12, via his home address: 12 Manley Close, New Earswick, YORK, YO32 4DN. The last edition of the journal carried an article on some of his experiences in Kathmandu. Ed.)

## SHORTER REVIEWS

**Ashoka – The search for India's Lost Emperor.** By Charles Allen. Little, Brown Book Group. London. 2012. Pp xi + 460. Hb. Illust. Map. Appx. Notes. Index. £25.00. ISBN 978-1-4087-0196-6.

This is another work by Charles Allen written in his narrative style but which has been well researched. Little hard archaeology is left of the 'Ashokan' period which has dogged research into this period of history. Politics too has intervened and is tied up with research into the Buddhist sites along the Indian-Nepal border with inevitable rivalry between both India and Nepal as to which country the true sites belong. (See the review of Allen's *The Buddha and Dr Fuehrer; an archaeological scandal* in the 2010 edition of the journal.) Allen has delved into many historical works as is clearly demonstrated in the extensive chapter notes. The Ashoka Empire was at its height around 250 BC covering a

good part of the Indian subcontinent across to Kandahar and northwards to the Himalayan Mountains. The few remains of this period are various pillars which have inscriptions which have taken scholars much time to translate. Ashoka is credited with attempts to rule this extensive empire in a fair and tolerant manner and used the Buddhist faith to achieve this. Unfortunately this did not result in a lasting legacy and his part in early history was all but lost. This book has been described as a multi-layered journey of discovery describing Britain's entanglement with India as well looking into its past. John Keay, author of *India: a History* has stated: "A labour of love and notable scholarship, Charles Allen's *Ashoka* is a fitting testament to a forgotten epic of discovery. His own feats of research and synthesis mirror exactly those of the great orientalists whose story he has so ingeniously pieced together. All who relish India's antiquity should read this book" This is a view which I entirely support.

GDB

**The Gurkha's Daughter – Stories.** By Prajwal Parajuly. Quercus. London. 2013. Pp 280. Hb. Maps. £12.99. ISBN 978-1-78087-293-3.

This is a work of fiction by Parajuly the son of an Indian father and a Nepalese mother. He travels between his home town of Gangtok, Sikkim and New York and Oxford. Part of this book was written whilst he was a writer-in-residence at Truman State University, Missouri. These stories are based in and around east Nepal and the Darjeeling district, Bhutan and Bangladesh set in these modern times and relates to experiences of people living there. These include tales of a

disfigured servant girl planning to flee to Nepal; a shop keeper facing an impossible dilemma; a Hindu festival in Darjeeling; a Nepali-Bhutanese refugee pinning her hopes on the West; a Gurkha's daughter who tries to comprehend her father's complaints: Nepali-speaking immigrants who meet in

Manhattan. Hope Cooke, former Queen of Sikkim comments: "Prajwal Parajuly's tales of contemporary life manage to be both unsparingly observed. Yet compassionately rendered – a dual prism that achieves an intensity and depth of feeling that hold the mind."

*GDB*

---

## OBITUARIES 2014



### **Richard Burges Watson, CMG (1930-2014)**

Richard was born in 1930, the eldest son of Harold Burges Watson, a District Commissioner in the Sudan Political Service, and Marjorie (née) Gordon, an accomplished musician, whose family had been in the West of Ireland since Norman times. Whilst at King Edward VI<sup>th</sup> School in Bury St Edmunds, Richard became fascinated in history and foreign affairs and decided that he wanted to become a diplomat. After National Service with the Royal Artillery in North Africa, he read History at St. John's College, Cambridge (1948-50). In preparation for the Foreign Office exams, he spent a summer studying Italian at Perugia University and a year at the Oriental Languages School in Paris,

learning Russian and living with a Russian émigré family.

Richard joined the Foreign Office in 1954. They already had plenty of Russian-speakers and decided that Richards's linguistic aptitude would be best used in Japan. He was posted there as a language student before serving in the Embassy in Tokyo and on the Japan desk in London. His next posting was Mali, then Paris, where he worked with the British delegation to OECD and met Ann, whom he married in 1966. There followed two years in London and a year at the Woodrow Wilson School in Princeton, after which Richard returned to Japan as Economic Counsellor. The Queen visited during this time and Richard was awarded Japan's Order of the Sacred Treasure. After further postings in Brussels and London, Richard was sent to Italy, first on sabbatical in Florence and then as Consul General in Milan and Commercial Minister in Italy. He was awarded the CMG in 1985, which was presented to him by Prince Charles and Princess Diana when they visited the city.

Richard was appointed British Ambassador to Nepal in 1987 and presented his Credentials at the Royal Palace in Kathmandu in March of that year; a ceremony that was ratified when the king poured drops of attar of roses on Richard's



white silk handkerchief. Nepal's monarchy was to become a fundamental issue during his posting, whose final year (1990) saw a popular uprising resulting in a new constitution.

Richard believed that successful diplomacy depended on getting to know the countries in which he was posted as well as possible and this was something in which he and Ann took much pleasure. Their great affection for Nepal developed as a result of energetic exploration, through which they made many good friends from all walks of life. Besides Nepal's extraordinary beauty, cultural and geographical richness, and the friendliness of the people, Richard was struck by the economic and political inequalities that he saw and the fundamental challenges which Nepal faced in meeting the growing demands for modernization. These difficulties were brought into sharp relief in the aftermath of the tragic earthquake in 1988. Richard was friends with some of the country's most influential leaders and believed that Britain should use its close relationship with Nepal to set a positive example. He felt that dialogue between the ruling elite and opposition figures - including the Communists - was essential to Nepal's future, despite the intense animosity which existed. He was greatly saddened by the events surrounding the death of King Birendra and his family and the strife which has beset Nepal in the last two decades.

An important part of Richard's job was overseeing Britain's substantial aid programme; he was particularly interested in education projects. Besides English-teaching, the most important project at the time was the excellent Budhanilkantha school, which, in the first attempt, secured funded university places in the UK for eight students, including four at Oxbridge. The school began accepting girls in 1992

onwards. Richard felt that Budhanilkantha had the potential to create a generation of educated leaders who could make a real difference to Nepal's future and was very sorry when Britain cut back its support for the school on the grounds that the project was too expensive and elitist.

Richard also took a great interest in the invaluable work of Nepal's great benefactor, Horace Kadoorie, who was a regular visitor to the country and much involved in the welfare of the Gurkhas. Richard was proud of Britain's association with these extraordinary soldiers, whose future was a key question during his posting, owing to cuts in the defence budget and the imminent handover of Hong Kong. Richard could see the negative consequences which the proposed cutbacks would have, not only for the Gurkhas themselves, but for Nepal more generally, especially Dharan, where the British Gurkha base had been a big local employer and had excellent medical facilities, on which many local people depended. Richard and his colleagues did what they could to persuade London of the Gurkhas' importance not only in their own regiment but also in undermanned British battalions. They also fought hard to ensure that the hospital in Dharan remained open.

Richard's coffin left the church of St Mary's Painswick to 'Garb of Auld Gaul' played by a Gurkha piper. Donations from the service were sent to the Gurkha Welfare Trust. For the last fourteen years of his life, Richard had lived happily with Ann in Painswick in the heart of the Cotswolds. They continued to travel widely and took great delight in their grandchildren. Richard was a devoted grandfather, father of five children, and husband. His family maintains great affection for Nepal. He is very much missed. Namaste Richard.

*Ann Burges Watson*



### **Inger Lissanevitch (1928 – 2013)**

Inger Lissanevitch died on 4th November 2013, in her apartment in Bhaktapur.

Inger was the widow of the famous Boris of Kathmandu, the Russian émigré who opened The Royal Hotel, Nepal's first hotel in 1954. Born on 5th February 1928, Inger led a colourful and fascinating life in the subcontinent. She met Boris in 1948, while he was running his famous 300 Club in Calcutta. They married later that year in her native Denmark, before returning to India. In what was to be a defining moment for the pair, they relocated to Kathmandu following the reinstatement of Nepal's monarchy which, under the Rana regime, had been reduced to a symbolic institution, with then-King Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah kept in virtual imprisonment in the capital's Narayanhiti Palace.

Boris and Inger had befriended HM King Tribhuvan, while still in Calcutta. The King would periodically be granted

leave by the Ranas to visit India under the pretext of accessing the country's comparatively advanced medical facilities. He would also take the opportunity during these visits to hold secret meetings with exiled Nepali Congress leaders. Some of these meetings would take place in Boris and Inger's apartment above the 300 Club, paving the way for the beleaguered monarch to stage his return to power. Soon after the King's reinstatement, Boris began working on the opening of The Royal Hotel, Nepal's first hotel, and convinced King Tribhuvan to authorise the issuance of the country's first tourist visas.

The Royal Hotel opened in what is now the Election Commission office in central Kathmandu. The hotel played host to a range of famous mountaineers and dignitaries as well as myriad state functions, and perhaps most famously, Boris orchestrated the state visit of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip to Nepal in 1961. An elephant-back hunt in Chitwan's Royal National Park saw Inger serving glasses of champagne to guests from a specially-prepared 'bar elephant'.

While Boris, who was more than twenty years her senior, pursued his ever-fanciful business interests, Inger looked after their three children, Mishka, Nicolas and Alexander, and was popular with the hotel's guests. One such visitor was the author Han Suyin, whose most famous novel, *The Mountain is Young*, featured a character based on Inger, in which she was described as a "Nordic goddess". Those close to Inger remember that while she remained devoted to her husband, she felt some frustration as a result of his relentless socialising with the hotel's guests. "In the fifteen years we have been married, I have only spent two evenings alone with him," she told the author and

anthropologist Michel Peissel in his memoir-cum-biography of Boris, *Tiger for Breakfast*.

Inger also remembers well that while Boris may have been something of a visionary, the more practical elements of hotel management often eluded him. “He was a terrible businessman,” she told me in an interview in 2011. “He didn’t think about money at all, so that was left to me.” Her affection for him was impossible to dispute, however, and was rivalled only by that which she felt for her beloved Kathmandu. An avid painter, Inger spent much of her leisure time capturing the beauty of the Himalayas and their surrounds on canvas and paper, and was especially fond of the Solukhumbu region, where she travelled regularly in her younger days.

After Boris’s death in 1985, Inger continued to live in Nepal and following a robbery at the home the couple had built together, she moved to Bhaktapur. In the final years of her life, Inger continued to live independently, despite the onset of advanced macular degeneration, which had greatly impeded her eyesight. While still a regular at social gatherings in the valley, she preferred the relative quiet of Bhaktapur to the modern bustle of Kathmandu. The rapid, unplanned urbanisation of Kathmandu left her pining for the quiet life and intricate Newari architecture that had once characterised the city. Inger moved house a number of times over the years but eventually settled in Bhaktapur to be closer to “the second most fascinating man” in her life, the noted architect Rabindra Puri, who told me he had felt the need to look after her, thinking of her after the burglary as a “refugee” in his own country.

Rabindra, who came to call Inger ‘Ma’, asked her to move into the top-

floor apartment in the modern building he remodelled in the classical Newari style and named ‘Toni Hagen House’, after the intrepid Swiss explorer a contemporary with Boris and Inger. ‘Ma’ wrote kindly of Rabindra some months after she had first met him, in a dedication in his copy of *Tiger for Breakfast*, dated 4th November 2002. In a bizarre coincidence, Inger died of a suspected stroke in her apartment eleven years later, to the day. Her death followed a private party held to celebrate Laxmi Puja the previous night, during which Inger held court with close friends and family. Attendees recounted that she had been dressed at the party in her nightgown, in order that, upon her return to her nearby apartment, she could retire immediately to bed.

Inger succumbed to a suspected stroke sometime on the following afternoon. Her cremation took place at Pashupatinath and was attended by her three sons and their families, along with close friends and well-wishers.

Later that week, a memorial service was held at the British Cemetery in Lainchaur, which was presided over by her old friend Father ‘Cap’ Miller from St. Xavier’s School in Jawalakhel. During the short service, a portion of Inger’s ashes were interred next to Boris’s grave, which itself lies next to a memorial to both of the couple’s mothers, who also died in Nepal. The service was attended by friends including the British Ambassador, HE Andrew Sparkes, the American Ambassador HE Peter Bodde, Barbara Adams, Betty Woodsend and fellow artist Jan Salter. A modest gathering was then organised at the British Embassy’s Sterling Club. Inger’s name will be a familiar one to many of the older members of the Society whether as a personal friend, a former hostess or

perhaps as the wife of the famed Boris of Kathmandu. It is in this latter light that she will likely be remembered by most, and while those who knew her well understand that there was much more to Inger than Boris and the hotel, it is this legacy of which she was most fiercely proud.

*Colin Cooper*

*(Colin Cooper is a writer and editor from the UK, currently living in Kathmandu and working on a motion picture screenplay about the life of Boris Lissanevitch. Ed.)*



**Iswar Prasad Manandhar (1931 - 2012)**

It is inevitable that whoever comes to this Earth by birth, will eventually leave this earth. It is the universal truth. But as humans the truth can be difficult to comprehend and accept, especially when one hears that someone as loved and valued as Mr Iswar Prasad Manandhar “dai” is no longer with us.

Mr Iswar Prasad Manandhar was the eldest son to father Sundar Prasad and mother Asta Maya Manandhar in Bhardah, Rajbiraj, Saptari District of Nepal on 23 July 1931. He had six sisters and five brothers in his family. Now, he leaves behind his loving wife, a son, daughter-in-law, three daughters, three sons-in-law and five grandchildren. Although he was born in a middle/working-class family in the Madhesh (southern belt of Nepal), where education was difficult to attain, he managed to gain a college education.

He was a self-made man who never discriminated against anyone based on their cast, creed, colour or occupation. He was an out-spoken man and always ready to oppose wrong-doing in the society if need be. He was in the government service as a Personal Assistant to the then Bada Haakim (District Governor) of Rajbiraj and Nepalgunj between 1957 and 1963. During that time he was very active in the Koshi Project and District development works.

He migrated to Kathmandu after leaving this government job. He joined Hotel Paras, one of the pioneering hotels in Kathmandu as the Hotel Manager and took on responsibility of running the hotel. During his service there, he had not only provided excellent service to hotel guests but also developed his own capabilities. Mr Bhavnani, a British restaurant-entrepreneur, who was regular visitor of Kathmandu, was so impressed with Mr Iswar Manandhar, that he offered him an attractive post as the manager of the Kwaliti Restaurant in London. In 1969, Mr Iswar Manandhar arrived in London under a work-permit and took over the designated position. He was the first Nepali to occupy such a prestigious position as manager of a restaurant in the UK.

He was multi-talented person. After arrival in London he became actively involved in various areas of the Nepali community such as social service, literature and radio journalism. He was involved with the BBC Radio Nepali Service from its initial commencement. He was anchoring many programmes during 1970 - 1988 in the Nepali Service that included one of the most popular programme “patrottar” (question and answer). He played an integral role as a pillar of BBC Nepali Service establishment.

He was a great nationalist. He wanted to achieve something extraordinary within the Nepali Diaspora community. In 1976 he purchased the Kwality Restaurant from his former employer Mr Bhavnani and opened the first-ever Nepali restaurant in central London named “Natraj Restaurant”. The restaurant was almost a small Nepal - managed by Nepali staff and offered Nepali cuisine. The top floors of the building were also used as a Nepali hotel. The restaurant grew in prominence and was visited by many Nepalese from students to Nepali government officials, ministers and Royal family members, all for many different reasons – for a stay and or to taste authentic Nepali cuisine.

He was involved with many associations and organisations in UK, and attained many accomplishments. He was an advisor to the first Nepali newspaper in UK, *The Sagarmatha Times*, one of the founder Presidents of Nepali Literature Development Council, Pasa Puchah Guthi, the World Hindu Federation – UK Chapter, former President of the Yeti Nepali Association and many more. In Nepali literature, he was one of the most respected and popular writers. There are about a dozen published and unpublished

books to his credit. He was honoured with the Gorkha Dakshin Baahu Medal by Nepal Government in 1999 (one of the most prestigious Nepali medals).

Mr Iswar Manandhar, at the time of his sudden departure was one of the key executive members of The Britain Nepal Society. The Society still fondly remembers Mr Manandhar and the Annual Nepali Suppers served in the early days from his Natraj Restaurant. On 4 February 2012, in the name of Mr Iswar Prasad Manandhar, who always dressed impeccably, mingled with people of all ages, male or female, always smiling and caring, vanished from our Nepali Diaspora of London and elevated to the heavens.

May God bless his departed soul with eternal peace.

*Balmukund Prasad Joshi*

**Major Lawrence Pottinger LVO MBE**  
Lawrence Pottinger was a loyal supporter of the Society but from afar having spent his military service in the Far East and subsequent career in Hong Kong and retirement in Australia. When I joined the Brigade in 1961, Lawrence was one of the ‘old burhos’ in my eyes, where he was a company commander at the Gurkha Depot in Sungei Patani in north Malaya. He was somewhat quieter than many others of his ilk who like him had been on active service for most of their careers. He was commissioned into the 9th Gurkha Rifles and took part in the second Chindit operation. He was evacuated due to serious illness. In 1946/47 he was witness to the violence of the partition of India, on one occasion he discovered a ‘ghost train’ with all the fleeing passengers having been murdered. With the formation of the post-1947 Brigade of

Gurkhas he transferred to 6th Gurkha Rifles and served through out the Malayan Emergency. On retirement he became the Protocol Officer of the Hong Kong government. Lawrence was a direct descendent of Lieutenant General Sir Henry Pottinger who became Governor of Hong Kong in 1843 and of Eldred Pottinger who was known as the 'Hero of Herat' when that city was besieged. Lawrence's father was Agent to the Governor of the Bombay Presidency. With that background it was fitting that he ended his career in Hong Kong. He finally retired to Australia.

*(I am grateful to Richard Morris and John Mackinlay, secretary and editor respectively of 6th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Association for permission to draw information from their journal. Ed.)*

#### **Major Bill Towill (1920 – 2013)**

Bill Towill, a long term member of the Society, although not well known, died aged 93 in December 2013. Although initially a pacifist, he joined the RAMC TA in 1939 and saw action at Dunkirk. He was in a casualty clearing station as the net closed around the beach at La Panne. He volunteered to stay behind to help the wounded as capture was inevitable. In the event his services were not needed as more than enough volunteers stepped forward. The horrors of this experience had a profound effect upon him, the result of which he joined the Indian Army. After officer training at Dehra Dun, he was commissioned into 3/9 Gurkha Rifles. In 1944, 3/9 GR became part of Orde Wingate's Chindit operations behind Japanese lines. He took part in the second Chindit operation flying into 'Broadway', a jungle airstrip, in a glider with the advance party. This

was not a successful operation and in the end Towill had a long torrid trek back out of the jungle. Towill was one of only 118 men declared fit out of an original strength of 2, 200. After a spell in hospital in Delhi he was sent to Singapore and then to Indonesia to help with prisoner repatriation and the Japanese surrender and transfer of power back to the colonial power. This became a major operation in which the 3/9 GR lost some 80 casualties. After the war he trained as a solicitor but suffered nightmares as a result of his horrific wartime experiences. He wrote of his service, published in 1990, *A Chindit's Chronicle*.

*Courtesy of the Daily Telegraph*

#### **Rodney Turk (1923 - 2013)**

Rodney Turk died earlier this year just after his 91st birthday. Until age caught up with him he had been a strong supporter of the Society as a committee member and treasurer over the period 1984 – 1987. Thereafter he could always be relied upon to produce both relevant and pithy comments at the Society's AGMs. His interest in Nepal doubtless stemmed from his wartime service with 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles. Rodney was born in Kent where he spent his childhood. From comments made by the family he had quite a sense of fun and was quite mischievous in the neighbourhood, including tying door knockers together and then watching the fun as puzzled neighbours appeared! In 1940 the family moved to London where Rodney was then working as an articulated clerk to a firm of accountants. He joined up in 1942 and was drafted to India where he joined 3rd QAO Gurkha Rifles. After officer training at Dehra Dun he

joined his battalion on the North West Frontier. The tribesmen, as ever, were taking advantage, hoping that that British Indian government would be otherwise engaged. Rodney's service with 3 GR ended in 1947. He continued his military service by joining the Honourable Artillery Company ((HAC). However he retained his connection to 3 GR (one of the Gurkha regiments that were transferred to the new Indian Army) by joining the 3 GR Regimental Association and becoming treasurer and secretary, posts that he held for many years until 2009. He and his wife first went to Nepal in 1978 where they trekked and visited some of the Gurkha Area Welfare Centres (AWCs). Donations that he gave over subsequent years helped to provide extensions to the centres for medical treatment to be given to pensioners. His son reported that he and Rodney, whilst

on trek in 1998, were both proud and honoured to be given such a welcome at the AWC in Besi Sahar in recognition of Rodney's generosity where a suitable plaque had been put up on the door of the extension. They spent three happy days there seeing medical services being provided, meeting ex-Gurkhas and their families and helping to pay out welfare pensions. Throughout his life Rodney had a strong sense of duty which was apparent in the comments and tributes that the family received: 'A fine gentleman. I enjoyed his company and valued his wisdom', 'a generous charitable man and a devoted regimental soldier.' These comments sum up a valued member of the Society.

*GDB*

*(I am grateful to the family for their assistance with this piece. Ed.)*

---

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

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

The Esther Benjamin's Trust  
Third Floor  
2 Cloth Court  
London EC1A 7LS  
[Website: www.ebtrust.org.uk](http://www.ebtrust.org.uk)

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

The Britain-Nepal Chamber of Commerce  
35 St Philip's Avenue  
Worcester Park  
Surrey KT4 8JS  
Tel: 020 8241 0313  
email: [bncc@tamgroup.co.uk](mailto:bncc@tamgroup.co.uk)  
[www.nepal-trade.org.uk](http://www.nepal-trade.org.uk)

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

Student Partnership Worldwide  
17 Deans Yard  
London SW1P 3PB

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

Bird Conservation Nepal  
PO Box 12465  
Lazimpat  
Kathmandu  
Nepal  
Tel: + 977 1 4417805  
[www.birdlifenepal.org/](http://www.birdlifenepal.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, usually in February 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 write to the Treasurer, Col Rupert Litherland at [rupertlitherland@gmail.com](mailto:rupertlitherland@gmail.com).

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

---

## THE BRITAIN-NEPAL SOCIETY

---

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

*Vice-Presidents*

Brigadier AB Taggart MC

Mrs Celia Brown\*\*

Colonel JM Evans MC

Sir Neil Thorne OBE, TD, DL

Mrs Pat Mellor

Sylvia Countess of Limerick CBE

Lieutenant Colonel Gerry D Birch\*

*Committee (2013/14)*

*Chairman:* Mr Roger M Potter MBE

*Vice-Chairman:* Colonel John SK Swanston

*Honorary Secretary:* Mrs Jenifer Evans

*Honorary Treasurer:* Colonel Rupert Litherland

Mr Ashley Adams

Lieutenant Colonel GC Bicket

Mr Gavin Edgerley-Harris

Mr Balmukund Joshi

Mrs Sneha Rana

Mrs Maggie Solon

Mrs Frances Spackman

Dr Mark Watson

Mr Tej B Chhetri, (Minister Counsellor), the Nepalese Embassy (*ex officio*)

Ms Sarah Wrathall, FCO (*ex officio*)

Major Nigel JD Wylie Carrick MBE, HQ Brigade of Gurkhas (*ex officio*)

*Archivist:* Position vacant (*ex officio*)

*Editor of the Journal:* Lieutenant Colonel GD Birch\* (*ex officio*)



