

A.V. Jim Edwards 1935 - 2009



This newsletter is written after the sad death of our founder and Managing Director, Jim Edwards. Adventurer, conservationist, entrepreneur, and extrovert, he was born 24th November 1935 in Jersey, Channel Islands. After working as a banker in Sweden and with Pan American Airways in New York, he lived in Nepal since 1962 when he started a hunting company. Taking over Tiger Tops in 1972 and Mountain Travel in 1975, he went on to pioneer white-water rafting, fishing, and ecotourism operations in Nepal and a range of wildlife and adventure tourism ventures in India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Tibet. He founded the World Elephant Polo Association, the International Trust for Nature Conservation and was a lifelong supporter of the Jersey Wildlife Trust. He married Fjola Bender from Iceland, and then Belinda Fuchs from Switzerland. Jim will be greatly missed by his partner, Tia and his four children, Kristijan, Anna Tara, Tim, and Jack. Life was never dull when Jim was around. He enriched the lives of many from all over the world and provided support for many Nepalis at home and abroad as part of his lifelong love and commitment to Nepal and her people. We mourn his passing but in Virgil's words – *meminisse juvabimus* – we shall delight in remembering.

A special memorial service was held at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge where staff and supporters gathered and garlanded Jim's picture. There followed a minute's silence and a concluding prayer. As Jim would have wished, the show must go on. We treasure his memory, guidance, flair and rededicate ourselves to developing and furthering his vision for responsible conservation tourism over the coming years.



The international Trust for Nature Conservation has established a Jim Edwards Memorial Fund – for details see please e-mail marcus@tigermountain.com.

NEWS

Business has held up surprisingly well, considering all the reports of gloom in the industry. We continue to strive for quality, attentive service for all our guests. To this end, we reviewed our room information packs and they have been completely revised and updated, and with clearer presentation of the information.

The Lodge continues to get good publicity in leading eco-travel forums and guides including Alastair Fuad-Luke's Eco-travel Handbook, Sawdays Green Guide, Globalista Guide, and the world's Best Eco-Lodges. Tiger Mountain's own website is undergoing a re-vamp and will shortly emerge in a newer, easier style with more accessibility for browsers.

We have hosted several visitors, including many leading travel agents from European and American operators. It is good to see the steady return of interest in Nepal after the past difficult times, particularly from the USA. Tiger Mountain's own representative in Europe, Walid Soubra, visited in December with his wife Sanaa, to learn about our services before the round of European travel trade fairs in the spring.

Staff Profile:



Buddhi Bahadur Thapa's family owned the land on which the lodge stands. Buddhi is an expert at general construction and a fine stonemason. He looks after all the repair and maintenance at the Lodge, having led the team of masons in the construction phase ten years ago. His local knowledge and history of the village is always interesting and led us to maintain the traditional "khar bari" – thatch grass field – near the present swimming pool that his family used in the past for their homes and barns. This makes an excellent natural meadow over the summer and autumn and provides good environmental benefits with enhanced bio-diversity.

Responsible Tourism:

Jenefer Bobbin, seen left in the picture with Gauri Malakar, a post-graduate researcher from the International Centre for Responsible Tourism, UK, stayed with us for three weeks' to study our work in sustainable conservation tourism as part of a project to develop our own responsible tourism audit scheme. She held effective meetings with individual and small groups of staff both to learn from them and gain information for her research. The Sustainable Action Group had two meetings with her and lively debate ensued.



As a result of Jenefer's visit, our Responsible Tourism Policy has been completely updated, improved, and made more effective. Work now is underway to define and quantify each policy action so that efforts can be audited, both internally and independently.



DB Chaudhary (left) from Tharu Lodge visited Pokhara with Gauri Malakar from Karnali lodge and Camp to coincide with Jenefer's attachment. They worked with her and similar policy development and audit-based systems will be implemented at their lodges. Having seen TM Pokhara's Sustainable Action Group meetings, they are keen to start similar groups in their respective operations. Responsible Tourism, apart from being good sense, is a growing requirement of all well managed tourism activities and we are keen that it forms the core of our approach. This will also ensure Tiger Mountain Nepal remains at the leading edge of responsible tourism development in the sub-continent.

Projects and Community Support:



January saw the guides, led by Jhalak Raj Chaudhary and under the aegis of the International Trust for Nature Conservation, coordinating the annual Asian Waterfowl Census for the Pokhara Valley. Working with Bird Conservation Nepal, Pokhara Branch, teams surveyed all the valley lakes, counting all the water birds encountered. The data was then compiled at the Lodge before being sent to Bird Conservation Nepal in Kathmandu. From there it will be added to the national data and sent to Birdlife International, the global body who organises the census. This is the sixth year that we have undertaken the census in Pokhara.

The Pokhara data is available from our website. Staff at Tiger Tops in Chitwan have, for many years, counted the main lakes and rivers in the western part of Chitwan National Park.

New Services:

Sam Vincent, a former Guest Relations Officer at Tiger Tops, visited to advise on updating of the furnishing, style and ambience of the Lodge. With broad experience of Tiger Mountain and many similar style of operation in India, she brought a wealth of experience to us. As a result, over the monsoon, guest rooms will be redecorated to incorporate a brighter and more contemporary feel. This will complement the work done already in the autumn in the Main Lodge area.



Images of Tiger Mountain

Another view of Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge - the Essence of Tranquillity....



For rates and further information, contact Pragma, Kamal, or Dipu at Tiger Mountain Central Sales & Reservations:

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TOURISM SINCE 1965**