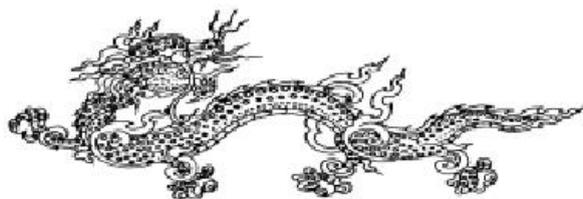


THE BHUTAN SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

Number 21

President: Lord Wilson of Tillyorn, KT, GCMG

January 2002

The 10th Anniversary of the Bhutan Society 1992-2002

Informal Talk – 4th February 2002

Modern Bhutan: A Concrete Jungle?



Central Thimphu as it was until recently

An opportunity to hear from Michael Rutland, who is now living in Bhutan for part of each year, about recent changes and developments in the country.

Michael first lived in a very different, or perhaps not so different, Bhutan in 1970, and is therefore well-placed to comment on the changes he perceives to have taken place over the last 31 years.

The talk will be illustrated with a number of slides and the intention is to provide plenty of opportunity for the audience to ask questions about any aspects of modern Bhutan which interest them.

Monday 4th February 2002

6:00 pm for 6:30 pm

**The National Liberal Club
(The Lady Violet Room)
Whitehall Place, London SW1**

Drinks available before the lecture

Bhutan to have Written Constitution

A further historic step in the process of Bhutan's political evolution occurred on 30th November 2001 when HM The King inaugurated the drafting of a written Constitution for Bhutan.

The Drafting Committee will be chaired by Lyonpo Sonam Tobgay, Chief Justice of Bhutan, and includes representatives from across Bhutanese society. HM The King, in his briefing of the Committee, said that the basic purpose of the Constitution was to ensure the sovereignty and security of the Nation and the well-being of the Bhutanese people for all time to come. He said that Bhutan must move with the times, and that it is important that the country's political system continues to evolve in the interests of peace, prosperity, justice and fundamental rights. He emphasised that the Constitution should establish a dynamic system of governance which would uphold the true principles of democracy, and stressed that the destiny of the nation lies in the hands of the people.

In response to apprehensions expressed about the risks of democratising a political system before the people were ready, HM The King said that Bhutan should not be deterred by the fact that democratic systems did not work well in some countries, and pointed out that Bhutan was in a unique position, with time and opportunity to develop a system of governance which would be in the interests of the people and the country; the Constitution should meet the expectations and aspirations of the people and should draw on the wisdom of existing systems, existing laws, and the lessons learnt by other countries around the world.

It will be recalled that three years ago HM The King took another historic step in the evolution of the political system in Bhutan when he transferred executive responsibility for the government of the Kingdom from himself to a Council of Ministers elected by the National Assembly of Bhutan. Ministers are elected for a term of five years. The next Ministerial elections will take place at the National Assembly session in Summer 2003.



News & Updates from

The Annual Dinner

The Society's ninth Annual Dinner took place at the National Liberal Club, London, on Friday 9th November 2001. Once again it was a sell-out event – many thanks to members for their continuing support.

The Bhutan Society would also particularly like to thank those members who generously sponsored a ticket for a student to attend the Dinner. This enabled Bhutanese guests from Sheffield, Edinburgh, Wolverhampton, Reading and London to attend and was much appreciated.

Guests were able to enjoy an exhibition of Bhutan-inspired paintings and woodblock prints by artist Merlyn Chesterman. Ms Chesterman kindly donated 20% of the evening's sales proceeds, raising £120 for the Bhutan Society Trust Fund.



Bhutanese student Ugen Wangchuk proposing the toast to the Bhutan Society with Lord Wilson seated facing the camera.

BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS !

Genette Dagtoglou first went to Bhutan eight years ago. In the course of her holiday she visited two schools, one the newly-opened secondary school in Paro, the other a small primary school in Bumthang. Both were very short of books for all ages. Since then she has collected and transhipped via Calcutta ten consignments of books to Bhutanese schools, about 10,000 books in total.

The need is still great. Any book that an English child would read between the age of six and eighteen is appreciated. Particularly important are books about the world we live in today, but reading books are also very much needed. And because there are many teachers living in outlying parts of Bhutan, with little to do in the evenings, all sorts of novels, classics, adventure stories and thrillers are also welcome.

Please sort through your bookshelves and help Genette to turn 10,000 into 20,000. She can collect books in the broader London area and, on occasion, further afield.
Tel.: (020) 8788 3513
Fax: (020) 8789 2467
E-mail: dagtoglou@aol.com

2002 Bhutan Society Tour of Bhutan 29th Oct. – 14th Nov. (provisional dates)

On the Tenth Anniversary of the founding of the Bhutan Society of the UK, the Foreign Ministry of Bhutan has invited a delegation of up to 16 members of the Bhutan Society to visit Bhutan on guest visas.

The normal tourist fee of USD 200 per day has been waived, and members of the group will pay only the basic in-country costs, which will total around USD 100 per day. This will include accommodation (twin), full board, transportation and guide services. The tour, led by the Hon. Secretary Michael Rutland, will last approximately 14 days and may include some official functions. It is hoped that Lord and Lady Wilson will be with the party for a part of the trip. The itinerary is not yet fixed, but will include a cross-country tour at least as far as Bumthang. It may be possible for a sub-group of the party to undertake a short trek, while the remainder of the party takes a less energetic route! The flights to and from the UK will be booked as a party booking by Steve Berry of Himalayan Kingdoms, on the London-Katmandu-Paro route.

For more information please contact the Hon. Secretary (see box below), giving your address (in block caps), phone number and e-mail address (if you have one).

Would all those who have already registered their interest in the tour by e-mail to Michael Rutland please telephone him on 01483-538189 before he returns to Bhutan on 23rd February. Thank you.



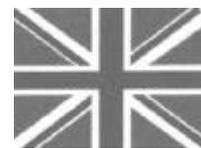
Trongsa Dzong, Central Bhutan

The Hon. Secretary Michael Rutland will be in Guildford until 23rd February (Tel: 01483-538189), and in Bhutan from 1st March to 1st August 2002.

Address: PO Box 1044, Thimphu, Bhutan
Tel: +975-2-321066
E-mail: mrutland@aol.com

Michael Rutland will be delighted to meet members of the Bhutan Society visiting Bhutan during this period. Telephone him when you are in Thimphu.

The Bhutan Society



Bhutan Lecture at Wakehurst Place

Anne Chapman, a Wakehurst Place botanical horticulturalist, will talk on 28th February about her experiences on a recent expedition to Bhutan to see how plants in the collections grow in the wild. Her trip took place in May 2001 and included a seven-day trek through the forests of Central Bhutan.

This is an event organised for the Friends of Wakehurst Place, however the Friends Office has kindly agreed to allow members of the Bhutan Society to attend. A limited number of tickets are still available for the talk and those interested in attending should contact Amanda Millar on 01444-894035 to check availability and to reserve a place (please mention that you are a member of the Bhutan Society).

Tickets cost £4 and entrance to Wakehurst Place is £6.50 for adults and £4.50 for senior citizens (free for Friends of Kew/Wakehurst Place and Members of the National Trust).

Time: 11am
Date: Thursday 28th February 2002
Place: Conference Room, Wakehurst Place,
Ardingly, nr. Haywards Heath, West Sussex
Directions: www.rbgkew.org.uk/visitor/findwp.html

Advance Notice of May Lecture

Plans are underway for a lecture in Oxford by Professor George van Driem, to be held in May in association with the Oriental Institute. It is hoped that the lecture will be repeated in London the following day, aimed at a more general audience.

Professor van Driem belongs to the Department of Comparative Linguistics, Leiden University, in The Netherlands. He is a world authority on Himalayan languages and will lecture on the languages of Bhutan (of which there are said to be 19!).

The Professor is a lively and entertaining lecturer and you need not be a language expert to enjoy learning about the many languages and dialects of Bhutan from the pre-eminent authority.

The date and full details of the lecture(s) will follow in the next issue of this newsletter (early April).

Professor van Driem's Internet homepage may be found at: www.iias.nl/host/himalaya/driem.html

Numerous links to extensive information on Bhutan's languages may be found at: www.languages-on-the-web.com/links/link-dzongkha.htm

E-Cards from Bhutan

Visit <http://edruk.tripod.com> and click on the *eGreetings* link at the top of the page to create and send one of nine colourful Bhutanese electronic greetings cards!

Polytunnel Restoration Appeal Update

Following her travel scholarship trip to Bhutan to help develop the Royal Botanic Garden in Thimphu, Jessica Beaghen (now in her third and final year on the Diploma Course at RBG Kew) has been raising money to restore the polytunnels there.

The polythene on both of the Royal Botanic Garden's two polytunnels has been ripped to shreds by the high winter winds. These polytunnels are the only place in the garden where plants can be protected from the fierce winds that tear through the site. They also provide much needed shelter and overwintering facilities for the more tender plants and are the only place where delicate propagation can take place. It is therefore very important that the polytunnels are restored using a strong grade of polythene.

The total amount needed for the restoration is £1,600 and to date £930 has been raised. Jessica passes on a big 'thank you' to all those who have contributed, and is anxious to continue to raise funds so that the job can be completed as soon as possible.

Contributions may be made through the Bhutan Society Trust Fund.

Please send a cheque made payable to the 'Bhutan Society Trust Fund' to:

The Hon. Treasurer Nicholas Rhodes
28 Napier Gardens, Hythe, Kent CT21 6DD
making it clear that your contribution is intended for the RBG Polytunnel Fund.



One of the severely damaged polytunnels



Low grade polythene rips easily in high winds



News from the

Problems Continue for Drukair Planes

Drukair, Bhutan's only airline, continues to experience problems with its BAe 146 planes. One plane has only recently returned from BAe Woodford, near Manchester, having been out of service for over a year due to severe corrosion in the wings. Eventually, BAe Systems agreed to replace the complete wings, and that plane is now back in service. However, the second BAe146 plane has been found also to be suffering from severe wing corrosion, and is likely to be out of service for three months while the problem is rectified.

The wing corrosion appears to be due to microbiological contamination, a well-known phenomenon, and a significant number of BAe146 planes in various parts of the world are suffering the same problem. While the fundamental cause of the problem is well-known in the aircraft industry, the severity of the problem in the BAe146 plane gives some cause for concern, and indeed it has been suggested that the extreme nature of the problems with these planes could be due to flaws in the design of the wings, or at least that the severity of the problem could have been avoided by a better wing design. However, BAe Systems do not accept this view.

Drukair's problems have been further compounded by BAe Systems' decision in December to cease production of its new regional jet, the RJX, after only four planes have been produced. Drukair signed a memorandum of understanding to purchase two of these planes, to replace its BAe146 fleet, in early 2000. However, there is an understandable reluctance on the part of Drukair to be saddled with two of a total production run of only four planes, which would inevitably lead to future maintenance and spares problems. Additionally, it would be difficult to build up any significant database of operational experience with only four planes worldwide.

Drukair has recently met a team from BAe Systems in Thimphu to discuss these issues, and meanwhile is embarking on a lengthy technical evaluation on the feasibility of buying alternative planes. Canadian Bombardier and Dornier 728, along with the Airbus 319, are some of the possible alternatives. The decision by Drukair to consider alternatives is understandable, given the unhappy experiences they have had with BAe Systems in recent years.



One of Drukair's two BAe 146 planes in Paro

Bhutan Considers Domestic Air Link

A possible link-up between a local private company, Bhutan Aviation, and the largest non-scheduled air-charter company in India, Deccan Aviation, promises a new era in domestic transport in Bhutan.

On December 10th 2001 a nine-seater single-engined Swiss-made Pilatus PC12 arrived at Paro Airport carrying Deccan Aviation's Managing Director for discussions on the link. During a demonstration flight the Pilatus PC12 travelled from Paro to the small airstrip in Tashigang (Eastern Bhutan) in around 26 minutes. By comparison, the road journey can take from two to four days, or even longer if there are landslides or snow on the road. On the other hand, the road journey passes through some of the most spectacular mountain scenery in the world!

Another option being considered is a link-up with the same Indian air charter company to permanently lease a Bell helicopter for domestic transport in Bhutan. The Bell is a single-engined helicopter, and although received wisdom automatically produces the reaction that twin-engined helicopters are safer, there are strong arguments which suggest that at the altitudes and in the temperatures at which a helicopter has to operate in Bhutan, single-engined helicopters of appropriate power and performance are in fact preferable.

Whereas in the past many tourists visiting Eastern Bhutan would exit via Assam, the activities of the separatist movements in Assam and around the Bhutan border (the Bodo and ULFA groups) currently make this inadvisable. Visitors therefore have to make the lengthy journey along the East-West road within Bhutan in both directions. A domestic air link, whether by helicopter or fixed-wing plane, would thus be a great attraction to tourists (at least the better-heeled ones!), in addition to being of use to official travellers and foreign consultants. It would also be of value in other situations such as geophysical surveys and medical evacuations.

International Red Cross Team Visits Bhutan

A three-member team from the ICRC has recently completed another review of prisons and detention centres in Bhutan, at the invitation of the Government. This is part of the regular programme of reviews which the ICRC has carried out since it signed an agreement with the Bhutan Government in 1993 to assess the conditions of detainees and the correctional facilities in which they are held. During their reviews the ICRC teams have complete access to these facilities and are able to talk freely to prisoners.

The Bhutan Government invited this regular ICRC involvement to provide an objective assessment of detention facilities so that Bhutan could be responsive to international standards in this field. Although the reports which arise from these reviews are confidential, it is known that the review teams have expressed satisfaction with the steps taken by the Bhutan Government to implement their recommendations over the last eight years.

Kingdom of Bhutan



Bhutan Launches New Legal Framework

Recently the Chief Justice of Bhutan, Lyonpo Sonam Tobgay, personally delivered three-day workshops in each of the districts of Bhutan to brief all ranks of judges and other officials concerned with the judicial system, and to promulgate and explain the new and comprehensive legal framework which has now been introduced in the Kingdom.

Among other aspects designed to modernise and codify the legal framework and move it towards best international practice, the updated system continues to emphasise the traditional approach of encouraging settlements of disputes by mutual agreement between parties, as well as ensuring that the judicial process is accessible to all through its 'people-friendly' approach.

Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister in Bhutan

The Vice-Foreign Minister of China led a five-member delegation visiting Thimphu in December for talks aimed at furthering understanding between the two Governments on a number of issues of mutual interest, including the ongoing border negotiations.

The Vice-Foreign Minister, Mr. Wang Yi, had an audience with HM The King as well as meeting the current Head of Government, Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, and the Foreign Minister, Lyonpo Jigme Thinley.

Bhutan and China have held annual boundary talks since 1984 and have made very substantial progress in delineating their common border.

David & Marion Young Bid Farewell to Bhutan after 12 years



David and Marion Young pose for a final photo (with Tashichodzong in the background) before returning to the UK after around 12 years in Bhutan.

Marion was for many years VSO Bhutan Programme Director, and David was a Drukair pilot and later Operations Manager for Drukair.

VAST: More Than Just Art

by Kencho Wangdi, Kuensel Online

Amidst the loud chattering, children are seated. Some on the floor, some on chairs – splashing colours onto large white pages. A boy stops to look at his work and frowns. Not happy with the outcome, he bends again to make the necessary changes. These children, some as young as six, would rather be here than out playing with friends. "I am happy to be here. I want to learn about painting and this is the place for me," says 11-year-old Jigme Norbu. "I want to take up painting as a profession."

Jigme Norbu is one of the many Thimphu students who spend their weekends learning and exploring their artistic inclinations at the Voluntary Artists Studio Thimphu (VAST). "It's an informal place where young budding artists can come together and share their ideas," says the man behind VAST, Kama Wangdi. A graphic designer and an artist, Kama and some other artists got together in 1998 to form VAST "to share skills and encourage young artists". Today the studio has about 150 members, mostly students. There are many willing to join but cannot because of the studio's limited space.

In Bhutan where commercial or modern art is confined to dzongs and monasteries, a Thimphu resident pointed out that VAST ought to try instilling that creative edge in the students. "This is what we are trying to do," says an active member of VAST, Rajesh Gurung. "We teach them traditional and contemporary art and later let them come up with their own work." Described as a "historic" day, VAST recently received four new computers from the Liaison Office of Denmark – and free Internet usage for a year. The young members now have the opportunity to learn the basics of computer operation and graphic designs.

Fredrik Sjosten Bjorn who helped them obtain the 'special fund' of Nu 394, 990 from DANIDA, says that this is a gesture of appreciation and encouragement for VAST. "What these kids do is something very positive in society," he says. VAST activities embrace all that is good in inculcating healthy habits in a child. They have been involved in restoration of chortens and various other cleanup campaigns.

Recently Phurba Thinley Sherpa, an active and prominent member, left for a four-year study to a fine arts school in Scotland, made possible by donations from well-wishers and patrons of the studio. "I want to come back and impart all that I learn to the students," he says.

The studio today is trying to find a foothold for itself. Largely dependent on donations from elderly members and a few organizations, shortage of funds remains their main constraint. The studio wants to take its activities across the country during the winter and summer school holidays and is hoping that the Youth Development Fund would help them financially. "There is nothing like working with young inquisitive children," says Kama.

£250 was recently donated to VAST by the Bhutan Society Trust Fund.

10th Anniversary of the Bhutan

Founding members may like to be reminded of the Society's programme during the last nine years.

- Oct. 1992 The Bhutan Society of the United Kingdom is launched at a Reception at Dartmouth House, London W1, attended by Dasho Nado Rinchen, Royal Government of Bhutan
- Apr. 1993 *Introduction to the Music and Melodies of Bhutan*, a lecture by Sarah Nuttall (Cambridge University), with live music on Bhutanese traditional instruments played by Sanga Dorji
- Nov. 1993 The first Annual Dinner of the Bhutan Society at 1, Great George Street, SW1
- Nov. 1993 Lunch for Bhutanese students in the UK at St. Paul's Walden Bury



Lunch for Bhutanese students (2000)

- Feb. 1994 *An Artist's Journey through the Lunana Region of Bhutan*, an illustrated lecture by Michael Blooman ARCA
- Mar. 1994 *The British Masagang Expedition*, a lecture by Julian Freeman-Attwood (a joint meeting with the Alpine Club)
- May 1994 *The Springtime Flora of Bhutan*, a lecture by Tony Schilling, formerly of Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and Wakehurst Place
- May 1994 Lunch and visit to the Gardens of Wakehurst Place, West Sussex
- July 1994 Lakeside Concert and Picnic at St. Paul's Walden Bury, home of Simon and Caroline Bowes Lyon
- Oct. 1994 *The Raven Crown*, an illustrated lecture by Dr Michael Aris (1946-99) to launch his book on the Monarchy of Bhutan
- Nov. 1994 The second Annual Dinner of the Bhutan Society at the House of Lords with Dasho Jigme Y. Thinley, Ambassador of Bhutan to the UN, Geneva, as Guest of Honour
- Nov. 1994 Lunch for Bhutanese students in the UK at St. Paul's Walden Bury
- Feb. 1995 *Women and Textiles in Bhutan*, an illustrated lecture by Dr Françoise Pommaret
- Mar. 1995 *One and a Half to the Borders of Tibet*, an illustrated lecture by Chris Chadwell, botanist and consultant with the EU Medicinal Plants Project, Thimphu

- May 1995 Weekend Visit to the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh. Saturday: Tour of RBG Living Collections followed by talks by David Long and Henry Noltie on *A History of Botanical Exploration in Bhutan 1938-1995*. Special exhibition of RBG's archives relating to Bhutan, including diaries and photographs by George Sherriff. Lord Wilson presided at Dinner at the RBG. Sunday: Tour and lunch at the Younger Botanic Gardens, Dunoon
- June 1995 *A White Ghost in Bhutan*, an illustrated lecture by Lesley Reader, former VSO Bhutan teacher
- Nov. 1995 The third Annual Dinner of the Bhutan Society at the National Liberal Club, London. Auction by Stephen Thurlow of Sotheby's of items donated by members, including paintings by Michael Blooman and Merlyn Chesterman, in aid of the Bhutan Society Trust Fund
- Nov. 1995 Lunch for Bhutanese students in the UK at St. Paul's Walden Bury
- Apr. 1996 *The European Community's Development Policy and Resource Development in Bhutan*, a lecture by Manisha Marwaha, University of Keele
- May 1996 *Buddhism and Popular Practices in Bhutan*, a lecture by Dr Françoise Pommaret
- May 1996 *Bhutanese Plants in Berkshire Gardens*, a visit to the Saville Gardens, Windsor Great Park, and the Kohli Memorial Botanic Garden, Slough (courtesy of Chris Chadwell)
- Sept. 1996 *East of Gangar Punsum*, an illustrated lecture by Michael Blooman, ARCA, accompanied by an exhibition of his watercolours of Bhutan, in aid of the Bhutan Society Trust Fund



Bhutanese Masked Dancers at the Millennium Dome

- Nov. 1996 The fourth Annual Dinner of the Bhutan Society at the National Liberal Club, London. Folk songs performed by Bhutanese students. Auction in aid of the Trust Fund, including a photograph by Walter Lees, a watercolour by Michael Blooman, and a Bhutanese *Dromyen* spontaneously donated by a student guest
- Nov. 1996 Lunch for Bhutanese students in the UK at St. Paul's Walden Bury

Society of the United Kingdom

More recent members might like to see what they have missed!

Mar. 1997 *Plant Hunting in North East Sikkim*, an illustrated lecture by David Lang

Apr. 1997 *Which Way Forward?*, a discussion of critical issues in sustainable development in Bhutan, led by Peter Stutley. Preceded by an exhibition of paintings and sketches of Bhutan by June Stutley



Bhutanese Masked Dancers in Guildford (2000)

May 1997 *In the Realm of the Thunder Dragon*, an illustrated lecture by Joanna Lumley in aid of the Trust Fund, followed by Buffet Supper

June 1997 Tour of the Royal Horticultural Society's gardens at Wisley, led by the Curator, Jim Gardiner

Oct. 1997 *The Masked Dances of Bhutan*, an illustrated lecture by Dr Françoise Pommaret

Nov. 1997 The fifth Annual Dinner of the Bhutan Society at The National Liberal Club, London, with Raffle of Bhutanese handicrafts in aid of the Bhutan Society Trust Fund

Nov. 1997 Lunch for Bhutanese students in the UK at St. Paul's Walden Bury

Dec. 1997 Society Weekend in Vienna to visit the exhibition *Bhutan: Land of the Thunder Dragon* at the Museum für Volkerkunde, Vienna

May 1998 *Bhutan into the 2000s*, a talk and discussion on Bhutan's eighth Five Year Development Plan by Michael Rutland

June 1998 Charity Preview of the film *Bhutan: The Last Shangri La* (courtesy of Icon Films) in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses Prince and Princess Michael of Kent, in aid of the Bhutan Society Trust Fund, followed by Buffet Supper

Nov. 1998 The sixth Annual Dinner of the Bhutan Society at the House of Lords

Nov. 1998 Lunch for Bhutanese students in the UK at St. Paul's Walden Bury

June 1999 *Bellamy and Bhutan*, an evening on Bhutan's environment led by Professor David Bellamy, with illustrated talks by Dr Pema Gyamtsho, Min. of Agriculture, Government of Bhutan, Dr Kinlay Dorji, Country Director, WWF Bhutan, Ugen Norbu, WWF Bhutan, and

Louis Standen, in aid of the Bhutan Society Trust Fund, followed by Buffet Supper

Sept. 1999 *Masks of Bhutan: Sacred and Obscene*, an illustrated lecture by Dr Françoise Pommaret

Nov. 1999 The seventh Annual Dinner of the Bhutan Society at the National Liberal Club, London

Nov. 1999 Lunch for Bhutanese students in the UK at St. Paul's Walden Bury

Mar. 2000 *Culinary Delicacies and Eating Etiquette in Bhutan*, an illustrated lecture by Dr Françoise Pommaret, with Bhutanese food prepared by pupils of the George Abbot School, Guildford

Aug. 2000 *The Masked Dances of Bhutan* performed by members of the Royal Academy for Performing Arts, Thimphu, in the High Street, Guildford (in the presence of The Worshipful The Mayor of Guildford) and at The Millennium Dome (in the presence of HRH The Crown Prince of Bhutan), supported by Himalayan Kingdoms Tours, Oxford Natural Products Ltd, and The Dome World Stage Programme

Oct. 2000 *Painting with The Prince*, an illustrated talk by James Hart-Dyke, official artist on the visit to Bhutan by HRH The Prince of Wales



The Annual Dinner (2000)

Nov. 2000 The eighth Annual Dinner of the Bhutan Society at the House of Lords, with HRH The Crown Prince of Bhutan as Guest of Honour. Sealed bid auction of a watercolour of Bhutan, donated by Julian Burton, in aid of the Bhutan Society Trust Fund

Nov. 2000 Lunch for Bhutanese students in the UK at St. Paul's Walden Bury

Jan. 2001 *Changing Patterns of Rural Life and Development in Bhutan*, a lecture by agronomist Adam Pain

Apr. 2001 *Return to the Land of the Thunder Dragon*, an illustrated lecture by David Lang

July 2001 *The Orchids of Bhutan*, an illustrated lecture by Dr Philip Cribb, RBG Kew

Nov. 2001 The ninth Annual Dinner of the Bhutan Society at The National Liberal Club, London

Nov. 2001 Lunch for Bhutanese students in the UK at St. Paul's Walden Bury

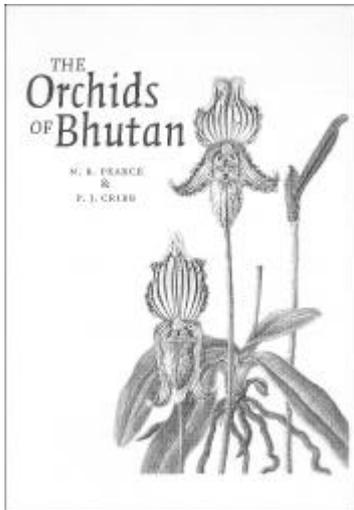
Bhutan Connections

Agriculture Minister at RBG Edinburgh

On 26 January 2002 the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh will hold an afternoon of lectures to celebrate the launch of the finally completed *Flora of Bhutan*. The Minister of Agriculture of Bhutan, Lyonpo Kinzang Dorji, will attend the launch as the guest of the Royal Botanic Gardens.

This definitive account of Bhutan's rich flora has been many years in the compilation and will provide an authoritative reference for botanists. The final volume of the Flora, *The Orchids of Bhutan* by N.R. Pearce and P.J. Cribb, is to be published on 30 January 2002.

Further information about the publication of the Flora can be obtained from Henry Noltie at the RBGE: Tel.: (0131) 248 2936; E-mail: h.noltie@rbge.org.uk Website: www.rbge.org.uk/research/bhutan.htm



The Orchids of Bhutan,
the final volume of
The Flora of Bhutan

Tentative Bhutan Festival Dates for 2002

These dates are UNCONFIRMED. Please be sure to check them before booking your trip to Bhutan!

Punakha Dromche	17-21 Feb
Chorten Kora (Trashiyangtse)	27 Feb & 13 Mar
Gomkhora (Trashigang)	22-24 Mar
Chhukha Tshechu	22-24 Mar
Paro Tshechu	24-28 Mar
Ura Tshechu (Bumthang)	23-27 Apr
Nimalung Tshechu (Bumthang)	18-20 June
Kurjey Tshechu (Bumthang)	20 June
Wangdi Phodrang Tsechu	14-16 Sept
Tamshingphala Choepa (Bumthang)	15-17 Sept
Thimphu Drupchen	11-15 Sept
Thimphu Tshechu	16-18 Sept
Tangbimani (Bumthang)	20-22 Sept
Jambay Lhakhang Drup (Bumthang)	21-25 Oct
Paker Tshechu (Bumthang)	22-25 Oct
Nalakhhar Tshechu (Bumthang)	19-21 Nov
Mongar Tshechu	11-14 Nov
Pema Gatsel Tshechu	11-14 Nov
Trashigang Tshechu	12-15 Nov
Trongsa Tshechu	13-15 Dec
Lhuntse Tshechu	13-15 Dec

Memorial Trust Launched to Honour Life of Michael Aris

(reprinted by kind permission of *Oxford Today*)

Dr Charles Ramble recently took up his post as lecturer in Tibetan and Himalayan Studies, created through the Memorial Trust launched to honour the life of scholar Michael Aris (1946-99). It was made possible thanks to generous gifts from the Rausing and Koerner families. The Trust's objective is to provide the UK with its first permanent university base for Tibetan and Himalayan studies. The Bodleian Library's collection, allied with Michael Aris's academic books and papers given by the family to the Library, provides a solid base for teaching and research.

Following Dr Ramble's appointment, the subject has already been included as an option for students doing a BA in Chinese, and will soon be included in the Sanskrit BA course. An MPhil in Tibetan Studies is to be established at the beginning of next academic year. The Trust, whose patron is HRH The Prince of Wales, is now seeking funding for the endowment of further posts, studentships and resources for teaching and research.

Bhutanese Red Rice On Sale in the UK

Sharp-eyed members may already have spotted boxes of Bhutan Red Rice on the shelves of Sainsbury's specialist food section. The rice, possibly the only Bhutanese product currently commercially available in the UK, is imported and marketed by Unique Fine Foods, a company based in Lincoln which specialises in interesting and unusual rice products.

Managing Director Jeremy Blower explained that Unique Fine Foods chose to source red rice from Bhutan rather than from other countries as the Bhutanese variety is



superior in both colour and taste. It has a distinctive nutty flavour and has been described by a reviewing Food Writer as being possibly the nicest and most decorative rice she has tasted. The red rice was harvested in the Bhutanese Himalayas, then driven all the way to Calcutta and onto a boat without any hitch – a very commendable feat of Bhutanese logistics.

On arrival at Folkestone however, HM Customs and Excise, having never seen red rice from Bhutan before, decided that it merited a closer look. Fortunately after that delay there were no further problems and the rice is now stocked by 350 Sainsbury's stores where the customers keep returning for more.

In addition to Bhutan Red Rice, Unique Fine Foods have found a number of other interesting firsts, such as Imperial Green Rice. Well worth trying!