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Behind JIM CORBETT'S Stories

GUEST AUTHORS:

Christopher de Coulon Berthoud (UK)

Stuart Gelzer (USA), Michael Barton (UK)

VOL. 2



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Publishing program LOGOS

Editor: **Preetum Gheerawo**

Photo on the front cover:

Research group jeeps going through the Ladhya River, 2018 (photo by S. Gelzer).

Photo on the back cover:

Research group members discussing plans in Kala Agar (Photo by S. Gelzer)

Book cover design: **Aleko Jikuridze**

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Fernando Quevedo de Oliveira: March 2020

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Program LOGOS

Georgia, Tbilisi, I. Chavchavadze ave. 13

ISBN 978-9941-468-85-8

“...Be a Man in all the hidden sense. That gives the grand old word its weight.
A Man who finds recompense in knowing he has done the right.
Suit you like men, be strong.
P.S. I Love You...”

Extract of letter from:

Mary Jane Corbett (Jim's Mother, Naini Tal) to Jim Corbett (Mokameh Ghat).

Dated 28th July 1900.

Contents

Preface	6
BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS	
Acknowledgements	10
Introduction	15
BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS	
Review and update of Volume One materials.....	21
PLACES	
New Details of the Champawat Man-Eater Hunting Story	25
BY PREETUM GHEERAWO (MAURITIUS), JOSEPH JORDANIA (AUSTRALIA), PRIYVRAT GADHVI (INDIA)	
Muktesar Man-Eater	33
BY ALI AKHTAR, INDIA	
The Panar Leopard Killing Site	53
BY STUART GELZER, USA	
Mohan Man-Eater	67
BY ALI AKHTAR, INDIA	
Thak Rock Identification: New Evidence and Considerations.....	92
BY JOSEPH JORDANIA, AUSTRALIA	
Night in Leper's Room	109
BY JOSEPH JORDANIA, AUSTRALIA	
PEOPLE	
Charles Henry Berthoud – 1872-1909.....	114
BY CHRISTOPHER DE COULON BERTHOUD, UK	
Guardian of the Historic Past – Bill Jones and Corbett's 450/400.....	120
TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW AND TEXT BY PREETUM GHEERAWO	
The Taming of the Jungle by Charles W. Doyle – A Review	128
BY MICHAEL BARTON, UK	
An African Sketchbook: Drawings & Watercolours of Kenya by Ray Nestor – A Review.....	132
BY MICHAEL BARTON, UK	
A Trip to Jim Corbett's Kenya	134
BY MICHAEL BARTON, UK	
The Old Meets the New – Mini Jim Corbett.....	142
BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS	
MYSTERY AND RESEARCH	
A Mystery of Purnagiri Lights	148
BY JOSEPH JORDANIA, AUSTRALIA	
Why did Corbett Go After Talla Des Man-Eater in a Terrible Physical Condition?.....	158
BY JOSEPH JORDANIA, AUSTRALIA	

One Day Short: The Timeline of the Thak Man-Eater Hunt	165
BY STUART GELZER, USA	
The Chowgarh Slate and the basic conditions of human memory	172
BY MANFRED WATTL, GERMANY	
Rudraprayag – Corbett and his Rifle ‘Come Together’	184
BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS	
Further Research – New Dates and Facts	192
BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS	
FROM CORBETT ARCHIVES	
The Chowgarh Letters and Other Materials	201
BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS	
Corbett’s writings from other sources than his books	208
BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS	
“Notes and Biographical Sketches” by Maggie Corbett.....	243
BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS	
First Biography of Jim Corbett by Marjorie Clough	292
BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS	
Other people on Corbett – From Corbett’s acquaintances and correspondents	301
BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS	
DIARIES OF RESEARCH TRIPS TO KUMAON	
Corbett Trip Diary, April, 2016 – Bringing Corbett’s rifle home	314
BY MANFRED WATTL, GERMANY	
Corbett Trip Diary, April, 2018.....	330
BY MANFRED WATTL, GERMANY	
Corbett Trip Diary, September, 2018	346
BY ALI AKHTAR, INDIA	
Corbett’s Timeline.....	369
BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS	
Information about the authors of the book.....	379

Preface

BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS

This Second Volume of *Behind Jim Corbett's Stories* brings those stories to life again as the authors literally follow Corbett's footsteps in physical reality while readers accompany them in their imaginations. On these journeys we shall find details (and even more details than in the first volume), which Corbett left out of his stories since Corbett's '... writing is as lean and clear-eyed as the man himself...' (*Rigby. A Grand Tradition* Calabi, Helsley & Sanger. Rigby Press 2012) and thereby try to add a little marbling to the lean meat of the stories to satisfy the appetites of Corbett fans who have hungered for more.

This appetite is due to Corbett's appeal, which appears to be universal. We suggest that this is because the qualities and characteristics exhibited in his books are universally appreciated: almost complete independence; able to live directly off of nature's bounty; walking on one's own feet to wherever one needs to go; confident in one's own knowledge and experience while exercising sincere humility and awareness of the continuing need to learn; and all of these taken as normal, necessary and a basis for appreciation of and interest in nature's beauties. In contrast '...most Westerners are dependent on a vast industrial complex for the simplest of life's requirements ... (*such dependence chafes with many who find Corbett's independence refreshing and appealing*) and ... measured by modern standards, enduring extremes of weather for days and nights (without outrageously-priced special clothing, equipment and, of course, a mobile 'phone ("I'm on the mountain...")), walking alone, perhaps for 28 miles, over difficult and mountainous terrain, being able to eat from trees or plants and keeping ourselves warm, dry and clean along the way, would be rated as achievements. It puts Corbett in some perspective to recognise that these activities were merely *preparatory* to his hunting a man-eater, and were so when he was well into his sixties...Perhaps most importantly, his love for the people, the animals and nature in general is held firmly between the lines of each book. 'He writeth well, who loveth well, Both man and bird and beast.' (With apologies to Coleridge. (Samuel Taylor Coleridge 1772 – 1834 English poet)).

The memoirs of many hunters who hunted for thrills or trophies (rarely including man-eaters) each conclude when the trigger is pulled; the memoir dies with the animal. Even those who write of their sense of deflation or regret, even guilt, when they stand over the dead animal, refer to little or nothing else but the hunt in their accounts. The end of the hunt reflects the end of their interest. In contrast, Corbett's accounts are more than the hunting and death of an animal. We hear details of the post mortem skinning, learning the reasons why the animal became a man-eater (which are all too often man-made); we meet real characters who play parts in the drama, making the

account more than just the record of a hunt; and we hear of stock replenished, wounds healed, peace restored and fear removed.

Corbett's concise accounts of hunting individual man-eaters also represent, in many respects, a miniature model of life – the struggle against nature's elements with limited resources and time, sometimes wasted on false leads or unreliable accomplices; the need for patience and persistence; determination and courage; the mastery of certain skills and knowledge, absorbed by patient attention and humility. Alongside those abilities and knowledge, uncertainty and unanswered questions always remain, as does the necessity to press on in spite of them. Moreover, his efforts were motivated, not by worthless objectives or self-promotion, but by benefit to others and, although he was righting wrongs and healing wounds caused by others, his self-imposed tasks required much self-sacrifice.' (*Framing Fearful Symmetries* Blake 2010).

Many people are also prone to complain or moan at even minor mishaps in life whereas Corbett literally took all in his stride. 'There seemed to be no limit to his endurance of fatigue or his ability to meet unruffled what seemed to be misfortune or mishap...' (Hailey's Introduction to *Tree Tops* 1955). As he grew up in India, Corbett must surely have been influenced, to some degree, by the Indian natives' indifference to personal comfort (anyone who has lived in rural India will recognise this trait). Moreover, his total integration with nature was such that he would have readily agreed with Red Indian Chief Luther Standing Bear, who wrote 'We never railed at the storms, the furious winds, and the biting frosts and snows. To do so intensified human futility, so whatever came we adjusted ourselves, by more effort and energy if necessary, but without complaint.' (*Land of the Spotted Eagle* by Luther Standing Bear)

'...if we are all products of nature and nurture, Corbett was British born in India, so the West was in his nature, but the East nurtured him, and hence he can be seen as a blend of East and West, of yin and yang respectively. Another famous blend of East and West was Kipling...

While considering qualities of character, Corbett also qualifies according to a number of Kipling's criteria for a man...he kept his head while others about him were losing theirs. He could wait and not be tired by waiting, yet he didn't look too good nor talk too wise. He heard the truth he'd spoken twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools and no doubt forced his heart and nerve and sinew to serve his turn long after they were gone, and so held on when there was nothing in him except the Will which said to them: "Hold on". He talked with crowds and kept his virtue, and walked with kings – without losing the common touch. All men counted with him. In his career hunting man-eaters he filled many unforgiving minutes with sixty seconds' worth of distance run, under a cold moon or burning sun. Corbett also qualifies according to Shakespeare's criteria:

His life was gentle, and the elements
 So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
 And say to all the world 'This was a man!'

Jim Corbett was a gentleman by nature and a large-hearted one at that. Plato (c.428 – c, 348 B.C. Greek philosopher) describes the ideal character combining bravery and gentleness as warp and woof, while east of Athens the same was said in a different way since bravery is yang, and gentleness, yin.' (*Framing Fearful Symmetries* Blake 2010)

The authors of this book have also shown much dedication and determination, while ignoring difficulties and hardships, to reach their destinations and, very often, over the very same ground covered by Corbett. In Corbett's day there were no motor cars, television, radio, or electricity – and in a few areas the authors found that this is still true - but there were vast jungles, where only sun, moon or stars made light and shadow, revealing or obscuring a healthy abundance of animals, among which were many tigers including... Shere Khan. Kumaon's 'Mowgli' grew up learning the ways of the jungle and of men simultaneously, and could adapt to either world at will. As nature imprinted vivid experiences upon him so he would later imprint those experiences on paper and the world learned of the Shere Khans of Kumaon and also of an idyllic life lived among mountains, rivers, lakes and forests.

So, come with us once again to Kumaon: 'To a hunter it is a name more fabled than Shangri La. Found rarely on maps, and still more rarely in history books, Kumaon is a relic of British India...' (Terry Wieland in his preface to the Culler edition of *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* 2009). In Kipling's allegory of British India, set in Kafiristan, there was a man who would be king. For hunters and many others, Kumaon can also conjure a magic similar to that of the story set in Kafiristan. Yet, *The Jungle Book*, Shangri La and the story set in Kafiristan are fiction whereas Corbett's stories of Kumaon are fact and he has been crowned by his readers as a sort of king among conservationists and hunters, and as one who truly served his people.

If there is one word that sums up Corbett's life-message it is 'conservation' and his soul must be sorely troubled to see the damage done to nature multiplying more extensively, rapidly and widely than in his day, despite all his efforts. Celebrating his life today, without recognition of the current global situation and the increasingly desperate need for conservation, could actually be offensive to him. He might be tempted to ask what we are doing about his warnings and how we can admire his message and efforts but have '...never raised a finger to prevent (*extinctions*)...' (Corbett in *Review of the Week – Naini Tal – Edition of 31 August 1932*) including our own! So, let us explore Nature's and Corbett's kingdoms and see what we can learn of life and how to preserve it; of such pressing and critical significance as we face the 21st century and our man-made environmental crisis (see Acknowledgements). Healthy life, internally

and externally, subjectively and objectively, is encapsulated by the concept of balance between extremes.

‘...when man upsets this balance, anomalies are made, such as man-eaters. Man-eaters are, most often, man-made – the result of wounding animals but not killing them and / or depriving them, directly or indirectly, of their natural prey and / or habitat. Whilst Corbett hunted man-eaters (i.e. opposed the results of imbalances) he promoted respect and care for nature and its conservation (i.e. promoted healthy balances) in the face of unpopularity and ridicule. He exhibits attitudes and actions that are needed now in a larger context – the environmental crisis – that is also born of our abuse and unbalancing of nature, turning nature as a whole into a potential ‘Man-Eater’ of global proportions.’ (*Framing Fearful Symmetries* Blake 2010)

Acknowledgements

Researching, compiling materials, analytical discussions, decisions, reading, writing, and editing by the authors of this book, on their own, were not sufficient for this book to reach its final stage of development. For this, the authors received considerable help from those persons cited below and for whose help, these words of thanks can only represent an understatement compared to the enormity of their input to the book.

This is a book on Corbett, and since Corbett and conservation of nature can never be parted, the idea and inspiration for writing many parts of this book, other than Corbett himself, is nature and its conservation. We are blessed to have been on Corbett trails in Kumaon, in nearly all the places where his hunts took place and have enjoyed nature's scenery at its very best in 'God's country' as Corbett himself describes it. From the very first lines of the first volume of *Behind Jim Corbett's Stories* (BJCS 2016) written by Manfred while sitting on the bank of the roaring snow-fed Sarda river in April 2012 to the lines written by Stuart Gelzer in 2018 in Sanouli village, where the Panar man-eater was accounted for by Corbett, our inspiration has always been found in nature.

True, there has been a decline since Corbett's time but, had it not been for Corbett's early efforts for conservation, that decline could have been much worse. We're very thankful for that and wish to also acknowledge the efforts of those people who now help to preserve nature in India, such as our friend and consultant of the Jim Corbett International Research Group (JCIRG), Dr A. J. T. Johnsingh, himself greatly inspired by Corbett.

Among 'those people' mentioned just above, and another who has devoted decades of his life contributing to conservation in India is our friend, David Blake. David has been very helpful during our trips to the UK in search of Corbett's acquaintances and other places where Corbett's legacy lay hidden and has helped by giving much of his time over many months reading, discussing and correcting numerous drafts and working at other tasks towards the completion of this book for which we are very thankful.

David, a keen Corbett enthusiast, one of the finest scholars we have met, has been researching Corbett since the 1970's and has followed Corbett's footsteps, both literally and through his conservation work over decades in India. David discovered Corbett through his interests in the natural world in general and India in particular, which have been with him since he was a small boy.

From his experiences and studies, both academic and in the field, over many decades, David has written an excellent, highly inspiring book, *Framing Fearful Symmetries* (FFS), published in 2010. FFS offers significant thoughts on conservation of nature from both practical and philosophical perspectives and is highly recommended to every Corbett reader who is interested in nature, its conservation and, therefore, personal survival! (If any interested reader has difficulty locating a copy, contact us

for advice). It is well known that Corbett was a pioneer conservationist. 'Conservation' was, in his day, a word infrequently used and a far from popular cause. Although the word is now more frequently used and the cause more popular it has not, as yet, been able to fully and effectively oppose the damage and destruction inflicted on nature (our life support system) which has, sadly and dangerously, vastly increased since Corbett's time. Any of Corbett's readers would recognise his individual ability to live in harmony with nature but the global environmental crisis is proof that, collectively speaking, humans in general still need to learn to do the same.

The time remaining in which to learn this critical lesson is rapidly diminishing and may already have passed but Corbett readers will also recognise the need to persevere in the face of dangers and difficulties, even when all seems lost. Corbett is used as an example of this and other healthy principles in the chapter devoted to him in FFS. He is also frequently referenced, along with previously unpublished quotes of his, throughout the remainder of the book. FFS offers many practical suggestions as to how each of us can live more closely in harmony with nature, promote conservation and make other positive contributions to halting and, hopefully, reversing the crisis. In summary and in harmony with the Preface of this edition of BJCS, it suggests how each of us can 'raise a finger to prevent extinctions', including our own! In doing so, it reveals many related philosophical, psychological and spiritual perspectives and benefits, all relevant to each reader, which are of much interest in the context of, but also beyond, environmental considerations. Reviews of *Framing Fearful Symmetries* on 'Amazon' provide further details.

As mentioned in the Introduction, a significant part of this book's content is a result of researching archived materials on Corbett in the UK. This has been achieved on a few visits to Oxford University Press (OUP), the library of which holds a store of Corbett materials. We are highly indebted to Dr. Martin Maw, head of the library section (Archives) for having made our visits as enjoyable and pleasurable as possible and who has helped us sort out the most relevant materials, saving us considerable time, which allowed us to proceed in comfort and leisure; but most importantly for giving permission to use the materials for the purpose of this book. We also have appreciative thoughts for the very warm and kind Ms. Beverley McCulloch, who took charge of correspondence and who gave personal assistance in terms of searching for material and making copies during our visits.

One of Corbett's closest acquaintances in the UK, other than his direct relatives, was Geoffrey Cumberlege or 'Jock' to his friends (an abbreviation of his third Christian name 'Jocelyn' which 'stuck' after being used to distinguish him among other Geoffreys when a child), who was at the time the head of publishing at OUP. Two of Jock's sons, Patrick and Francis both warmly received us and allowed us to research their father's archived materials.

Reverend Francis Cumberlege, to acknowledge him formally, keeps his father's annual diaries which he very kindly put at our disposal. A great deal of hitherto unknown facts, details and the whereabouts of Corbett during his three visits to the UK not long before his death are recorded in them. The most interesting of them are to be found in this book, including some drafts of letters which Jock intended to send Corbett. However, in our view, the most interesting material comes from Jock's private library, now in the care of his son Patrick, whose contact details were provided and introductions made to us, by Francis. We take this opportunity to express our great thanks and appreciation to both gentlemen.

Patrick very kindly and generously invited us for lunch at his residence in a lovely country setting south of London, in East Sussex, on a beautiful summer's day in August 2018 where we spent time chatting about bygone days when Corbett and/or Maggie were visitors to his parents' home. Patrick allowed us access to the library where his father's materials are kept, untouched most of the time by visitors, except for a brief stint in the 1980's when some of them were loaned to Martin Booth for his book *Carpet Sahib* (Constable 1986). It is from this private archive that many rare items, including letters to and from Corbett, original signed books and other materials such as very rare and unpublished photos are kept and Patrick graciously gave us permission to publish them in this volume.

A few words need to be expressed here to also show appreciation to Mrs. Vera Cumberlege, Francis' and Patrick's late mother, all of whom have maintained Jock's library in a very good state of preservation throughout all these decades. It is also good to know that Vera was a published author herself, a fact which we did not know previously, since our focus was on Jock. The 'Corbett universe' will be ever thankful to her for having kept Corbett's legacy alive.

Special thanks also go to Elizabeth Knight, Jock's former secretary at the OUP, for having put to paper, in typeset form, whatever Maggie Corbett had to say about her brother in the late 1950's. These notes form part of the longest chapter in this volume and an insight to the circumstances which led us to Elizabeth is told in the introductory part of that chapter. The task was then incumbent upon the youngest members of the JCIRG, Rushika and Reyna Jayalukshmi, daughters of Preetum Gheerawo, who did a great part of transferring these typeset notes to the computer. Our appreciation and thanks go to them as well.

Research, in addition to focused work, also, at times, demands a share of good fortune if discoveries are to be made and, once or twice, pivotal progress was made by a stroke of good luck. In this way we have been lucky enough to get in touch with Glenn Boyes of New Zealand whose maternal great aunt was Dorothy Kathleen Lincoln-Gordon, Corbett's niece, affectionately known as Aunt Tina by Glenn's mother, Jo. Since 1984 Glenn has been researching his genealogy from several centuries ago and from Britain to British-India and some other parts of the world. The results of

his research and discoveries are available on his website*. Glenn's research resulted in details of over 4400 individuals along his family tree, which includes over 900 family surnames, among which are the Lincoln-Gordons. Glenn handed over to us first hand materials, namely the only photo of and personal letters from his maternal great aunt 'Tina', in which she refers to Corbett and we take this opportunity to extend our deepest gratitude towards him and his mother, Jo, for their much valued contribution to this edition.

In our first volume, our readers encountered Marc Newton, the director of London-based gun manufacturer, John Rigby and Co., who wrote a chapter on Corbett's bolt action rifle, the famous .275 with which he shot a few of his man-eaters such as the leopard of Rudraprayag (see a full account elsewhere in this book of the famous rifle being taken on a pilgrimage to Rudraprayag and other places). Marc is to be credited again for having led us to meet Bill Jones, the current owner of Corbett's, perhaps better known 450/400 DB, rifle with which he shot the Kanda man-eater, amongst others. It is fitting to mention that it was at Kanda that we met Bill for the first time.

William L. Jones, to acknowledge Bill formally, has joined our research team and is now a consultant of the JCIRG. Bill has very graciously offered us his help in writing a chapter for Corbett's 450/400 based on the numerous papers he has collected on famous rifles, supplying us with accurate facts about Corbett's famed rifle, including some very precious close-up photos of the rifle, its parts and features.

In 2016, during the time of the pilgrimage to Rudraprayag, Corbett's .275 rifle was also taken to Corbett's former houses in Kaladhungi and Gurney House in Naini Tal. To visit the latter we were granted permission by the current owner Mrs. Nilanjana Dalmia but, having an engagement in Delhi, she could not be present at that time. We, however, really appreciated the dedication of Mrs. Dalmia towards Corbett's legacy and she also joined us at the JCIRG as a consultant. Mrs Dalmia will host, in April 2020, perhaps the greatest event at Gurney House since its former famed owner departed from it nearly 75 years ago: that is the official launching of this book and a talk on Corbett by the JCIRG, in the presence of a number of media people. Our heartfelt words of thanks to Mrs Dalmia for this exceptional initiative.

Kamal Bisht and his staff of Wildrift Adventures deserve a special mention for having, since 2012, catered for us while we were on Corbett's trails and treated us with the most excellent traditional Kumaoni foods and folk songs during our trips. We therefore seize this occasion to thank him and his wonderful team for their exceptional contribution to the members of the JCIRG.

Our appreciative thoughts and gratitude also goes to Bruce Watson for his precious help in Information Technology matters and other miscellaneous tasks involving the computer; and for his most valuable contribution towards setting up the JCIRG web-

* (<http://mygenealogymaterial.50webs.com/index.html>)

site and its associated Facebook page, allowing the thousands of Corbett fans around the world to gain easy access to, and communication, with us.

We also take this opportunity to thank other people who have helped in some way or the other, directly or indirectly, with the preparation of this volume, and in no particular order they are: Shrimati Oree, mother of Preetum Gheerawo, who offered lodging and other logistical facilities while research was done in the UK in 2016 and 2018; Noel Mascarenhas for his help with the use of imagery and mapping; Michael Barton, as guest author and researcher of rare collectibles on Corbett; Paata Natsvlishvili for his help with the photography and the essential part he played in the India and Kenya trips; Rohit Bakshi for his help in discussing important issues in Thak and his enjoyable company throughout our 2018 trip; and our Kenneth Anderson fan group friends Joshua Mathew and Naveen 'Toon Tiger' S for providing excellent preludes and conclusions to our trips for those of us who arrived or returned via southern India.

Our thanks are also extended to all the members of the JCIRG Facebook page for their valuable comments and suggestions, similarly for the visitors to the JCIRG website who left their kind comments and appreciation; and also to all those who wished to remain unnamed or unmentioned who will perhaps recognise themselves here.

Lastly, but most importantly, we are most grateful to our family members for their exceptional understanding, patience and support, without which this volume would never have reached completion.

Introduction

BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS

We are greatly privileged to introduce to you this second volume of *Behind Jim Corbett's Stories* some four years after the first volume (BJCS 2016), subtitled *An Analytical Journey to Corbett Places and Unanswered Questions*, was published.

After its publication and scrutiny by scholars and Corbett fans alike, BJCS 2016 raised more questions than the answers it was supposed to provide. We were pleased at the interest this indicated and, in a spirit of collaboration and co-operation, with each other and our readers, we were encouraged to pursue further research work. One aspect of this research has been carried out in the field in Corbett country; Kumaon, India, on three subsequent occasions to investigate claims and discussion points raised by BJCS 2016. As a result, confirmations, corrections and new discoveries have been made. Another aspect consisted of searching and researching archives for letters, press cuttings and other materials in the UK which relate to Corbett. Findings from both aspects appear in this volume.

BJCS 2016 produced numerous reviews, critics and praise from all over the world in various forms of correspondence and over different platforms on the Internet. As a result our group was strengthened with new additions, essentially people who had read BJCS 2016 and who, as a result, offered their contributions to our research. This prompted the creation of the Jim Corbett International Research Group (JCIRG), which now has members and consultants from all the six continents. The last member to join the JCIRG, Ali Akhtar, applied and was approved to be included in the visit to Thak village in April 2018, where Corbett hunted his last man-eater.

In addition, a website (jimcorbettdiscussions.weebly.com) and a Facebook page, namely the Jim Corbett International Research Group FB page, have subsequently been created to further facilitate contact and interactions with fans, reviewers and critics from the 'Corbett Universe'. Also, since BJCS 2016 was published in book form as a limited edition, an e-book containing its full features was made available, with its link on the 'Weebly' website, as a free download for all Corbett fans. Further, the website contains articles, photos and videos which document our research in Corbett country from day one, that is, from our very first 'pilgrimage' to Kumaon in April 2012. The highlight of that first visit was a trek to Thak, where we placed a small (30 x 30 cm) square plate to commemorate the place where, as far as we could judge at the time, Corbett killed his last man-eater (full details in BJCS 2016, see also the volume).

No less than four more such pilgrimages to Kumaon have been organized by and for members of the Corbett Brotherhood² all coming to India from their respective countries, every alternate April since 2012 (and once in September 2018). Each trip was filled with interest and excitement as we met and travelled together while discussing and exchanging views on Corbett and related matters.

Whilst these ‘pilgrimages’ were enjoyable, they required much effort. Each individual relied solely on his own means, when and where these permitted, knowing that the only return would be to walk in Corbett’s footsteps, make discoveries about the places and people he refers to in his books and to bring these to the attention of the ever-growing Corbett fan base. Moreover, such trips entail considerable strain on our constitution and nerves; cause each of us to take leave from work, leave the comfort of our homes; and for most of us, leave our family behind, invariably for between two and three weeks. Despite all this, we enjoyed our time together, especially when good humour and good cheer within our group helped us overcome the difficulties of both trekking for considerable distances over rough landscape and uncomfortable mountain driving for many long hours. After these trying times we enjoyed gathering around a campfire at night, in true Corbett tradition, sharing the findings and yarns of the day or enjoying Kumaoni folk music and songs provided by our tour operator Kamal and his men.

Negative reviews of and comments about BJCS 2016 never diminished our passion, commitment and dedication. In fact, we welcome them, if they are courteous and civilised, as they indicate any errors we might have made and stimulate us to re-examine or add to our research. While we are pleased with external critics, very seldom are we pleased with ourselves. We always criticise our findings firstly within the Corbetthood, applying the Corbett principle of ‘disagreeing with one another while remaining friends’; many times we ‘agreed to disagree’ and put any conclusions on hold until further investigations could be made. We often ask ourselves “Why we didn’t go that way?” or “Why did we not measure that?” or “How come we ignored this sentence of Corbett?” and so, to find the answers, the cycle starts over once more and we meet again the following year in April in Kumaon. It’s only when we have cleared our own doubts and reached an agreement that our findings go public and we wait for any criticism we rightly deserve.

On receipt of that criticism we do our best to correct any errors or misinterpretations. This second volume of BJCS includes corrections and also confirms some assertions which were unjustifiably criticised. Over and above these, this second volume also holds a wealth of new Corbett material, including much that is previously unpublished.

2 Our group developed into a solid fraternity, and we affectionately nicknamed it the “Corbett Brotherhood” or as suggested by Paata Natsvlishvili, a Georgian sports journalist, “Corbetthood”.

However, critics are not always courteous and civilised. In rare cases discussions on Corbett matters over the Internet have begun in a civilised way but have then descended into a torrent of uncivilised comments and, on at least one occasion, the behaviour and attitude were bad enough to direct these comments at individual members of our research group. While we can understand that sometimes frustration can be vented by an exaggerated reaction, we should by all means try to avoid such interactions.

On another context, BJCS 2016 also opened the way for others to find Corbett locations which were hitherto unknown or undiscovered. Sadly, in our view, the visits of some others do not appear to have been considered as ‘pilgrimages’ but merely as opportunities to practise and express personal agendas. Mahatma Gandhi once said that:

“The holy places of India are no longer holy. Formerly, people went to these places with very great difficulty. Generally therefore, only the real devotees visited such places. Nowadays rogues visit them to practise their roguery.”

Expanding Mahatma Gandhi’s observation to include the secular and our ‘pilgrimages’ to Corbett sites, Thak is a case in point. Our initial conclusion concerning the killing site could not be agreed upon by all members of our group. Therefore, upholding our principles of objectivity and impartiality; of not retaining a conclusion on which significant doubt has been expressed, we, in April 2018, decided to remove our plate, mentioned above, from where we placed it six years before. We thought it was agreed that the plate would only be restored once further evidence and arguments have been considered, as in this volume, and after we were satisfied that no further challenging evidence could be offered. Another ‘pilgrimage’ to Thak is due in April 2020 and it is hoped that, by this time, the location of this ‘holy’ place for Corbett fans, where Corbett killed his last man-eater, will be finally settled.

However, to our surprise and disappointment, a very large concrete monument has been erected at Thak, at another location, but without, as yet, ‘concrete’ and unquestionable evidence to support it. While we made every effort to present our findings in the most objective way, we also invited peers to review them and, where our findings were lacking in any way, offer an alternative conclusion. In Thak, the ‘alternative conclusion’ took the form of a disproportionate monument, representing, to us at least, disproportionate and unwarranted action.

“All you need is love” - such is the title of a popular song sung by the Beatles. Another Beatles’ song is entitled *We Can Work it Out*, which includes the lines: *Life is very short, and there’s no time for fussing and fighting*. We sincerely believe the Beatles’ lyrics and in spreading love. On the subject of love, we quote from our friend David Blake’s book (*Framing Fearful Symmetries* (FFS), see ‘Acknowledgements’), which, along with many other interrelated topics, also manages to incorporate connections to this one:

‘From experience we know that the best blend and balance of yin and yang is achieved with, by and through love – remembering what was noted in the previous chapter that love is multi-faceted and more than the full-on fireworks of romantic passion, such that it includes compassion, care, kindness, concern, courtesy, sacrifice and suffering (sometimes voluntarily, sometimes not). With constancy of good character we establish wholesome, healthy, loving relationships and these in turn create wholesome, healthy societies. Sadly, so many modern societies are mostly loveless...’

In The Perennial Philosophy Aldous Huxley identifies ‘lovelessness’ as the factor common to many aspects of modern society at which we have looked (abuse of the environment, decline in art and architecture, collaboration between business and politics, mass production). A love of self often accompanies a lack of love for others and above we considered selfishness as the offspring of fear. The cycle is complete since fear often springs from lack of love (both given and received) and hence selfishness can also be a consequence of ‘lovelessness’. The Presentation to the Forest Guards reproduced in the next chapter quotes from Hosea 4: 1-3 “...Listen to what (God) says: ‘There is no faithfulness or love in the land... And so the land will dry up, and everything that lives on it will die. All the animals and birds, and even the fish will die.’” As the pop song says “All you need is love” and so, from the Bible to the Beatles, the message is the same; love is all we need.’

We also see Corbett spreading love through compassion, care, kindness, concern, courtesy, sacrifice and suffering. So why shouldn't we spread love like the Corbett? And what would be our Corbett Brotherhood without love and lots of it to spread around? Moreover, due to his intimate association with nature, Corbett exhibited many of the loving characteristics described by Red Indian Chief Luther Standing Bear in his book *Land of the Spotted Eagle* quoted in FFS:

‘The character of the Indian’s emotion left little room in his heart for antagonism toward his fellow creatures... the Lakota was a true naturalist – a lover of Nature. He loved the earth and all things of the earth, and the attachment grew with age. The old people came literally to love the soil and they sat or reclined on the ground with a feeling of being close to a mothering power... It was good for the skin to touch the earth, and the old people liked to remove their moccasins and walk with bare feet on the sacred earth... Their tipis were built upon the earth and their altars were made of earth. The birds that flew in the air came to rest upon the earth, and it was the final abiding place of all things that lived and grew. The soil was soothing, strengthening, cleansing, and healing... This is why the old Indian still sits upon the earth instead of propping himself up and away from its life-giving forces. For him, to sit or lie upon the ground is to be able to think more deeply and to feel more keenly; he can see more clearly into the mysteries of life and come closer in kinship to other lives about him... In talking to children, the old Lakota would place a hand on the ground and explain: ‘We sit in the lap of our Mother. From her we, and all other living things, come.’ ...’

In the animal and bird world there existed a brotherly feeling that kept the Lakota safe among them. And so close did some of the Lakotas come to their feathered and furred friends that in true brotherhood they spoke a common tongue...The animals had rights – the right of a man’s protection, the right to live, the right to multiply, the right to freedom, and the right to man’s indebtedness – and in recognition of these rights the Lakota never enslaved an animal, and spared all life that was not needed for food and clothing...This concept of life...gave to the Lakota an abiding love. It filled his being with joy and mystery of living; it gave him reverence for all life; it made a place for all things in the scheme of existence with equal importance to all.

Chief Standing Bear’s comments summarise much that we have seen from our path through these chapters and something of the chapter to come: the Earth as mother, unity, knowledge all around us and available to those who look with interest and wonder. Morality and virtue as guides for our relationships, love, joy, humility and meekness, communication with animals, the fear that inhibits sharing and stimulates conquest, lack of love for nature leading to lack of love for people.

Love locked in between the lines of Corbett’s accounts (for the local people and the natural world) has been referred to above and love is implicit in Seymour’s writing and Seattle’s speeches, and explicit in the book by Chief Luther Standing Bear.’

Corbett’s love of nature and the local people was evident to one of his first biographers - Marjorie Clough (see elsewhere in this book), who met Jim and Maggie in 1946, and wrote that “*There is a reward for living and loving like the Corbetts have, and that reward is in being loved.*” It would appear that this was true of those who knew them personally and, to the degree that it is possible without having met them, by the readers of Jim’s books.

Above, we have used the word ‘pilgrimage’ for our trips to emphasise our devotion to all that is related to Corbett and his books. Quoting from *Framing Fearful Symmetries* again, which also includes the quote of Mahatma Gandhi’s above, a pilgrimage is:

‘...a journey of personal commitment and active interest ... and is ideally made on one’s own feet. The pilgrimage is an index of the effort one is prepared to make for what one believes in (the amount of suffering one will voluntarily undertake for love).’

In summary, we would say that on our ‘pilgrimages’ we have been fortunate enough to find and explore some locations referred to in Corbett’s books and share our findings with the wider world in print as straightforwardly as we could. We have clearly distinguished between what we physically found and/or were told by locals and our personal opinions or interpretations, partly from a sense of ‘duty’ to other Corbett fans unable to visit for themselves. We believe this to be in accordance with Shakespeare’s *‘For never anything can be amiss when simpleness and duty tender it’*.

However, it appears that not everybody agrees with us, Shakespeare or the Beatles. Since, although we offered our findings and opinions (simply, dutifully and with

love), sincerely and in good faith, with no intention of suggesting that these were the last words on the subject or that we were ‘experts’, and were happy to hear alternative interpretations or simply learn more from others, we on rare occasions received responses that not only disrespectfully disagreed with us but which were also unnecessarily offensive.

We simply do not understand how or why our original book could provoke such responses. We have tried to ensure that this second edition only offers interested readers pleasure and food for thought about our mutual interests. Surely, Corbett fans share much more that unites them than anything that could divide them? Can we not also share, with Corbett himself, the ability to disagree but remain friends? We hope so, and offer this second volume of *Behind Jim Corbett’s Stories* in this spirit.

Review and update of Volume One materials

Some of the readers that are reading this text, probably already have the volume one of our book, and they might be interested to know if there were any new developments in the topics discussed in the first volume.

During these three years from 2016, plenty of new materials and consideration were brought to our attention. The text of this introduction was specifically written to update the information that was presented in volume one. In several cases, completely new chapters were written, and in several cases, only minor changes or updates were necessary (which is done in this “Introduction”).

Here is the content of volume one, with the corresponding comments:

The book contained several parts, with several chapters in each part. Part one was dedicated to various **PLACES** from Corbett stories. This part included the following chapters:

“The Champawat Tigress Amphitheatre” (by Preetum Gheerawo) discussed the killing site of the first Corbett man-eater. The conclusions generated no further controversies and were generally accepted by Corbett fans and researchers.

“The Chowgarh Tigress’s giant slate” (by Preetum Gheerawo) generated plenty of discussions, controversies, and further fieldwork research, but still no final answer exists on this topic (you can see the debate about the current situation in volume two).

“Thak tigress killing site” (by Joseph Jordania) was followed by plenty of new research and discussions. You can see a new chapter on this topic on new developments and existing controversies.

The chapter “Historical rock where Thak tigress escaped Corbett, Ibbotson, and Tewari” (by Joseph Jordania and Priyvrat Gadhi) generated no further controversies.

Part Two of the book was dedicated to **PEOPLE** from Corbett stories.

“Kulomani: The Gaunt Friend of Corbett,” (by Preetum Gheerawo) discussed the life of the village giant who fought the Chowgarh man-eater and survived to tell the story despite the horrible wounds. We also would like to apologize as in BJCS first volume we had said that there is a photo of Trilochand Bhugiyal, Kulomani's grandson, while actually there isn't.

“Naruli Devi and Shri Ganga Dutt Bhatt: The brave mother and the ‘occupant of the basket,’” (by Preetum Gheerawo), discussed another survivor of Chwogarh man-eater, nursed to health by Corbett. A special chapter was also dedicated to the identity of Premka Devi, the last victim of the Champawat Man-eater (by Preetum Gheerawo). There was a chapter about Beena - Thak Tigress’s First Victim, (by Joseph Jordania). After the publication of volume one, during our 2016 trip, we also found out Beena’s family name: Pander. Another small chapter discussed the identity of the Thak Man

Eater's second victim (by Joseph Jordania). According to 96-year-old Basanti Tewari's information (she lived in Thak village, now she lives in Purnagiri) her name was Lalita Devi, and she was born in about 1890.

"A man who put Corbett on a career of hunting man-eaters" (by Joseph Jordania) discussed the short life of Charles Berthoud who asked Corbett to hunt his first man-eaters. "Other Characters Alluded to in the Champawat Chapter in Man-Eaters of Kumaon" by Priyvrata Gadhvi discussed several participants of Corbett stories.

Part Three (**MYSTERY AND RESEARCH**), as it was expected, generated significant interest. This part also included several chapters:

"Mysterious Night Scream from the Deserted Thak Village" (by Joseph Jordania, Preetum Gheerawo, and Priyvrata Gadhvi) discussed the source of the scream that baffled Corbett and Thak headman during hunting the Thak man-eater. As it was expected, the conclusion that the call was most likely a copy of the tiger's last victim, made by a Common Hill Mynah, loud bird with unlimited abilities of mimicry, resulted in a number of discussions, although no alternative viable scholarly explanation was provided during any of the discussions.

"The Mystery of Champawat Bungalow" (by Joseph Jordania), suggesting that a well-known incident in bungalow before killing the Champawat man-eater has a material explanation: as a result of witnessing the catastrophic landslide in his early childhood, Corbett probably suffered closed claustrophobic condition, resulting not only in this incident but another similar occurrence and a few other details of his behaviour. This explanation also resulted in heated discussions, although again, no alternative scholarly explanation was provided by participants of the discussions.

"The Mysterious Nagpur Man-Eater and Other Unknown Man-Eaters," (by Priyvrata Gadhvi), proved that Nagpur man-eating leopard is the Rudraprayag man-eating leopard. This conclusion was accepted without any further discussions. Similarly, "From the National Archives of India: Ibbotson's unknown letter," (by Joseph Jordania and Priyvrata Gadhvi) presented a newly found unique letter written in January 1939, a letter that answered several lingering questions; "Mystery of 'War Fever' that gave India Rudraprayag Man-Eater," (by Joseph Jordania) also raised no further questions or discussions.

The chapter "Did Corbett Kill a Ladhya Man-Eater in 1946" (by Joseph Jordania & Priyvrata Gadhvi) received new fascinating evidence of existing a man-eater in the Ladhya Valley in 1946. The additional information came initially from Basanti Tewari, 96-years-old Thak villager, who was 17 years old in 1938 and remembers Corbett (we met her in 2016). Basanti claimed she not only knew the name of the 1946 tiger attack victim (Gany Devi), but informed us that Gany Devi was her friend from Chuka, and even more, that she witnessed the attack in 1946. This information was met with distrust from some Corbett researchers. Quite unexpectedly, Basanti's words were con-

firmed by Corbett himself. Here is the excerpt from Corbett's 1946, April 6th letter to Hawkins (Oxford University Press, Bombay): "We are going to Lucknow on Monday the 8th to spend a few days with the Wylies, and on our return I have promised the villagers in the Ladhya river valley, five days march from here, to try and contact a man-eater (tiger) that has recently eaten fifteen of their number. When I am free of this job I intend treating myself to some fishing on the Ramganga. While in the Ladhya valley, and on the Ramganga, I will get opportunities of taking jungle pictures and it is for this purpose that I am accepting your offer of trying to get me films". There is a big discrepancy in the number of victims, but there can be no doubts that this letter is an essential validation of Basanti Tewari's information. In 2016 Basanti also informed us that the 1946 tiger attack victim's body was never found and that there had been no further tiger attacks. Probably this was the reason Corbett never went back to the Ladhya Valley.

"Search for Corbett Cartridges," (by Preetum Gheerawo) was a part of identifying the Thak rock, the chapter that is specially discussed in the new volume. "Corbett's rifles," (by Preetum Gheerawo), after receiving new information about the new owner of the 450/400 rifle the readers can see the chapter written by Preetum Gheerawo about Bill Jones, the new owner of the legendary rifle. "Corbett Magic: Rigby Re-Connects with Corbett," by a guest author of the first volume, Managing Director of John Rigby & Co, Marc Newton. In this chapter, Marc discusses the rare surviving copy of the book "Jungle Stories" (1935). The chapter "Jim Corbett's films," (by Preetum Gheerawo) discusses the surviving footage of Corbett's pioneering work in filming tigers and Indian wildlife. "Through Wounds and old age" was a research chapter written by Manfred Waltl, it was very positively received.

Part four of the volume one was dedicated to **CONTROVERSIES**. It contained the following chapters:

"Killing of the Chowgarh Man-Eater," (by Joseph Jordania), and "The Rudraprayag goat controversy," by Priyvat Gadhvi (where Gadhvi first raised the question about Corbett's memory), did not generate further controversies.

Following four chapters have important updates in volume two: "The Kanda man-eating tigers," (by Preetum Gheerawo), "Chowgarh Tigress Cub killing Date," (by Preetum Gheerawo), "The Muktesar Man-Eater killing Date," (by Preetum Gheerawo), and "The Panar Leopard killing date," (by Preetum Gheerawo).

The following four chapters: "Chuka Man-Eater Killing Date," (by Joseph Jordania), "The bear or the tiger? Norah Vivian controversy," (by Joseph Jordania), "Meeting with Jungle Stories – The Holy Grail for Corbett fans," (By Preetum Gheerawo), and "Was a tiger subspecies really named after Jim Corbett?" by Joseph Jordania does not have any new information or controversies to report.

The book also contained extensive diaries of our 2012 and 2014 trips to Kumaon, written in style by Manfred Waltl. The chronicles were very positively received by the readers.

And finally, “Corbett’s Timeline” by Preetum Gheerawo presented the known and newly established dates of Corbett’s life in the chronological order. The freshly updated timelines can be seen at the end of volume two as well.

New Chapters

As it was already mentioned, Volume Two has several entirely new topics and research results, not discussed in Volume One. Among them are the chapters dedicated to the mystery of Purnagiri lights, to the real reason why Corbett went after the Tala Des man-eater in a horrible physical shape, to the new details of the hunt of Champawat man-eater, to the place where Corbett slept in leper’s room (from Panar story), to the killing site of the Panar man-eater, to the Mohan man-eater related sites, including the killing site. Readers will see also plenty of archival materials, such as Corbett’s letters to his publishers, and to Maggie written when hunting Chowgarh and Rudraprayag man-eaters, Maggie’s full notes about her brother, M. Clough’s first (unpublished) biography of Jim Corbett, rare Corbett publications, a chapter about late Thakur Dutt Joshi, affectionately known in Kumaon as Mini Jim Corbett. The readers can also read vividly written diaries of our trips to Kumaon in 2016 and 2018 (two trips in 2018), and finally, this volume includes the updated Corbett timelines.

We are sure the presented material will be met with interest of thousands of Corbett admirers, and hopefully, generate new questions and new research, leading to a better understanding of the multifaceted legacy of the legendary hunter, author, environmentalist and humanitarian.

Jim Corbett International Research Group, April 19, 2019

PLACES

New Details of the Champawat Man-Eater Hunting Story

BY PREETUM GHEERAWO (MAURITIUS),
JOSEPH JORDANIA (AUSTRALIA), PRIYVRAT GADHVI (INDIA)

Putting an end to the Champawat man-eater's career, the most prolific man-eating animal in known human history, was an event of great significance.

First of all, we know that the demise of the tigress had stopped the reign of terror it had established in the vicinity of Champawat, where people were living under fear and constant threat for four years.

Then secondly, it was the success of hunting the Champawat man-eater that earned Corbett the notoriety and status of a legendary hunter of man-eating tigers and leopards in the Kumaon and Garhwal districts of the then United Provinces in British North India. To the poor people of these regions, living exclusively on subsistence farming, Carpet Sahib, as Corbett was to be known by them, became their saviour. Even nowadays the descendants of these people revere him in as many yarns and folk songs about his exploits and his humanly character.

As Corbett fans probably know, some of the crucial information, including the precise date of this historical hunt, and some important names, had been omitted in the chapter dedicated to this man-eater in Corbett's first book '*Man-Eaters of Kumaon*' (MEOK). For many years the exact place of the hunt, the overhanging rock on the right bank of the Champa River, was also unknown to Corbett fans. But finally, Corbett fans were able to see the photos of this historic rock in 2016, when the book "*Behind Jim Corbett's Stories*" came out. Now we can share with the Corbett fans a new exciting discovery about the precise date of the hunt and some names of the important characters from the story.

A newly found source is a newspaper article clipped from the "*Pioneer*" of June 16, 1907. This article, although questionable for several details (see below), still gives some vitally important missing bits of information. Most importantly the precise date of the hunt and the names of two important participants of the story are given.

Here is the full text of the newspaper article:

"Man-eating tigers had been for some time very troublesome in the neighbourhood of Lohaghat in the Almora district, but it is now hoped that the animals which did the damage have been accounted for. At the beginning of March Mr. E. L. Wildblood on a short leave from Leinster

regiment at Mauritius, shot a tigress which was established to be a man-eater, and was paid the reward of Rs 200, offered by the Local Government. Human kills continued to occur and it was evident that another man-eater was about. Several persons went after it, but it was not till the 12th of May that Mr. Corbett of Naini Tal succeeded in shooting it. About mid-day of the 11th [May] some 25 women and girls were gathering leaves together when a tigress appeared, and, seizing a young girl, carried her off with hardly a sound. Mr Corbett, who was in the neighbourhood, was sent the news and promptly followed up tigress in company with a patwari of the name of Jaman Singh.

The animal appeared to be very hungry and was eating her victim as she moved down the ravine, and as she did so portions of her body and of its clothing were left behind. Mr. Corbett managed to get close to the tigress in heavy rhododendron jungle, but she had become aware that she was being followed and retreated into a very dense thicket. When darkness came on she had to be left. On the following day, however, a beat was organised to beat her up to Mr. Corbett and the Tahsildar of Champawat, Pandit Sri Kishan Pant, with the result that Mr. Corbett succeeded in shooting her. These two tigresses have caused the death of about 70 persons, nearly all females. The one which Mr. Wildblood shot measured 8 foot 1; the second one was a small size, but not young. The latter had lost both upper and lower canine teeth on one side, but otherwise, both tigresses were in good condition. Both of them had old bullets in them. The Local Government has determined, instead of paying a money reward for the second tigress, to present Mr. Corbett with a rifle, the Tahsildar with a gun and patwari with a hunting knife, with suitable inscriptions on them, and the Lieutenant-Governor proposes to take the opportunity of presenting them himself."

A brief analysis of the article text reveals some imprecisions or imperfections, which we shall try to explain here:

1) It asserts the possibility of having two man-eaters in the same region of Lohaghat / Champawat at the same time. Possibly this was believed at that time, or, more probably, this was written not to embarrass the local government for having given the reward for killing the wrong tiger, that is known to happen sometimes.

2) The Nepalese past of the man-eater is not mentioned - she was chased from Nepal, and was known in Nepal as Rupal man-eater. Rupal was a district adjoining Baitadi in Western Nepal's border with India, as this was established by Peter Byrne (see the book "*Shikari Sahib*" - 2003). However, most probably, the editor or the journalist writing this article was not aware of this fact.

3) The article does not mention that Corbett had requested to Berthoud, the Deputy Commissioner to withdraw the reward and remove other hunters from the area.

Again, this fact was perhaps unknown to the editor/journalist at the time of publication.

4) The number of the kills does not match the accurate figure put in by Corbett in his account from *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*. We can probably say that Corbett was not accurate for stating the number of the tigress's victims in Nepal (two hundred), but by giving a number with three significant figures (234, prior to the Pali victim), it could be safe to trust that he referred to an official Government figure. And the editor or journalist could have been giving only a rough estimate of some quite recent death toll prior to his article.

Now we are going to concentrate on establishing the chronology of events back from the date of killing the man-eater, as we have no reasons to doubt the date given in the article.

The Chronology of Events

As we know the killing date, we will trace the events backwards, gradually reaching the beginning of the story.

May 12, 1907. We know that killing of the tigress happened on a Sunday, May 12th, about noon to be precise, after the beat organized by Corbett with the help of the Tahsildar of the Champawat. From the newspaper article we know the name of the Tahsildar – Pundit Sri Kishan Pant (we owe this brave man more research in the future). It was during the culminating event of the hunt that Corbett could have been killed. As the tigress took two direct bullet hits from Corbett, the latter ran out of ammunition. Corbett was then expecting the tigress to charge, as he was only about 30 yards directly in front of the wounded man-eater. Fortunately for Corbett, the heavily wounded tigress decided to avoid direct confrontation and instead tried to escape. She crossed the Champa River, climbed the projecting rock, and tried to take cover in the green foliage at the end of the rock. It was here, on this rock that the dreaded man-eater of Champawat died while confronting Corbett's last bullet when he came back with the borrowed Tahsildar's ancient and quite ineffective gun. After that, the body of the tigress was taken directly to the village Phungar for everyone to see. (Incidentally, on the same day, May 12, 1907, the day when the most prolific man-eater in recent human history was killed in India, arguably the greatest Hollywood female movie star, Katherine Hepburn was born in the USA).

The previous day, **May 11th** was the day when the Champawat man-eater took her last victim. Her name was Premka Devi. She was a young and recently married girl from village Phungar. She was killed while attending to the collection of fodder for the cattle with her family and other village women. The identity of the last victim, not mentioned in Corbett's story, was established after our research in 2014 and you can read it from the chapter "Premka Devi – the last victim of the Champawat tigress" in

the book “*Behind Jim Corbett’s Stories*”. We met the niece and nephew of the victim in 2014 and 2018.

Corbett had received an urgent message from a message runner of Phungar, and for the rest of the day Corbett conducted a hair-raising pursuit of the man-eater in company of the village patwari Jaman Singh (researching more information on Jaman Singh is also in our nearest plans). The tigress was quite hungry (this is evident both from Corbett story and the newspaper article), and while she was escaping with Corbett hot on her heels, she was at the same time trying to eat the victim’s body. Corbett had a very narrow escape on that day when he felt that he was in an imminent danger while he was examining the severed leg of the young girl left behind by the hungry tigress by a stream bank.

May 10th started with Corbett moving from a Dak bungalow (probably at the end of Lohaghat) to settle in the Phungar forest bungalow (see a special discussion on the identity of this bungalow in this volume), the one that is still standing there, nearby the village today. This he did following the Tahsildar’s advice (the advice proved to be a very good one). After settling in the Phungar forest bungalow, Corbett was sent on a wild goose chase, so he walked for ten miles to see that the rumoured kill was that of a leopard, not of the man-eating tigress. The Tahsildar promised to return in the evening and spend the night with Corbett in the bungalow. After Corbett returned from his 20 miles futile walk, he found that Tahsildar had changed his mind and was not going to stay overnight with him in the Bungalow. So Corbett stayed with his men in the bungalow and had a night he remembered for life.

It was the night from 10 to May 11 when he had a baffling experience known among Corbett fans as “Corbett’s ghost experience in Champawat bungalow”. [Corbett fans can read the scholarly explanation of the events of the mysterious night in the chapter “*The Mystery of Champawat Bungalow*” from the book “*Behind Jim Corbett’s Stories*,” vol 1.]

Going back in time, **May 9th** was the day when Corbett left Pali village and went towards Champawat via Dhunaghat and Lohaghat, covering 15 miles with his group. During this trip, some locals who were going to the Champawat Bazaar joined Corbett’s own party of men. They then recounted to him the story of how the man-eater was carrying away a live, naked woman along a nearby river course two months earlier. The unfortunate woman was desperate and crying for help, but as the people who witnessed the scene were afraid, they didn’t attempt to save her claiming further that she would have surely died anyway as she was already covered in blood. Later these men joined a rescuing party from the woman’s village but could not do better than carry the dead body back from where the tiger had left it, after covering it with their loincloths.

It is that event which made Corbett very philosophically quoting that “...there is no more terrible thing than to live and have one’s being under the shadow of a

man-eater...” For that night Corbett stayed in the Dak Bungalow before moving to another bungalow at Phungar village.

Three days before moving to Champawat, **May 6, 7, and 8**, Corbett spent wandering in jungles around Pali village, trying to meet the tigress. At the same time, his presence re-assured the Pali villagers as they slowly but surely returned to normal life after the death of one of their women, the penultimate victim of the Champawat man-eater.

May 5th, this was the long day when Corbett went to shoot ghoorals in the valley on the northern side of Pali village. After showing excellent mastery with his rifle and having supplied fresh meat to the village, he got a full trust of the villagers. It was then that he was taken to the scene where the unfortunate Pali woman was dragged down from a tree and taken away by the tigress. It was on this day that Corbett first saw the man-eaters pugmarks and became aware that it was a female tiger, a little past her prime. During that same day, Corbett met a brave woman, who, a year earlier had chased the man-eater who was carrying her sister, bidding for the tigress to release her sister and take her instead. After the sheer shock of this event, the woman lost the power of speech. Her ability to speak returned to her also suddenly, about a week after meeting Corbett for the first time, on seeing the dreaded man-eater’s skin brought to her house by Corbett.

May 4th was the second day in Pali, and in the early morning, the villagers were quite surprised that the man-eater had not taken Corbett while he spent the previous night sitting with his back at a tree on the village road. Corbett then spent most of the day guarding villagers with his rifle, while they were working in their fields, harvesting their crops. At night Corbett slept for the first time inside of a house, after having left Naini Tal, although he opened the door and barricaded himself from the possible attack from the man-eating tiger with thorn bushes.

May 3 after three days walk Corbett arrived at Pali village in the evening. He found the villagers in a state of absolute terror, frightened to leave their houses and forced to soil their own backyards in the process.

Corbett chose to spend the night in the open, sitting with his back against a tree. It was for the first time that Corbett was dealing with a man-eating tiger, and although he was accustomed to spending nights in the jungles from his childhood, he quickly felt the difference of spending a night in a jungle with a man-eating tiger around. He vividly writes about his night experiences, his chattering teeth, the fear and fantasies seen in every shadow around, and bitterly regretting to have chosen to stay outside in the open at the mercy of the man-eater. It was a full moon, according to Corbett, but the Moon phase calendar does not confirm this date. It is very likely that Corbett does not remember ALL the day’s events, as the full moon was on April 27, 28, and 29. Corbett makes similar omissions of full days in other stories as well (e.g., Thak story, Panar story).

May 1, 2 and 3 were spent in walking towards Pali. On **May 1st** Corbett and his six men covered 17 miles from Nainital to Dhari, next day (May 2nd) they reached Mornaula for breakfast and walked towards Dabidhura which they reached in the evening and spent the night. May 3rd was the march from Dabhidura to Pali which they reached early evening, five days after the village woman was killed.

On **April 30** Berthoud visited Corbett in the early morning, informing him that a woman was killed in village Pali on the previous day. Corbett spent the day in preparation for the long walk and collecting his men. (You can see a special chapter on Berthoud in this volume).

April 29 – the day when the 235th Indian victim of the Champawat man-eater was killed. This was the kill that put the dramatic story of the hunt in the making.

April 23 – Shortly after Corbett's arrival in Naini Tal, Berthoud, the Deputy Commissioner of Naini Tal had visited him for the first time to ask him and thereby extracting his promise to go after the Champawat man-eater. During their meeting, Corbett had put his two usual requirements, repeated in all subsequent hunts for the man-eaters (and missing from the newspaper article):

- (1) That the reward for killing the man-eater to be withdrawn; and
- (2) All other hunters ("special shikaris and regulars from Almora") to be withdrawn from the region. Requests that Berthoud had agreed to.

A week after, the news that Corbett was waiting for arrived. It was the death of the penultimate victim of the Champawat man-eater, the signal to pack the materials, collect the men and set off for Pali village, where the victim was taken. The story of the hunt for the Champawat man-eater, which we all know in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*, has now some precise dates with it and we can now follow it day by day as from the 23rd of April 1907.

When the book was ready to be published, we received a new very interesting find about the events related to Champawat man-eater from one of our group members, Priyvrat Gadhvi. This is a story published in a scholarly monthly Journal "*Prabuddha Bharata*" ("Awakened India" in Hindi) which was published from the Advaita Ashram located in Mayavati, a few kms from Champawat and Lohaghat. It was founded in 1896 at the behest of none other than the great Swami Vivekananda. It was also managed by some English disciples of him. In 1907, by the time the article was published, Swami Virakananda was the editor of the Journal. Since the ashram is located so close to Champawat, it had close experiences of the Champawat man-eater and recorded their depredations in their publication for the month of June 1907 – less than one month after the killing of the tigress by Corbett. Here is the full text of the article:

"During the past two years, man-eaters have often appeared in the neighbourhood of Champawat, Lohaghat, and other villages near Mayavati, and caused incalculable injury to the villagers in these localities. The poor women have been terror-stricken, and went in fear

and trembling to the jungle, to collect the necessary fire-wood for their daily use, and to cut grass for their cattle. The list of persons killed by these ferocious brutes, in the Champawat Tahsil, since August 1905, is recorded at the high figure of forty-four women and eight men. Many more deaths are known to have occurred in other villages, of which particulars are not to hand. In March last, a tigress was killed, about one mile from Lohaghat, by Mr. E. C. Wildblood, and since then, two other animals have met with their death near Champawat, a distance of four miles from Mayavati. One fell to the gun of Mr. Corbett, of Naini Tal, on the 12th of May, and was carried by the peasants amongst great rejoicing to Champawat, where it was skinned. The stomach of the beast was opened, and found to contain one finger, and part of a foot with four toes and nails intact, portions of the unfortunate girl it had killed and eaten on the previous day. It was discovered that the tigress would shortly have given birth to three cubs. The fat of the animal was taken by the Tahsildar for distribution amongst the people, who consider it an infallible remedy for divers diseases. Mr. Corbett left Champawat with the blessings and thanks of the villagers. The third tigress who took to the jungle after being severely wounded by the Tahsildar of Champawat on May 16th, was finally discovered and despatched a few days later, when a number of coolies carried the body to Lohaghat, passing through Mayavati on the way. Quite a large number of people gathered in the precincts of the Ashrama to view the remains of this large man-eater, whose skin of bright tawny - yellow, and bearing beautiful black stripes, looked magnificent, even in death."

In several points, the new source confirms the details from Corbett's story and the *Pioneer* article, but there are significant differences as well, most importantly the information about the tigress pregnancy, and particularly the information about the third man-eater. The information on pregnancy is theoretically possible, although it would be unlikely that Corbett, who did the post-mortem investigation of the tigress, would not report this fact in his story. In regards to the possibility of the third man-eater, involved in the killing, it is most likely an exaggeration following the terror that man-eater brought to the local population over the years. We know that at the Durban the tahsildar was given a token of appreciation from the government for helping Corbett in killing the man-eater, not for killing the third man-eater. We have ground to believe that the first tigress was mistaken for a man-eater, and this was confirmed by the fact that killing continued. Then was the real man-eater, killed by Corbett (and confirmed by the post-mortem finds). And the last, third tigress, was killed again by a mistake as a continuation of the fear for the man-eater tigers. No facts supporting the two other tigers being man-eaters had been provided in either of the two published sources, and all the sources provided the facts confirming that the second (Corbett's) tigress being the man-eater.

This very recently found source is worth to be investigated further, not only by us but by other Corbett researchers as well.

(This text, without the newly found source from a scholarly monthly Journal “*Pra-buddha Bharata*”, was initially published on Jim Corbett International Research Group website on July 20, 2018.)

Muktesar Man-Eater

BY ALI AKHTAR, INDIA

I have been fascinated with the Jungle stories of Jim Corbett since 2012. What a man of extraordinary courage and skills he was, is truly amazing, and a long array of skills made him a unique hunter and a conservationist. To me, he is a true Hero, a philanthropist, the man who always was ready to help the people of Kumaon and to rid them of the menace of man-eaters.

Every story of Jim Corbett puts a chill in my spine, and I feel the spirit of Jim Corbett inside me every time I read his books. For me, the journey to Corbett land and my unbaiting relationship with Jim Corbett began in 2012 when I visited Jim Corbett National Park for the first time in my life and bought Man-eaters of Kumaon and Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag. Since then I have been fascinated with the mysteries of jungles and associated wildlife and became the hard-core fan and researcher of Jim Corbett's legacy. I read and re-read the Corbett stories and every time I find them as exciting as if I am reading them for the first time.

My first visit to Ramgarh and Mukteshwar (earlier Muktesar) happened in February 2015 during our eight days trip to Kumaon. Accompanied with my wife "Kulsoom Noor" on February 16, 2015, I left my hometown (Naugawan Sadat, U.P) at 8:00 am and reached Ramgarh late afternoon via Moradabad, Rudrapur, Haldwani, Kathgodam, Bhowali road. I had booked my accommodation in Ramgarh Bungalows, maintained and managed by Neemrana Hotels Pvt. Ltd. At the reception, I was informed by Shailendra (Hotel Manager) that there are six 19th century bungalows, which were once home to the British officers and their families. These Bungalows have been acquired and restored by the Neemrana group over a period of several years.

The views of well-wooded Ramgarh Valley were simply magnificent from the bungalow (Ashok Vatika, built in 1860). While sitting in the veranda and looking over the hillside I recalled Jim Corbett's words about the beauty of well-wooded Ramgarh Hills. Since we were bone tired after a long drive, we requested a much-needed Coffee which was served very soon. It was 5:00 p.m. and the sun had already gone behind the mountains then we decided to walk to the Writer's Bungalow (built in 1860 Where great poet Rabindranath Tagore Stayed and composed some of his great poems) and Old Bungalow. Walking through the thick chirr pine forests, which suffuse the air with an exhilarating and pleasant aroma, we reached the Writer's bungalow. After a halt for fifteen minutes, we continued our walk towards the Old Bungalow. The Old Bungalow was built in 1830 and the Writer's Bungalow built in 1860 they both had a long history. These heritage bungalows once housed the British and Indian officers as well as their wives who travelled on horseback and palanquins. These bungalows were probably used as "PWD Inspection Bungalows". The Old Bungalow, Writer's Bungalow

and Ashok Vatika still retain the old-world charm which presents the colonial character of the building, with furniture and accessories keeping completely in sync with the colonial era. Close to the Old Bungalow there is another PWD Inspection Bungalow (also known as Ramgarh Dak Bungalow) built in 1898 which was abandoned when I visited it in February 2015. According to the local people, this is most likely the bungalow where Jim Corbett had stayed while on his way to shoot the Muktesar Man-eater, however an old person informed us that Jim Corbett stayed in the Old bungalow (Built in 1830). I wanted to check the old records of the bungalows if I can get some information or any register where I could find the details of the guest stayed in the bungalows but sadly there were no records in old Bungalow and other bungalow (built in 1898) was abandoned in February 2015.

After a heavy breakfast next morning at 9:30 am, we headed towards Mukteshwar. Mukteshwar, a secluded mountain retreat is perched at an altitude of 2300 m above sea level in the Kumaon hills in Uttarakhand. It is 50 km away from Nainital and 345 km away from Delhi. The journey to Mukteshwar takes us through a pristine valley of Corbett Country still unspoiled by human encroachment.

Corbett writes about this place in his story of Mukteshwar Man eater;

"EIGHTEEN MILES TO THE NORTH-north-east of Naini Tal is a hill eight thousand feet high and twelve to fifteen miles long, running east and west. The western end of the hill rises steeply and near this end is the Muktesar Veterinary Research Institute, where lymph and vaccines are produced to fight India's cattle diseases. The laboratory and staff quarters are situated on the northern face of the hill and command one of the best views to be had anywhere of the Himalayan snowy range. This range, and all the hills that lie between it and the plains of India, run east and west, and from a commanding point on any of the hills an uninterrupted view can be obtained not only of the snows to the north but also of the hills and valleys to the east and to the west as far as the eye can see. People who have lived at Muktesar claim that it is the most beautiful spot in Kumaon, and that its climate has no equal."

Muktesar man-eater story, that follows these words, is very thrilling. When the toll of human beings killed by the tigress had risen to twenty-four, and the lives of all the people living in the settlement and neighbouring villages were endangered and work at the IVRI Institute at Muktesar slowed down, the veterinary officer in charge of the Institute requested the Government to solicit Jim's help.

IVRI Mukteshwar (The Indian Veterinary Research Institute) was set up in 1893 by the 'Britishers' and while driving through the IVRI grounds, I doffed an imaginary hat to the British, and to the Government for keeping places like this still intact and well maintained. There are some lovely old buildings along the way that belongs to the British era, and so the old-world charm is still preserved! Enjoying the picturesque sur-

roundings, we reached Mukteshwar Post Office. The post office was established in 1905 which I believe is the most beautiful post office building in Kumaon I have ever seen.

Driving through the pristine forests we reached the edge of the world: the Mukteshwar Dak Bungalow (PWD Inspection Bungalow) where Jim Corbett stayed while hunting Mukteshwar man-eater. The bungalow is only about a half-mile away from IVRI and last point of Mukteshwar from where one can obtain the best views of Himalayas snowy range anywhere in Kumaon. Jim Corbett writes; *“People who have lived at Muktesar claim that it is the most beautiful spot in Kumaon, and that its climate has no equal.”*

There is a breathtaking view of the mountains and the valley from the courtyard of the bungalow and ones like this blend in perfectly with the scenery. These Dak Bungalows were the original post points set up at various locations on the road and were also places where the tired travellers could rest.

Khansama of the Bungalow informed me that this Bungalow is reserved for the government officials and one has to seek government permission for the night stay. Upon my request, he showed me more than 110 years old kettle which is said to have used by Jim Corbett while staying at Bungalow. The kettle was very heavy, roughly 4-5 kg. in weight. (The reason why this kettle was left behind can be found out elsewhere in this book, from Corbet's letter to his publisher.)

We were hoping to catch a glimpse of the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas from Dak Bungalow but haze & clouds in the sky made it difficult, however occasionally snowy Himalayan ranges were visible. We sat on the lawn looking out over the valley and it literally felt like we were sitting on the edge of the world! We spent three hours looking up the surroundings and snow-clad mountains beyond. The views were overwhelming and after clicking many photos from every nook & corner of the courtyard of the bungalow we decided to go to famous Chauliki Jali which is around 500 meters away from the bungalow. Here, the rock face of the hill is jutting into the sky at bizarre angles with a sheer drop of many hundred feet to the valley floor. The rock face has been sculpted and eroded like that by the winds for thousands of years to the present shape. There is one very steep trek from here which goes to 350 years old Mukteshwar temple. We wanted to climb the hill and see the temple which has a lot of history associated with it but shortly cancelled the idea as my wife was unable to climb that very steep trek because she wasn't wearing hiking shoes. The entire hillside was dotted with the tall chir, pine teak, cedar trees, and heavy jungle; I imagined how the priest of the temple used to perform his daily prayers under the shadow of a man-eater.

In Corbett time there was plenty of wildlife in that area including tigers, leopards, Himalayan black bears but now very rare. This is the example of how habitat destruction and interference by humans can alter the balance of nature and the ecosystem. This imbalance is the root cause of the destruction of natural habitat and wildlife. I was very sad to know that there are no more tigers in the surrounding areas and most of

the wildlife has been gone although monkeys, langurs, deer, birds and the occasional leopards and Himalayan black bear can still be spotted. The lush green forest and dense vegetation spread over the hills with a variety of birds is a haven for nature lovers. In the terraced fields and farms are lush fruit orchards that grow apples, plums, peaches, apricots, and pears.

During February 2015 trip I didn't get to see the exact spot where Corbett shot the Muktesar man-eater and Badri Shah Apple orchard due to very limited time. We left a bit late and had to get back to Ramgarh Bungalow before dusk. It was a wonderful day while we were there and the only regret of the trip was not able to walk on that small portion of the earth (Dhari Road) which Corbett made safe for the brave little girl to walk on.

There are many old buildings in Ramgarh and Mukteshwar built during British time. Some of these bungalows have been abandoned and severely weathered while some are kept in good condition. These buildings were probably used as Dak Bungalows/inspection bungalows where British officers, PWD officers, and travellers could take rest. Looking up these buildings is like looking back into time when somebody lived there. There are many stories associated with these buildings, in these stones, Colonial styled roofs with chimney, stories that were once alive and now forgotten completely, as are the people who once inhabited them. Yet, they lived here, worked here, died here, laughed here, played here and their stories are now forgotten. There are many interesting folklore tales full of such stories of the past, the ghosts & the spirits. Our hill people have a deep-rooted belief in the spirits and every gorge, valley, mountain and old abandoned buildings are thought to be associated with some kind of ghost's stories, spirits, and other paranormal activities. Some hill people claim to have seen the spirits of some British officers still roaming in the proximity of such old bungalows.

The second visit to Muktesar happened in September 2018 when I visited the place with Dr. Joseph Jordania. During this trip we successfully pinpointed the location of many places mentioned in the story of Muktesar man-eater, except the killing place. Though we had reached very close to the killing place, due to the time constraint and the difficult terrain we had to abandon our research and hope for more search during our April 2020 visit. Corbett fans will be happy to know that Badri Sah Apple Orchard is still there, and we saw many apple trees still growing in the vicinity of his guesthouse.

Corbett's Ten Miles Walk to Ramgarh Dak Bungalow (29°26'17.0"N 79°33'04.1"E)

Accompanied by a servant and two men carrying a roll of bedding and a suitcase, Corbett left Nainital at midday and walked ten miles to the Ramgarh Dak Bungalow, where he spent the night. The current distance from Nainital to Ramgarh Dak Bungalow is 10 km as the crow flies and the road distance is about 28 km however Corbett

mentioned it only 16 km (10 miles) which is contradicting however it is possible that Corbett would have taken a shorter route to reach the Ramgarh Dak Bungalow.

Keep in mind that Corbett recounts these stories nearly 30 years later. Who would remember the exact details of the distances, places, and directions? Corbett was writing thrilling stories and his encounters with the man-eaters and events happened during the hunt, not a field guide for people to follow in his footsteps precisely after more than a hundred years. He most likely was not making notes in the field for his future books. I believe that Corbett's distance and direction estimates should be taken as a guide only to give us a picture in our minds, not a detailed map with precise distances that we can accurately follow. The landscape and the terrain he mentioned in stories can't match accurately now due to the many significant changes in the terrain such as torrential rainfall, human encroachment, and other civil construction activities.

Corbett writes; "Accompanied by a servant and two men carrying a roll of bedding and a suitcase, I left Naini Tal at midday and walked ten miles to the Ramgarh Dak Bungalow, where I spent the night. The Dak Bungalow khansama (cook, bottle-washer, and general factotum) was a friend of mine, and when he learnt that I was on my way to Muktesar to try to shoot the man-eater, he warned me to be very careful while negotiating the last two miles into Muktesar for, he said, several people had recently been killed on that stretch of road".

The Ramgarh Dak Bungalow (also known as PWD Inspection Bungalow) was built in 1899 where Britishers and other government officials used to stay there. Colonial styled roofs, a fireplace with chimney, a beautiful veranda to sit still reminds us the days of British raj of yore. The bungalow once housed Colonel Jim Corbett while on his way to Muktesar to shoot the man-eater. During my visit in February 2015, I saw the bungalow was locked and it appeared that it hasn't been occupied for long. The interior of the bungalow looked shabby with broken door glasses and windows. The old furniture was carelessly scattered here & there on the ground and was very messy. Sitting in the veranda and thinking about Corbett the imagination took a flight in the past and it was as if the time had stopped and Corbett and Khansama of the Bungalow are having a conversation about the man-eater and Khansama is warning Corbett to be very careful while negotiating last two miles into Muktesar as several people had recently been killed on that stretch of the road. The eerie feeling while sitting in the abandoned bungalow was something I can't explain in words. In imagination, it was as if somebody is watching me from behind the broken windows.

During my second visit in September 2018, I saw some people there which means the bungalow has been restored and occupied. The Bungalow was now in much better condition though not much has changed. I tried to speak to the people, but they were reluctant to talk and least interested in giving any information about the Bungalow.

Corbett's Arrival in Muktesar

Armed with a double-barrelled .500 express rifle and making a very early start next morning Corbett arrived at the junction of the Naini Tal/Almora road with the Muktesar road just as it was getting light. Currently, there is a motorable coal tar road going to Almora and Muktesar however, earlier in Corbett time, this road was not motorable and there used to be an old dirt road (kutcha road).

The Nainital / Almora Junction (29°25'16.7"N 79°34'08.3"E) is about little more than seven kilometres from Ramgarh Dak Bungalow and 2.5 km from the famous Bhatt Ji Da Dhabain Ramgarh Market. Corbett left Ramgarh Dak Bungalow at 4:00 a.m. and walked about seven kilometres till he reached Nainital / Almora Junction around 5:15 a.m. when it was getting light in the month of March/April in 1909. From this point, Corbett walked very cautiously for he was now in the man-eater's territory. From this junction Corbett walked another 22 kilometres till he reached the Muktesar Post office (29°28'23.9"N 79°38'49.5"E). Keeping in mind that Corbett was a good walker and a typical Hillman, we can assume that he would have reached Mukteshwar around 9:00 a.m. or little before. As per Corbett's description the post office was not open in early hours but one of the shops was and shopkeeper gave him the direction to the Dak Bungalow. Corbett came to know later that the shop keeper, mistaking him for a government official had directed him to the wrong Bungalow. The opening time of all governmental offices in India is 10:00 a.m. and if Corbett reached there around 9:00 a.m., it can still be considered as early hours. Moreover, most of the markets in India also open around 10:00 a.m. hence it is very plausible to assume that many shops were not opened in the early hours of the morning. The main gate of India Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) is about 170 meters from the Post office. The IVRI campus acquires a huge area of Mukteshwar hill and is, therefore, a protected area with less human habitation around.

Corbett writes: "Where the road comes out on a saddle of the hill there is a small area of flat ground flanked on the far side by the Muktesar Post Office, and a small bazaar. The post office was not open at that early hour, but one of the shops was and the shopkeeper very kindly gave me directions to the Dak Bungalow which, he said, was half a mile away on the northern face of the hill. There are two Dak Bungalows at Muktesar, one reserved for government officials and the other for the general public. I did not know this and my shopkeeper friend, mistaking me for a government official, possibly because of the size of my hat, directed me to the wrong one and the khansama in charge of the bungalow, and I, incurred the displeasure of the red tape brigade, the khansama by providing me with breakfast, and I by partaking of it. However, of this I was at the time happily ignorant and later I made it my business to see that the khansama did not suffer in any way for my mistake."

Muktesar Dak Bungalows

The Dak Bungalow (Now PWD Inspection Bungalow- 29°28'37.0"N 79°38'48.8"E) and other IVRI staff quarters are situated on the northern face of Mukteshwar Hill and command one of the best views of snowy ranges of Himalayas to be seen anywhere in the Kumaon. As I have already mentioned, during my February 2015 visit, the Khansama of the Bungalow informed me that this Bungalow is reserved for the government officials only and one has to seek government permission for night stay, and showed me a more than a century old kettle which is said to have used by Jim Corbett while staying at Bungalow. Until this time (February 2015) the bungalow retained its old-world charm without any change in the main design and the architecture of the building but currently it has been occupied by KMVN and converted into a commercial property (guest house) for night stay. The Bungalow has been modified with all modern amenities, with lots of alterations and changes in original interior and exterior of the Bungalow and therefore has lost its old legacy in the name of modernization. It doesn't look like more than a century-old bungalow now.

While Corbett was admiring the snowy range of The Himalayas from the bungalow and waiting for breakfast, he saw a party of twelve Europeans passed carrying service rifles, followed a few minutes later by a sergeant and two men carrying targets and flags. The sergeant was a friendly soul and informed Corbett that the party that had just passed was its way to the rifle range and that it was keeping together because of the fear of the man-eater. The sergeant expressed the hope that Corbett would succeed in shooting the man-eater for, he said, conditions in the settlement had become very difficult. No one even in daylight cared to move about alone, and after dusk, everyone had to remain behind locked doors. Many attempts had been made to shoot the man-eater, but it had never returned to any of the kills that had been sat over.

The Bungalow reserved for the general public where Corbett was supposed to stay has now been occupied by SBI Bank (29°28'17.3"N 79°38'53.8"E) and is about 270 meters in the south-east from Mukteshwar Post Office.

Muktesar post Office (29°28'23.9"N 79°38'49.5"E)

After a very good breakfast, Corbett instructed the Khansama of the Bungalow to tell his men when they arrived that he had gone out to try getting news of the man-eater, and that he did not know when he would return. Then, picking up his rifle, Corbett went up to the post office to send a telegram to his mother to let her know he had arrived safely.

The date inscribed on the Post office indicates that it was built in 1905 but it appears that the Post Office building has been renovated with some modern facilities. Here in the compound of the post office (29°28'23.9"N 79°38'49.5"E) Corbett had displayed the skin of the Muktesar tigress for the postmaster to see it. There are two

more very old buildings in front of the current Post office premises, which were built in the same year (1905). Just In front of the post office and behind these buildings there is some flat bit of ground overlooking the Muktesar valley (south-west Mukteshwar hill) with a commanding view of heavily wooded Ramgarh hills beyond.

Corbett writes: "From the flat ground in front of the post office and the bazaar the southern face of the Muktesar hill falls steeply away and is cut up by ridges and ravines overgrown with dense brushwood, with a few trees scattered here and there. I was standing on the edge of the hill, looking down into the valley and the well-wooded Ramgarh hills beyond, when I was joined by the Postmaster and several shopkeepers. The Postmaster had dealt with the Government telegram of the previous day, and on seeing my signature on the form I had just handed in, he concluded I was the person refer referred to in the telegram and his friends and he had now come to offer me their help. I was very glad of the offer for they were in the best position to see and converse with everyone coming to Muktesar, and as the man-eater was sure to be the main topic of conversation where two or more were gathered together, they would be able to collect information that would be of great value to me. In rural India, the post office and the bania's shop are to village folk what taverns and clubs are to people of other lands, and if information on any particular subject is sought, the post office and the bania's shop are the best places to seek it.

In a fold of the hill to our left front, and about two miles away and a thousand feet below us, was a patch of cultivation. This I was informed was Badri Sah's apple orchard."

According to Corbett, he was standing on the edge of the hill and was looking down into the valley and well-wooded Ramgarh hills beyond, when he was joined by the postmaster and several shopkeepers. He was informed about the Badri Sah's apple orchard which was about two miles away and a thousand feet below to their left front.

The well-wooded Ramgarh hills are clearly visible while standing on the edge of the hill and one can have a commanding view of the valley where the Muktesar man-eater tigress finally met her fate. From this point, the Muktesar hill falls steeply away and is cut up by ridges and ravines were overgrown with dense brushwood, with sal and pine trees scattered here and there over the entire hillside.

Corbett's Six Miles Walk on Dhari Road and the Meeting with Brave Little Girl-Putli who was Having Difficulties with a Bullock

The road to Dhari since Corbett time has undergone major modifications and alterations while maintaining most of the original stretch of the road still the same. In this chapter, we shall try to speculate a possible route Corbett took while he set off down the Dhari Road. In the absence of solid landmarks in Corbett account it would

not be easy to pinpoint the exact location of the Corbett point of return after he has gone six miles on Dhari road. Moreover, it is very difficult to precisely match all the details of the places mentioned in the story; the things that were existed during Corbett time may not be there today due to change in land topography and terrain and other civil construction activities in the area.

We know that when Corbett had gone 6 miles on the road to Dhari and retraced 3 miles back, he overtook a small girl having difficulties with a bullock. If you start your journey from Post office and cover six miles on Dhari road, you arrive at the place (GPS Coordinates - 29°25'35.1"N 79°38'05.5"E) most likely from where Corbett turned back. Again, I want to clarify that the exact point of Corbett's return is unknown and can't be predicted with certainty. If you return from this point and retrace three miles back, you arrive at the point (29°26'37.4"N 79°38'58.7"E) in the vicinity of which Corbett met Putli having difficulties with a bullock. One hundred forty meters from this place there is a junction (29°26'40.5"N 79°39'02.1"E) from where a branch of road runs down a steep hill for about a mile to Badri Sah's orchard on the western side of the hill. Close to this junction and one hundred meters away on the main road is the beginning of the cattle track (29°26'40.9"N 79°39'05.8"E), which runs across the eastern face of the hill. The little girl showed this cattle track to Corbett as the place where the tiger killed her uncle's bullock the day before.

As we know from Corbett's account, Kalwa (the bullock that Putli was taking to her uncle) didn't want to continue his walk and wanted to turn back. According to Dr. Joseph Jordania, Kalwa did not want to continue the walk possibly due to one of these reasons:

1. Kalwa had witnessed the tiger attack on the cattle track previous morning and did not want to approach the cattle road again, or,
2. on the contrary, Kalwa wanted to go the usual way - down the cattle road and did not want to continue walking towards the uncle's house. Jim Corbett was often interpreting animal behavior from their psychological point of view, including the Muktesar story case. So, it is very reasonable to ask questions about why Kalwa, who started at home and was walking perfectly well, then suddenly stopped and refused to continue to walk? And we need to remember, this happened somewhere in the vicinity of the cattle track road.

The total distance from the place most likely where Corbett met Putli and the cattle track is around 240 meters and we know from Corbett's description that after having some difficulties with a bullock, they started waking in the direction of Muktesar. After they had proceeded for a short distance Corbett started a conversation with small girl.

CORBETT WRITES; "There were no milestones along the road, and after I had covered what I considered was about six miles and visited two villages, I turned back. I had retraced my steps for about three miles when I overtook a small girl having difficulties with a bullock. The girl, who was about eight years old, wanted the bullock to

go in the direction of Muktesar, while bullock wanted to go in the opposite direction, and when I arrived on the scene the stage had been reached when neither would do what the other wanted. The bullock was a quiet old beast, and with the girl walking in front holding the rope that was tied round his neck and I walking behind to keep him on the move he gave no further trouble. After we had proceeded a short distance I said:

'We are not stealing Kalwa, are we?' I heard her addressing the black bullock by that name.

'No,' she answered indignantly, turning her big brown eyes full on me.

'To who does he belong?' I next asked.

'To my father.' She said.

'And where are we taking him?'

'To my uncle.'

'And why does uncle want Kalwa?'

'To plough his field.'

'But Kalwa can't plough uncle's field by himself.'

'Of course not,' she said. I was being stupid, but then you could not expect a sahib to know anything about bullocks and ploughing.

'Has uncle only got one bullock?' I next asked.

'Yes,' she said; 'he has only got one bullock now, but he did have two.'

'Where is the other one?' I asked, thinking that it had probably been sold to satisfy a debt.

'The tiger killed it yesterday.' I was told. Here was news indeed, and while was digesting it. We walked on in silence, the girl every now and then looking back at me until she plucked up courage to ask:

'Have you come to shoot the tiger?'

'Yes.' I said, 'I have come to try to shoot the tiger.'

'Then why are you going away from the kill?'

From the above conversation, we can conclude that the meeting might have happened just a few hundred meters (tentatively 240 meters) before or after the cattle track and after proceeding for a short distance, the conversation started between Corbett and Putli. Here, we must note a very important point that the girl told about the location of the kill while addressing to Corbett, the girl said; 'Why are you going away from the kill?' It means that after proceeding a short distance or maybe a few hundred meters from the place where the cattle track commences into the jungle, the girl informed Corbett about the direction of the place where man-eater attacked on cattle and killed the bullock.

House of Putli's Uncle (29°27'28.8"N 79°39'13.9"E)

We know from Corbett story that the house of Putli's uncle was about one mile away from the cattle track. Hence, considering the cattle track as a reference point (29°26'40.9"N 79°39'05.8"E) we moved in the direction of Mukteshwar for about a mile and come to a field (29°27'27.3"N 79°39'14.8"E) on the far side of which is concrete structure building (29°27'28.8"N 79°39'13.9"E). It is most likely the same place where Putli's uncle's house existed in 1909. Around 130 meters before this concrete structure on the little knoll to the right side of the road is CITH campus (Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture), established in 1991. Before CITH was established, this was the regional station of CPRI Central Potato Research Institute where according to Mr. Arvind Upreti (Nainital-Nostalgia group Admin.) his father was posted in the 1980's. According to him this place where currently a concrete building exists, is the same place where they stayed for a few years when his father was posted in CPRI in the 1980s, and the place belonged to one Pant ji, and that was a solitary house with no other houses around as far as 500 metres either way. Due to the remoteness of the house, there were strict instructions, never ever to open the doors during the night, even if a knock is heard, as it may be a leopard sharpening its claws on the wood of the doors. The houses built currently are the later addition, after demolishing the old cottages where Mr. Arvind and his family had stayed.

According to Mr. Upreti, The solitary house was the one on the top edge (where there is a concrete structure now as you can see in the pictures). Earlier, it was a series of two tin-roofed houses in continuity, where in one Mr. Pant stayed and the second one was occupied by Mr. Upreti's family. The shop below next to the road and the cement structure on the top edge is the later addition. Mr. Pant sold that house in the early 90s, along with all the land and the family shifted to Almora. So, if we know who stayed there before Mr. Pant Ji, we probably may know more about Putli's relatives and the history of the place and if there was an old house at the same place where Putli's uncle lived?

There are some convincing evidence that this might be the same location where the house (29°27'28.8"N 79°39'13.9"E) of Putli's uncle existed in 1909 and as confirmed by Mr. Arvind Upreti there were no other houses around, so we can probably conclude that this is most likely the place where Corbett and Putli came, tied the Kalwa to the post and went back to the road in the direction of cattle track road. Corbett was very clear about the distance of cattle track from the house of Putli's uncle which he mentioned is about a mile however the current road distance is about little more than a mile (1.2 miles). Here I want to clarify again that Corbett's distances and direction estimates should be taken as a reference only to give us a picture in our minds, not a detailed map with precise distances that we can always accurately follow.

Corbett writes: "We had now come to a path up which the girl went, the bullock following, and I bringing up the rear. Presently we came

to a field (29°27'27.3"N 79°39'14.8"E) on the far side of which was a small house (29°27'28.8"N 79°39'13.9"E). As we approached the house the girl called out and told her uncle that she had brought Kalwa.

'All right,' a man's voice answered from the house, 'tie him to the post, Putli, and go home. I am having my food.' So we tied Kalwa to the post and went back to the road. Without the connecting link of Kalwa between us, Putli (dolly) was now shy, and as she would not walk by my side I walked ahead, suiting my pace to hers. We walked in silence for some time and then I said:

'I want to shoot the tiger that killed uncle's bullock but I don't know where the kill is. Will you show me?'

'Oh, yes,' she said eagerly, 'I will show you.'

'Have you seen the kill?' I asked.

'No,' she said, 'I have not seen it, but I heard uncle telling my father where it was.'

'Is it close to the road?'

'I don't know'.

'Was the bullock alone when it was killed?'

'No, it was with the village cattle.'

'Was it killed in the morning or evening?'

'It was killed in the morning when it was going out to graze with the cows.'

While talking to the girl I was keeping a sharp look-out all round, for the road bordered on the left by heavy tree jungle, and on the right by dense scrub. We had proceeded for about a mile when we came to a well-used cattle track leading off into the jungle on the left. Here the girl stopped and said it was on this track that her uncle had told her father the bullock had been killed."

The Cattle Track (29°26'40.9"N 79°39'05.8"E) and the Place where Cattle had Stampeded (29°26'48.3"N 79°39'16.2"E)

From the earlier discussion, we know the locality of the place, most likely where Corbett met Putli and they walked in the direction of Muktesar taking Kalwa to Uncle's house. After tying Kalwa to the post they returned to the road and continued to walk in the same direction from where they had come (not in the direction of Muktesar). After they had proceeded for about a mile, they came to a well-used cattle track leading off into the jungle on the left (29°26'40.9"N 79°39'05.8"E). Here the girl stopped and said it was on this track that her uncle had told her father the bullock had been killed.

The current road distance from the Uncle's house to the cattle track is about 1.9 km (1.2 miles). The Cattle track is exactly on the left side of the main road and runs across a valley. According to Corbett, the cattle track was very close to the junction from where the road to Badri Sah's Orchard commences (29°26'40.5"N 79°39'02.1"E).

During our search, we found this fact undoubtedly true and to our great surprise, one hundred meters away from the cattle track on Main Mukteshwar-Bhatelia road, a branch of the road is going down to Badri Sah's guest house and his apple orchard. There is a Café close to this junction named "Chandi Mati Café". Corbett writes; *"The road to Badri Sah's Orchard takes off close to where the cattle track joins the road, and runs down a steep hill for a mile through dense brushwood"*.

The place where Cattle had stampeded (29°26'48.3"N 79°39'16.2"E) is about four hundred meters (quarter a mile) away from the commencement of the Cattle track and is the only place in four hundred meters stretch where we found a relatively open field where cattle can graze which was evident from the fact that some goats were grazing while we were there.

Corbett writes: "This track ran across a valley and I had gone along it for about a quarter of a mile when I came upon a spot where cattle had stampeded."

The Night of Terror: Corbett's Night Vigil on Stunted Tree (29°26'46.9"N 79°39'22.5"E)

Sometimes while hunting infamous man-eaters Corbett's life was in great danger. He had one such close encounter with Muktesar man-eating tigress when he decided to spend a night sitting on a stunted tree overlooking the bullock kill. It was one of the nights of terror while hunting the man-eaters when Corbett himself was very frightened. The tigress was roaring ferociously on the top of the bank with a close distance of about twenty feet. Sitting on a very precarious seat, only eight feet from the ground with his dangling feet considerably lower, and in pitch darkness, was a very frightening moment indeed. Corbett describes these horrifying moments in the following paragraph of Muktesar Story:

"The near proximity of a tiger in the daylight, even when it has not seen you, causes a disturbance in the blood stream. When the tiger is not an ordinary one, however, but a man-eater and the time is ten o'clock on a dark night, and you know the man-eater is watching you, the disturbance in the blood stream becomes a storm. I maintain that tiger does not kill beyond its requirements, except under provocation. The tiger that was growling at me already, had a kill that would last it for two or three days, and there was no necessity for it to kill me. Even so, I had an uneasy feeling that on this occasion this particular tiger might prove an exception to the rule. Tigers will at the time return to a kill after being fired at, but I knew this one would not do so."

Reading above lines several times I had a desire to see this place to visualize the frightening moments Corbett had that night while sitting on a stunted tree. In order to search this place where man-eater was roaring in close proximity of Corbett we left

the main cattle track where cattle had stampeded and went down through the jungle parallel to this track and after we had gone about little more than two hundred meters we came on the head of a deep ravine (29°26'47.1"N 79°39'22.7"E) exactly as described by Corbett. We don't know how precisely we followed the route as mentioned by Corbett however the route which we followed, and direction are very surprisingly matching with Corbett's description.

Corbett writes; "I had now got all the particulars I needed to enable me to find the kill, and after seeing the girl safely to her home I returned to the cattle track. This track ran across a valley and I had gone along it for about a quarter of a mile when I came upon a spot where cattle had stampeded. Leaving the track, I now went through the jungle, parallel to and about fifty yards below the track. I had only gone a short distance when I came on a drag-mark went straight and down into the valley, and after I had followed it for a few hundred yards I found the bullock, from which only a small portion had been eaten. It was lying at the foot of a bank about twenty feet high, and some forty feet from the head of a deep ravine. Between the ravine and the kill was a stunted tree, smothered over by a wild rose. This was the only tree within a reasonable distance of the kill on which I could sit with any hope of bagging the tiger, for there was no moon, and if the tiger came after dark - as I felt sure it would - the nearer I was to the kill the better would be my chance of killing the tiger."

The ravine in fact is very deep and from its head, it is extending eastward to hundredth of yards below till it meets the valley floor. Corbett mentioned that he heard a kakar started barking on the side of the ravine two hundred yards below him. It was in this ravine where he heard a kakar barking.

The hill from where we had come is overgrown with weeds and short stiff grass with some trees scattered here and there and by examining its topography, we noticed that this hill has been cut up to accommodate terrace farming. According to local people there used to be a forest on this hill but sometime in the past, the hill had been occupied for use of terrace farming. Therefore, it would be very reasonable to assume that many significant changes have occurred in the original topography of the hill since 1909. Due to these changes the height of twenty feet high bank at the foot of which the bullock kill was lying has been significantly reduced which is clearly evident from its uniform cutting to accommodate terraced fields. The man-eater was roaring ferociously on the top of the very same bank when Corbett fired at her in the dark. The terraced farming on this hill has been currently abandoned and the lush green forest is taking back its place. Between the bank and the head of a deep ravine, we surprisingly found some wild rose bushes are growing (29°26'46.9"N 79°39'22.5"E). I don't proclaim that these wild rose bushes are the direct descendants of very same old wild rose bushes dating back in 1909 which obstructed Corbett's approach while climbing

the stunted tree although the location is coinciding with Corbett's description. These wild rose bushes were found around seven meters from the head of a deep ravine and the bank is further five meters away from these bushes. The total distance between the bank (29°26'46.8"N 79°39'22.3"E) and the head of a deep ravine (29°26'47.1"N 79°39'22.7"E) is about twelve meters close to the Corbett approximations of forty feet and therefore coinciding perfectly with his description. By standing on this point close to wild rose bushes where stunted tree existed (29°26'46.9"N 79°39'22.5"E) in Corbett time we imagined the Corbett's precarious position while sitting on the tree. From this point, we noticed that the tigress might have approached from Corbett's left side as the access is only this side from where an animal can come from below on the flat bit of ground and approach the kill. We know that Corbett was facing the hill with a deep ravine behind him. Currently, there is no way on the right side from where the tigress could have approached the kill as the ravine is very steep from its commencements (it's head) and there is no access to reach on the top of the ravine and on to the kill further.

Corbett writes: "I had told Badri about the tree I intended sitting on, and when I returned to the kill he insisted on going with me accompanied by two men carrying materials for making a small machan. Badri and the two men had lived under the shadow of the man-eater for over a year and had no illusions about it, and when they saw that there were no trees near the kill—with the exception of the one I had selected—in which a machan could be built, they urged me not to sit up that night, on the assumption that the tiger would remove the kill and provide me with a more suitable place to sit up the following night. This was what I myself would have done if the tiger had not been a man-eater, but as it was I was disinclined to miss a chance which might not recur on the morrow, even if it entailed a little risk. There were bears in this forest and if one of them smelt the kill, any hope I had of getting a shot at the tiger would vanish, for Himalayan bears are no respecters of tigers and do not hesitate to appropriate their kills. Climbing into the tree, smothered as it was by rose bush, was a difficult feat, and after I had made myself comfortable as thorn permitted and my rifle had been handed up to me Badri and his men left, promising to return early next morning.

I was facing the hill, with the ravine behind me, I was in clear view of any animal coming down from above, but if the tiger came from below, as I expected, it would not see me until it got to the kill. The bullock, which was white, was lying on its right side with its legs towards me, and at a distance of about fifteen feet. I had taken my seat at 4 p.m. and an hour later a kakar started barking on the side of ravine two hundred yards below me. The tiger was on the move, and having seen it the kakar was standing still and barking. For a long time it barked and then it started to move away, the bark growing fainter until the sound died away round the shoulder of the hill.

This indicated that after coming within sight of the kill, the tiger had lain down. I had expected this to happen after having been told by the Badri the reasons for the failures to shoot the tiger over a kill. I knew the tiger would now be lying somewhere nearby with his eyes and ears open, to make quite sure there were no human beings near the kill, before he approached it. Minute succeeded long minute; dusk came; objects on the hill in front of me became indistinct and then faded out. I could still see the kill as a white blur when a stick snapped at the head of the ravine and stealthy steps came towards me, and then stopped immediately below. For a minute or two there was dead silence, and then the tiger lay down on the dry leaves at the foot at the tree.

Heavy clouds had rolled up near sunset and there was now a black canopy overhead blotting out the stars. When the tiger eventually got up and went to the kill, the night could best be described as pitch black. Strain my eyes as I would, I could see nothing of the white bullock, and still less of the tiger. On reaching the kill the tiger started blowing on it. In the Himalayas, and especially in the summer, kills attract hornets, most of which leave as the light fades but those that are too torpid to fly remain, and the tiger - possibly after bitter experience - blows off the hornets adhering to the exposed portion of the flesh before starting to feed. There was no need for me to hurry over my shot for, close though it was, the tiger would not see me unless I attracted its attention by some movement or sound. I can see reasonably well on a dark night by the light of stars, but there were no stars visible that night nor was there a flicker of lightening in the heavy clouds. The tiger had not moved the kill before starting to eat, so I knew he was lying broadside on to me, on the right hand side of the kill.

Owing to the attempts that had been made to shoot the tiger I had suspicion that it would not come before dark and it had been my intention to take what aim I could - by the light of stars - and then move the muzzle of my rifle sufficiently for my bullet to go a foot or two to the right of the kill. But now that clouds had rendered my eyes useless, I would have to depend on my ears (my hearing at that time was perfect). Raising the rifle and resting my elbows on my knees, I took careful aim at the sound the tiger was making, and while holding the rifle steady, turned my right ear to the sound, and then back again. My aim was a little too high, so, lowering the muzzle a fraction of an inch, I again turned my head and listened. After I had done this few times and satisfied myself that I was pointing at the sound, I moved the muzzle a little to the right and pressed the trigger. In two bounds the tiger was up twenty-foot bank. At the top there was a small bit of flat ground, beyond which the hill went up steeply. I heard the tiger on the dry leaves as far as the flat

ground, and then there was silence. This silence could be interpreted to mean either that the tiger had died on reaching the flat ground or that it was unwounded. Keeping the rifle to my shoulder I listened intently for three or four minutes, and as there was no further sound I lowered the rifle. This movement was greeted by a deep growl from the top of the bank. So the tiger was unwounded, and had seen me. My seat on the tree had originally been about ten feet up, as I had nothing solid to sit on, the rose bush had sagged under my weight and I was now possibly no more than eight feet above the ground, with my dangling feet considerably lower. And a little above and some twenty feet from me a tiger that I had every reason to believe was a man-eater was growling deep down in his throat.

... I also knew that in spite of my uneasy feeling was perfectly safe so long as I did not lose my balance - I had nothing to hold on to - or go to sleep and fall off the tree. There was no longer any reason for me to deny myself a smoke, so I took out my cigarette case and as I lit a match I heard the tiger move away from the edge of the bank. Presently it came back and again growled. I had smoked three cigarettes, and the tiger was still with me, when it came on to rain. A few big drops at first and then a heavy downpour. I had put on light clothes when I started from Ramgarh that morning and in a few minutes I was wet to the skin, for there was not a leaf above me to diffuse the raindrops. The tiger, I knew, would have hurried off to shelter under a tree or on the lee of a rock the moment the rain started. The rain came on at 11 p.m.; at 4 a.m. it stopped and then the sky cleared. A wind now started to blow, to add to my discomfort, and where I had been cold before I was now frozen. When I get a twinge of rheumatism I remember that night and others like it, and am thankful that it is no more than a twinge."

Badri Sah's Guest House and His Apple Orchard (29°26'54.1"N 79°38'37.1"E)

A few hours before Corbett sat for a night of horrors on a stunted tree, about 2 p.m. Corbett decided to call on Badri Sah and ask him for a cup of tea as he had done a lot walking since leaving Ramgarh at four o'clock that morning. Here Corbett gives a very important clue about the road to Badri Sah's guest house which he says is very close to the place where cattle track joins the main road, and this is undoubtedly true as the road to Badri Sah's house is only one hundred meters away from where cattle track joins the main road. From the main road (Mukteshwar-Bhatelia), the cattle track (29°26'40.9"N 79°39'05.8"E) runs across the eastern face of the hill while the road to Badri Sah's house takes off and runs down a steep hill on the western side of the hill (29°26'40.5"N 79°39'02.1"E).

Jim Corbett writes: "It was now 2 p.m. and there was just time for me to call on Badri and ask him for a cup of tea, of which I was in need for I had done a lot of walking since leaving Ramgarh at four o'clock that morning. The road to Badri's orchard takes off close to-where the cattle track joins the road and runs down a steep hill for a mile through dense brushwood. Badri was near his guest house, attending to a damaged apple tree when I arrived, and on hearing the reason for my visit he took me up the guest house which was on a little knoll overlooking the orchard. While we sat on the veranda waiting for the tea and something to eat that Badri had ordered his servant to prepare for me, I told him why I had come to Muktesar, and about the kill the young girl had enabled me to find. When I asked Badri why this kill had not been reported to the sportsmen at Muktesar, he said that owing to repeated failures of the sportsmen to bag the tiger the village folk had lost confidence in them, and for this reason kills were no longer being reported to them. Badri attributed the failures to the elaborate preparations that had been made to sit over kills. These preparations consisted of clearing the ground near the kills of all abstractions in the way of bushes and small trees, the building of big machans, and the occupation the machans by several men. Reasons enough for the reputation the tiger had earned of never returning to a kill. Badri was convinced that there was only one tiger in Muktesar district and that it was slightly lame in its right foreleg, but he did not know what had caused the lameness, nor did he know whether the animal was male or female."

There is now a concrete road to Badri Sah's Orchard which in-fact runs down a steep hill for a mile till you reach the Dyo Organic Resort (29°26'49.8"N 79°38'33.9"E). There is a narrow old dirt road skirting off right to the knoll on which the building of Dyo-Organic village resort building stood, leading up to the Badri Sah's guest house and his apple orchard 150 meters away from Resort. The Guest house (29°26'54.1"N 79°38'37.1"E) is on a little knoll overlooking the Orchard and the valley, has been severely weathered but one can still see the remains a fireplace, chimney and veranda. The roof of the house has been fallen and lots of weeds and other plants are growing inside and out which is really an awful sight. The roof of the veranda doesn't exist anymore however its remnants can still be seen. It was here sitting in this veranda Jim Corbett saw the fight between langur and the dog. Corbett writes:

"Sitting on the veranda with us was a big Airedale terrier. Presently dog started growling, and looking in the direction in which the dog was facing, we saw a big langur sitting on the ground and holding down the branch of an apple tree, and eating the unripe fruit. Picking up a shotgun that was leaning against the railing of the veranda, Badri loaded it with No. 4 shot and fired. The range was too great for the pellets, assuming any hit it, to do the langur any harm, but the shot had the effect of making it canter up the hill which the dog

in hot pursuit. Frightened that the dog might come to grief, I asked Badri to call it back, but he said it would be all right for the dog was always chasing this particular animal, which he said had done a lot of damage to his young trees. The dog was now gaining on the langur, and when it got within a few yards the langur whipped round, got the dog by ears, and bit a lump off the side of its head. The wound was very severe one, and by the time we had finished attending to it my tea and plate of the hot puris (unleavened bread fried in butter) was ready for me."

The apple trees are growing here and there over the hill and below the knoll. We saw some apple trees growing in the courtyard of the house on its northern side. The house is now more than 110 years old and the architecture of the house coincides with colonial era bungalows. There are many colonial era buildings in various parts of Kumaon, some buildings are still in good conditions while some are in a very poor state for the time has taken a heavy toll due to long negligence & lack of maintenance to preserve these heritage bungalows. If immediate action in the restoration of this historic house is not taken, this building too will soon be a part of our forgotten history.

Badri Sah's full name was Badri Lal Sah. He had two children. An elderly person in Mukteshwar informed us that Anand Lal Sah (Badri's son) lived in this house and was occupied by him until the late 1970s. The elderly person clearly remembered late Anand Lal Sah's daughter's (Uma Sah) marriage ceremony in this house in 1962 to Kishori Lal Sah. Kishori Lal Sah had a cement shop in Nainital.

Unfortunately, after seeing and photographing the orchard, there was not enough time of the day for us left to find the killing place, although whatever was possible, we did, and we can say we came close and probably will be able to locate the place on our next visit.

But this is a different story to be told later.

Important GPS Coordinates-Muktesar Man-eater		
SN.	Description of the Place	GPS Coordinates
1	Ramgarh Dak Bungalow	29°26'17.0"N 79°33'04.1"E (29.438057, 79.551145)
2	Nainital / Almora Junction	29°25'16.7"N 79°34'08.3"E (29.421306, 79.568972)
3	Muktesar Post office	29°28'23.9"N 79°38'49.5"E (29.473306, 79.647083)
4	Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI)	29°28'20.3"N 79°38'53.5"E (29.472306, 79.648194)
5	Muktesar Dak Bungalow Reserved for Government Officials	29°28'37.0"N 79°38'48.8"E (29.476944, 79.646889)
6	Muktesar Dak Bungalow Reserved for General Public	29°28'17.3"N 79°38'53.8"E (29.471472, 79.648278)
7	Corbett Point of Return after He had Covered Six miles on Dhari Road	29°25'35.1"N 79°38'05.5"E (29.426417, 79.634861)
8	The Place Where Corbett met a brave little girl –Putli	29°26'37.4"N 79°38'58.7"E (29.443722, 79.649639)
9	House of Putli's Uncle	29°27'28.8"N 79°39'13.9"E (29.458000, 79.653861)
10	A Well-used Cattle Track Leading off into the Jungle on the Left	29°26'40.9"N 79°39'05.8"E (29.444694, 79.651611)
11	Where the Cattle had Stampeded	29°26'48.3"N 79°39'16.2"E (29.446750, 79.654500)
12	Corbett's Night Vigil on Stunted Tree	29°26'46.9"N 79°39'22.5"E (29.446361, 79.656250)
13	Wild Rose Bushes	29°26'46.9"N 79°39'22.5"E (29.446361, 79.656250)
14	Head of a Deep Ravine	29°26'47.1"N 79°39'22.7"E (29.446417, 79.656306)
15	Twenty Feet High Bank at the Foot of Which the Bullock Kill was Lying	29°26'46.8"N 79°39'22.3"E (29.446333, 79.656194)
16	Commencement of the Road to Badri Sah's Guest House and his Apple Orchard	29°26'40.5"N 79°39'02.1"E (29.444583, 79.650583)
17	Badri Sah's Guest House	29°26'54.1"N 79°38'37.1"E (29.448361, 79.643639)

The Panar Leopard Killing Site

BY STUART GELZER, USA

In the first decade of the twentieth century, a single leopard killed at least four hundred people in the Panar Valley of central Kumaon – more than three times as many as the much more famous Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag in the 1920s. Jim Corbett attributed the national (and even international) notoriety of the latter animal, and the relative obscurity of the former, to the position of Rudraprayag on the Badrinath-Kedarnath pilgrimage route:

“ ... the Panar leopard operated in a remote area far from the beaten track, whereas the Rudraprayag leopard operated in an area visited each year by sixty thousand pilgrims ranging from the humblest in the land to the highest, all of whom had to run the gauntlet of the man-eater. It was these pilgrims, and the daily bulletins issued by Government, that made the Rudraprayag leopard so famous, though it caused far less human suffering than the Panar leopard.”

The Panar Valley does not look especially remote on a map – it lies in central Kumaon, not far east of Almora – but its isolation has more to do with being a relative backwater, away from important through roads, and therefore hard to get to except on purpose. Corbett visited the Panar Valley twice, in April and September of 1910, and the long treks (a week or more) involved in his getting there produced memorable incidents that are the subject of another article in this book. More than a century later, the Panar Valley is still off the beaten path, though now you can get there by jeep instead of on foot, the way Corbett traveled. Still, it is quite possible that when members of the 2018 Corbett research party (Joseph Jordania, Fernando Quevedo, Paata Natsvlishvili, and Stuart Gelzer) reached the Panar Valley village of Sanouli, we were the first outsiders to go there after Jim Corbett himself in 1910 and Corbett enthusiast Peter Byrne in 1998.

The length of Corbett’s journey from Nainital to the Panar Valley has a direct bearing on the challenge of locating the kill site now. In some of Corbett’s hunts – for the Champawat and Mohan man-eaters, for examples – he was able to track the tiger directly from the site of a fresh human or buffalo kill, following blood or drag marks in a more or less continuously unfolding and uninterrupted action that ended with the tiger’s death. In those cases the site of the last victim’s death, if known, therefore provides an important clue, one end of a dotted line on a map that links the victim to the man-eater’s kill site.

When Corbett returned to the Panar Valley in September 1910 (having done no better on his April visit than a fruitless overnight vigil), it took him several days just to gather news of where the leopard had struck most recently, and then – once he

had been pointed toward Sanouli – two more days, including a dramatic crossing of the Panar River, to reach that village. He writes, “*The last kill had taken place six days before...*” There would be no fresh blood or drag trail to follow in this case, nor any half-eaten kill for the leopard to return to.

In April 2018, in a Mahindra jeep climbing by a bad and winding road up from our previous campsite on the bank of the Panar River, it still took us almost two hours to reach Sanouli. The main road passes some distance above the village, and we were met up there by the village headman, Kunwar Singh Negi. We were surprised and delighted when, on being asked about Corbett and the Panar Leopard, he immediately began to point and explain – perhaps our search would be over by lunchtime! But as our expedition leader, Kamal Bisht, translated, we learned that what the headman was pointing to was the site of the death of the leopard’s last two human victims.

Each of those women, on separate occasions, had been killed in the open and then dragged into what Corbett calls a “*patch of brushwood*” to be eaten. (To defang potential rebellion, the British colonial government had confiscated firearms, even in remote rural areas, so no one in Sanouli had a gun with which to pursue the mean-eater; in fact, having never been hunted by anyone, the Panar Leopard had no fear of humans – important later in its behaviour leading up to its death.) Headman Kunwar Singh said the victims were named Sheela and Debuli, and that since 1910 the villagers had commemorated their deaths by naming the place they were killed after them: Sheela-Deb, pronounced in the local dialect more like “Sheela-Doob”.

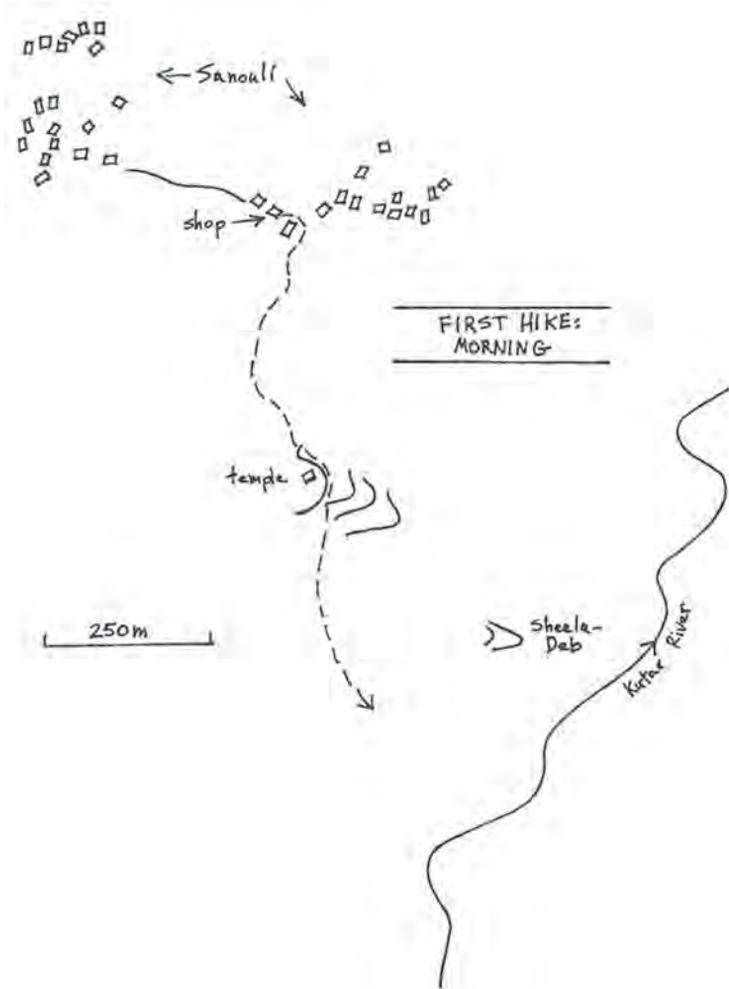
We were certainly moved as we reflected on the power of local oral history in preserving the memory of those poor women. However, we quickly reminded ourselves, our mission was to find the place where Corbett killed the leopard, not the place where the leopard killed Sheela (or Debuli) six days before Corbett got here. But, perhaps because he misunderstood our specific interests, perhaps because he had nothing better to offer us, Kunwar Singh appointed his deputy, a man named Diwan Singh Negi, to guide us down the mountain to the place called Sheela-Deb.

The site of almost every Corbett adventure – and indeed most of the landscape of Kumaon – seems to lie on a near-vertical plane. So the zigzagging paths along which we followed Diwan Singh led down, down, down, down, and then more steeply down. A little below the road we passed through the village, the effective center and crossroads of which is the village shop. (For those readers trying to locate Sanouli and the surrounding area on a map, or on Google Satellite, for instance to get a sense of Sanouli relative to Almora, the GPS coordinates of the Sanouli village shop are 29°28’26.9”N 79°52’08.8”E.)

In our descent we soon left the village behind. The hillside all around is cleared and carved into terraces for cultivation, and our path led down across one terrace after another. Further down Diwan Singh led us past an isolated temple, and then bore slightly right (southwest) and down again. Rain threatened, and our entire hike

down was punctuated by flashes of lightning and frequent booms of thunder rolling around the mountainsides.

As it began to sprinkle, Diwan Singh paused on the path and pointed (down, down, down) to a broad flat space near the bottom of the steep valley cut by the Kutar, a small tributary of the Panar River. So much further down to that terraced field was it from where we stood that it looked no bigger than a postage stamp. Diwan Singh announced, "Sheela-Deb."



We conferred and took stock: It was raining. The field he was pointing to seemed vertically at least as much further down the mountain as we had already come – no joke if the steep ground got slippery. Anyway, Sheela-Deb was the place the women were killed, not the place the leopard was killed. More to the point, we had come too far from the village to match Corbett's account (see below). We turned back, and in a gentle rain, but still accompanied by plenty of lightning and thunder, we retraced our

steps, climbing – much more slowly now – up, up, up the path toward the village. We paused just below the isolated temple to pace out a couple of larger terraced fields, just in case, but nothing matched Corbett’s account, and we climbed on up as far as the village shop to rest and regroup and hide from the cold rain.

We found shelter from the rain in the small crowded storeroom next to the village shop, and there, perched on large tins of cooking oil and sacks of gram flour and boxes of soap, we combed once again through Corbett’s account of the Panar Leopard in *The Temple Tiger and More Man-eaters of Kumaon*, in search of a definitive list (not given in any one place by Corbett, but scattered through the text) of the kill site conditions implied by the narrative:

Condition 1: For his stakeout perch overlooking his second (successful) bait goat Corbett chose a tree “*on the near side of the patch of brushwood*” – meaning the brushwood patch from which the leopard had emerged to kill Corbett’s first bait goat, and probably the same brushwood patch into which the leopard had earlier dragged Sheela and Debuli. Corbett describes the brushwood patch as being “*some twenty acres in extent.*” But a century later, with the mountainside now so densely cultivated by a much larger village population, even if that brushwood patch survived, would it cover the same area as in 1910? Could either its presence or its absence near a potential kill site serve as evidence?

Condition 2: Corbett’s stakeout tree was “*an old oak tree... growing out of a six-foot-high bank between two terraced fields... leaning away from the hill... with a branch jutting out...*” On our morning hike down the mountain we had seen a number of trees growing that way, rooted in the terrace wall and with their trunks angled at 45 degrees or more over the lower field. But none were oak trees (Kamal said they were mostly Mau trees). Still, this clue was of little or no help anyway, because more than a century has passed since 1910, and that oak tree was already noticeably “*old*” in Corbett’s time, and he describes the branch he chose to sit on as “*hollow and rotten.*” We should not expect such a tree, already in its twilight then, to have survived till now as a convenient landmark at the kill site.

Condition 3: Still, with or without an oak tree, we needed “*a six-foot-high bank between two terraced fields.*” Of course, terraces can be rebuilt and reconfigured over a century. But, considering that earth-shaping work of that sort is still done laboriously by hand in India, it seemed more likely that – unless it had collapsed in rain or earthquake – a six-foot terrace between fields in 1910 would still remain more or less a six-foot terrace now.

So far the needed conditions we had listed were relatively minor and contingent: there might or might not be an area of brushwood, an old oak, or a six-foot terrace at the site – and conversely finding any one of them would not significantly narrow the search. On the other hand, the last two conditions given or implied by Corbett were major and relatively inalterable:

Condition 4: In the dramatic final scene of his account, Corbett describes how, having shot at and at least wounded the leopard as it attacked his bait goat, he led the men of the village across the terraced field from the upper end, where he sat in the oak tree, toward the lower end, where the leopard had vanished over the lip of the next terrace down, to die or to wait in ambush, they didn't know. With his characteristic narrative flair, Corbett expands the moment to heighten the suspense: "*Thirty yards to the goat, and another twenty yards to the edge of the field.*" He was counting from the foot of tree, after his men had helped him down; earlier, before the arrival of the leopard, he mentioned that the goat was tied "*thirty yards in front of me.*" Therefore – stepping back now from the drama of the story to the pedestrian level of the clues it gives about the location – the field the men crossed must be fifty yards wide, meaning from its uphill limit to its downhill limit. (I will use that sense of the "width" of the field from here on, since the dimension along the contour of the hillside is not at issue. I will also treat metres as a good enough equivalent to yards, over a distance merely estimated by Corbett and paced out rather than measured to the inch with a tape measure.)

We now realized that this requirement in Corbett's account – a terraced field 50 metres wide – had the effect of excluding almost every field on the mountainside. I have mentioned the steepness of the slope: on a steep slope the terraces must be built narrow, and on a very steep slope the terraces will be very narrow. Most of the terraces we had passed on our climb down and back up in the morning were (estimating by sight) no more than 5 metres wide, many even less. A field 10 metres wide would have counted as "big." We had noticed that just below the isolated temple the ground flattened out a little, and on our way back up the hill we paced out the comparatively wider fields there: but the widest was still no more than 20 metres – not even half the width of the kill site field, and neither Corbett nor anyone else would be likely to estimate that distance wrong by a hundred percent.

The only ground we had seen that could conceivably support terraced fields 50 metres wide lay at the very bottom of the valley, where the land seemed to level out slightly just above the Kutar River. I say "seemed" because we had not been there; we had observed the valley bottom, where Sheela-Deb was located, only from far away, high up the hillside, at the point where we turned back.

And we had turned back in part because of the final but critical condition:

Condition 5: The kill site had to be close to the village. How close? Within easy earshot.

After Corbett's men had wrapped blackthorn shoots around the oak tree he had chosen to wait in – the blackthorn shoots that saved his life by preventing the leopard from walking out along the trunk of the tree (growing out of the bank at 45 degrees) and killing him – Corbett had the men "*return to the village*" to be safe. Later, while the leopard was struggling to get past or even to undo the blackthorn barrier to get

at him (remember, the Panar Leopard had never been hunted and had no fear of humans), Corbett writes that the angry man-eater “*was growling loud enough to be heard by the men anxiously listening in the village.*” This was not a guess or a figure of speech: they told him so afterward.

Later, when the leopard had given up on Corbett and gone after the goat instead, and Corbett had shot and hit it, and it had fled over the next terrace wall, he waited, listening. After a while, “*my men called out and asked if they should come to me.*” Corbett responded with detailed instructions: the men should “*light pine torches,*” and before they came he made sure that they “*circled around above the terraced fields and approached my tree from behind.*” (All this because he still did not know where the leopard was, and if alive or dead.)

It is one thing to call out a lung-bursting halloo from one hilltop to the next to get someone’s attention. It is another thing to hold a lengthy two-way conversation, especially one dense with instructions. When this point is joined to the point about the men safe inside the village houses being able to hear the leopard growling on the oak tree, the conclusion is clear: the kill site must be within easy conversational distance of the village.

When we reached this stage in our analysis of the kill site conditions required by Corbett’s account – still sitting on our makeshift stools of bulk goods in the village shop storeroom – and we compared it to what we had observed of the area around the village that morning, we felt at an impasse, checkmated. To cite only conditions 4 and 5: without a doubt, we had seen no terraced field 50 meters wide anywhere within easy earshot of the village. (It had taken us at least half an hour’s trek downhill to reach even the point from which we could see the river bottom still far below us.) It seemed like an unresolvable contradiction.

It was cold and rainy and still barely noon on our first day in Sanouli, and we were stuck, facing failure. So we did the only reasonable thing: over lunch, with help from Diwan Singh Negi and the Wildrift expedition crew, we drank a whole bottle of Gulab brand “country liquor” – rum made from Uttarakhand sugarcane – and we toasted to the inevitable and unstoppable success of our mission to find the Panar Leopard kill site.

The alert reader will remember that the pioneering Corbett researcher Peter Byrne visited Sanouli in 1998. In fact, when older villagers were shown a snapshot, reproduced in *Behind Jim Corbett’s Stories*, of Dr. Jordania dining with Byrne in the United States a few years ago, they recognized Byrne immediately – though they had met him only briefly twenty years ago. (That suggests the rarity of foreign visitors to the Panar Valley.)

Would the chapter on the Panar Leopard in Byrne’s book, *Shikari Sahib*, resolve the impasse and contradictions in which we found ourselves at this point in our own visit to Sanouli? Byrne writes that he was taken to the kill site, and he includes a photo of

himself sitting in what he says is the same oak tree used by Corbett. So all we needed now was to find Byrne's field!

Unfortunately, Byrne's account raises more doubts than it resolves:

- The terraced field visible in the background of the *Shikari Sahib* tree photo is indistinct and generic and without surrounding context: no help in identifying one field among many.
- The tree Byrne is sitting in is clearly not an oak. And besides, we have addressed above the unlikelihood of Corbett's already old and rotting oak surviving for another hundred years – much less remaining strong enough after all that time to support Peter Byrne, who is not a small man.
- Byrne, who did not have Corbett's text with him on his visit to cross-check against claims and clues on the spot, refers to the kill site as being located "*half-way down the hill and about three hundred yards from the nearest village house.*" But, as argued above, a distance of a third of a kilometre – and that only to the very nearest (lowest) house – is too far to sustain plausibly the complex two-way conversation between Corbett and his men.

As a result it seemed to us, coming to Sanouli twenty years later, that whatever Peter Byrne thought he had found, it was not what we were looking for.

In a fine example of Nature rhyming its moods with human thoughts and emotions, in the middle of the afternoon, as the rain cleared and the mist rose up from valleys through the village and was followed by sunshine, we began to see our way clear to solving the puzzle.

Of course, after eleven decades, no eyewitness to the original events would survive. But the headman, Kunwar Singh Negi, had said there were a few village elders whom we could interview to learn what they remembered being told about Corbett or the leopard when they were young. (Both Kunwar Singh and his deputy, our guide Diwan Singh, looked to be in their forties, and therefore several generations removed from Corbett's time.)

So when we finally emerged from the shelter of the village shop we followed Diwan Singh uphill to find those elders. In the flagstone-paved courtyard in front of a village house, we met first with Durga Singh Negi, a man 95 years old. He was soon joined by another man, Kharak Singh Negi, aged somewhere between 85 and 90. (Byrne includes a photo of him – twenty years younger – in his book, spelling his name "Karak Singh," and writes that he "*helped the author in his research at Sanouli and offered the use of his house.*") Those two men together were already a fountain of memory and knowledge – addressing the questions Kamal passed on from us to them and then elaborating with energy and humour – but a useful reinforcement followed: Kala Bisht, the village schoolteacher, who was of a much younger generation, but who added clarity and broader factual context, and most importantly specific dates, to the

story the old men were telling us. (Kala Bisht's husband was a great-grandson of one of the Panar Leopard's local victims, possibly Debuli, though she was not sure which.)

We had now spent half a day traipsing up and down through a village whose last foreign visitor came twenty years ago, and by this time we were the biggest, most entertaining show in town. As our interview went on, it seemed as if at least half the village, people of all ages but notably teenagers, had gathered to watch, and the audience for the old men's reminiscences had grown from four Corbett researchers to several dozen people, some of them eager listeners and some just there to enjoy the unexpected crowd scene.

What we learned from the collective memory in that cheerful gathering cut through the mystery, the contradiction, the confusion, like a knife going through a knot: In 1910 the village of Sanouli stood much further down the mountainside, just above the broad fields around Sheela-Deb and the Kutar River, on which the villagers then depended for water. Starting in the early 1960s the government tapped springs much higher up, and ran gravity-fed water pipes down the slope. No longer dependent on the river itself for water, and with better land available higher up for pasturing animals, the villagers began to follow the water pipes uphill, moving not *en masse* but one or two households at a time over several years. They abandoned their old houses lower down, but many of the ruins still stand now, the broken stone walls and slate roofs marking the site of the original Sanouli. (If, instead of turning back, we had continued down the mountain toward Sheela-Deb on our morning trek, we would soon have found ourselves passing through the ruins.)

It was instantly clear that moving the village solved our logical problem, which had been that all the suitable fields (50 meters wide) were down there by the river, yet the village was up here, much too far away for conversational earshot. But in Corbett's time the village was down there, by the wide fields. (Oddly, in his book Peter Byrne makes no mention of the old village or its ruins. Yet if he went down to a site near the river he must have passed through the area of abandoned houses.)

A few puzzle pieces remained. Sanouli sits on a very large mountainside, and – having not been down that far – we still had no clear sense of where (how far down, in what direction) the abandoned village stood. We had also seen the valley bottom only from much higher up, so we had no real certainty that any terraced field down there would really measure 50 metres wide. Kamal therefore asked the villagers the essential question: “Are there fields 50 metres wide near the old village?” Everyone present said yes, without a doubt. One man, Lakshman Singh Negi, volunteered to guide us down to look.

It was now late afternoon, and new rain clouds were gathering, meaning that daylight would not last much longer, and we all had a vivid mental picture of how very far and very steep downhill it was from this courtyard (near the top of the modern village) to the village shop, and then from there down to the isolated temple, and then

from there down to the valley overlook point where we had turned back, and then (on new ground unknown to us) from there down all the way to the ruins, and then from there down still further to the wide fields. We decided that for the sake of speed one of us (Stuart, the youngest and fastest-moving) would join Kamal and our new volunteer guide, Lakshman Singh, and do what Kamal would call “a recce” to learn if there was anything worth bringing the whole group back to see in the morning.

Lakshman Singh and Kamal and I set off at a pace that can only be described as a run, or maybe a gallop, down the mountain, at first following the same route we had taken in the morning – though now with every few rapid strides we covered a length of path that then had filled a minute or more of leisurely downhill stroll. Yet even as we ran we were easily overtaken by others: five boys who had enjoyed the village gathering around the old-timers’ interview and who didn’t want the fun to end, and who now raced past us, sometimes circling back behind us to overtake us again for fun – and all this they did wearing nothing more sturdy on their feet than thin plastic flip-flop chappals.

Below the isolated temple Lakshman Singh again led us slightly to the right (south) as we descended, but this time instead of turning back left (southeast), as Diwan Singh had in the morning to show us Sheela-Deb, we kept on going straight and a little to our right, and of course always down, down, down, and always at a near-run. Finally we came off the slope onto a somewhat more level space, a lumpy irregular clearing that could at one time have been a field, though it seemed long abandoned. But it didn’t feel right: I didn’t even have to pace it out to see that it was not 50 meters wide; and there was no terrace at its upper end – the natural mountain slope just emerged onto the field. Where then would Corbett’s oak tree, growing out of the upper terrace wall, have stood?

I asked Lakshman Singh if there was another choice, another wide enough field. Yes, just below this one. We scrambled down the terrace wall. This next field was more level, and possibly wide enough, and it had an uphill terrace wall. Could this be the place? While Kamal and Lakshman Singh and the five village boys watched me, I wandered around, considering. Again, it didn’t feel right:

- First, this time what was lacking was a terrace wall at the downhill end, since Corbett writes that after he shot it the leopard “*disappeared down another high bank into the field beyond*” and later he refers repeatedly to the leopard’s hiding place as “*the terraced field below.*” But here there was no field below this one: instead, following the natural slope, the ground dropped off steeply toward the river, which was near enough below us that we could hear the rush of the water.
- Second, rather than a lack, was an instance of something present that should not have been: the far (south) side of this field was bounded by a very deep and almost sheer ravine formed by a side stream entering the Kutar. It was such a prominent feature, such a significant aspect of the landscape at this spot, that I

could not believe that Corbett would have omitted it from his description. Yet nowhere does he mention a ravine, just the “*patch of brushwood*” bordering the site.

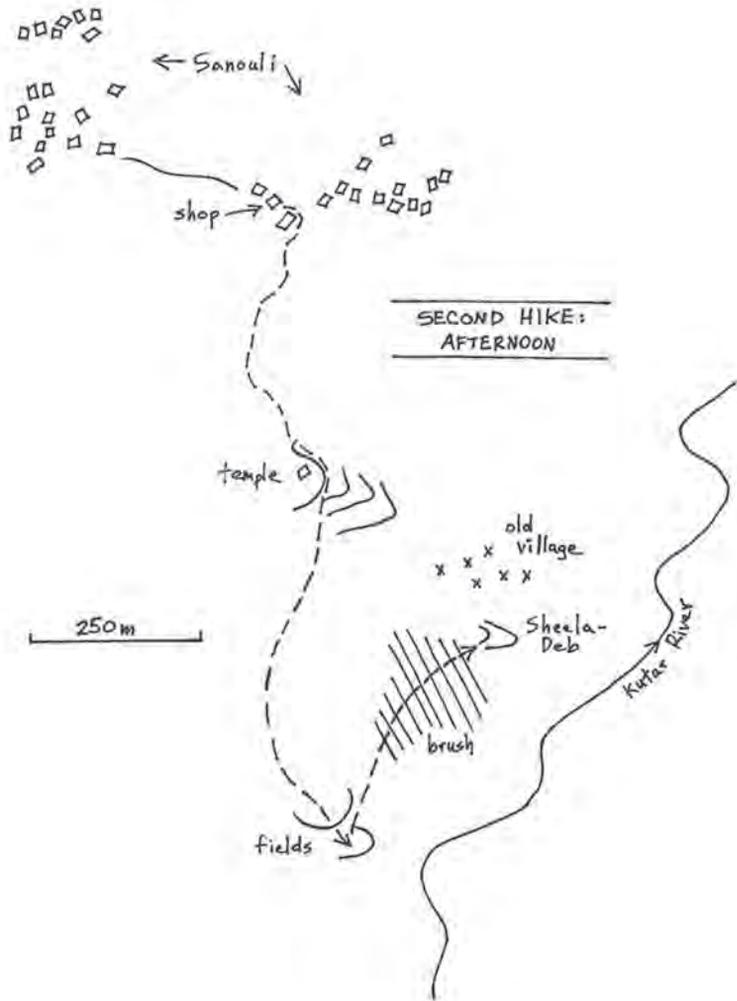
- Most importantly – and this applied to the upper as well as the lower field here – when I asked Lakshman Singh where we were relative to the old village ruins (which I still had not seen), he pointed away around the slope to the northeast. The abandoned village was not visible from here, he said, because the ridge blocked it from view. He assured me that a loud shout would be heard across that distance, even over the noise of the river, but I reflected again that Corbett’s account implies a comfortable conversational distance, not merely the possibility of a desperate halloo.

Adding up my doubts about this spot, I realized that what we needed was three terraced fields in succession: (1) an upper field of undetermined width, from whose downhill bank the oak tree grew; (2) a middle field 50 meters wide, where the kill occurred; and (3) a lower field of undetermined width, where the wounded leopard hid before his final charge. And above all, these fields should be much closer to the old village.

I asked Lakshman Singh if there was such a thing, gesturing with my hands to show three terraced fields descending from the old village in stepwise succession. He said in English, “Step by step?” – “Yes. Near the old village.” He nodded and set off, naturally at a run, and we all followed, the excited boys leading the way.

This time, instead of trekking steeply uphill or down, we stayed more or less level, following the contour of the mountain along the valley going downstream (north or northeast). But for the first time in our exploration of Sanouli we left behind the familiar landscape of open terraced fields and plunged into a snarl of thick undergrowth – weeds and small trees and thorn bushes so dense I had to hang onto my hat and my backpack to keep them from being stripped away. There was no path to follow, and each of us tunnelled through the brush as best he could on all fours; even here the village boys, of course, somehow scrambled ahead and doubled back to help pull me through when I got stuck in the brambles.

Ten exhausting and painful minutes later we emerged onto an open field. At a glance I guessed it to be about 50 meters wide. At its downhill end a high terraced bank dropped to a much narrower field. At its uphill end a terraced bank about my height (six feet) divided it from another much narrower field: no surviving oak or any other significant tree, of course. Just beyond that upper field stood the ruins of a small stone hut or shed – too close to be where Corbett’s men went, since that would hardly constitute “going away to the village” – but dotting the slope higher up, maybe seventy-five or a hundred feet away and overlooking the wide field, I could see, half-hidden here and there, the scattered ruins of houses.



Looking back the way we had just come, I realized that the belt of almost impenetrably dense undergrowth we had forced our way through to get here could easily be what remains of Corbett's 20-acre patch of brushwood adjoining the kill site. (In fact, because the lower fields around the old village were abandoned when people moved uphill to better pasture, the long-overgrown lower slopes now have much more tree cover than they did in Corbett's time, when "there were no other trees within a radius of several hundred yards" of the oak he chose.)

Looking much further up the mountainside, and locating the field in which we now stood relative to the whole slope, and picturing what it would look like from up there, I realized that this field must be exactly the one Diwan Singh had pointed out to us from high above that morning: Sheela-Deb. So if this spot was in fact the right one – and everything about it felt right to me – then the place where Corbett killed the Panar Leopard was the same place where the leopard killed its last human victims,

Sheela and Debuli, and in the morning we had been on our way straight to it when we stopped and turned back.

I asked Lakshman Singh if he knew whether Peter Byrne had come to this spot. “Yes,” he said, “I brought him here myself.” (Lakshman Singh looked to be in his mid-forties, so he would have been in his twenties when Byrne needed a guide down the mountain.) I still couldn’t understand why Byrne had not made note of the abandoned village immediately above the kill site. For this reason, and others enumerated below, I suspect that though Byrne visited Sheela-Deb he did not consider it to be the place where Corbett killed the leopard, but only the place where the leopard killed the women.

But the essential thing was, I was here now. We rested in the middle of the field and had a snack, and Kamal opened Dr. Jordania’s copy of *The Temple Tiger* and translated out loud for the village boys Corbett’s account of the grand finale of the Panar Leopard: the leopard clawing at the thorn branches to reach Corbett, Corbett shooting the leopard as it killed the goat – on the very spot where we now sat listening to the story – the wounded leopard fleeing over the lower terrace, the men coming down from the village, the men dropping their pine torches when the leopard charged, Corbett firing the final shot by the light of the torches scattered on the ground....

As I listened I thought, I might be the third foreigner ever to stand here: Jim Corbett (not really a foreigner!) in 1910, Peter Byrne in 1998, and me.

The next morning all of us returned to Sheela-Deb for a collective assessment and more accurate documentation. We asked our guide, Diwan Singh once again, to lead us down this time by way of the abandoned village, so below the isolated temple we bore left (southeast) and after a while followed the path as it zigzagged down between the old houses scattered over a wide area on the steep descending terraces. The final approach to Sheela-Deb from the nearest (lowest) village houses follows the curving contour of the terraced fields and reaches the broad field from above and behind it, exactly the way Corbett directed his men to come when they had to release him from the thorn-wrapped tree. The Sheela-Deb field is located at approximately 29°28’06.2”N 79°52’21.7”E, which (on a flat map, disregarding vertical distance) is about 715 meters in a straight line southeast of the village shop. Peter Byrne’s description of the kill site he was shown “*three hundred yards from the nearest village house*” remains a puzzle: from Sheela-Deb up to the modern village it is much further than 300 meters (three-quarters of a kilometre in a straight line and much more by footpath), but to the old abandoned village it is much closer than 300 meters (no more than 50 to the nearest houses.) So where was Byrne measuring from and to? And why would he describe the kill site as being “*halfway down the hill*”?

From the modern village or the road, Sheela-Deb is very far down, almost at the very bottom of the hill, near the river. The houses visible in the background of Byrne’s 1998 photos look well maintained and inhabited – not like houses abandoned for over

a quarter century by then. (And again, nowhere in his account does Byrne mention the existence of the old village.) My own untested surmise is that Byrne took those 1998 photos from somewhere in the fields downhill (northeast) of the section of the modern village near the shop and the school, at about 29°28'32.1"N 79°52'16.2"E, looking uphill toward the modern village – a place that is not only too far from the old village to be the kill site, but that in 1910 was probably a wooded slope not yet even terraced and cultivated. In any case, wherever Byrne was standing when he took those photos and climbed in that tree, it was not at Sheela-Deb.

The height of the uphill terrace wall that bounds the field at Sheela-Deb varies with the slope of the terrain, but much of it, especially in the middle, rises roughly 2 meters or six feet high. On my return uphill to our quarters at the headman's house the previous evening I had reported to the rest of the party that I had seen no oak or other significant tree growing from that terrace wall, and Dr. Jordania had predicted that we would still find some trace of where it had grown – either root remnants or at least a gap of some sort in the wall. And indeed, by morning light, we saw at one point near the middle of the wall a break or interruption in the smooth line of stones that might be the remaining mark of where the roots of a large tree, now gone, were once anchored. According to Diwan Singh, with confirmation from Kamal, oak trees are uncommon these days at that elevation; most of the larger trees on that terrain now are Bimal or pine (including many planted by the Forest Service) or Mau. But they agreed that one isolated oak tree – as Corbett describes the tree he chose – is not impossible down there, and would have been more likely in the past.

Diwan Singh said that the area of dense brush bordering Sheela-Deb to the southwest – the tangle of thorns and low bushes we had crawled through the day before, and that I speculated to be Corbett's "*patch of brushwood*" where the leopard lurked – was not the result of recent growth overtaking abandoned fields but had always been there, left uncleared because the slope was too steep even for terraced cultivation.

Because of the natural contour of the slope, the field at Sheela-Deb is not a parallelogram but is shaped more like a long rounded V. From the uphill terrace wall, at about where the break in the stones is now, to the far (downhill) point of the V we measured the distance to be about 50 meters. To the nearer edges, though, such as the terraced bank immediately left (northeast) of the presumed oak tree location, the distance is much less, barely 5 meters. All the way around the lower edge of Sheela-Deb the drop down to the next field below is about 5 meters or fifteen feet, more than enough to conceal an animal from view even from someone looking down from quite close to the edge.

The most obvious inconsistency between the actual ground and Corbett's description of the kill site might be that about two thirds of the way across the Sheela-Deb field (counting from the uphill end) a low break or bank runs across it diagonally from southwest to northeast. The height of that drop varies: At the south end of the field it

is at least two feet – more than a comfortable step down and requiring at least a small hop, and arguably enough to hide a crouching leopard from sight much closer to the presumed oak tree location than the 50 meters Corbett describes. A straight line from the presumed oak tree location to the point of the V, however, runs closer to the north end of that diagonal break in the field, and crosses it where the drop is six inches or less – barely noticeable when walking, and a trivial detail that (assuming the shallow ledge was present at the time) would not matter to the description of the setting even if Corbett remembered it when he wrote his account decades later.

Considering all of the factors together – the testimony of the village elders based on oral memory, the many corroborating details on the ground, the overall consistency with Corbett’s written account – the collective sense of the members of the Corbett research party present was strongly affirmative: beyond almost any doubt, the place we found below the village of Sanouli, the field called Sheela-Deb, is indeed the spot where Jim Corbett killed the Panar Leopard in September 1910.¹

July 2018, New Mexico, USA

¹ Dr. Joseph Jordania contributed valuable information for this article, especially about our oral interview subjects in Sanouli, and about Peter Byrne’s earlier visit. Fernando Quevedo contributed useful GPS data collected on the spot. I thank them both.

Mohan Man-Eater

BY ALI AKHTAR, INDIA

It was in November 2012 when I bought *Man-eaters of Kumaon* and *Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag* for the first time in my life and became a dedicated fan of Corbett's writings ever since. After reading the books, I had dreamed of visiting the actual places of the hunt Corbett narrated in his stories. However, it wasn't until February 2015 when my dream came true, and when I visited Kumaon with my family. I decided to stay at Camp Riverwild, Mohan, and asked Mr. A.G. Ansari – The owner of the camp to arrange a tour to Kath ki Naal. Mr. Ansari is a well-known person in Mohan and a wildlife expert having immense knowledge about Corbett parks and its wildlife corridors. Our plan was to stay two nights at Ramgarh, two nights in Nainital, three nights in Kyari village Ramnagar, and in the last two days stay at Camp Riverwild. During this visit (February 2015) to Mohan, I had the minimal time and spent around only two hours in village Kartkanloul Mohan and visited the Foresters Hut and Overhanging rock. The second visit happened in October 2017 when I managed to spend around 6 hours in the area. The third visit with Dr. Joseph Jordania happened on 23rd Sep 2018. The below research is the outcome of my three subsequent visits to Village Kartkanoula (known today as *Kath Ki Naav*) and Mohan.

After traveling through Ramgarh-Nainital-Ramnagar on 23rd February 2019, we reached Camp Riverwild and were greeted by front office executive Mr. Puran at the reception with a welcome drink and after some check-in formalities headed to our rooms. Mr. Ansari had already arranged a tour to Kath Ki Naav, accompanied by front office executive Mr. Puran. Initially, I was relying on Mr. Ansari's Knowledge about Kath Ki Naav (Kartkanoula) and Mohan man-eater places. I requested them to show me the overhanging rock, which Corbett considered quite the most dangerous place on the road to Chaknakl. I was very curious to know which road Corbett took while on his climb to the village Kartkanoula from Mohan. In the evening, along the bonfire discussed with Mr. Ansari and he told me that according to local folklore, Corbett went to Kath Ki Naav via village Bhakrakot. The village is almost at the foot of the hills which rise to the north of it and on the northern ridge is the village of Kathkinal or Kath Ki Naav or as we know it as Kartkanoula from Corbett's writings.

Mr. Ansari instructed Mr. Puran (our guide) to show me the Foresters Hut and the overhanging rock. Accompanied by my wife and Mr. Puran the next day around 10:30 am, we left for village Kartkanoula (Now Kath ki Naal). Camp Riverwild is located on the bank of Kosi river, and Kartkanoula ridge is visible from the camp itself. Our guide Mr. Puran pointed out towards a particular spot on the ridge and said that this is the place where the forester's hut stands. The hut, however, was not visible from Mohan may be due to the haze in the sky, and even on a clear day, one can

hardly notice it now as white blur dot. According to Corbett, the Foresters' Hut was visible from Mohan, and which had been pointed out to him by the Forest Guards as the best place for his stay while at Kartkanoula. Driving through the trodden village paths (29°32'52.0"N 79°06'33.0"E) of Mohan which is still almost in the same condition when Corbett visited there in 1931, we came onto the Mohan Bazaar which is at junction (29°32'51.4"N 79°06'25.9"E) of Marchula and Ranikhet Road. We took the road to Marchula, which is the motorable road to reach the lower part of Kartnanoula village. The Mohan Forest Rest House (29°32'55.7"N 79°06'35.3"E) is on Ranikhet road only 300 meters away from the present Mohan Market.

Corbett writes about Mohan Bazaar and Forest Bungalow: "After a very early start next morning we did the twelve miles to Mohan before the sun got hot, and while my men were cooking their food and my servants were preparing my breakfast, the chowkidar of the bungalow, two Forest Guards, and several men from the Mohan bazaar, entertained me with stories of the man-eater, the most recent of which concerned the exploits of a fisherman who had been fishing the Kosi river. One of the Forest Guards claimed to be the proud hero of this exploit, and he described very graphically how he had been out one day with the fisherman and, on turning a bend in the river, they had come face to face with the man-eater; and how the fisherman had thrown away his rod and had grabbed the rifle off his the Forest Guard's shoulder; and how they had run for their lives with the tiger close on their heels."

The river Kosi at Mohan is taking a turn (29°32'54.7"N 79°06'42.1"E), and this might be the same place where the forest guard and fisherman had an encounter with the man-eater. Close to this turn only a few hundred meters away on the bank of river Kosi is the Camp Riverwild where I stayed and tried to take a picture of the Foresters hut from its compound.

The drive through the beautiful forests and the river valleys was awesome with some breathtaking views of Ramganga River and Kosi River and snow-clad mountains beyond. Since it was the month of Feb, we were feeling cold in an open gypsy. Unaware of the destination, my wife didn't know where we are heading to. However, she was quite happy with the views of the mountains. After a one-hour drive from Mohan, we finally reached the village Kartkanoula. After leaving the main road on the right side, we drove through the old dirt road till we reached Foresters Hut (29°34'48.6"N 79°08'11.3"E) where Corbett stayed while hunting the Mohan man-eater. The Hut was on a little knoll to the left of the present motorable road. We stopped our gypsy at the base of the Knoll close to a much smaller masonry hut (29°34'49.1"N 79°08'14.1"E) and walked to the bigger hut that was standing on the knoll.

The structure of the hut looked quite big when compared to actual dimensions of the hut mentioned by Corbett (10 feet square). Close to the hut, there is a new wireless Fire watching room (29°34'49.0"N 79°08'10.6"E) where a forest fire watcher informed

us that this Hut is very old but was unsure whether it is very same Hut where Corbett had stayed. We clicked many pictures of the hut and surroundings, assuming that this might be the same place where once the original hut existed and in which Corbett stayed. According to Corbett, the hut was 10 feet square and had a veranda; however, the present structure of the hut is 53 feet long and 19 feet wide and has no veranda. Therefore, it is safe to assume that another much smaller hut around 10 square feet existed at the very same place when Corbett visited the area in 1931. One very important clue about the authenticity of the place Corbett mentions is that Hut was on the southern edge of the ridge while the village was on the Northern face of the Hill and later was not visible from the former. When I checked it personally, I found that the village (Northern face of the hill) was not visible from the Hut. So, the location of the Hut is matching with Corbett's description, but another question arises how a 10 feet square hut was visible from Mohan – a place 5 kilometers away as the crow flies. Presently we can't properly see the current structure of the hut (53 feet long and 19 feet wide) from Mohan. We don't know how the topography of the Kartkanoula ridge and the forest area which lay around it looked like in 1931 and from which place & angle in Mohan a 10 feet square hut on Kartkanoula ridge. According to Corbett, the size of the hut was about 9-10 square meters (ten feet or three metres each wall), with two narrow slips of the rooms on both sides one used as the kitchen while the other was used as a fuel storeroom. The current structure of the hut, which is 53 feet long and 19 feet wide, has a metallic roof on the top. It has a three feet high wall made of stones and concrete and remaining walls are consisting of wooden planks. There is a narrow slip of the room on the western end of the hut, which is used as kitchen, but there is no storeroom on the other side of the main room. If you enter the hut from one of the main doors all facing north, you will see a dividing wall on the western side of the hut, which separates the main room. The wall has two doors; the right doors open in the kitchen, and the left side door opens in the storeroom. The kitchen can be accessed externally from the front door (facing north) as well. In total, the hut has four front doors, including one kitchen door. According to Corbett, he opened the back door of the hut to let a current of air blow through the room; however, the current structure has no back door or window (facing south). The southern wall of the hut made of the wooden planks has been severely weathered and in very bad shape. Some of the wooden planks have been completely deteriorated and crumbled.

Taking some rest in the hut and clicking some good photographs of the snow-clad Himalayan ranges in the north visible from the hut and Kosi valley to the south, we decided to return to Mohan while anticipating a small halt on the way to Chaknakl at the overhanging rock. I admit that until this time, I was an amateur researcher and didn't carefully investigate the whole area and was completely relying on my guide's knowledge. After going about 500 meters westward on the road to Chaknakl, our guide told the driver to stop the gypsy near a rock which was not overhanging though but

looked like remnants of old overhanging rock (29°34'56.5"N 79°07'57.1"E). According to him, this is the very same rock which Corbett mentioned in the story of Mohan man-eater; however, later during my second visit, I came to know that this rock is the wrong one and doesn't coincide with Corbett's description. Driving through the old dirt road and enjoying the beautiful views of Kosi valley, we came down onto the main road and headed towards Mohan. It was late in the evening when we reached Camp Riverwild.

The second visit to Mohan in Oct 2017 proved very fruitful, and I discovered many significant places mentioned in the story of Mohan man-eater. I posted some of the photographs of my visit to the Jim Corbett Facebook group and had a long discussion with other Corbett researchers, like Dr. Joseph Jordania, Quinton Ottley, and Manfred Walt. I found some discrepancies of few places such as the route which Corbett took while 400 feet climb to village Kartkanoula, the triangular hill close to the overhanging rock, the place where buffalo was tied and the spring where Corbett met a woman filling an earthenware pitcher. I had wrongly assumed the location of the spring, the place where buffalo was tied and where Corbett left the woman when she said the village from which she had come is just around the shoulder of the hill and added that she was now quite safe.

I revisited the area third time again in Sep 2018 with Dr. Joseph Jordania and rectified few of discrepancies described herein;

I had assumed a different path from Mohan to Foresters Hut, which Corbett took while his four thousand-foot climbs to Kartkanoula. I was assuming that the route which Corbett took from Mohan meets somewhere on Chaknaki road to the west of the Foresters Hut while the actual path meets about a kilometre eastward from the hut close to the school building (29°34'25.8"N 79°08'35.3"E). By standing in the compound of the school building, one can obtain the view of both sides (East & West) of the ridge, and above this point on the ridge, there are the traces of old terraced fields (29°34'31.5"N 79°08'36.6"E). The path Corbett might have taken commences somewhere in Mohan and meets along the level stretch of the road running across the face of the hill close to a school building (29°34'25.8"N 79°08'35.3"E). Corbett described the path to be very steep, and after many halts, on the way up, they reached the edge of the cultivated land. He writes: "Our progress was slow, for my men were carrying heavy loads and the track was excessively steep, and the heat terrific. There had been some trouble in the upper villages a short time previously, necessitating the dispatch from Naini Tal of a small police force, and I had been advised to take everything I needed for myself and my men with me, as owing to the unsettled conditions it would not be possible to get any stores locally. This was the reason for the heavy loads my men were carrying. After many halts we reached the edge of the cultivated land in the late afternoon, and as there was now no further danger to be apprehended for my men from the man-eater, I left them and set

out alone for the Foresters' Hut which is visible from Mohan, and which had been pointed out to me by the Forest Guards as the best place for my stay while at Kartkanoula" *There* are many forest trails from Mohan to Kartkanoula and the one which connects to a school building at village Ghewari on Kartkanoula ridge close to a Home stay Tanhau appears to be the correct one as it coincides perfectly with Corbett's description.

The spring I had assumed would be very close to the forester's hut, in fact, was found to be about 550 meters eastward from the hut. The spring is still functioning and the main source of water supply for the villages in the vicinity. Now, if you continue 180 meters westward from the spring, you will come to a footpath running up the hill where Corbett left the woman while the main road continues westward towards foresters hut.

The place where the buffalo was tied, I had assumed around 100 meters before the actual place where the road comes out on the ridge (29°35'00.5"N 79°07'37.2"E) close to a stagnant pool of water (29°34'60.0"N 79°07'36.4"E). There is a very precise landmark – three-feet high rock (29°34'59.8"N 79°07'35.4"E) which Corbett mentioned was on khud side of the road near the stagnant pool of water and 40 yards from this rock on the west is the place where Corbett had tied the buffalo (29°35'00.9"N 79°07'34.7"E).

Corbett Seven miles Walk to Garjiya from Ramnagar

I have been frequently visiting Corbett Park since 2012, but the road from Ramnagar to Mohan leaves me spellbound every time I travel there. The lush green forests, the overwhelming beauty, the silence of the surroundings, and the views of Kosi valley are simply spectacular. To me, It is totally an out-of-this-world experience, away from the hustle and bustle of hectic daily lives of city dwellers, away from the polluted streets and crowded corners of plains, in the lap of serene, beautiful foothills of Kumaon, The Himalayas. The areas in and around the present-day Corbett National Park were the stages for the exciting adventures of the great naturalist-writer Jim Corbett; whose writings have fascinated generations of wildlife enthusiasts. Few of his man-eater hunting expeditions also took place in the same areas. On this very same road, he went after killing the Man-eater of Mohan and Gargia is the place where Corbett heard mysterious sounds during his night stay while on his way to Mohan.

It was evening when Corbett arrived at Gargia after seven miles long walk from Ramnagar. Corbett was in a hurry when he left home and had not asked permission to reserve the Gargia Forest Bungalow for his night stay, so he decided to sleep in the open. The present road distance to Gargia Forest Bungalow (29°28'44.0"N 79°08'47.4"E) is 11.5 km (around 7 miles) Northward from Ramnagar. The Forest Bungalow was built in 1884 and is still in very good condition. It has undergone renovation in 2010 and very well maintained by the forest department ever since.

Somewhere in the courtyard of the bungalow, Jim Corbett would have camped and slept in his tent. Opposite to the Bungalow and on the far side of Kosi River there is a mountain cliff exactly as described by the Corbett however the views of the cliff from the road have currently been obliterated due to heavy construction work by the road side and on the bank of Kosi River. From the main road (Ramnagar-Ranikhet Road) and opposite to Taj Corbett Resort one can have a glimpse of Gargia Forest Bungalow. The area has been populated now and many resorts have come up in the vicinity, but one can still observe the unadulterated wilderness in the vicinity. This place is heaven for bird watchers, nature lovers, and while roaming in these pristine forests, Corbett fans can feel as if Corbett is watching them from happy hunting grounds.

Corbett narrates this exciting incident in his book *The Man-eaters of Kumaon*; "It was on a blistering hot day in May that I, my two servants, and the six Garhwalis I had brought with me from Naini Tal alighted from the 1 p.m. train at Ramnagar and set off on our twenty-four-mile foot journey to Kartkanoula. Our first stage was only seven miles, but it was evening before we arrived at Gargia. I had left home in a hurry on receiving Baines letter, and had not had time to ask for permission to occupy the Gargia Forest Bungalow, so I slept out in the open.

On the far side of the Kosi river at Gargia there is a cliff several hundred feet high, and while I was trying to get sleep I heard what I thought were stones falling off the cliff on the rocks below. The sound was exactly the same as would be made by bringing two stones violently together. After some time this sound worried me, as sounds will on a hot night, and as the moon was up and the light good enough to avoid stepping on snakes, I left my camp bed and set out to make investigations. I found that the sound was being made by a colony of frogs in a marsh by the side of the road. I have heard land- water- and tree-frogs making strange sounds in different parts of the world, but I have never heard anything so strange as the sound made by the frogs at Gargia in the month of May."

Having read Corbett's book "*Man-Eaters of Kumaon*" several times, the villages and the forests in front of my eyes were as I had imagined while reading the book.

Corbett's Arrival in Mohan and meeting with Forest Officers and Villagers

After a very early start next morning Corbett and his Six Garhwalis did twelve miles march to Mohan. The sun was already up and while Corbett's men were preparing the breakfast for him Corbett had very interesting conversation with Forest Guards and several men from the Mohan Bazaar who came to see him and entertained him

with the stories of Man-eater, the most recent of which was concerned the exploits of one of the forest guards and a fisherman who had been fishing in the Kosi River.

Corbett writes: "After a very early start next morning we did the twelve miles to Mohan before the sun got hot, and while my men were cooking their food and my servants were preparing my breakfast, the chowkidar of the bungalow, two Forest Guards, and several men from the Mohan bazaar, entertained me with stories of the man-eater, the most recent of which concerned the exploits of a fisherman who had been fishing the Kosi river. One of the Forest Guards claimed to be the proud hero of this exploit, and he described very graphically how he had been out one day with the fisherman and, on turning a bend in the river, they had come face to face with the man-eater; and how the fisherman had thrown away his rod and had grabbed the rifle off his the Forest Guard's shoulder; and how they had run for their lives with the tiger close on their heels."

The river Kosi after meandering around hundreds of kilometers in Himalayan foothills enters the Mohan from east. Here the river takes a turn to south ($29^{\circ}32'54.7''\text{N}$ $79^{\circ}06'42.1''\text{E}$), and this bend might be the same place where the forest guard and fisherman had an encounter with the man-eater.

According to Corbett, the Foresters Hut was visible from Mohan which had been pointed out to him by the Forest Guards as the best place for his stay while at Kartkanoula. The Kartkanoula ridge is visible from the vast expanse of Kosi valley at this turn, and one can easily point out it. The hut, however, was not visible from Mohan when we visited there in February 2015 that may be due to the haze in the sky and even in a clear day one can hardly notice it as white blur dot. The Hut is situated on a little knoll of the ridge and is 5 km away from Mohan as the crow flies. According to Corbett, the size of the Hut was 10 feet square and was visible from Mohan, however, now if you see it from Mohan you can hardly notice it despite the bigger size of the current structure of the Hut (53 feet long and 19 feet wide). I am not questioning Corbett's description of how he was able to see a ten feet square hut from Mohan. I don't know from which place and angle the Foresters Hut was visible from Mohan, but currently, it is very difficult to identify it from Mohan. This may be because of dense forests that lay between the Mohan and the ridge and other vegetation which are obstructing the view of the Hut. Also, there might be some changes in the topography of the hill due to torrential rainfall and other climatic changes.

Mostly Mohan village still looks the same as Corbett left it in 1931. Walking through the trodden village paths will remind you of the days of yore and reign of terror that Man-eater had established in the vicinity. While walking through the village, you can imagine that the man-eater used to roam on these streets/paths while the people used to lock themselves behind the doors and never dared to venture out

even in broad daylight except in large parties. The six months between September 2010 and January 2011, this area was again under prowl of a man-eater tiger that had killed and eaten seven human beings in the nearby villages, most of them from Sunderkhal village and thus this tiger was named after the man-eater of Sunderkhal.

Situated on the outskirts of Corbett National Park and flanked by the Kosi River on one side Sunderkhal is a beautiful little village in Himalayan foothills. If you are driving through Ramnagar-Ranikhet road, you arrive at Gargia Police Chauki 13 kilometres from Ramnagar. From here, a dirt road branches off to the right going to Garjiya Devi temple while the main road further continues towards Mohan. Less than one kilometre from Garjiya police Chauki the road comes out on the flat ground to the right of which Sunderkhal village is situated on the bank of Kosi River.

During one of my subsequent visits in 2015, 2017, and 2018, I visited the village and talked to a few villagers who vividly remember the horrifying moments they spent between September 2010 and January 2011. One of the villagers narrates those dreadful moments when man-eater created a terror in the area. One day in November 2010, Nandi Devi was attacked by the man-eater in broad daylight when she was returning to her village Sunderkhal with two other women. Her partially eaten body blood stained clothes were recovered later. The second Killing happened on December 29, 2010, when a woman named Kalpa Mehra was attacked by the tiger in the village Chukam close to Mohan (around 1.5 km) when she had gone to collect fodder and dry sticks from the forest. Her body was found later and was partially eaten by the tiger. Since then, the man-eater had killed a total of six human beings until it was finally shot dead by the forest guards in Ramnagar Division of Uttarakhand on Jan 27, 2011, while the animal was devouring its latest human prey.

Back to the Mohan village, most part of which is consisting of huts made up of mud walls and thatched roofs and while walking with my wife one February 2015 evening the simple village folks mainly kids staring at us inquisitively with a smile on their faces.

The Mohan market (Bazaar) is located at Junction of Ranikhet-Marchula Road. From this junction one road goes to Ranikhet on the right side while the one on the left side goes to Marchula and village Kartkanoula. The Mohan Forest Rest House (29°32'55.7"N 79°06'35.3"E) is on Ranikhet road around 300 meters from present Mohan Market.

Corbett's Four Thousand Foot Climb to Village Kartkanoula (Now Kath Ki Naav)

With many warnings from the small crowd that had collected to see off Corbett and his men to keep a sharp lookout for the man-eater while negotiating the dense forest that lay ahead of them, they set out on their four-thousand-foot climb to village Kartkanoula. According to Corbett, his men were carrying heavy loads, and the track

was excessively steep, and after many halts they reached the edge of cultivated land where the steep climb from Mohan ends (29°34'24.7"N 79°08'34.1"E). I tried to investigate which route Corbett took while his four-thousand-foot climbs to Kartkanoula. According to local people, Corbett went to Kartkanoula via Bkharakote village, while some believe that he went via different forest route. There are many forest trails/paths from Mohan which lead to Kartkanoula, and the one such forest path leads to the eastern part of the ridge close to a village school near homestay-Tanhau appears to be the right one and fits well in Corbett's description. Once you reach the school building close to where the steep climb from Mohan ends (29°34'24.7"N 79°08'34.1"E), you can have an extensive view on both sides of the ridge. This is the place that Corbett referred to as the edge of cultivated land.

Corbett writes: "After many halts we reached the edge of the cultivated land in the late afternoon, and as there was now no further danger to be apprehended for my men from the man-eater, I left them and set out alone for the Foresters' Hut which is visible from Mohan, and which had been pointed out to me by the Forest Guards as the best place for my stay while at Kartkanoula."

Above this point where the steep climb from Mohan ends (edge of cultivated land-29°34'24.7"N 79°08'34.1"E) and in the proximity of a homestay one can still see the traces of old terraced fields (29°34'31.5"N 79°08'36.6"E).

The level stretch of road running across the face of the hill and the ravine where Corbett saw a woman filling an earthenware pitcher from a little trickle of water flowing down a wooden trough

After a steep climb from Mohan Corbett left his men on the edge of Cultivated (29°34'24.7"N 79°08'34.1"E) and set out alone for Foresters Hut possibly because this area was relatively safe from the attack of the man-eater. The level stretch of the road running across the face of the hill on which the Foresters Hut stood commences close to a homestay (29°34'29.9"N 79°08'35.2"E). If you continue to walk on this level stretch of the road for One Kilometer, you arrive at the base of the little knoll, on the top of which Foresters Hut stood on its southern edge (29°34'48.6"N 79°08'11.3"E).

Around four hundred meters from the commencement of level stretch of the road, close to a homestay the road turns right and fifty metres further from this bend the road again turns left, which in-fact is a turn in the densely wooded ravine. Exactly in this turn on the right-side corner is a spring (29°34'42.0"N 79°08'28.3"E) where Corbett saw a woman filling an earthenware pitcher from a little trickle of water flowing down a wooden trough. The spring is still functioning and providing fresh water to nearby villages. Continue for another 180 meters, and you come to a footpath path (29°34'45.4"N 79°08'22.7"E) which goes up and around the shoulder of the hill while the level stretch of the road further continues to the west towards the Foresters

Hut and Chaknaki beyond. Here Corbett had a very interesting conversation with a local woman and acquired very useful information about the man-eater and the place where man-eater had killed the last victim.

Corbett writes: "The hut is on the ridge of the high hill overlooking Mohan, and as I approached it along the level stretch of road running across the face of the hill, in turning a corner in a ravine where there is some dense undergrowth, I came on a woman filling an earthenware pitcher from a little trickle of water flowing down a wooden trough. Apprehending that my approach on rubber-soled shoes would frighten her, I coughed to attract her attention, noticed that she started violently as I did so, and a few yards beyond her, stopped to light a cigarette. A minute or two later I asked, without turning my head, if it was safe for anyone to be in this lonely spot, and after a little hesitation the woman answered that it was not safe, but that water had to be fetched and as there was no one in the home to accompany her, she had come alone. Was there no man? Yes, there was a man, but he was in the fields ploughing, and in any case it was the duty of women to fetch water. How long would it take to fill the pitcher? Only a little longer. The woman had got over her fright and shyness, and I was now subjected to a close cross-examination. Was I a policeman? No. Was I a Forest Officer? No, Then who was I? Just a man. Why had I come? To try and help the people of Kartkanoula. In what way? By shooting the man-eater. Where had I heard about the man-eater? Why had I come alone? Where were my men? How many were there? How long would I stay? And so on.

The pitcher was not declared full until the woman had satisfied her curiosity, and as she walked behind me she pointed to one of several ridges running down the south face of the hill, and pointing out a big tree growing on a grassy slope said that three days previously the man-eater had killed a woman under it; this tree I noted, with interest, was only two or three hundred yards from my objective the Foresters' Hut. We had now come to a footpath running up the hill, and as she took it the woman said the village from which she had come was just round the shoulder of the hill, and added that she was now quite safe."

The Foresters Hut

After leaving the woman Corbett continued his walk to the forester's hut. According to him, The Foresters Hut was on a little knoll some twenty yards to the left of the road. The knoll is around 350 meters from the footpath, where Corbett left the woman and resumed his walk on road going west. The road coming from the east separates into two sections at **29°34'48.6"N 79°08'15.9"E**. One branch of the road is skirting to the northern side (right) of Knoll & while other on the south side (left)

and again rejoin on the ridge ($29^{\circ}34'50.3''\text{N } 79^{\circ}08'07.2''\text{E}$) after 260 meters. The old footpath going through the Northern side of the Knoll is the one from where Corbett approached the Hut while the road which goes through the southern side of the Knoll is a later addition. The present stretch of the road roughly 3.6 km running from the Homestay till it joins the present motorable road ($29^{\circ}35'13.9''\text{N } 79^{\circ}07'01.7''\text{E}$) has been maintained by the Homestays owners in order to get clearance for their 4x4 vehicles. They have cut the rocks on the side of the hill and have used them to level the road. On the top of the knoll, there is an elevated rectangular platform made of stones and the mud which covers most of the top surface of the knoll. Above this platform, a Hut like structure made of steel posts and frames exists which the people of Kartkanoula and the Fire watcher at Wireless Control room adjacent to the Hut, believe is very old. However, they are unable to tell the exact date of the hut. The structure of the hut looks quite big as compared to actual dimensions of the hut mentioned by Corbett. According to Corbett, the hut was ten feet square with two narrow slips of the rooms on either side of the main room, one used as the kitchen while other as a fuel storeroom and had a veranda, however, the present structure of the hut is 53 feet long and 19 feet wide and has no veranda. Therefore, it is safe to assume that another much smaller hut around 10 square feet existed at the very same place when Corbett visited the area in 1931. One very important clue about the authenticity of the place Corbett mentions is that Hut was on the southern edge of the ridge while the village was on the Northern face of the Hill and later was not visible from the former. When we checked it physically, we noticed that the village was not visible from the Hut and the hut is stood on the southern edge of the ridge. So, the location of the Hut is matching with Corbett's description, but another question arises how a ten square feet hut was visible from Mohan – a place roughly five kilometres away as the crow flies. Presently we can't properly see the current structure of the hut (53 feet long and 19 feet wide) from Mohan. We don't know how the topography of the Kartkanoula ridge and the forest area which lay around it looked like in 1931 and from which place & angle in Mohan a ten feet square feet hut on Kartkanoula ridge was visible. The current structure of the hut (53 feet long and 19 feet wide) has a metallic roof on the top. It has a three feet high wall along its base made of stones and concrete and remaining walls are consisting of wooden planks. There is a narrow slip of the room on the western end of the hut which is used as a kitchen but there is no storeroom on the other side of the main room. If you enter the hut from one of the main doors all facing north, you will see a dividing wall on the western side of the hut which separates the main room. The wall has two doors; the right door opens in the Kitchen and the left side door opens in the store room. The kitchen can be accessed externally from the front door (facing north) as well. In total, the hut has four front doors, including a kitchen door. According to Corbett, he opened the back door of the hut to let a current of air blow through the room; however, the current structure has no back door (facing

south). The southern wall of the hut made of the wooden planks has been severely weathered and in a very bad condition. Some of the wooden planks have been completely deteriorated and crumbled. We can fairly assume that a much smaller Hut had existed at the same place where the present structure stands. The Hut is needed an urgent renovation; otherwise, it may soon be dilapidated completely. There is still a dense forest on the backside of the Hut facing south where Corbett heard an animal moving about in the jungle

Corbett writes: "I am a light sleeper and two or three hours later I awoke on hearing an animal moving about in the jungle. It came right up to the back door. Getting hold of a rifle and a torch, I moved the stone aside with my foot and heard an animal moving off as I opened the door it might from the sound it was making have been the tiger, but it might also have been a leopard or a porcupine. However, the jungle was too thick for me to see what it was."

Some part of the knoll has been occupied by a school building almost 20 metres northeast from the Hut. As we know from Corbett's description, there was no school building in that time, and path coming eastward from the Mohan might have different slope gradients and route while passing below the north edge of the knoll. It might be possible that close to the school building (29°34'49.4"N 79°08'12.2"E) and between the small masonry Hut (29°34'49.1"N 79°08'14.1"E) Corbett had selected a suitable place to erect his 40lb tent, however, later he dropped this idea upon horrible exclamation from assembled villagers who came to see him after the water-carrier woman had informed the villagers about his arrival in the village.

The rock Corbett sat down and awaited the arrival of his men is difficult to find. It is possible that with so many excavations and construction of a school building and the platform on which the Hut is erected, the rock has been either demolished or has been buried in the soil under the platform. Comparing the current path coming from the Mohan (from east) with Corbett's description it would be reasonable to assume that the rock he sat on close to the road was slightly on lower elevation from the Knoll's elevation as Corbett describes in Mohan man-eater story: "The ridge at this point was about fifty yards wide, and as the hut was on the south edge of the ridge, and the village on the north face of the hill, the latter was not visible from the former. I had been sitting on the rock for about ten minutes when a head appeared over the crest from the direction of the village, followed by a second and a third. My friend the watercarrier had not been slow in informing the village of my arrival."

From the above description, we can conclude that Corbett was sitting on the southeast lower edge of the ridge close to the road from where the village was not visible, and he saw a head appeared over the crest from the direction of the village.

As I have already described that close to small masonry Hut the road divides into two sections, one branch is running through the northern face of the knoll while other branch running through the southern face of the knoll and rejoin on the ridge after 260 meters. Furthermore, from the road which is running through the northern face of the hill another path is going down to village Kartkanoula and beyond while the main path continues further towards Chankakl. There are few hut structures like houses where the road runs through the northern face of the knoll.

The Overhanging Rock

The women had already informed villagers about Corbett and informed them about the purpose of his arrival. Since there was no furniture of any kind in the Hut Corbett sat down on a rock close to the road to await the arrival of his men. The villagers came to see Corbett and informed him about the man-eater and the path the man-eater used to follow every night. Corbett was informed by the assembled villagers that road along which the tiger came every night ran eastward to BaintalGhat with a branch down to Mohan, and westward to Chaknakl on the Ramganga River. This description clearly indicates that after four thousand foot climb from Mohan Corbett approached the Hut from the east close to the school building from where a branch of the road is going down to Mohan.

Next day Corbett set out to have a look at the road to Chaknakl and describes the terrain very lucidly. There is a triangular-shaped hill to the east of the hut which Corbett described as it sloped gradually upward to a height of about five hundred feet and there is another triangular-shaped hill to the west of the hut smaller in height. The road after running through the upper part of the village and through the cultivated land for about 810 meters (half a mile) on the northern face of the hill turns south (29°35'03.8"N 79°07'47.8"E) along the face of the hill and rejoins the ridge (29°35'00.5"N 79°07'37.2"E) on which the Hut stands. The place where the road comes out on the ridge (29°35'00.5"N 79°07'37.2"E) is close to a stagnant pool of water, which I shall discuss in the next part. If you see the google maps/satellite images you can easily notice the remnants of old terrace field on the northern face of the hill and where the road turns sharply to the left after half a mile through cultivated land. Corbett found several scratch marks just around the corner where the road turned to left after leaving cultivated ground. About little more than two hundred yards (I measured it around 195 meters) from this place, there are the remnants of overhanging rock (29°35'02.0"N 79°07'40.0"E). Corbett fans will be disappointed to know that a major portion of the overhanging rock doesn't exist anymore; however, its remnants are still there with some portion of the rock still overhanging on the roadside. I carefully measured the length from the place where Corbett found the pug marks of the tiger to the overhanging rock (29°35'02.0"N 79°07'40.0"E) which is little more than 200 yards.

Corbett writes in the story of Mohan man-eater: "I found several scratch marks just round the corner where the road turned to the left after leaving the cultivated ground, the most recent of which was three days old. Two hundred yards from these scratch marks the road, for a third of its width, ran under an overhanging rock. This rock was ten feet high and at the top of it there was a flat piece of ground two or three yards wide, which was only visible from the road when approaching the rock from the village side"

Since I approached the rock from the village side, I noticed a gradual descent in the road till the bend where Corbett stopped thirty yards before overhanging rock while returning from the road to Chaknaki on the second day after his arrival in Kartkanoula. According to Corbett, the top portion of overhanging rock was not visible from the side he approached while it was visible from the road when approaching the rock from the village side. I wanted to know why the top portion of the rock was not visible from side Corbett approached it (Chaknaki side). I noticed that the road is not level from the bend (29°35'01.3"N 79°07'38.5"E) 30 yards from the rock (29°35'02.0"N 79°07'40.0"E) till you exit the rock and reach the farthest corner of the road from where one could have easily seen two or three yards wide flat piece of ground on the top of the rock. The road is gradually sloping upwards from the bend 30 yards from the overhanging rock till the highest point of it where there is another bend to the right shortly after which Corbett heard the alarm calls of Barking deer and two hind samburs. Therefore, if anybody is approaching from the village side (Foresters Hut side) he will be slightly on a higher elevation as compared to Corbett's position (lower elevation) as can be clearly seen in the pictures. The hill as described by the Corbett, is very steep and overgrown with dense foliage, trees, and scrub jungle having the remnants of great rock jutting out of it.

Corbett writes: "On the fourth evening when I was returning at sunset after visiting the buffalo on the ridge, as I came round a bend in the road thirty yards from the overhanging rock, I suddenly, and for the first time since my arrival at Kartkanoula, felt I was in danger, and that the danger that threatened me was on the rock in front of me. For five minutes I stood perfectly still with my eyes fixed on the upper edge of the rock, watching for movement. At that short range the flicker of an eyelid would have caught my eyes, but there was not even this small movement; and after going forward ten paces, I again stood watching for several minutes. The fact that I had seen no movement did not in any way reassure me the man-eater was on the rock, of that I was sure; and the question was, what was I going to do about it? The hill, as I have already told you, was very steep, had great rocks jutting out of it, and was overgrown with long grass and tree and scrub jungle. Bad as the going was, had it been earlier in the day I would have gone back and worked round and above the

tiger to try to get a shot at him, but with only half an hour of daylight left, and the best part of a mile still to go, it would have been madness to have left the road. So, slipping up the safety-catch and putting the rifle to my shoulder, I started to pass the rock.

The road here was about eight feet wide, and going to the extreme outer edge I started walking crab-fashion, feeling each step with my feet before putting my weight down to keep from stepping off into space. Progress was slow and difficult, but as I drew level with the overhanging rock and then began to pass it, hope rose high that the tiger would remain where he was until I reached that part of the road from which the flat bit of ground above the rock, on which he was lying, was visible. The tiger, however, having failed to catch me off my guard was taking no chances, and I had just got clear of the rock when I heard a low muttered growl above me, and a little later first a kakar went off barking to the right, and then two hind sambur started belling near the crest of the triangular hill."

The bend (29°35'01.3"N 79°07'38.5"E) is around one hundred sixty meters from the ridge where Corbett tied the buffalo (29°35'00.9"N 79°07'34.7"E) and the forester's hut is 1100 meters away from this bend. Corbett referred this distance (1100 meters / 0.7 miles) as "*the best part of a mile still to go*"

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OVERHANGING ROCK?

One question remained unanswered: what happened to the overhanging rock?

Most likely, this can be attributed to a lot of civil work in that area since Corbett arrival in 1931. They possibly have demolished the overhanging portion of the rock in order to widen the road to get easy clearance for 4x4 vehicles. This would have happened within a period of the last 25 years as when Manfred Walt visited the area in 2007. He found some damaged parts of the rock cliff still lying on the ground. This road was not in use till 2007 for vehicle access until the few homestay/hotels came up in the upper parts of Kartkanouala village. The road is more or less maintained and cleared from obstructions by the hotel owners for taking up their vehicles & guests to the hotel.

Another explanation can be attributed to the demand of the rocks/stones in that area required by the villagers for building their houses and other masonry work in the vicinity. They have built many small walls made of stone for marking restricted and non-restricted forest area where villagers can collect the fodders for their cattle, felling of the trees with the permission from local Gram Panchayat and forest department. In my October 2017 visit I saw several such boundary walls in that area made of stones and the one I found was very close to the overhanging rock near the stagnant pool of water. A villager of Kartkanouala informed me that these boundary walls have been

made up with permission of forest department and whenever necessity arose for any of villagers for building their houses, they can cut the trees and collect the rocks available within the boundary. They are not allowed to cut or demolish anything beyond the boundary walls.

Stagnant Pool of Water and three feet high rock

If you continue to walk 90 meters westward on the road to Chaknakl from overhanging rock, you arrive at the place where the road comes out on the ridge (29°35'00.5"N 79°07'37.2"E). Below this spot is the stagnant pool of water (29°34'60.0"N 79°07'36.4"E) also known as Suarkhal in the local language. The pool was very green and had water when I visited in October 2017 and Sep 2018. The name attributed to this pool due to fact that some wild pigs are used to be wallowed in the muddy pool.

Close to the stagnant pool of water there is a rock about three feet high (29°34'59.8"N 79°07'35.4"E), on the khud side of the road. By standing on it I tried to obtain the same view what Corbett had while looking over the hump in the road where the buffalo was tied 40 yards away (29°35'00.9"N 79°07'34.7"E). The hump is still seen in the road however some portion of the top side has been cut away to accommodate the new motorable road.

Corbett writes about this three feet high rock: "The overhanging rock that I passed with such trouble the previous evening did not give me a moment's uneasiness now, and after passing it I started looking for tracks, for the rain had softened the surface of the road. I saw nothing however until I came to the damp place on the road, which, as I have said, was on the near side of the ridge and close to the pool where the buffalo was tied. Here in the soft earth I found the pug marks of the tiger, made before the storm had come on, and going in the direction of the ridge. Close to this spot there is a rock about three feet high, on the khud side of the road. On the previous occasions that I had stalked down the road I had found that by standing on this rock I could look over a hump in the road and see the buffalo where it was tied forty yards away. When I now climbed on to the rock and slowly raised my head, I found that the buffalo had gone. This discovery was as disconcerting as it was inexplicable. To prevent the tiger from carrying the buffalo away to some distant part of the jungle, where the only method of getting a shot would have been by sitting up on the ground or in a tree - a hopeless proceeding with my throat in the condition it was in - I had used four thicknesses of strong one-inch-thick hemp rope, and even so the tiger had got away with the kill."

850 meters westward from the stagnant pool of water is the first hairpin bend (29°35'10.4"N 79°07'10.8"E), where in the soft earth Corbett found the pug marks of the tiger for the first time after his arrival in village Kartkanoula.

Corbett writes: "On the ridge I found more scratch marks, but I did not find any pug marks until I got to the first hairpin bend. Here, in cutting across the bend, the tiger had left its tracks where it had jumped down onto some soft earth. The tracks, which were a day old, were a little distorted, but even so it was possible to see that they had been made by a big, old, male tiger."

The Great Rock & Buffalo Kill

We know from the Corbett's description that tiger had had carried off the kill down the hill facing Mohan. I began to follow Corbett's description from three feet high rock (29°34'59.8"N 79°07'35.4"E) and the place (29°35'00.9"N 79°07'34.7"E) where the buffalo was tied forty yards away. Since entire hillside was carpeted with bracken, thick undergrowth and other vegetation, it was a difficult task to find out the great rock and the flat bit of ground where Corbett fired at man-eater at a point blank range.

I began descending the hill close to the place where the buffalo was tied & three feet high rock. Please note that Corbett didn't mention in which direction (left or right) the tiger went a hundred yards diagonally across the face of the hill. At this point I was unsure about the direction, however, to my left and right were two little distorted tracks going down diagonally across the face of the hill. I decided to follow the track going left (South-East). The hill was very steep, and the descent was difficult and risky. Following the Corbett's description strictly, first I went around 100 yards diagonally across the face of the hill (to my left- South-East) where the tiger had slipped and relinquished his hold of the kill, and then I went 40 yards down the hill where the kill had fetched up against a tree. After leaving this place I went around 200 yards to the right and then 100 yards straight down the hill. It was a sheer coincidence that I found a dense patch of ringals (Stunted bamboo) at this place. From this place, I went around 400 yards to the left (eastward) and came to a big rock where possibly Corbett had sat on and saw buffalo kill 40 or 50 yards below. The basic features of the rock was matching with Corbett's description as it was flush with the ground on the approach side, however, the height of the rock is not exactly 20 feet. It is around 12-14 feet now. The other portion of the rock has been demolished or broken as it is clearly seen from its remnants (see the picture). This might be the reason why the current height of the rock is not matching with Corbett's description (20 feet). I saw several portions of broken rock scattered just below this rock. This rock offers a good view of the dell and of the surrounding jungle and while sitting on the same rock I tried to obtain the Corbett view of the surrounding jungle and Buffalo kill which was laying 50 yards below. As per Corbett, this place was comparatively safe from an attack

from the man-eater and while sitting on this rock Corbett saw the buffalo kill fifty yards below. After clicking some photographs, I went down the hill fifty yards where Corbett found the buffalo kill.

Corbett writes in Mohan man-eater story how did he approach the great rock and saw the buffalo kill fifty yards below: "In the present case the tiger was carrying the buffalo by the neck, and the hind quarters trailing on the ground were leaving a drag mark it was easy to follow. For a hundred yards the tiger went diagonally across the face of the hill until he came to a steep clay bank. In attempting to cross this bank he had slipped and relinquished his hold of the kill, which had rolled down the hill for thirty or forty yards until it had fetched up against a tree. On recovering the kill the tiger picked it up by the back, and from now on only one leg occasionally touched the ground, leaving a faint drag mark, which nevertheless, owing to the hillside being carpeted with bracken, was not very difficult to follow. In his fall the tiger had lost direction, and he now appeared to be undecided where to take the kill. First he went a couple of hundred yards to the right, then a hundred yards straight down the hill through a dense patch of ringals (stunted bamboo). After forcing his way with considerable difficulty through the ringals he turned to the left and went diagonally across the hill for a few hundred yards until he came to a great rock, to the right of which he skirted. This rock was flush with the ground on the approach side, and, rising gently for twenty feet, appeared to project out over a hollow or dell of considerable extent. If there was a cave or recess under the projection, it would be a very likely place for the tiger to have taken his kill to, so leaving the drag I stepped on to the rock and moved forward very slowly, examining every yard of ground below, and on either side of me, as it came into view. On reaching the end of the projection and looking over I was disappointed to find that the hill came up steeply to meet the rock, and that there was no cave or recess under it as I had expected there would be.

As the point of the rock offered a good view of the dell and of the surrounding jungle and was comparatively safe from an attack from the man-eater I sat down; and as I did so, I caught sight of a red and white object in a dense patch of short undergrowth, forty or fifty yards directly below me. When one is looking for a tiger in heavy jungle everything red that catches the eye is immediately taken for the tiger, and here, not only could I see the red of the tiger, but I could also see his stripes. For a long minute I watched the object intently, and then, as the face you are told to look for in a freak picture suddenly resolves itself, I saw that the object I was looking at was the kill, and not the tiger; the red was blood where he had recently been eating, and the stripes were the ribs from which he had

torn away the skin. I was thankful for having held my fire for that long minute, for in a somewhat similar case a friend of mine ruined his chance of bagging a very fine tiger by putting two bullets into a kill over which he had intended sitting; fortunately he was a good shot, and the two men whom he had sent out in advance to find the kill and put up a machan over it, and who were, at the time he fired, standing near the kill screened by a bush, escaped injury.

When a tiger that has not been disturbed leaves his kill out in the open, it can be assumed that he is lying up close at hand to guard the kill from vultures and other scavengers, and the fact that I could not see the tiger did not mean that he was not lying somewhere close by in the dense undergrowth.

Tigers are troubled by flies and do not lie long in one position, so I decided to remain where I was and watch for movement; but hardly had I come to this decision, when I felt an irritation in my throat. I had not quite recovered from my attack of laryngitis and the irritation grew rapidly worse until it became imperative for me to cough. The usual methods one employs on these occasions, whether in church or the jungle, such as holding the breath and swallowing hard, gave no relief until it became a case of cough, or burst; and in desperation I tried to relieve my throat by giving the alarm-call of the langur. Sounds are difficult to translate into words and for those of you who are not acquainted with our jungles I would try to describe this alarm-call, which can be heard for half a mile, as khok, khok, khok, repeated again and again at short intervals, and ending up with khokorrer. All langurs do not call at tigers, but the ones in our hills certainly do, and as this tiger had probably heard the call every day of his life it was the one sound I could make to which he would not pay the slightest attention. My rendering of the call in this emergency did not sound very convincing, but it had the desired effect of removing the irritation from my throat.

For half an hour thereafter I continued to sit on the rock, watching for movement and listening for news from the jungle folk, and when I had satisfied myself that the tiger was not anywhere within my range of vision, I got off the rock, and, moving with the utmost caution, went down to the kill.

I regret I am not able to tell you what weight of flesh a full-grown tiger can consume at a meal, but you will have some idea of his capacity when I tell you he can eat a sambur in two days, and a buffalo in three, leaving possibly a small snack for the fourth day.

The buffalo I had tied up was not full-grown but he was by no means a small animal, and the tiger had eaten approximately half of him. With a meal of that dimension inside of him I felt sure he had not gone far, and as the ground was still wet, and would remain so for

another hour or two, I decided to find out in what direction he had gone, and if possible, stalk him.”

The Killing Place

As evident from the title, I will discuss here the final resting place of “Mohan Man-eater”. Corbett’s fans will enjoy seeing actual place, the flat bit of ground where possibly Mohan man-eater met his end while he was asleep. This trail was a part of my quest to see the real places where the great hunter & Conservationist Jim Corbett hunted some of the most dreaded and infamous man-eaters. The Mohan man-eater story always fascinated me and was main driving force in search of Corbett man-eaters hunting places. The story is very spine-chilling especially during the final pursuit of the man-eater, for Corbett knew that tiger was very close and a rapid shooting might require at any moment. As silently and as slowly as a shadow Corbett took up the track until He came on a flat bit of ground, twenty feet square carpeted with the variety of short soft grass.

Leaving the place where buffalo kill was found, I went around a hundred yards to my right (west) and came to a flat bit of ground twenty feet square. The flat bit of ground is slightly on the elevated position as compared to the slopes on the hill from where I approached it. I don’t know what obstructed Corbett’s view of the Rock and Buffalo kill in 1931 but I will tell you what I observed while following Corbett footsteps; the rock & place where Buffalo kill was found both were not clearly visible when I was only 5-10 yards away from the flat bit of ground and when I reached in the middle of the flat ground some trees, other dense vegetation and topography of the hill obstructed my view.

I don’t know how precisely I was able to follow the footsteps as many things in the area such as land topography and terrain have been changed since 1931. Many places mentioned in the story will not coincide precisely with actual sites/locations and there will be always a possibility of little more or less inaccuracy. I surveyed a big part of the hill facing and found only one significant place, which is coinciding with Corbett’s description. This place and the rock on which Corbett had sat, and the kill, form the point of a triangle, one side of which is forty or fifty yards (from rock to Buffalo Kill) and other two sides are about a hundred yards long, coinciding with Corbett’s description to a great accuracy.

Corbett writes about the final moments of killing Mohan man-eater: “There was a confusion of tracks near the kill but by going round in widening circles I found the track the tiger had made when leaving. Soft-footed animals are a little more difficult to track than hard-footed ones, yet after long years of experience tracking needs as little effort as a gun dog exerts when following a scent. As silently and as slowly as a shadow I took up the track, knowing that the tiger would be close at hand. When I had gone a hun-

dred yards I came on a flat bit of ground, twenty feet square and carpeted with that variety of short soft grass that has highly scented roots; on this grass the tiger had lain, the imprint of his body being clearly visible.

As I was looking at the imprint and guessing at the size of the animal that had made it, I saw some of the blades of grass that had been crushed down, spring erect. This indicated that the tiger had been gone only a minute or so.

You will have some idea of the lay-out when I tell you that the tiger had brought the kill down from the north, and on leaving it had gone west, and that the rock on which I had sat, the kill, and the spot where I was now standing, formed the points of a triangle, one side of which was forty yards, and the other two sides a hundred yards long.

My first thought on seeing the grass spring erect was that the tiger had seen me and moved off, but this I soon found was not likely, for neither the rock nor the kill was visible from the grass plot, and that he had not seen me and moved after I had taken up his track I was quite certain. Why then had he left his comfortable bed and gone away? The sun shining on the back of my neck provided the answer. It was now nine o'clock of an unpleasantly hot May morning, and a glance at the sun and the tree-tops over which it had come showed that it had been shining on the grass for ten minutes. The tiger had evidently found it too hot and gone away a few minutes before my arrival to look for a shady spot.

I have told you that the grass plot was twenty feet square. On the far side to that from which I had approached there was a fallen tree, lying north and south. This tree was about four feet in diameter, and as it was lying along the edge of the grass plot in the middle of which I was standing, it was ten feet away from me. The root end of the tree was resting on the hillside, which here went up steeply and was overgrown with brushwood, and the branch end (which had been snapped off when the tree had fallen) was projecting out over the hillside. Beyond the tree the hill appeared to be more or less perpendicular, and running across the face of it was a narrow ledge of rock, which disappeared into dense jungle thirty yards further on.

If my surmise, that the sun had been the cause of the tiger changing his position, was correct, there was no more suitable place than the lee of the tree for him to have taken shelter in, and the only way of satisfying myself on this point was, to walk up to the tree and look over. Here a picture seen long years ago in Punch flashed into memory. The picture was of a lone sportsman who had gone out to hunt lions and who on glancing up, on to the rock he was passing, looked straight into the grinning face of the most enormous lion in Africa. Underneath the picture was written, when you go out looking for

a lion, be quite sure that you want to see him'. True, there would be this small difference, that whereas my friend in Africa looked up into the lion's face, I would look down into the tiger's; otherwise the two cases assuming that the tiger was on the far side of the tree would be very similar.

Slipping my feet forward an inch at a time on the soft grass, I now started to approach the tree, and had covered about half the distance that separated me from it when I caught sight of a black-and-yellow object about three inches long on the rocky ledge, which I now saw was a well-used game path. For a long minute I stared at this motionless object, until I was convinced that it was the tip of the tiger's tail. If the tail was pointing away from me the head must obviously be towards me, and as the ledge was only some two feet wide, the tiger could only be crouching down and waiting to spring the moment my head appeared over the bole of the tree. The tip of the tail was twenty feet from me, and allowing eight feet for the tiger's length while crouching, his head would be twelve feet away. But I should have to approach much nearer before I should be able to see enough of his body to get in a crippling shot, and a crippling shot it would have to be if I wanted to leave on my feet. And now, for the first time in my life, I regretted my habit of carrying an uncocked rifle. The safety-catch of my 450/400 makes a very distinct click when thrown off, and to make any sound now would either bring the tiger right on top of me, or send him straight down the steep hillside without any possibility of my getting in a shot.

Inch by inch I again started to creep forward, until the whole of the tail, and after it the hind quarters, came into view. When I saw the hind quarters, I could have shouted with delight, for they showed that the tiger was not crouching and ready to spring, but was lying down. As there was only room for his body on the two-foot-wide ledge, he had stretched his hind legs out and was resting them on the upper branches of an oak sapling growing up the face of the almost perpendicular hillside. Another foot forward and his belly came into view, and from the regular way in which it was heaving up and down I knew that he was asleep. Less slowly now I moved forward, until his shoulder, and then his whole length, was exposed to my view. The back of his head was resting on the edge of the grass plot, which extended for three, or four feet beyond the fallen tree; his eyes were fast shut, and his nose was pointing to heaven.

Aligning the sights of the rifle on his forehead I pressed the trigger and, while maintaining a steady pressure on it, pushed up the safety-catch. I had no idea how this reversal of the usual method of discharging a rifle would work, but it did work; and when the heavy bullet at that short range crashed into his forehead not so much as a quiver went through his body. His tail remained stretched straight

out; his hind legs continued to rest on the upper branches of the sapling; and his nose still pointed to heaven. Nor did his position change in the slightest when I sent a second, and quite unnecessary, bullet to follow the first. The only change noticeable was that his stomach had stopped heaving up and down, and that blood was trickling down his forehead from two surprisingly small holes."

The tiger was dead, and if my trophy was to be saved from falling into the valley below and ruined, it was advisable to get him off the ledge with as little delay as possible. Leaning the rifle, for which I had no further use, against the fallen tree, I climbed up to the road and, once round the corner near the cultivated land, I cupped my hands and sent a cooee echoing over the hills and valleys."

Confirmation of the killing site

In 2018 the book of Peter Byrne, arguably the first researcher of Corbett killing sites, came to my attention. Peter Byrne visited all the Corbett man-eater killing sites. His method of research was very straightforward: he was arriving at the villages where, according to Corbett's stories, man-eaters were killed, and was asking villagers if they were able to bring him to the killing site. Peter was not making the vigorous comparison of the site to the Corbett's descriptions, as the researchers of the new generations are doing today. Because of this, some of the sites seem very unconvincing today and reflects more the process of "folklorisation" of Corbett-related memories than the reality. At the same time, some other sites were confirmed by later researchers. Also, as Peter visited many sites as early as in 1975 when the generation of villagers that met Corbett during his hunt of the man-eaters was still alive, his informants must be still viewed as an important source of information.

Interestingly, in the case of the Mohan man-eater killing place, the site that Peter showed in his book, coincides with the site I found during my second visit to Mohan. The fact of identical results from two researchers; using different methodologies (one relying on the memory of still living villagers who remembered the historic hunt, and another one diligently following the words of Corbett's story), strengthen our belief that the killing site of the Mohan man-eater has been correctly identified.

Important GPS Coordinates

SN.	Description of the Place	GPS Coordinates
1	Gargia Forest Bungalow	29°28'44.0"N 79°08'47.4"E (29.478889, 79.146500)
2	Mohan Bazar & Chowk	29°32'51.4"N 79°06'25.9"E (29.547611, 79.107194)
3	Mohan village	29°32'52.0"N 79°06'33.0"E (29.547778, 79.109167)
4	The Mohan Forest Rest House	29°32'55.7"N 79°06'35.3"E (29.548806, 79.109806)
5	Where the river Kosi at Mohan is taking a turn; a most likely the place where the forest guard and fisherman had an encounter with the man-eater	29°32'54.7"N 79°06'42.1"E (29.548528, 79.111694)
6	Place where steep climb from Mohan ends (edge of the cultivated land)	29°34'24.7"N 79°08'34.1"E (29.573521, 79.142805)
7	School building close to the place where steep climb from Mohan ends	29°34'25.8"N 79°08'35.3"E (29.573820, 79.143124)
8	A homestay – Tanhau	29°34'29.9"N 79°08'35.2"E (29.574972, 79.143111)
9	Old terrace field close to where the steep climb from Mohan ends	29°34'31.5"N 79°08'36.6"E (29.575417, 79.143500)
10	The Water Spring where Corbett saw a woman filling an earthenware pitcher. Corbett writes; "in turning a corner in a ravine where there some dense undergrowth I came on a woman filling an earthenware pitcher flowing down a wooden trough."	29°34'42.0"N 79°08'28.3"E (29.578324, 79.141198)
11	A footpath running up the hill where woman said the village from which she had come was just round the shoulder of the hill, and added she was now quite safe.	29°34'45.4"N 79°08'22.7"E (29.579278, 79.139639)
12	Foresters Hut and the Little Knoll	29°34'48.6"N 79°08'11.3"E (29.580167, 79.136472)
13	Wireless tower adjacent to Foresters Hut	29°34'49.0"N 79°08'10.6"E (29.580278, 79.136278)
14	Chaknaki	29°35'04.8"N 79°05'01.0"E (29.584667, 79.083611)
15	Where the road turned to the left (South) after leaving the cultivated ground	29°35'03.8"N 79°07'47.8"E (29.584389, 79.129944)
16	First hairpin bend where Corbett found the Pug marks of tiger for the first time after his arrival in village Kartkanoula.	29°35'10.4"N 79°07'10.8"E (29.586222, 79.119667)

SN.	Description of the Place	GPS Coordinates
17	A Bend 30 yards from rock	29°35'01.3"N 79°07'38.5"E (29.583694, 79.127361)
18	The Overhanging Rock which Corbett marked as being quite the most dangerous spot in the all the ground he had so far gone over while examining the road to Chaknakl on second day after his arrival in Village Kartkanoula	29°35'02.0"N 79°07'40.0"E (29.583889, 79.127778)
19	Crest of Triangular hill where Corbett saw two hind sambur started belling when he had just crossed the overhanging rock over which the tiger was laying.	29°35'01.6"N 79°07'46.3"E (29.583778, 79.129528)
20	Where the road comes out on the ridge	29°35'00.5"N 79°07'37.2"E (29.583472, 79.127000)
21	A rock about 3 Feet high on Khud side of the road	29°34'59.8"N 79°07'35.4"E (29.583278, 79.126500)
22	Where Corbett tied the buffalo on the ridge close to stagnant pool of water.	29°35'00.9"N 79°07'34.7"E (29.583583, 79.126306)
23	Stagnant pool of water	29°35'00.0"N 79°07'36.4"E (29.583333, 79.126778)
24	Present Col tar road where the Old Dirt road ends	29°35'13.9"N 79°07'01.7"E (29.587194, 79.117139)

Thak Rock Identification: New Evidence and Considerations

BY JOSEPH JORDANIA, AUSTRALIA

The kill site of Thak tigress, Jim Corbett's last man-eater, received wide attention from Corbett researchers after the publication of Volume One of our book "*Behind Jim Corbett's Stories*" (Logos, 2016). Most importantly, inconsistencies were found with our research, and another possible candidate was suggested. This chapter tries to discuss and explain the contradictions that are still present in this issue.

In the text below I discuss relevant passages (quotes) from the *Thak Man-Eater* story that would give the readers details of the locality and the situation at the last meeting with the tigress on November 30, 1938, in order to establish the identity of the rock of Corbett's last hunt.

I was specifically comparing two rocks that are considered to be the most probable candidates:

- (1) The rock that is often known among Corbett researchers as Quinton Ottley's rock. The rock is situated about 800 meters from the spring under the mango tree. Quinton noted several times that the rock was not found by him, it was initially found by Joel Lyall, the author of "Jungle Tales" (Unicorn Books, 2007), with the help of Chuka villager, Sundar Singh. I will be referring to this rock with the name of initial finder, as Joel Lyall's rock (or "JL's rock") in the text of this chapter; and
- (2) The rock, found by Joseph Jordania on January 20, 2011, and confirmed in 2012 by the group of Corbett researchers (later forming the "Jim Corbett International Research Group"), who released the book "*Behind Jim Corbett's Stories*." I will be referring to this rock in the text below as JJ's rock (with the name of the initial finder).

Two other rocks (so-called Peter Byrne's rock and Sid's rock) are not discussed in this chapter as they have too many inconsistencies with Corbett words (see the published chapter on this topic in Vol. 1 for more details).

Comparison of two rocks

As you will see, some points fit both rocks, some quotes fit JL's rock better, and some points fit JJ's rock better. This text confirmed our general agreement, that JL's rock is at a better locality (distance from the village, and is lower than the village), and JJ's rock fits better the description of the rock itself (size, shape, including Corbett's awkward sitting position, and subsequent fall).

So here is the list of Corbett quotes with comments. I tried to be objective in my comments, but I probably was naturally biased towards JJ's rock. I will be happy if later researchers correct me if any of my comments do not seem fair. Also, there are probably more quotes from this or other Corbett stories that are suitable for this discussion.

1. "Four hundred yards down the ridge the path runs for fifty yards across a flat bit of ground. At the far right-hand side of this flat ground the path skirts a big rock and then drops steeply, and continues in a series of hairpin bends, down to the next bend. It was at this rock I decided to meet the tigress, and on my way down to it I called several times to let her know I was changing my position, and also to keep in touch with her."

COMMENT: These words fit better the description of JL's rock, as (1) JL's rock is 400 yards down the ridge, and JJ's rock is very close to Thak and beginning of the ridge, and also, (2) there is no need to go down to go to JJ's rock ("on my way down" as Corbett mentions). It should also be noted, that the initial point for counting the distance from the village is a bit unclear, as we can only reconstruct the path from Thak based on circumstantial evidence. In 2011, when I visited Thak, the path was starting from the middle of the village going to the left, to the ridge, so the distance of 800 yards was leading to JJ's rock. Later Quinton suggested that we must count the distance from a little bit above the mango tree spring. The general conclusion in this comment is based on Quinton's suggestion, although, as Preetum Gheerawo (Kotecha Kristoff) believes, the possibility of another course of the old path ("high path") still exists.

2. "Imagine then a rectangular piece of ground forty yards wide and eighty yards long, ending in a more or less perpendicular rock face."

COMMENT: This is more likely about JL's rock locality. The flat ground at JJ's rock is bigger (about 105 meters on 50 meters). We did not measure JL's rock flat ground, but Quinton with his associates did and informed us that it is precisely the size as Corbett mentions.

3. "The path coming down from Thak runs on to this ground at its short or south end, and after continuing down the centre for twenty-five yards bends to the right and leaves the rectangle on its long or east side."

COMMENT: this can be about both places, particularly as we do not know the precise details of the path.

4. "At the point where the path leaves the flat ground there is a rock about four feet high."

COMMENT: This is the rock where Corbett waited for the tigress. These words fit JJ's rock, as it is almost precisely 4 feet high (115 cm), JL's rock does not fit this detail, as it has zero feet height from the front (it is at the ground level), and it is over 5 feet tall from behind (165 cm).

5. "From a little beyond where the path bends to the right, a ridge of rock, three or four feet high, rises and extends to the north side of the rectangle, where the ground falls away in a perpendicular rock face."

COMMENT: This fits very well the flat ground at JJ's rock, as it has a clearly defined rock ridge in the middle of the flat ground, extending from south to the north as Corbett writes. At JL's location, there is no ridge of rocks in the middle of the flat land, stretching from south to north. There are widely scattered rocks, but not the rock ridge.

6. "On the near or path side of this low ridge there is a dense line of bushes approaching to within ten feet of the four-foot-high rock I have mentioned."

COMMENT: This fits JJ's rock, which has a rock ridge and could have bushes approaching the rock within ten feet (particularly in November, still lush after the rainy season). There is no ridge of rocks in the middle of the flat land at JL's rock. Ridge of rocks seems one of the central points of Corbett's description of the flat ground where the last scene took place, as he mentions it several times. So far we have not paid little attention to this ridge. In April 2018, while we were discussing the rock and the locality of JL's rock, I draw the attention of all present that there was no rock ridge there, and Stuart replied the rocks (with the JL's rock included) could be counted as the one, but it does not fit the description of the rock ridge from story, as it must be in the middle of the flat ground, going from South to North, and should have the distance full of green bushes between the ridge and the rock where Corbett was hiding.

7. "The rest of the rectangle is grown over with trees, scattered bushes, and short grass."

COMMENT: this can be true for both localities.

8. "It was my intention to lie on the path by the side of the rock and shoot the tigress as she approached me, but when I tried this position I found it would not be possible for me to see her until she was within two or three yards, and further, that she could get at me either round the rock or through the scattered bushes on my left without my seeing her at all."

COMMENT: this can be true about both places.

9. "Projecting out of the rock, from the side opposite to that from which I expected the tigress to approach, there was a narrow ledge."

COMMENT: This can be true about both rocks, as both have ledges opposite to the direction where the tigress was coming from. At the same time, we have to note that at JL's rock the ledge is non-functional, as Corbett would not have to sit on this ledge, as there is a perfectly stable standing position available behind JL's rock.

10. "By sitting sideways I found I could get a little of my bottom on the ledge,"

COMMENT: although both rocks have ledges, at JL's rock there is absolutely no need to sit on the ledge, as Corbett could easily stand steadily on his both feet behind this rock. At JJ's rock, there is no other way to stand there steadily, so you have to sit on a ledge sideways, precisely as Corbett describes.

11. "and by putting my left hand flat on the top of the rounded rock"

COMMENT: There is no rounded top in JL's rock, as the top of this rock is flat. At JJ's rock you need to put your left hand precisely on the top of the rounded rock to retain your precarious sitting position on the ledge.

12. "and stretching out my right leg to its full extent and touching the ground with my toes, retain my position on it."

COMMENT: You touch another rock (not ground), without stretching it with your right foot at JL's rock, but there was no need to do this, as anyone can stand there firmly with both feet on the ground. At JJ's rock that is exactly what you need to do to keep your position behind the rock: you have to stretch your right foot to touch the ground on the right side of the rock.

13. "The men and goats I placed immediately behind, and ten to twelve feet below me."

COMMENT: This is impossible at JL's rock, as there is no space below Corbett's position. At JJ's rock, there is a space right under Corbett's awkward sitting position (see the photo). This is the same space where Corbett fell on top of his men and goats after shooting the rifle.

14. "The fact that I could not hold my rifle, a D.B. 450/400, with my left hand (which I was using to retain my precarious seat on the ledge) was causing me some uneasiness,"

COMMENT: At JL's place it is impossible to understand why would Corbett held the rifle with one hand only, as Corbett could hold the rifle with both hands, with both his feet steadily on the ground. At JJ's rock, this is precisely how Corbett would

feel, as he needed his left hand on the top of the rounded rock and right foot stretched to touch the ground.

15. "for apart from the fear of the rifle slipping on the rounded top of the rock - I had folded my handkerchief and placed the rifle on it to try to prevent this - I did not know what would be the effect of the recoil of a high velocity rifle fired in this position."

COMMENT: At JL's rock it is impossible to see where is the "rounded top of the rock," the place where Corbett rested his rifle. The rifle can be placed at any area of the rock without of fear of it slipping off. At JJ's rock, this is precisely how you need to put the rifle if you sit behind the rock - there is an elevated small rounded top of the rock (a place for Corbett's handkerchief) where the rifle must be placed, and where from the rifle could easily slip down.

16. "The rifle was pointing along the path, in which there was a hump, and it was my intention to fire into the tigress's face immediately it appeared over this hump, which was twenty feet from the rock."

COMMENT: Initially I had a conviction that JL's rock was better at this point, as there is a hump at JL's rock (more precisely, a "negative" hump, indentation, not literary a "hump"), but after seeing another "hump in the road" in Kartkanoula (mentioned by Corbett in Mohan story), I changed my mind, as the hump in the story is mentioned as "in the path" but it is actually "by the path." So possibly the path from the story was obscured by a hump next to the path (which is present at JJ's rock on the left side). Also, importantly, on the plaque on JL's rock the hump is indicated in other side, on the right side from Corbett's sitting position, which is confusing, as Corbett's rifle was pointing along the path, to the left from him, and he later mentions (see below) that he was unprepared to take aim and shot if the tigress came from the slightly right position ("one o'clock position").

17. "This manoeuvre put the low ridge of rock, over which I could not see, between us."

COMMENT: As mentioned before, there is no rock ridge at JL's locality, so this description does not fit JL's rock. At JJ's rock, there is a clearly defined low rock ridge (about 10-15 yards from the rock where Corbett was sitting, the distance partly filled with vegetation) that could conceal the tigress on the other side of rock ridge.

18. "What effect this appalling sound was having on my men I was frightened to think, and if they had gone screaming down the hill I should not have been at all surprised, for even though I had the heel of a good rifle to my shoulder and the stock against my cheek I felt like screaming myself."

COMMENT: This sentence fits very well JL's rock, as running down the hill is possible there and is harder to imagine at JJ's rock.

19. "Without a second's hesitation she came tramping with quick steps through the dead leaves, over the low ridge and into the bushes a little to my right front,"

COMMENT: Again, the low rock ridge is mentioned here, and it is absent in JL's locality, and it is present at JJ's location.

20. "and just as I was expecting her to walk right on top of me she stopped,"

COMMENT: These words are better suited for JL's rock, as Corbett would be at the ground level there with the tiger above him, but we need to remember that JJ's rock is also situated lower than the three-four foot high rock ridge, so these words could also apply to JJ's locality, although not as perfectly, as to JL's rock.

21. "By great and unexpected good luck the half-dozen steps the tigress took to her right front carried her almost to the exact spot at which my rifle was pointing. Had she continued in the direction in which she was coming before her last call, my story if written would have had a different ending, for it would have been as impossible to slew the rifle on the rounded top of the rock as it would have been to lift and fire it with one hand."

COMMENT: These words confirm that Corbett's rifle aim was severely constrained by his position behind the rock – he could fire only to the left direction, but not to the right direction (the direction where the tigress was moving before the last call). At JL's rock, as already mentioned above, there was no such constraint, as Corbett could aim and fire easily in any direction. From a position behind JJ's rock, the shooter is very constrained, precisely as was Corbett, and he can only aim his rifle to his left, at about 10 or 11 o'clock position.

22. "My first bullet caught her under the right eye and the second, fired more by accident than with intent, took her in the throat and she came to rest with her nose against the rock."

COMMENT: JL's rock extends a couple of meters on the level of the flat ground, so if the tigress fell down the place where she was standing, JL's rock is a much better candidate, than JJ's rock. But if the tigress's tense body reacted instinctively on the bullet (as cats often do, and was also explained by Corbett in a story of him killing his first leopard who instinctively jumped over him), she would have made a jump, or at least attempted a leap, and could have easily come couple of meters forward to touch the rock with her nose.

23. "Very cautiously they climbed up to the rock, but went no further for, as I have told you, the tigress was touching the other side of it."

COMMENT: These words could be used when discussing the shape of the rock, as these two rocks under discussion have very different shapes. Stuart Gelzer, native English speaker, who was in Kumaon in 2018 with us and is familiar with both rocks, commented on Corbett's words: "the other side of it" requires that the rock HAS another side. From the perspective of the back side of the rock, if the tiger was touching the TOP of the rock (a necessity at Quinton's rock), in English you would never say "the other side," you would say "the top." Also, Corbett's earlier words "she came to rest with her nose against the rock" indicates the similar conclusion: If the rock has no front side, you would probably say "with her nose on the rock." These comments were made having in mind the shape of JL's rock, which in fact has only 'back' side and the 'top' side, without having the 'front' side. So these words suit the description of JJ's rock shape and do not suit JL's rock shape.

24. "The recoil from the right barrel loosened my hold on the rock and knocked me off the ledge, and the recoil from the left barrel, fired while I was in the air, brought the rifle up in violent contact with my jaw and sent me heels over head right on top of the men and goats."

COMMENT: These words indicate that Corbett definitely fell on top of his men and goats. This is only possible at JJ's rock, but not at JL's rock, as JL's rock has no space where villagers could sit, and where Corbett could fall on top of them (see the photo). During a discussion on Jim Corbett FB group, Quinton Ottley openly claimed in his comments that there has never been a falling space behind the Thak rock, because, as he wrote, Corbett was touching the ground with his right foot ("and how he could touch the ground if there were a big falling space?" asked Quinton in his letter). So for him "falling space" is a figurative expression only. But at JJ's rock, this is clearly possible (even without the reconstruction digging done in 2012). And we can say that Quinton was not right in his logic, because while sitting at JJ's rock, Corbett's right foot would be touching the ground not UNDER Corbett's body (as Quinton proposed), but on the RIGHT SIDE of the rock, with a falling space under Corbett's position.

Apart from these quotes from Corbett's story, we should pay attention to one more detail not mentioned by Corbett: there is a big boulder just in front of JL's rock, you cannot miss it, and Corbett never mentioned that in front of his hiding place there was a big boulder, obscuring his views. This rock should also be taken into consideration.

Conclusions and Further Discussions and Considerations

I am not claiming that I made use of all the possible quotes from the text of the story, so readers and other researchers can continue this comparison by bringing other quotes as well. Out of these 23 quotes, mentioned here:

Four quotes fit both rocks:

- (1) Both places allow the path entering from the south and then going to the east where the rocks are,
- (2) Both places have scattered trees, bushes, and grass,
- (3) Neither of the places allowed safe position for Corbett next to the rock,
- (4) Both rocks have ledges from the Eastern side;

Six quotes fit JL's rock:

- (1) Distance from the ridge,
- (2) Size of the rectangular land,
- (3) There is a negative hump, although according to Quinton, the hump is in right front of Corbett, which is a confusing direction,
- (4) The theoretical possibility of Corbett's men to go down running from the tigris,
- (5) Fits better with Corbett's words about the tigress "to walk on top of me,"
- (6) Fits Corbett's words better if the tigress died on the spot, without moving;

Fourteen quotes fit JJ's rock:

- (1) Rock's height – four feet,
- (2) The presence of the low rock ridge,
- (3) Bushes between the rock ridge and the rock with the ledge,
- (4) Need to sit on the ledge awkwardly,
- (5) The rock shape with a rounded top,
- (6) Need to stretch right leg to touch the ground to retain the position,
- (7) The presence of the place to put his men and goats under his sitting place,
- (8) The impossibility to use left hand to hold the rifle with both hands,
- (9) The impossibility of putting the rifle anywhere else but a rounded top of the rock,
- (10) The presence of rock ridge to conceal the approaching tiger,
- (11) Tigress move over the low bridge to the right front of Corbett is possible,
- (12) Corbett's rifle aim was constrained to the left direction by his awkward position,
- (13) Fits Corbett's words tigress touching the "other side of the rock",
- (14) There is a falling space where Corbett could fall on his men and goats, after firing two shots and was dislodged from the ledge.

We need to remember that the numbers might change if some of the discussed quotes are found to be incorrectly assessed. For example, if we follow Quinton's diagram and consider that there is a rock ridge in the middle of the flat ground, and we also consider that the JL's rock also has a round top (as asserted in the diagram) the numbers of the points will be different: in this case nine points would fit both rocks, seven fits JL's rock, and nine fits JJ's rock. Still, numbers cannot simply point to the right rock, as different points clearly have a different value.

In this context, we need to mention that certain inconsistencies were observed in writings to the JL's rock, made by Quinton Ottley on the metal plaque. As it became impossible to have direct discussions with Quinton, the information provided on the plaque is particularly important. Two critical points were observed: (1) the plaque claims that the rock where Corbett was sitting has a rounded top (original wording: "LARGE ROUNDED TOP ROCK WITH LEDGE"), which does not agree with the shape of the JL rock, as the top of the rock is flat, not rounded; and also, (2) the plaque claims that there is a rock ridge in the middle of the rectangular piece of ground running from South to North. In 2018, while we were at the JL's rock, we specially addressed this question, and no such rock ridge was identified.

What is essential for us to remember is that to reach the final solution, Corbett's detailed description should be confirmed by most, ideally, all the details. And as we can see, this is not the case with any of the two rocks discussed here. As we knew previously, the description of how Corbett got to the flat piece of ground where he ambushed the unsuspecting tigris, fits better the JL's location (not everyone agrees with this position – see later). At the same time, the detailed description of the size and shape of the rock, of how Corbett was awkwardly sitting behind the rock, constrained in his firing direction, and fall off the rock after firing shots, definitely does not fit with JL's rock. Conversely, JJ's rock fits very well with the shape and size of the rock, the awkward and constrained position of how Corbett was sitting at the rock, but does not fit well the description of how Corbett and his four men reached the place.

The existing general sentiment among Corbett researchers that "If JJ's rock was at JL's location, it would have been perfect" remains (with the addition that the low rock ridge also would need to be moved from JJ's location). The central question that this text is going to address now is what can be the reason that the most likely locality, described by Corbett, and the most likely rock, described by him, are found in different places?

Discussing Controversy

First of all, before I go into discussing this controversy, I have to mention that there are still attempts to prove that one of these two rocks has all the positive points that were described by Corbett.

Quinton Ottley, for example, believes that the rock found by Joel Lyall (and re-discovered by him) fits Corbett's description perfectly. This claim is not based on hard evidence, and it was pointed out several times to him, that the rock itself has many obvious discrepancies, regarding the rock's shape, height, Corbett's awkward sitting position behind the rock, the absence of falling space, and the absence of low rock ridge.

On the other hand, two of the co-authors of this book, Preetum Gheerawo (mentioned sometimes in this book as Kristoff Kotecha) and Fernando Quevedo believe that JJ's rock fits all points. They propose that if we start counting the distance from the Thak village, not from Mango tree, and allow the possibility that the path from the village was going higher than it is assumed by many researchers today, the locality of JJ's rock would fit perfectly the Corbett's words.

In this chapter, I want to propose a different explanation of the paradox. I believe that we should not discount the possibility that Corbett had compelling reasons for memory failure when describing the final scene of the Thak story.

It is widely known that the suggestion of Corbett having a memory failure never elicits a positive reaction from the majority of Corbett fans. And it is hard to disagree with them: We all know that Corbett was an almost inhumanly strong individual, with uniquely fit physical and mental health, and his memory is rightfully regarded legendary. We know that when he was writing *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*, he never used dozens of his letters written to Maggie while hunting man-eaters to aid his narrative (confirmation of this see in Maggie's biography of Corbett in this volume), so immaculate was his memory and his confidence in his own memory. So what kind of proof we might have to suspect a memory failure in Corbett's writings?

In our 2016 book, "*Behind Jim Corbett's Stories*", the issue of Corbett's memory was raised for the first time by Priyvrat Gadhvi (see the chapter "*The Rudraprayag Goat Controversy*", the section "*Corbett's Memory*", pages 204-207). Based on the review of the available scholarly literature, Gadhvi came to the conclusion that although Corbett had an extraordinary memory, he did have instances of memory failure. Here we need to remember that there are small, but still clear differences in his descriptions of his hunts in his letters to Maggie, and his stories. I do not mean here the differences that were caused by his concern for Maggie's anxiety (see for example Chowgarh discrepancies discussion in Vol 1). Sometimes there are discrepancies in describing the same events in his two books "*Man-Eaters of Kumaon*" and "*The Temple Tiger*" as well. So what implications are behind this admission of the possible memory failure?

Despite our long search for the Thak killing place, with an overwhelming amount of detailed description of the locality and the rock itself, there is still not a single candidate that would prove to coincide with all the Corbett words. In 2016, after hearing Quinton's arguments about the locality, I agreed that his locality was better, and congratulated Quinton with finding the correct locality, but as I mentioned from

the very beginning (and I repeated this many times) the precise location does not automatically solve the existing many contradictions that Quinton's (more precisely, Joel Lyall's) rock has. In fact, although pointing to a more precise distance from the village, JL's rock did not coincide with many other characteristics of the rock, that the JJs rock was coinciding precisely. And this unresolved situation lingers on, despite the many trips to the Thak village from all parties involved. Personally I visited this place (mostly with my friends) five times during the last seven years, and Quinton with his associates made several visits as well. And still, the best of the conclusions can be expressed by Priyvat's words: "If we had JJ's rock at JL's locality that would be perfect."

Let us now see if there are any serious grounds to suspect that Corbett might have strong reasons to have a memory failure.

Stress and Memory

First of all, let me make it clear that we are not talking about the memory failure caused by the passing of several years. We are talking about the memory failure caused by extreme stress, and possibly in collaboration with some other factors, like severe sleep deprivation and age.

Stress-related memory loss is a well-known psychological phenomenon. To remind to the readers one of the most famous examples of the stress-related memory failure, let us recall the fact that Jacqueline Kennedy did not have a recollection of her climbing out on the boot of the presidential limousine after the fatal shot that killed her husband, USA President, John F. Kennedy. I have been interested in the stress-related memory loss (and the appearance of false memories) for many years, and know that quite a few humans have stress-related memory loss for the reason of less stressful events.

For example, one of my former students from Singapore did not remember how she crossed the rope bridge where she was forced by her school teacher for the school competition (she actually won the competition as she was the fastest). Another of my students, who witnessed a criminal gangland killing in the centre of Melbourne, could not remember the moment of murder, although she clearly remembered the killer approaching the victim, and then the killer running away after the shooting. It is also well known that after the combat situations military personnel sometimes have a partial or full memory loss of the most stressful moments of combat. Therefore the possibility that strong stress might cause a memory loss or the appearance of false memories is a well-established fact in psychology.

Those who have read the story of the Thak man-eater do not need much persuasion to believe that Corbett was indeed under profound stress. When he decided to call up the tigress, he knew very well that with this decision he was endangering several human lives: most importantly, lives of four of his men, and also his own life. Risking his own life was no big deal for Corbett (you can see the chapter dedicated

to the reasons why Corbett went after the Talla Des man-eater in a very bad physical shape), as we all know, but risking the lives of four innocent humans must have been a robust stress-inducing factor for him.

Wishing to get an expert opinion on this matter I contacted three world-authorities on the field of stress-related memory failures and the formation of false memories. These three experts are:

1. Elizabeth Loftus, USA, Distinguished Professor, Psychology & Social Behaviour, Criminology, Law & Society, Cognitive Sciences, School of Law, University of California, Irvine, a well-known psychologist, who is often invited to the court of justice to assess the reliability of witness testimonies;

2. Willaim (Bill) R. Klemm, USA, Senior Professor of Neuroscience, Texas A&M University, author of several books of human memory and behaviour;

3. Susumu Tonegawa, Japan, Nobel Prize-winning molecular biologist, and neuroscientist.

I wrote emails to these three scholars, describing the situation Jim Corbett was in and asked if it was feasible to think that Corbett might have developed false memories as the result of the stressful situation.

Three responses were received. Two of them were from Bill Klemm, and one from Elizabeth Loftus. No response was received from Susumu Tonegawa.

In his first letter (May 28th, 2018) Willian (Bill) Klemm from Texas A&M University made it clear that the appearance of false memory was definitely possible in case of Corbett. Here is his opinion in his own words: "I can only speculate. But certainly, this enormous stress could cause a false memory. False memory instances have been documented in far less stressful situations."

In the letter from Elizabeth Loftus from the University of California (June 1st, 2018), Irwin, another positive opinion was expressed, and interestingly, Loftus also mentioned the possibility of other contributing factors. Here is her opinion: "seems to me that stress could cause memory loss, but perhaps passage of time or other factors play a role too."

After receiving a letter from Elizabeth Loftus, I realized that the enormous stress of the situation was not the only psychological factor that could cause false memories. Sleep deprivation is another powerful factor that can cause the appearance of false memories. Still another contributing factor can be the advanced age. On my question about the possible participation of these factors in creating false memories, William Klemm responded with his second letter (June 1st, 2018): "Absolutely, sleep loss and age contribute to false memory."

Here I would like to remind a reader of this chapter how strongly was Corbett deprived of normal sleep by the evening of November 30, 1938.

Sleep Deprivation and Age

Before meeting the tigress on the evening on the 30th November, Corbett did not sleep for two consecutive nights. Last time Corbett slept before the evening of the 30th of November was the afternoon of the 28th November, when he was able to have, as he mentions himself, “some sleep,” while nine magpies were feeding on the kill that tiger was expected to come back later. We need to remember that this was not an adequate and comfortable deep sleep: first of all, Corbett was sitting high on the tree with a rifle, waiting for the man-eater to appear, and secondly, he had to keep some attention to the sounds that magpies were making. And besides, Corbett was already badly deprived of sleep, as he did not sleep the previous night that he spent on machan. So by the evening of November 30th Corbett was extremely sleep-deprived.

Corbett was known to go without food and without sleep for days while he was hunting man-eaters, and this was, by his own admission, straining his nerves to the limits. Probably the most importantly, he admits himself he was badly in need of rest and sleep, when he describes the morning of his last day of hunt. His words: “This was my last day of man-eater hunting, and though *I was badly in need of rest and sleep*, I decided to spend what was left of it in one last attempt to get in touch with the tigress.”

All Corbett fans would agree with me that when Corbett says that he was “badly in need of rest and sleep,” he already was beyond all the imaginable thresholds that normal human can endure.

There might have been another factor known to increase the chance of appearing of false memories: advancing age. Very much like many other Corbett fans, I believe that age did very little damage to his phenomenal abilities, including memory, but still, as we all remember, that for 63-year-old Corbett the hunt for Thak man-eater was the last in his 32-year long hunting career after the man-eating big cats.

A Factor of the Repeated Hunting Expedition

Another possible factor for the increased stress was brought to my attention by our fellow researcher, Preetum Gheerawo. He noticed that Corbett’s discrepancies between his writings and other sources (his other writings, Maggie’s letters, etc.) were stronger occurring in the cases when Corbett was going after the same man-eater for the second time. Corbett had only four such cases when more than one hunting expedition was needed. These were the cases with the Panar leopard, Rudraprayag leopard, Chowgarh tigers, and Thak tigress. All other man-eaters were accounted for within one hunting expedition. There must have been an increased pressure on Corbett when he had to come back from the first expedition empty-handed, and organize a second hunting expedition. And interestingly, in the stories of all four mentioned man-eaters, certain details show inconsistency in Corbett’s memory.

In the case of the Panar man-eater, for example, when describing the recent kills of the leopard before his second, September hunting expedition, Corbett mistakenly mentions March and April instead of August and September. Also, he must have omitted in his story the events of a few days, as the third quarter of the moon phase (at the sight of killing the leopard) was a few days later than following Corbett's daily account brings us to;

In case of the Rudraprayag leopard, Corbett at least once shows a discrepancy between the letter to Maggie and the story he wrote (the case of the goat), although this discrepancy might have had other explanation as well (see Priyvrat Gadhvi's chapter from Vol 1 of our book);

In the case of Chowgarh tigers, there are several discrepancies between the letter to Maggie and his text (for example, the number of men that were with him during the final encounter – two or three?). I would add here also that finding the Chowgarh tigress killing site proved particularly difficult despite many days spent in the locality, many dangerous climbs and associated injuries, use of the drone to see the hard-to-reach places, etc. I suggest that we should not discount the possibility that the profound stress that Corbett experienced in finding the man-eater in the most awkward situation behind him could have also contributed to the loss of precision of some of the memories. Corbett definitely had super-human abilities, but we need to remember that he was putting on himself super-human stress as well, way beyond all the limits of human endurance.

And lastly, in Thak man-eater story, although the story is full of the precise dates and many wonderful details of the entire hunt, apart from missing one whole day in his account (see in this volume), and the position of the Moon on the night when Corbett heard the agonizing scream from the Thak village (mentioned in vol 1 of our book, pg. 102), there is a discrepancy between the most probable locality of the rock and the most probable rock.

Conclusions

Therefore, the possibility that Corbett might have had partial memory loss (or the appearance of false memories) should not be overlooked when searching for the reasons why the most convincing locality and the most convincing rock are in different places. As unattractive as this suggestion seems to many Corbett fans, it does give a fully scholarly explanation to the existing discrepancies we are facing while researching this site.

If we accept this possibility of the appearance of false memories, another question arises: if this was really the case, which part of his narrative is to be believed to be correctly represented in Corbett story, the locality of the rock, or the rock features? Theoretically, memory failure might affect both of these elements, (1) the distance from the village and (2) rock characteristics.

Let us have a critical look at this issue.

There can be only two possible models of what Corbett could remember and what he could forget:

(Model 1, correct location, wrong rock details): Corbett remembers very precisely the distance from the Mango tree to the ridge via the flat ground, and then 400 yards down from the ridge to the rock where he met the tigress, but on the other hand, he does not remember that there was no rock ridge there, forgot that he could stand behind the rock steadily on both feet, forgot that he could hold the rifle with both hands and fire in any direction, forgot that the rock had zero elevation from front and more than five feet from side, forgot that the rock had flat top, forgot that there was no falling space under his seat, and finally he forgot he did not fall after shooting the rifle on top of his men and goats.

(Model 2, correct rock details, wrong location): Corbett remembers precisely the size of the rock, its round top, remembers the rock ridge on the flat ground running from South to North, remembers his awkward position and his constrained line of fire, remembered the falling space under his seat, and falling on top of his men and goats, but on the other hand, he forgot (misremembered) the distance from the mango tree to the rock.

From psychological point of views, the Model 1 is harder to accept, as it is difficult to believe that Corbett could forget so many details of the hunt, particularly as these were the details of primary importance for the hunt. The second model is much more plausible from the psychological point of the view, as the distance from the village was not the matter of the primary importance for the hunt outcome.

This is my personal opinion. For some Corbett researchers, this might be another way around, I mean that they might consider more possible Corbett to have confused the rock shape and his awkward position behind the rock than the locality.

Therefore, at the point of writing this chapter, during the last days of 2018, with a very remote possibility of finding a totally new rock where Corbett ended his career as a hunter of man-eaters, there seem only three possible versions of the explanations of the killing site of the Thak man-eater:

1. JJ's rock is the correct one, including the distance of the rock from the village;
2. JL's rock is the correct one, including the shape of the rock and Corbett's awkward position at the rock;
3. None of these two rocks is 100% correct. Instead, the immense stress and sleep deprivation caused Corbett to have some of his memories altered. In the case of the appearance of false memories, the possibility that JJ's rock is the correct one is much higher.

I personally think the third version is the most plausible one, still with a small chance for the first version to be correct, and there is virtually no chance for the second version to be correct.

Conclusion: Every Corbett researcher and fan, who manages to visit Thak, is likely to develop his or her own opinion on the problem. The exact site of Corbett's last hunt after the man-eating tiger might remain clouded in mystery forever, with various fans and researchers giving arguments for any of the existing sites, or even coming up with an entirely new solution of the problem.

And the very last comment: in the perfect line of his inhuman abilities, after killing the elusive tigress, instead of having a well-deserved long, happy, and deep sleep, Corbett, to keep his word given to his sister Maggies, left immediately for a long 20-mile walk from Chuka to Tanakpur.

POSTSCRIPTUM

According to the principle we follow in "Jim Corbett International Research Group" membership, "we agree to disagree," which means that each individual researcher is free to disagree and express his personal opinion. So the opinion expressed in this text by no means represents our common conclusion, it is the opinion of the author of the text.

Here are brief opinions of other members of our research group on the topic of Thak rock:

1. Priyvrat Gadhvi (India) believes that JL's rock has much better chances to be the correct one, although he still believes that it would have been ideal to have the JJ's rock at the JL's locality. Priyvrat was the first researcher who raised the possibility of memory failures in Corbett's writings in the first volume of our book "Behind Jim Corbett's Stories" (Logos, 2016).
2. Preetum Gheerawo [Kotecha Kristoff] (Mauritius) believes that JJ's rock is the correct one, both as a rock and a locality, so there is no contradiction between Corbett words and the locality of this rock. Preetum believes we are making mistakes in reconstructing the details of the path between Thak and Chuka, the path that has disappeared long ago; And that JJ's rock fits very well the Corbett's description of the rock, as well as the awkward and constrained sitting position on the moment of the meeting the tigress.
3. Manfred Walzl (Germany) thinks there are valid arguments on both sides. He also thinks that we may never know for sure the truth, for even an excellent memory like Corbett's has its limitation as a human being and can never be fully reliable over such a long time span. Manfred came to this conclusion after reading the book by Julia Shaw: "The memory Illusion, Remembering, Forgetting and the science of False Memory" (London, 2016). He thinks this

possibility must be considered particularly in the cases of Thak and Chowgarh killing sites. See also Manfred's text on this issue in the current volume.

4. Fernando Oliveira (Brazil) thinks that JJ's rock is most probably the correct one and that there still is a possibility that the point where the path coming from the village meets the ridge was a bit higher in Corbett times, so there is no contradiction in the locality as well. He believes that if we assume that JL's rock to be the correct one, then Corbett must have made big mistakes trying to describe the size and the shape of the rock and his position behind the rock, which is very unlikely. If Corbett was wrong in some estimates, it is more likely that he made mistakes in his estimates of the larger distances than smaller objects and details directly connected to the final encounter.
5. Ali Akhtar (India) still needs to see the place for himself and form his opinion on the issue.

Night in Leper's Room

BY JOSEPH JORDANIA, AUSTRALIA

During his hunting expeditions after man-eating big cats Corbett spent several nights of horror. The first night in village Pali when going after the Champawat man-eater, which Corbett spent on the open, with his back to the tree and shivering both from cold and fear, or the night in a Champawat bungalow a few days later, that left him bewildered and mystified, or the sleepless night that Corbett spent waiting for the Panar man-eating leopard to come back for a dying girls on the second floor, or another sleepless night in Bhainswara village that Corbett spent waiting for the Rudraprayag man-eating leopard in a bundle of hay, were some of such nights.

In this chapter we will discuss the horror that Corbett experiences during his second hunting expedition after the Panar man-eating leopard, in village Chakati. The night in question (the night of September 14th-15th 1910) did not seem too bad, and was not really a sleepless night spent in waiting for a man-eating tiger of leopards to appear. On the contrary, Corbett was soundly asleep, unaware of the deadly danger he was in, and got the scare of his life only in the morning. But let us follow Corbett's words. He is in the beginning of his second hunting expedition after the Panar man-eating leopard, it is September of 1910:

"It had been my intention to follow the same route from Almora that I had followed in April, and start my hunt for the leopard from the house in which the girl had died of her wounds. While I was having breakfast a mason by the name of Panwa, who did odd jobs for us in Naini Tal, presented himself. Panwa's home was in the Panar valley and on learning from my men that I was on my way to try to shoot the man-eater he asked for permission to join our party for he wanted to visit his home and was frightened to undertake journey alone. Panwa knew the country and on his advice I altered my plans and instead of taking the road to Dabidhura via the school where the leopard had eaten my dinner, I took the road leading to Pithoragarh, Spending the night at the Panwa Naula Dak Bungalow, we made an early start next morning and after proceeding a few miles left the Pithoragarh road for a track leading off to the right. We were now in the man-eater's territory where there were no roads, and where the only communication was along footpaths running from village to village.

Progress was slow, for the villages were widely scattered over many hundreds of square miles of country and as the exact whereabouts of man-eater were not known it was necessary to visit each village to make inquiries. Going through Salan and Rangot pattis (*PATTI* is a group of villages), I arrived late on the evening of the fourth day

at Chakati, where I was informed by the headman that a human being had been killed a few days previously at a village called Sanouli on the far side of the Panar riven. Owing to the recent heavy rain the Panar was in flood and the headman advised me to spend the night in his village, promising to give me a guide next morning to show me the only safe ford over the river, for the Panar was not bridged.

The headman and I had carried on our conversation at one end of a long row of double-storied buildings and when, on his advice, I elected to stay the night in the village, he said he would have two rooms vacated in the upper storey for myself and my men. I had noticed while talking to him that the end room on the ground floor was untenanted, so I told him I would stay in it and that he need only have one room vacated in the upper storey for my men. The room I had elected to spend the night in had no door, but this did not matter for I had been told that the last kill had taken place on the far side of the river and I knew the man-eater would not attempt to cross the river while it was in flood.

The room had no furniture of any kind, and after my men had swept all the straw and bits of rags out of it, complaining as they did so that the last tenant must have been a very dirty person, they spread my groundsheet on the mud floor and made up my bed. I ate my dinner - which my servant cooked on an open fire in the courtyard - sitting on my bed, and as I had done a lot of walking during the twelve hours I had been on my feet, it did not take me long to get to sleep. The sun was just rising next morning, flooding the room with light, when on hearing a slight sound in the room I opened my eyes and saw a man sitting on the floor near my bed. He was about fifty years of age, and in the last stage of leprosy. On seeing that I was awake this unfortunate living death said he hoped I had spent a comfortable night in his room. He went on to say that he had been on a two-days' visit to friends in an adjoining village, and finding me asleep in his room on his return had sat near my bed and waited for me to awake.

Leprosy, the most terrible and the most contagious of all diseases in the East, is very prevalent throughout Kumaon, and especially bad in Almora district. Being fatalists the people look upon the disease as a visitation from God, and neither segregate the afflicted nor take any precautions against infection. So quite evidently, the headman did not think it necessary to warn me that the room I had selected to stay in had for years been the home of a leper. It did not take me long to dress that morning, and as soon as our guide was ready we left the village.

Moving about as I have done in Kumaon I have always gone in dread of leprosy, and I have never felt as unclean as I did after my night in that poor unfortunate's room. At the first stream we came to I called a halt, for my servant to get breakfast ready for me and for my

men to have their food. Then, telling my men to wash my groundsheet and lay my bedding out in the sun, I took a bar of carbolic soap and went down the stream to where there was a little pool surrounded by great slabs of rock. Taking off every stitch of clothing I had worn in that room, I washed it all in the pool and, after laying it out on the slabs of rock, I used the remainder of the soap to scrub myself as I had never scrubbed myself before. Two hours later, in garments that had shrunk a little from the rough treatment they had received, I returned to my men feeling clean once again, and with a hunter's appetite for breakfast."

During our 2018 April research trip in Kumaon we went to see the places connected to Corbett's hunt for Panar leopard. You can see another chapter in this volume, dedicated to the killing site of Panar leopard near the Sanouli village. This chapter is dedicated to finding the village, and if possible, the room, where Corbett spent a night, and which belonged for many years to a local leper.

Although Corbett had to go entire expedition on foot, nowadays you can reach virtually every village by car of Panar Valey. Our party consisted of our guide, Kamal Bisht, Fernando Quevedo, Stuart Gelzer, Paata Natsvlshvili, and myself (Joseph Jordania) reached Chakati on April 12th, 2018. The modern spelling of the name of the village is "Chagethi," not Chakati, and that it is within the administration of the larger village of Pali, on the Almora-Champawat Road.

We were delighted to see that the village Chagethi still had "*bakkhalis*", a long row of two-storied buildings built next to each other. When Corbett visited Chakati (Chagethi today) in 1910, there was a similar long row of two-storied buildings, where the villagers lived. Living with shared walls possibly brings benefits of better insulation and possibly a better feel of safety.

Our main informant in Chagethi was Kamela Datt, the man directly associated with the string of houses. Kamela Datt was born in 1942. He told us that the string of houses we see in Chagethi today, were built after Corbett time. He actually remembered the old houses, and then the appearance of the new houses in the 1950s or even later. According to his words, the old houses were built between the 1870s and 1880s, by his great-grandfather, a man named Chandramani Bajetta. He apparently had three sons: Bhim Datt, Kushal Dev, and Joshedhar Datt. The descendant of Kushal Dev was Lakshmi Datt, the father of our informant Kamela Datt (born in 1942). So most likely the Chakati headman who met Corbett in 1910 and had conversation with him was Chandramanu Bajetta.

To our great excitement Kamela told us that there still were remnants of the very old string of houses on the other side of the new string of houses. We went there to see what was remaining from the Corbett-time houses. It is only a few metres away from the new string of houses. Unfortunately, only the end of the long string of two-storied houses were remaining, and only the ground floor, and it was without any roof. It was

obviously the end of the string of houses. As we know from Corbett, the room where he spent a night, was on the ground floor, and was the very last house in the string of houses. It is impossible to know for sure which end of the sting of houses was Corbett talking about, but I would say that there is at least a 50/50 chance that the remaining last room on the ground floor was exactly the one we were searching for.

There is one more argument for this room to be the place we were searching for. The room belonged, as we know, to a local leper for many years. When the new string of houses was built, the building material (mostly stones) from the old houses was actively used. The materials of the only room that was not used for the new houses, might have been exactly the room that belonged to a leper. The room was not in a good condition already in 1910, and not only for the anti sanitary conditions, but also it had no door. With the man-eating leopard around, to live in a door-less room on the ground floor for years sounds like a suicidal prospect. Possibly the room had a reputation of being impure, the way Corbett felt in the morning after he saw the owner of the room. So it seems natural to propose that when villagers were building the new houses, no one wanted to use the materials from the room which was tenanted by a leper for many years (although this house physically was closest to the newly built houses).

The surviving entrance to the room is quite small, but you do not need to go through the door, as walls are crumbled and open in many places. In case if Corbett fans want to know the coordinated of the place where Corbett spent the night of September 14-15th, 1910, here are the coordinates: (= 29.507761, 79.903972, Thanks to Stuart Gelzer for providing coordinates).

It is an eerie feeling when you are on the territory of the room, where Corbett avoided one of the deadliest dangers that he encountered during his hunts. Seeing this room was a stark reminder that the lethal danger coming from the man-eating tigers and leopards, was not the only one Corbett had to deal with.

While in Chagethi, we were told by another informant, Kamela's son, who runs a local tea shop and wedding photo busyness some local news about the big cats. About two weeks before our arrival in April, in a village Garana, a leopard apparently was running after a dog and as the dog rushed into the house, leopard also rushed into the house. Villagers closed the door, locking the leopard inside. Later when they opened the door, the leopard was not coming out. We know from Corbett that leopards are more careful than tigers and when pushed to go to open place they refuse to do so (for example during the beat). The leopard was captured and was sent to the zoo. The headman of Garana village apparently informed our informant by phone.

We were also told by Chagethi that three men were killed by a tiger in the village Lamgara (the last one was killed in 2016). "The tiger is probably alive today" the son of Kamela told us, it seems to me with some nostalgic overtones for someone like Jim Corbett.

We spent couple of nights in the region where Panar man-eater established a reign of terror in the first decade of the 20th century. For the night before we arrived to Chagethi, the headman of Sanouli, Kunwar Singh, a very hospitable man, kindly allowed us to spend a night in his own house. And I can tell you, after a rainy day, and with a prospect of sleeping in a damp tent, it was a blessing for all of us. Our next night in Lamgara was spent in tents, and although it was raining outside, it felt cosy in the tents. And as an additional bonus, the overnight rain generated stunning views of the Himalayas next morning..

We definitely had safer and more comfortable nights in the territory of the notorious Panar man-eater, than Jim Corbett had some 108 years ago.

PEOPLE

Charles Henry Berthoud – 1872-1909

BY CHRISTOPHER DE COULON BERTHOUD, UK

I first came across the name of Charles Henry Berthoud when reading a battered Penguin edition of Jim Corbett's "Man-Eaters of Kumaon" as a child. The idea that I might be related to someone involved in Corbett's exciting stories was exhilarating;

"...in Naini Tal I received a visit from Berthoud. Berthoud, who was Deputy Commissioner of Naini Tal at that time, and who after his tragic death now lies buried in an obscure grave in Haldwani, was a man who was loved and respected by all who knew him." (Corbett 1955, p.17)

Later I found his name on the family tree that hung in the hallway at home, listing the exotic names of family from a seemingly impossibly distant past, who I had never met and to whom all connections seem to have evaporated. Fortunately, some time ago, my father, Michael Berthoud, wrote a manuscript in which he gathered all that he could recall about his family. I used this, along with online genealogy sites, and the autobiographies of Sir Eric Berthoud and his son, the journalist, Roger Berthoud, to piece together a brief thumbnail sketch of my first cousin (twice removed).



Charles Henry Berthoud was born at Hale End House in Walthamstow, Essex on the 31st May 1872, the third child of Alphonse Henry Berthoud (1839–1913) and Clara Emma Green (1849-1910). The house, leased from John Gurney Fry, son of the prison reformer Elizabeth Fry, was also known as Hale End Manor, and was occupied by the Berthoud family until 1902. Although now no longer standing, it was "*an early eighteenth-century building standing well back from the road from which it may be seen through the surrounding trees and shrubs. The little river Ching runs close to the house and right through the fields of this estate*" (Bosworth 1928, p.88). The 1871 Census, a year before Charles was born, shows the young Berthoud family settled at Hale End, with Alphonse, (his occupation listed as a merchant), Clara, and Charles' elder siblings, Albert (2) and Laura (10 months), looked after by three servants. Alphonse's younger brothers, Edouard (26) and Henri Louis (25) [my great-grandfather] also lived at Hale End.

Charles' father Alphonse was born in Neuchatel, Switzerland, arriving in England in 1857, at the age of 18, to work in the English branch of the family bank, Cou-

lon, Berthoud & Co, at Basildon House, 7-11 Moorgate Street, London. This private merchant bank was originally established in London in 1848 as Rapp & Coulon, by Albert de Coulon, whose niece, Adeline, had married Charles' Uncle Edouard. When his father, Alphonse became a full partner in the bank its name changed to Coulon Berthoud & Co.

In 1861, at the age of 22, Alphonse was living at 29 Upper Berkeley Street in London, along with Leopold de Coulon, one of his cousins, who was also a banker, although interestingly, their professions are listed at this time as spice merchants. On July 28th 1868, the 29-year-old Alphonse became a naturalised British citizen, and a week later on August 6th he married Clara Green, the daughter of a prosperous Exetersilk mercer. These two procedures occurred so closely together because the marriage had been opposed by her family who "would not allow their daughter to marry a foreigner" (Berthoud, 1980, p.17).

As well as Hale End, the family also kept a London address, the 1891 census, taken of the 5th April, saw them living at 17 Warrington Crescent, Paddington. It is interesting to note that 23 years after becoming a naturalised British citizen, Alphonse is still listed in his occupation as a 'foreign banker' Warrington Crescent served as Charles' London address while up to Oxford. At the time the census was taken, there were eleven people in the house, Alphonse and Clara, their three children, Laura (20), Charles (18) and Leonie (12) and three live-in servants, Lydia March, Lydia Styles and Annie Remington. Also visiting were Clara's brother, Walter Green and his wife Maria. Walter is described, at the age of 43, as a 'retired brewer', having previously been in partnership with his brother-in-law John Benskin at Benskin's Watford Brewery (Richmond and Turton 1990, p.65). Also visiting at the time of this census was Alphonse's nephew, the 22-year-old Swiss painter Louis de Meuron. De Meuron went on to become one of the foremost members of the Neuchatel School of painters, a Professor of Art History at the University of Neuchâtel and a member of the Federal Commission of Fine Arts. In 2018, the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire in Neuchatel mounted a well-received retrospective of de Meuron's work called "Impression of Eden", marking 150 years since his birth.

When Charles was five, a tragic event happened to his Uncle Albert de Coulon. On August 29, 1877, while the de Coulon family were spending the summer at Treytel, their holiday home on the shore of Lake Neuchatel. Albert had dressed his hunting dogs with rubbing alcohol to make their coats shine. The dogs then lay by the stove and the fumes caught fire. Ablaze and maddened with pain the dogs ran through the house setting fires in every room. The whole house was destroyed and was subsequently rebuilt by the Neuchatelois architect William Mayor (de Reynier 2000, p.5). Undeterred by this disaster, 1878 Alphonse purchased Chateau Gorgier in Neuchatel from Henry de Pourtalès-Gorgier, the last of the Huguenot lords of the castle, and undertook a series of improvements and repairs (Locher, André, Eli, n.d.). The chateau was used as a holiday home by the family, but he also sent his eldest son, Alfred,

to live there, alone but attended by servants, while attending school at the Neuchatel Gymnase until he was 18, when he returned to London. Alphonse's ownership of the castle is commemorated, along with all previous owners including King Frederick II of Prussia, in a stained-glass window in the castle's chapel. Despite his Swiss birth, Alphonse took his British nationality to heart and flew the Union Flag from the turret of the castle (see the photo).

At the age of 14, in 1886, Charles became a boarder at Uppingham School, a public school in Rutland, until his matriculation on the 12th December 1891, from where he went up to New College, Oxford in 1892. Here he studied law and obtained a 2nd class B.A law degree. It was while at Oxford, on the 30th October 1894, at the age of 22, Charles was initiated into the Apollo Lodge, the masonic lodge for members of Oxford University, this was also the year he took, and passed, his India Office exams. At the age of 23 Charles sailed from London, bound for Bombay, on the Parramatta on the 6th November 1895. He remained an active freemason as he moved around different postings in India, joining the Koil Lodge in Aligarh on the 2nd October 1900 and the Morning Star Lodge in Lucknow on 6th July 1901.

By 1895 Alphonse had sold the chateau in Neuchatel and took a 15-year lease on Dromore Castle from the Earl of Limerick. This was remembered in letters to my father by my Great Aunt Anita, in which she described her family visiting her uncle's family "in their lovely castle home", although she was too young to go (Berthoud, 2004). Anita had taken orders to become a Carmelite nun, and my family visited her every year in the cloistered monastery in Dumbarton where she had spent much of the 20th Century in holy orders. In another letter to my family written in the 1970s she wrote about Alphonse;

'I only saw Uncle Alphonse once,' she wrote, 'at Dover in 1912 when he was bringing my Father [Henri Louis] back from Paris. He had a stroke on the way from Lourdes and was well nursed by the Brothers of St. John of God. ... Leonie [Alphonse's youngest daughter] was waiting for our boat with her father. They were so nice. I never saw them again... Uncle Alphonse was very like King Edward VII and was often mistaken for him when he was out driving in his carriage. He used to return the salute so as not to put the King in disfavour' (Berthoud, 2004).

Alphonse certainly cared about his appearance, and it would seem, relished his resemblance to the King. What is curious though is a passage in Sir John Hewett's 'Jungle Trails in Northern India' in which he suggests Alphonse held the title of Baron. (See his photo.)

"After Charlie Berthoud's death Baron Berthoud very kindly gave me his Rigby D.B. 400-450 cordite rifle" (Hewett 1938, p.118).

Whether this was an in-joke, a nickname, or a title that Alphonse had either earned or just assumed remains unclear. One is left wondering if perhaps the xenophobic

snobbery of his in-laws led Alphonse to react with a series of performative displays of aristocratic pretence.

In the 1900 India Civil Service list Charles is appointed Assistant Magistrate, North West Provinces and Oudh. At the age of 31 in 1903 he is serving as Joint Magistrate, United Province, having served in the North West Province and Oudh as Assistant Magistrate and Collector, as City Magistrate in Lucknow between March 1901 and June 1903, and as Joint Magistrate, December 1903. This rise through the ranks of the civil service was curtailed in 1909 where he met the tragic death mentioned by Jim Corbett. On December 29th 1909 The Times of India printed a short paragraph noting Charles' death of 'enteric fever' or cholera as it is more commonly known.

The 1911 census sees Alphonse, two years after Charles' death, and now a widowed too, living at 42 Bramham Gardens in South Kensington, looked after by a maid, a parlour-maid, a housemaid, an under-housemaid, a kitchen-maid and a cook. On the day of the census he was being visited by Phyllis, the wife of his third son Edward (1876-1955) along with their 2-year-old daughter, Clara and her nurse Ellen Leaning. Edward had followed in Charles' footsteps through Uppingham School and New College Oxford, and then the Indian Civil Service, arriving in India five years after his brother. By 1921 he held the position of Commissioner of Excise and Salt, and Inspector-General of Registration, Bihar and Orissa. In 1928 he was awarded an OBE, and later he was awarded the Order of the Indian Empire for his services.

Alphonse died on the 5th November 1913 aged 74. Only 3 months after Alphonse's death, on the 3rd February 1914, the Coulon Berthoud bank failed quite spectacularly. A report in the Financial Times, 10th February 1914 was headlined; "Failure of Coulon Berthoud, Heavy Losses through Bad Debts". The article describes how the 60-year-old bank had suffered in the past three years from debts accrued from, among other things, the failure of Fry Miers and Co, a company involved in construction of railways in Brazil. Michael Berthoud wrote; "*A great deal of family money was tied up in the bank, both from the Swiss and English branches of the family, and everything was lost*" (Berthoud 2004). Albert, Charles' eldest brother, who was in charge of the bank at its collapse took the shame of failure badly, and died a tragically ignominious death at the age of 50. On the 12th of February 1920 he went to the Eccentric Club in Ryder Street, St James's where he was to play bridge, while there he collapsed in a toilet and died of suffocation (Berthoud, 2009, p.19).

Albert's son (Charles' nephew), Sir Eric Berthoud, published a letter from Jim Corbett, sent from Nyeri in Kenya, dated 7th July 1953, in an appendix to his autobiography published in 1980. Corbett, heaped praise on Charles, speaking of his great pleasure in receiving a letter "*from a nephew of a man who honoured me with his friendship, and for whom I had a very sincere regard. Had he lived he would have gone as far as a man could go in India*" (Berthoud 1980, p.263). The letter talks of Charles' burial, expedited because of the cholera from which he died, and at which only his

Indian friends were present to pay their respects. Corbett suggested that the grave was not neglected, although “he lies practically alone in a little strip of ground.”

In the same letter Corbett also tells the story of a tiger hunt that Charles arranged for Sir John Hewett, who was at that time the Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.

“Hewett dropped the tiger with a single shot. The guns descended from their machans, handed their rifles to attendants, and collected round the dead animal and while they were measuring it, for everyone thought it was a record, the tiger got up, shook itself, and galloped off and was never seen again. When telling me the story your uncle said it was fortunate for him that the tiger did not kill anybody, for if it had, he would have lost his job” (ibid, p.264).”

The letter finishes with Corbett accepting an invitation to meet Sir Eric for lunch in London.

The search for Charles’ ‘obscure grave’ in Haldwani was started by the pioneer Corbett researcher Peter Byrne. Peter, a traveler and prolific author, is a consultant of the Jim Corbett International Research Group. Peter had a photograph of an unnamed grave taken in 1975, and it was thought it belonged to Charles Berthoud. On further research during 2018 September trip to Kumaon by the members of JCIRG, it was found out that the photo was taken in Nainital, not in Haldwani, and it does not belong to Berthoud. A recent photograph on the JCIRG Facebook page from 2018 showed a touching handwritten memorial garlanded with flowers at the entrance of Halwani Christian Cemetery indicates that Charles Berthoud memory is still very much being kept alive.

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Guardian of the Historic Past – Bill Jones and Corbett’s 450/400

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW AND TEXT BY PREETUM GHEERAWO

In the first volume of our book “*Behind Jim Corbett’s Stories*” (BJCS 2016), in the chapter *Corbett’s Rifles*, we had reported that both of Jim Corbett’s famed rifles, namely the .275 Rigby Mauser and the 450/400 DB (Double Barrel) by Jeffery & Co. had surfaced in the media after years, if not decades, of having gone unnoticed. The reason for the public exposure was that both rifles had been acquired by respective new owners. Since we had not yet made contact with Bill Jones at that time, we covered the .275 Rigby rifle in more detail than Corbett’s other faithful old friend, the 450/400.

This second volume of BJCS now provides an opportunity for making amends regarding the 450/400, especially with regards to its new owner, Mr. Bill Jones, whom we met during our India 2016 trip. Bill Jones is now a consultant for our Jim Corbett International Research Group and, as such, it was an immense pleasure to welcome him on board for our adventures in Corbett country, looking for Corbett places and, of course, to share whatever he has to offer to Corbett fans with regard to the famous 450/400 rifle; his passion for famous people of the golden age of hunting and their rifles; and his efforts towards preservation of fauna through responsible hunting.²

Meet the Man

William L. Jones (‘Bill’ to his acquaintances) was born, raised and educated in the state of Alabama in the USA, an area renowned for the richness of its soil in terms of mining for coal, iron ore and other raw materials used in the steel and iron industries. His family has, for many generations, been involved in the mining business and also had some interests in timber and other industrial raw materials.

2 Bill travels to hunt in well-managed reserves that promote responsible hunting, mainly in Africa. Responsible hunting is sometimes termed ‘conservation-hunting’ – a recently adopted oxymoron which means achieving conservation of species or more generally ecosystems, by assigning quotas of game that can be hunted to ensure the viability of the reserve (or park, mainly privately owned ones) in terms of its animal populations and the resources on which they depend. This practice has, in the past, been called ‘culling’ but this costs park management money whereas, usually, fees are charged to hunters for achieving the same result for game species with excessive population numbers as regards to the size of the reserve. The proceeds are used to finance the guarding of the animals against poachers (the greatest threat to their survival since poachers will kill all the animals); create jobs for the locals and also compensate other locals for any loss of crops or domestic animals due to any conflict between wild and farmed habitats. These reserves can also address the problem of insufficient genetic diversity (due to their isolation and lack of natural corridors to other reserves) through interchange with other such reserves by translocation of some members of their breeding populations. Hence, such reserves and parks, due to the financial income from hunting, not only maintain all the requirements of a sustainable ecosystem but also a sustainable economy for local communities adjacent to their boundaries.

It is therefore not surprising that Bill joined the family's well-established businesses and, after he graduated in Business, Finance and Economics, undertook to develop coal mines on land with the mineral rights his grandfather had left for the family. While at school Bill also worked in the steel industry and used that first-hand experience to expand the coal mining business by developing various other mines to supply raw materials to industry, and eventually sold them to a large regional mining company. Having formed good relations with petroleum companies that supplied the mining and transportation industries of the area, Bill then founded energy and trading company with which he is still involved.

Apart from these business activities, Bill spends his time filming for documentaries and outdoor shows for television. A great part of the latter activity is dedicated to historic firearms, for which Bill has a great passion and of which he is an avid collector. Bill is a member of the Explorers Club, Dallas Safari Club, Safari Club International, The International Order of St Hubertus and the Professional Hunters Group, amongst others. These affiliations have enabled Bill to travel to many countries all over the world for hunting and exploration. Bill also loves competition auto-racing and collects sports cars.

The origins

We wouldn't have met Bill if it were not for his passion for collecting firearms, mainly historic ones such as Corbett's famed 450/400 DB by Jeffery & Co., with which many of the man-eaters described in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* and *Temple Tiger* were brought to account.

This passion has its roots in Bill's family and friends who loved hunting and fishing. At the age of 8 he received his first firearm, a .22 rifle, although it was not meant for serious shooting. It was from then that his passion for collecting firearms and related artefacts started, and so far, has never stopped. At the same time his grandparents introduced him to reading books about outdoor sports. His grandfather had collected and later shared his many hunting books with him and his grandmother, who was an English teacher, spent much time reading the stories to little Bill. These books, most of them with an African setting, included some with an Indian setting, among them, *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* by Jim Corbett, which lit a spark that would grow into a deep desire, when the time came, to visit and explore these far-away places and follow the trails of the larger-than-life characters who had trodden them.

The Elmer Keith collection and other famous rifles

Bill's favourite hobby is the collection of firearms, principally historic ones, which were previously owned or used by famous people all around the world. One marvels at how he remembers each and every one of them and its associated story.

The late Elmer Keith was, above all, a gun collector and built a collection of famous, previously owned rifles, including Corbett's 450/400. Much of the story behind Keith's acquisition of the 450/400 is told in BJCS 2016 (see chapter *Corbett's Rifles*).

Bill now owns quite a few Elmer Keith rifles and bought his first from the Holt Auction Company of London. This was a .470 drop-lock double rifle by Westley Richards, in great condition. The rifle was discovered in a gun vault in Hamburg, Germany, in its original case with .470 calibre ammunition as well as test targets signed by Keith himself. The rifle and ammo had been previously sold by Keith to a friend who later traded it with a German gun company. From Keith's collection, Bill also bought a very rare and magnificent .500 Jeffery & Co. side-lock double, a rifle etched with beautiful engravings portraying the crest of the Raja of Miraj Junior State (India) and gold inlays featuring Indian wildlife in action. The most refined of these is a gold leopard on a platinum leaf, crouching on the trigger guard bow. Among other Elmer Keith rifles acquired by Bill is another Westley Richards double-barrelled nitro express (DBNE) with a .476 chamber, and a .500 Charles Boswell DBNE, which was Keith's favourite for elephant hunts in Africa.

While acquiring his historic rifles Bill has dealt with various auction houses including Rock Island Auctions, Bonhams, Sotheby's and, of particular interest to us, James Julia Auctions of Fairfield, Maine, from which Corbett's 450/400 was acquired along with three other rifles and two handguns. Since Bill was a known customer of James Julia Auctions these deals were made over the telephone. Among other rifles that Bill has bought from James Julia is Ernest Hemingway's famed .577 DBNE by Westley Richards. Bill still fondly remembers how the deal for this historic piece was sealed by a satellite-phone conversation while he was on an expedition on the Nile River in Uganda in 2011. Manufactured in 1913 in England, this rifle, an absolute masterpiece, was meant for stopping the charges of the biggest game in Africa.

Hemingway, to name a few of his notable achievements, was among the journalists who covered the D-Day Normandy landings and, some months later, the liberation of Paris in 1944. Although famous as an author of best-selling novels, winning Pulitzer and Nobel Prizes, he was also a keen angler and sportsman. He famously used this .577 during his 1953 African safari and previously, during World War II, had even thought that it could be used effectively on German U-Boats (submarines).

Great Men, Great Rifles

Bill's collection takes us down memory lane, from the days of hunting to the birth of conservation in Africa. He owns two of Frederick Courtney Selous' rifles, a .461 single barrel using modified cordite by Gibbs and a .256 falling-block action by Holland and Holland (H&H) with a 100-yard fixed-sight and additional leaf sights up to 500 yards, an amazingly accurate weapon. This H&H rifle is said to have been custom built for Selous. The latter, a famous hunter, pioneer explorer and guide who fought

in the First World War (WWI) alongside Robert Baden-Powell (later Lord, founder of the World Scout Movement, buried in the same graveyard as Corbett, who had lived in Baden-Powell's cottage after the latter's death, in Nyeri, Kenya – see *Kenya Trip* in this book). Selous had previously guided 'Teddy' Roosevelt (26th US President) during his African safari in British East Africa (now Kenya) and the Congo basin.

A hero of Bill's during his childhood, Selous portrays the typical European hunter in Africa, with bush shirt and shorts, and a rifle slung over the shoulder. As such, it is thought that Selous was the inspiration for the character of Allan Quatermain and his outfit attire, played by Stewart Granger in the film based on H. Rider Haggard's eponymous novel *King Solomon's Mines* (see elsewhere in this book). Tragically, Selous was shot and killed in 1917 while fighting the Germans in Tanganyika (which was part of territorial disputes between the British and the Germans during, and partly causing, WWI) on the banks of the Rufiji river where nowadays the area, a protected game reserve, is named after him – The Selous Game Reserve. Incidentally, the most notorious and recent man-eating lion, the Rufiji man-eater, nicknamed 'Osama', who claimed 49 victims, was shot at a location there in 2004.

There are yet other famous rifles in Bill's collection and among them a very rare double rifle. This is the Maharaja of Surguja's .416 side-lock ejector action by John Rigby and Co. The Maharaja of Surguja who ruled the eponymous province in Central India (now Madhya Pradesh) had the rifle custom made for him and the model is the only one ever chambered for the same calibre as that made famous by Rigby's magnum Mauser bolt-action rifle. The Maharaja is reputed to have taken this rifle on safari in Africa with John Alexander (JA) Hunter, another very famous hunter, who used a regular .416 Rigby bolt-action rifle, now also in Bill's collection, a rifle and calibre which he made famous.

J.A. Hunter, another of Bill's childhood heroes, was an English hunter who settled in British East Africa (now Kenya) where he led many notable safaris for important people coming from all over the world. JA is also credited as a pioneer explorer who discovered the Ngorongoro crater, a unique paradise-esque haven teeming with wildlife in the heart of today's Tanzania. It could be said that JA and Jim Corbett have led somewhat parallel lives if we consider that both were formerly trophy hunters (JA was at one point a bounty hunter, though Corbett refused bounties for shooting man-eaters) and later, both took the path towards conservation and protection of vulnerable iconic species in their respective countries. Like Corbett, JA also wrote several books about his experiences and both transmit their love for the local people, the wildlife and their adventures in their writings.

JA was a friend and contemporary of Denys Finch-Hatton, another famous hunter later turned conservationist. In fact, Finch-Hatton is one of the first, besides Corbett (in India), who famously championed the cause of swapping the gun for the camera (in Africa) and who later influenced the founding of the Serengeti National Park.

Finch-Hatton also had a passion for flying as described in the book *Out of Africa*, written by Baroness Blixen (or Karen Blixen if she did not use her title). Blixen and Finch-Hatton shared a romantic relationship which was featured in a 1986 film made of the mainly autobiographical *Out of Africa* in which Finch-Hatton was played by Robert Redford and Karen Blixen by Meryl Streep. The film, which was well made and directed by Sidney Pollack, won seven Academy Awards.

The rifle Finch-Hatton used most of the time on his safaris was a .450 Charles Lancaster DBNE. Incidentally, it's the one historic rifle that Bill regrets not buying, though it had been offered for sale to him. At the time, Bill judged that the rifle would have been well used and therefore its condition would not match its price tag. He now tells us of his disappointment at not having given the purchase a second consideration.

There are other double rifles in Bill's collection; notably among them is a matched pair of .450 DBNE No.2 action box-lock ejector by Joseph Lang which formerly belonged to Philip Percival. Percival is said by many to be the greatest professional hunter ever, having a very long career in Africa starting from the early 1900's, when he accompanied US president Roosevelt on one of his safaris. He later formed a long lasting friendship with Hemingway and teamed up with the story-teller on various safaris. It is thought that Hemingway was inspired to write "*Green Hills of Africa*", using Percival as his inspiration for the character 'Pop'.

Bolt-Action Rifles

While talking about JA Hunter's .416 Rigby, Bill was asked to talk about other bolt-action rifles in his collection. Bill modestly said that 'may be' the most famous one in his collection is a .500 Jeffery & Co. Mauser M98 magnum with a 26-inch barrel, previously owned by a certain Fletcher Jamieson.

C. Fletcher Jamieson was a renowned ivory hunter and pioneer photographer. He would spend much of his time in the 1930's and 40's hunting in the Zambezi valley, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Many of his photographs were used in the book *African Rifles and Cartridges* authored by his friend John 'Pondoro' Taylor and which makes special mention of the .500 Jeffery & Co.. This book, one of Bill's favourites, no doubt endlessly moving on and off Bill's bookshelf when he was young, would be another reason why Bill thinks so highly of the rifle. Bolt-action rifles of such large bores are very rare and only 24 have ever been made by Jeffery & Co. and this is possibly another reason why it was the first to come to Bill's mind. The rifle, custom-made for Jamieson, is also engraved with his name, making it one of the rarest collector items ever.

To give details of all the other bolt-action rifles in Bill's collection would fill a chapter on their own and so, to briefly summarise the remainder we would mention two .458 Winchester model-70s with 6-round magazines. One of them was Jack O'Connor's, the American author and gun expert and the other one belonged to John Kingsley Heath. The latter was a former hunter and later a game park warden in various

countries of East Africa. He was instrumental in opening Botswana for safari tourism and was closely involved in securing the magnificent photography for the film 'Hatari' (1962) featuring the scenic backdrop of Mount Meru (on one side of which Corbett had his coffee estate). The other bolt-actions in Bill's collection, listed in no particular order are the .375 H&H, .404 Jeffery & Co., .416 Rigby, .416 Remington, .425 Westley Richards, .458 Lott, .460 Weatherby, .505 Gibbs and other bolt-action guns of smaller calibres. All of these have a story to tell and we would have loved to hear them but Bill wanted above all to talk about his favourite of the favourites: Corbett's 450/400.

Corbett's 450/400 and the Man-Eater Hunting Legacy

Bill tells us that he is very confident that Corbett's rifle would still be perfect for a lion hunt in Africa. He thinks very highly of the 450/400 and explains that the rifle comes to the shoulder very easily and balances very well for its weight of 10 pounds, two ounces and its 24-inch barrels. The recoil is moderate and its power is close to the famed .416 Rigby which Bill regularly used before he had the 450/400. Its accuracy is spot-on and the No.2 Jeffery action of the rifle is very sound, making it one of the best rifles that Bill has ever used.

Bill is of the same opinion as Elmer Keith (see chapter "Corbett Rifles" in BJCS 2016) in that the Corbett's 450/400 rifle is the most heavily used but best cared-for rifle he owns. The rifle is beautifully engraved with English scrolls. All the visible bluing have been worn away except for the detachable fore-end. The rifle has been tested and is most accurate at the 50-yard target and all shots were within 1 to 1 ½ inches, with some bullet holes even overlapping. The stock checkering is worn smooth from Corbett carrying it for so many years and in such harsh field conditions.

Bill hopes that he can take Corbett's legendary 450/400 on an African safari this September (2019) and thinks that the rifle's balance, and its ejectors which allow for quick reloading, would make it perfect for big and dangerous game. During the interview it was suggested to Bill that Corbett used the 450/400 on a lion hunt in Tanzania in the 1930's (see chapter "Unedited Corbett Writings" in this book) and Bill is confident that the rifle could repeat that feat, despite its age, due to the quality of the gun and it having been looked after so well by Corbett.

Bill has hunted lions in Africa and his first lion was in 1984. That was a man-eating lion which was terrorising the inhabitants of the Mowoyi area of western Tanzania. The lion was regularly taking a toll of the cattle and villagers alike and when precautions were taken against him, it went a grade further by trying to attack safari vehicles and their occupants. His last attempted attack was on the vehicle carrying the US Ambassador to Argentina and the lion only narrowly missed grabbing him through the open door of his safari car (the doors of the cars were removed during the hunting season).

Bill arrived in the area two days after the attack accompanied by a professional hunter named David Omanney. When they toured the area in a vehicle, the lion saw and stalked them and, when close enough, charged the vehicle. David, who had seen the charge coming, used his .470 DBNE to deflect it. While David covered with the .470, Bill grabbed a .375 H&H magnum rifle and put three bullets into the lion in quick succession, killing the man-eater.

On a later expedition, Bill had another experience with man-eaters, this time with a pride of lions which regularly besieged a Watusi village. A pride of man-eating lions may not be such a rare occurrence, if we consider that females of a pride not only collaborate when hunting prey but also teach their young how to hunt and what prey to choose. However, even if the pride as a whole does not regularly eat humans, identifying the one or two responsible for attacks on man is very difficult and can cost more casualties while investigating. Hence, sadly, the whole pride must be eliminated (see Manfred Waltl's chapter *Through Wounds and Old Age* under the heading *Man-Eating Traditions* in BJCS 2016).

Bill and his assistants tracked the members of the pride and, after a week, one after the other, the pride, comprising of two males and three females, were brought to account. The lions were then displayed in the village to the great relief of the inhabitants. However, despite his own experiences, Bill considers Corbett's successful hunts of man-eating tigers and leopards in India as being the most dangerous and deadly exploits, taking into account the difficulties of the terrain and conditions under which he was hunting them. As such, Corbett is Bill's greatest hero.

So, in 2016 when the opportunity was there to visit the scenes of some of Corbett's hunts in the company of Corbett's .275 Rigby, Bill gladly undertook to come on that trip with Marc Newton (See chapter *Corbett Magic* in BJCS 2016) and his associates; and that's how we first met him in Camp Kyari near Kaladhungi.

Bill feels that he was blessed to have been on Corbett's trails while we were together in India, exploring among others, the place where the Kanda man-eater was shot. This is in the Dhikala region of today's Corbett National Park and the spot is indicated with a plate on a concrete monument. According to Bill, who has used the 450/400 several times, it was the second barrel that saved Corbett's life while the tiger was charging the tree on which he was precariously seated. Bill then finally tells us how honoured he is to be the custodian of Corbett's 450/400 double rifle that saved his life many times.

It seems to us that, due to Bill's and John Rigby and Co's collections (see chapter *Rudraprayag* in this book), Corbett's gunshots are, although faint, still echoing around the world in some sense and bringing interest and pleasure, whereas they previously brought relief and the second greatest happiness – which Corbett considered to be the sudden cessation of great fear (the greatest happiness being the sudden cessation of great pain).

Note: During the interview, Bill pointed out to me that in the chapter *Corbett's Rifles* in BJCS 2016 the sale price of Corbett's 450/400 was incorrect. I had relied on James Julia Auctions' website which gave a price of USD 230,000. Bill tells me that the correct price was USD 264,000 but also says that no price tag can equate to the rifle's value, since the rifle is priceless.

In BJCS 2016 I had also mentioned that Corbett's 450/400 'had been acquired by a private collector who has wished to remain anonymous ... and has intended not to display the rifle publicly'. I am pleased to say that we now know, obviously, that Bill has not remained anonymous and further that Bill has also, on a number of occasions, allowed the rifle to be displayed publicly in the USA. The first time was in January 2016 at the Dallas Safari Club convention and then a little later in 2016 when both of Corbett's faithful old friends (the other one being the .275 Rigby) were re-united at the Safari Club International convention, a unique occurrence since 1953 when the rifles parted company. The 450/400 made a few more public appearances for the National Rifle Association and the Ring of Freedom group.

Addendum:

And finally, readers of the chapter would be interested to know which of Corbett's man-eaters were shot by this rifle. These were all tigers: Mohan man-eater in 1931, Kanda man-eater in 1932, Chuka man-eater in 1938, and Thak man-eater in 1938. There is also a slight possibility that the Talla Des man-eater was also shot by this rifle, as Maggie, who did not make mistakes in identifying bullet marks, identified the marks on Talla Des skin as made from 450/400. On the other hand, Corbett himself mentions in the story taking for the final encounter with the tigress the .275 rifle, and besides, although Corbett was usually taking the heavier 450/400 for close encounters, in 1929, just after his horrible ear accident, the doctor advised him to use the lighter rifle (he mentions this in the story), which was what probably happened in this case. So we can say that if the 1920s were mostly the decade of .275 (Corbett used .275 rifle to shoot the Rudraprayag man-eating leopard in 1926, Talla-Des and Chowgarh man eating tigers, respectively in 1929 and in 1930), from 1931 onwards Corbett was using 450/400 when the critical moment in hunting man-eaters was approaching.

The Taming of the Jungle by Charles W. Doyle – A Review

BY MICHAEL BARTON, UK

Charles Doyle Jr. was a half brother of Jim Corbett, from their mother Mary's first marriage. Mary had been widowed with 3 children when her husband, Charles Doyle Sr. was killed in the uprising of 1857. The following year she met Christopher William Corbett, and they were married that same year and went on to have 9 children together.

Mary used the life insurance money collected after her husband's death to send her first 3 children, including Charles Doyle, to the United Kingdom to train as doctors. Charles studied in Edinburgh and later settled in California, where he became an author.

His book, *The Taming of the Jungle*, was published in 1899 by Butler & Tanner and comprised 16 stories of people living in the terai and bhabar, bands of grassland and jungle respectively, skirting the foothills of the Himalayas.

It's a charming little book which, throughout, uses settings made familiar to us by Corbett. The majority of stories centre around Kaladhungi (Kaladoongie in the book) and the Bore Bridge (Corbett's 'Boar' river bridge in his own books). The title, *The Taming of the Jungle*, is a little misleading as, although the Kumaon jungle is a constant setting, the book only concerns itself with tales of its people; from dacoits and low caste hill-men to women-folk and visiting Sahibs.

The book's episodic stories interconnect mainly by following the exploits of Ram Deen, the new driver of the mail carriage; his jungle wife, Biroo and their ferocious pariah dog, Hasteen. Many of the stories begin as a tale told around a camp fire on the Nainital road, in one of which, Biroo and Ram Deen recount how they first met:

"... the villagers waked when as they heard the crackling of the flames from our hut and the barking of the village dogs; and Hasteen and I ran towards the road that leads to Kaladoongie, being more fearful of the men of Nyagong than of the wild things of the jungle. When we came to the bridge over the Bore Nuddee my feet were tired, and calling Hasteen to me for warmth I set my back to the wall of the bridge and so fell asleep..."

"it was thus I found him, Thanadar-ji" said Ram Deen, "and I came none to soon. A mile from the bridge I heard the hunting bay of a grey wolf, and when I came nearer I could see in the moonlight, crouched beside the end of the bridge, some great beast that leapt into the jungle as the cart approached".

The tone of the stories varies from chapter to chapter. A story such as *The Woman in the Carriage* is a humorous tale of how Ram Deen reunites a woman and her two-week old baby with her husband (Captain Barfield) who had absconded. On finding the Captain at his wits' end while his mistress is raving hysterically in their abandoned

carriage, Ram Deen drives the carriage into the Bore River where, under the threat of drowning and alligators⁵, convinces the mistress to calm down and leave the Captain for good.

Other stories strike a much darker, gruesome tone. The first, *A Jungle Vendetta* begins with our 'hero' Ram Deen cheerfully recounting the violent means by which he secured the position of mail cart driver. Having broken a telegraph wire, he stretches it across the road as a tripwire. This topples the passing mail cart, killing the horse and driver outright, and leaving his enemy, Bheem Dass thrown in the road with a broken thigh bone. Ram Deen takes down the cart lamp so Bheem Dass can see who is responsible for his downfall, then, after spitting and stamping on him, he rides the heavy mail cart forward, crushing Bheem Dass' skull as he pleads for mercy. This first tale establishes the tone of the book, which manages to turn a seemingly charming tale into a dark, murderous story. Characters who carry out barbaric acts such as Ram Deen or Bijoo (who cuts his wife's nose off thinking her guilty of infidelity) are rewarded at the end of their tale with a hero's status, the book concluding with Ram Deen being honoured with the role of district policeman.

One of the most enjoyable tales is that of '*The Lame Tiger of Huldwani*', in which Ram Deen recounts his involvement with a man-eating tiger at the Bore Bridge:

"When we came within a mile of the Bore bridge that night, the horses stopped suddenly; they were wild with fear, and refused to move. The night was as dark as the inside of a gourd, and beyond the circle of light made by our lanterns we could discern in the middle of the road two balls of fire close to the ground. "Bâg! (tiger)", said Nandha, as he climbed over into the back seat; "we be dead men, Ram Deen".

Ram Deen goes on to recount how his passenger, Nandha becomes hypnotised by the tiger and climbs out of the cart and walks fearlessly towards him:

"I beheld Nandha proceed towards the tiger, which now crouched in the road, waiting for him, its tail waving from side to side. When he was within five paces of the beast, he salaamed to the ground, and as he stooped the tiger sprang on him with another roar, and throwing him over its shoulder it bounded with him into the jungle".

Ram Deen sends word of the man-eater to the post-master of Naini Tal, who replies that the government have sent a Sahib to 'slay the slayer of men'. Ram Deen waits in the local dák-bungalow for the Sahib to arrive, who amusingly turns out to be a 'man-child' whose 'chin was as smooth as the palm of my hand'. The young Sahib, however, goes on to prove his skill and bravery. Ram Deen drives him over the Bore Bridge while blowing the same bugle he had used to first drive the tiger away. The tiger responds with a terrifying roar and leaps on to the road. The Sahib jumps out of the cart and gives a whistle in the manner you would to a dog. As the tiger crouches and makes itself ready to pounce, the Sahib fires and hits the tiger between the eyes, killing it outright.

With the familiar Kumaon setting and people, and even the presence of a man-eating tiger, some of the enjoyable stories in Charles Doyle's *The Taming of the Jungle* would not feel out of place in Corbett's own books; *Jungle Lore* or *My India*.

Sources

The Taming of the Jungle by C.W. Doyle (Butler & Tanner, 1899)

Jim Corbett of Kumaon by D.C. Kala (Ravi Dayal, 1999)

§ It is thought that Charles Doyle, having already settled in America by 1899, the year of publication of his book, had, perhaps by habit, used the term 'alligators' – denoting the American species (*Alligator mississippiensis*) which are only found naturally in America – where he should have referred to 'crocodiles' i.e. the Indian species or 'mugger' (*Crocodylus palustris*).

Editor's note

It may interest the reader to know that *The Taming of the Jungle* is also quoted in the book *Framing Fearful Symmetries* (FFS), referred to in *Acknowledgements* in this book. FFS identifies many of nature's lessons, which remain unknown to most, and often only for want of interest and attention. *The Taming of the Jungle* is quoted to illustrate some of those lessons; the jungle lore that Corbett later learned and which, in his book *Jungle Lore*, provides the answers to the questions of an Indian girl included in the quote below from *The Taming of the Jungle*. The Indian girl also refers to happiness in nature and, through the jungle lore he learned, Corbett was also able to understand, and feel, that happiness.

'Corbett refers to the time he spent in jungles being uncontaminated happiness and traced his happiness to wildlife being happy in its natural habitat. He could not see sadness or regret in nature's creatures. Sitting in beautiful, natural surroundings, smelling the scent of flowers and listening to birdsong, the hardships of the human world could be forgotten and the law of the jungle appreciated which, he says, is older and incomparably better than laws made by men. Dangers keep every individual vigilant but without reducing the joy of life.' (FFS p. 115)

With regard to jungle lore and *The Taming of the Jungle*, FFS (pp. 111 – 112) tells us that:

'In addition to providing all we need for our bodies, mind and soul, nature offers us a model on which we can base our own activities and affairs. It can act as a tutor at many different levels. Firstly, and literally, at grass roots level: In a book by Dr. C.W. Doyle (Corbett's half-brother from his mother's first marriage) called *The Taming of the Jungle*, published in 1899, is the following scene of an Indian girl, who had been adopted by a British family and lived in England, but who is now back in India, in some emotional distress:

“Educated me, forsooth!’ she exclaimed with scorn, her nostrils twitching; ‘they robbed me of my five senses, and gave me instead – accomplishments. Can you tell the time of the day from the sun, sir? Can you say when the sambhur (a large deer) passed whose track is at your feet, and how many wolves were in the pack that followed him? Would your sense of smell lead you to a pool of fresh water in mid-jungle? Can you feel the proximity of a crouching leopard without seeing it? What sort of education is it that neglects the senses? Oh, the highest product of your civilisation – your poet laureate, Tennyson – felt the same thing stir in his pulses when he wrote Locksley Hall, and deprecated the “poring over miserable books” with blinded eyesight...No, I have no feeling of gratitude towards those you speak of; for the large freedom of the Terai they gave me a brick cage in London; they gave me endless crowds of miserable men and women for these, my green brothers, who are always happy,’ and she put out her hand and caressed a tree that grew beside her...

‘But don’t you miss your books, and the keeping in touch with the progress of civilisation?’ I asked.

‘Must I quote “books in running brooks”¹ to you? What book is there like this book of God’s?’ and she swept her arm round her.”

FFS (see ‘*Acknowledgements*’) also includes a chapter on Jim Corbett, as well as references to him throughout the whole book. It explores the broader and deeper lessons of nature which we have collectively ignored on global scales to produce the environmental crisis, much in keeping with Thakur Dutt’s concerns about the environment (see chapter *The Old Meets the New* in this book). It makes recommendations as to how we can all contribute to slowing and, hopefully, halting and then reversing the environmental crisis while exploring philosophical, psychological and personal lessons contained in, as Corbett called it, the book of nature.

Interest in, and the study and love of nature was, it would appear, a family characteristic, from Charles Doyle to Tom Corbett and Stephen Dease, Maurice Corbett and, of course, Jim and Maggie. It would be interesting to know if, perhaps during his annual leave from Mokameh Ghat, Jim had seen his half-brother’s book on a shelf at Gurney House, heard about Charles from his mother or half sister and then read the book and if so, whether he had derived any form of inspiration from it, particularly in finding a Ram Deen of his own in Kunwar Singh, his poacher friend?

From all we have discovered about him, it appears that Jim in particular could be seen as the right ‘seed’ planted in the right ‘soil’ at the right time and right place. The resulting growth was strong and healthy and he, in turn, pollinated the interest of many thousands of others as his store of life was carried around the world by trees turned into paper – perhaps a variation on the theme of ‘tongues in trees’?

1 In Shakespeare’s play *As You Like It*, the exiled duke lives in the Forest of Arden, far from the shallow life at court and discovers: ‘... our life exempt from public haunt,/Finds tongues in trees, /books in the running brooks, /Sermons in stones and good in everything.’

An African Sketchbook: Drawings & Watercolours of Kenya by Ray Nestor – A Review

BY MICHAEL BARTON, UK

Published by Fountain Press in 1988, in celebration of Ray's 100th birthday. *An African Sketchbook* contains a selection of Ray Nestor's artwork accompanied by some memoirs.

The nephew of Jim Corbett, Ray traveled to Kenya in 1912. After being severely wounded in the First World War, Ray eventually retired from government service in the 1930s and became a farmer in the Nandi Hills of western Kenya.

The book contains many fine reproductions of Ray's work in watercolours as well as his pencil and ink sketches. Included are some excellent portraits of well-known figures in Kenya at the time including Denys Finch-Hatton, Lord Delamere and Berkeley Cole.

The accompanying text written by Ray gives a context to his artwork, and an impression of his life in the ever-changing Kenya. Depicting the early days in Nairobi – Ray likens it to an old wild west or gold-rush town, he also writes of big game safaris, the increase of white settlers in Kenya, his own time fighting in WWI at the Battle of the Somme, growing coffee at his Kipkarren farm, a battle with locals and authorities over unauthorized grass fires, the financial crash of the 1920s, important figures he knew in Nairobi, life in Nyali on the coast, living on the farm with Nandi tribes, and of the eventual sale of the farm and departure from Kenya in 1949¹.

He writes with scorn regarding the old attitudes towards game hunting and the depletion of numbers; *“The stupid Victorian idea that wild animals, as opposed to the tame variety, were dangerous, and that it was brave, even a noble thing to kill them, has resulted in the loss to mankind of one of its greatest heritages, the beautiful and interesting wildlife now savagely depleted and almost destroyed within the last hundred years”*.²

Ray was one of a few Kenyan residents who formed the first committee for the Kenyan Arts and Crafts Society, which was to hold exhibitions in the Memorial Hall. Lady Alice Scott and Lord Baden-Powell were amongst those who exhibited their own work in the hall. In the first exhibition in the 1920s, Ray had one of his own art pieces accepted, a portrait of Berkeley Cole. The success of this portrait led to many notable figures of Nairobi's Muthaiga Club requesting Ray to produce their own portraits, including Lord Delamere and Denys Finch-Hatton, the latter inviting Ray to come and draw a portrait of Karen Blixen (of *Out of Africa* fame – see elsewhere in this book), an invitation Ray regretted never having accepted.

Ray includes a short section in the book on his uncle, Jim Corbett, who he describes as something of a hero to him. Ray goes on to include a short biographical note on his uncle, and a description of Jim's night at Tree Tops, ending with a quote from Jim's obituary notices in the English papers, "(Jim) had an almost uncanny knowledge of the jungle and power to interpret and imitate the noises of beast and bird... All lovers of wild life are the poorer for Jim Corbett's passing".

Ray provided some artwork for some of Jim's publications, including a portrait of Jim for the inside dust jacket of the 1950 edition of *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* and some watercolours for the first edition of *Jungle Lore* (OUP, 1953). Sadly there are no portraits of Jim Corbett included in this collection of Ray's work.

Ray's memoirs and artwork paint a picture of a Kenyan life that has long since passed, and gives a glimpse of what drew so many figures, including many of Corbett's family members and Corbett himself – to move to Kenya. Another of Jim Corbett's nephews (his great-nephew), the late Brian Stutchbury³ (1923-2019) resided in Kenya, and recently released his own memoirs: '*Flying, Farming and Fencing: A Memoir of a Kenya Life*' (Old Africa Books, 2016).

Sources

An African Sketchbook by Ray Nestor (1988, Fountain Press)

Flying, Farming and Fencing – A Memoir of a Kenyan Life by Brian Stutchbury (2016, Old Africa Books)

NOTES:

[1] According to Maggie Corbett (see elsewhere in this book), Ray's and his wife Dorothy's farm near Victoria Nyanza was sold in 1949 but they left Kenya in 1953 at the start of the Mau Mau uprising.

[2] In the editor's note in the review of the book *Taming of the Jungle* by Charles Doyle (see elsewhere in this book) is a comment that, love of and compassion for wildlife was in the family blood. Ray's statement shows that these qualities were passed to at least one more generation of the family.

[3] Late Brian Stutchbury is the son of Ray's sister, Vivian. Unfortunately, Brian passed away just after this article was written and while this book's publication was in progress. With our kindest thoughts to his daughter Joannah.

A Trip to Jim Corbett's Kenya

BY MICHAEL BARTON, UK

Over twenty years ago my father gave me a battered paperback copy of *Jim Corbett's India* (OUP, 1986). A fine selection of Corbett's writings edited into chronological order by R. E. Hawkins. This was the book that first sparked my interest in Jim Corbett and since then I always had the ambition to visit some of the locations so key to Corbett's life.

Just over 5 years ago, my partner and I were lucky enough to spend our honeymoon in India, where, of course, our first stop was Nainital and Jim Corbett's ex-residence: Gurney House, followed by a stop in Kaladhungi and a few magical days in Corbett Tiger Reserve.

Having been based on the west coast of Ireland since then, I felt it was time for another adventure, and for me there was only one choice of destination... Kenya! Not just to visit the continent of Africa for the first time but also the famous sites where Jim Corbett spent his final years. It was fitting that I chose to bring along not just the old copy of *Jim Corbett's India* but also my father and mother to share in what would be a memorable trip.

We touched down in Nairobi on the 12th February 2019, and the next morning we were collected by John, our driver and guide for the duration of our trip. We spent a few days on safari in the incredible Masai Mara Game Reserve, followed by a stop at the beautiful Lake Nakuru. All apprehensions any of us had about the trip vanished within the first day as we tried to absorb the bombardment of incredible culture, fauna and flora that Africa has to offer.

On the long, unsealed road out of the Masai Mara, our van struck a rock and broke a spring. We spent 4 hours on the side of the dusty road awaiting a replacement. Even this didn't break our enjoyment as it gave us a chance to stop and take in the stillness of the vast dusty plains, and watch the young Masai boys bringing their cattle to the nearby watering hole. Our replacement spring finally arrived with three locals who were all sat on one motorbike and all wearing flip-flops. After another hour of improvised mechanics, we were back on the road again!

Nyeri

On the 17th February we arrived in Nyeri and the Aberdares, where we were to spend our final few days in Kenya. Our first stop was the ACK (Anglican Church of Kenya) St. Peter's Church in Nyeri. Two armed guards opened the gated entrance and our guide, John, stopped the van and let the four of us out. It was a Sunday and the church was busy with Mass services. We paused for a moment wondering where we

would find the cemetery with Jim Corbett's grave. It soon transpired that John had thought we had come to St. Peter's to go to Sunday mass! Once we explained our reason for the visit we were advised that the grave was no longer in the church grounds but part of the Baden-Powell Municipal Park just the other side of the boundary wall.

We went back out to the main street, and pulled up at the gated entrance next door. Here another armed guard came and took down the particulars of all of us, before opening the gates. The small park was dominated by a large building labeled the 'Baden-Powell Scouts Information Centre – Nyeri' but this was closed due to Sunday hours. There was also a long pathway, lined with flags and stones painted with Scout mottos that led to the small cemetery at the rear.

Once inside the small cemetery, we spotted Corbett's grave in the top left corner, recognizable from the various photos published online and in his biographies. The grave of Jim Corbett and his sister Maggie were located in a quiet corner of the cemetery, where the plants had started to grow and claim back the soil. Previously, the grave had been long forgotten and fallen into disrepair, until Jerry Jaleel (author of the book *Under the Shadow of Man-Eaters*) assisted in its restoration back in 1994. Also located there was the grave of R.J. Prickett (1917 – 2003), a hunter and guide at the Tree Tops Hotel. Prickett wrote his own book on Tree Tops called, *Tree Tops: Story of a World Famous Hotel* (David & Charles, 1987). He had guided Queen Elizabeth to Tree Tops during her 1983 visit. This was over 30 years after Corbett had guided her there himself, and the two hunters/guides now rest in the same cemetery a short distance from each other.

Just by the path and a short distance from both Corbett's and Prickett's graves, is that of Flora Margaret Corbett (1879 – 1951), wife of General Tom Corbett (Jim's nephew through his eldest brother, Thomas Bartholomew). General Tom Corbett is listed in Eric Sherbrooke Walker's book, *Tree Tops Hotel* (Hale, 1962. p. 57) as one of the hunters that had worked at the Tree Tops Hotel.

We were soon joined in the cemetery by a young Kenyan boy who said his name was Tom. He explained the history of Baden-Powell in Nyeri, how the founder of the Cub Scouts had wished to retire to the warmer climate, and moved to the purpose built 'Paxtu' cottage in the nearby Outspan Hotel. Baden-Powell had died in 1941 and had asked to be buried here, facing Mount Kenya (the view of which was blocked at the time of our visit by a bank of clouds and an office block). Baden-Powell's grave was in a small fenced garden, kept free of weeds and the headstone pristine. The circular symbol at the base of the headstone is the Scout symbol for 'Gone Home'. Tom went on to explain that Cub Scouts from all over the world come to visit Baden-Powell's grave and cottage at the Outspan every year, and their next visit was due in just a few days time.

We spotted our guide, John, looking at the grave of R.J. Prickett. He pointed out to us that a guide at Tree Tops was buried here. We took John up to Jim Corbett's

grave, and explained that Jim had also acted as a guide to Queen Elizabeth but thirty years earlier. We told John how Jim Corbett was a famous hunter-conservationist in India, responsible for the killing of man-eating tigers and leopards, and went on to help found the first national park of India. Just like Tom, John said he had not heard of Corbett, but admitted he did not read much. I showed him my book, *Jim Corbett's India*, and recommended him to find a copy of any of Corbett's work. It's a shame that there was no display board detailing any information about Corbett or any other graves present in the park. With the exception of Baden-Powell's grave which had been kept immaculate, all the other graves were overgrown and somewhat forgotten. With a heavy heart, we left the cemetery and headed just up the road to our next stop in Nyeri, The Outspan Hotel.

The Outspan Hotel

A guard opened the front gates and we drove the long road through the large gardens, up to the Reception entrance. In the trees over our heads we could hear the loud squawk of the impressive silvery-cheeked hornbill (*Bycanistes brevis*).

The Outspan and Tree Tops Hotels were built by Eric Sherbrooke Walker. Born in England in 1887, he saved his wages from working on cargo ships and emigrated to Kenya with his wife in the 1920s. Having been disappointed with the standard of local Hotels, they decided to build their own. Selecting the then small town of Nyeri and a large site offering trout fishing and views of Mount Kenya, they built the Outspan Hotel in 1927.

It's a very large building, much expanded over the years with extensions. We found the facilities and décor a little worn and old fashioned, every other light bulb seemed to need changing. However, we found that was part of the charm of the hotel and a fitting atmosphere for a historic property from a by-gone era.

There was a large variety of facilities on offer. Our porter showed us past the snooker room, swimming pool, squash court, tennis court, and table tennis room. Signs pointed to the 'Sherbrooke Walker Conference Room' & 'River Walk' but later another sign advised that you must have a security guard to accompany you on this walk (at the time there were none available).

We ate lunch on the outdoor tables, which offered fine views of the gardens and towering Mount Kenya on the horizon. For such a large hotel there seemed, sadly, to be very few guests staying. There was, however, a few small groups of businessmen coming from and going to meeting rooms (one group with a heavily armed guard), so it appears that the hotel is a prime site for conferences.

After lunch we paid the porter USD 10 for the right of entry to the Baden-Powell Museum (Paxtu Cottage). This was located just a short distance from the restaurant down the garden. Lord and Lady Baden-Powell were old friends of Eric Sherbrooke Walker, and ten years before Paxtu was built, had mentioned how they enjoyed the

peace and quiet of Nyeri and the Outspan. Baden-Powell was noted to have said “The nearer to Nyeri, the nearer to bliss. I am coming to spend the rest of my life at the Outspan”.

Eric proceeded with the building of Baden-Powell's cottage at the Outspan for a sum he calculated at £600. Baden-Powell's cottage back in Bentley (England) had been named ‘Pax’ because they had bought the property on Armistice Day after WWI. So they decided to name this cottage ‘Pax-too’ or ‘Paxtu’.

Baden-Powell and his wife lived there from 1939 until his death in 1941. Paxtu Cottage has since been changed into a Baden-Powell Museum, with the USD 10 entrance fee. There were two doors to access Paxtu from the front steps. The door on the right led into what was the sitting room and small office (now Baden-Powell Museum) also with a rear door exit.

The front door on the left led into the bedroom and bathroom. These rooms have been blocked off so there is no connecting access between the bedroom and museum. The sitting room of the cottage now largely consists of one room with a fireplace, all furnishings having been removed. The walls are adorned with Cub Scout scarves from around the world and a display case of Cub Scout paraphernalia. There is a cluster of ornaments and some documents/photos of Baden-Powell displayed on the fireplace wall, including photos of one of Baden-Powell's visits to the original Tree Tops Hotel.

After leaving behind their home in India, Jim Corbett and his sister Maggie arrived in Kenya in 1947. The original plan was to build a replica of their Gurney House cottage at his nephew Tom's farm in Nyeri. They finally found that Nyeri and the Paxtu Cottage at the Outspan were more suitable, and in 1948 moved in. Sadly, the only reference I saw at Paxtu relating to Jim Corbett was a copy of Jerry Jaleel's portrait of Jim amongst the Baden-Powell paraphernalia. The porter then opened the second door to Paxtu, which was the bedroom and bathroom. You may now pay a small additional fee and request to stay in this room. It is not a museum piece and no original furniture/items remain from Baden-Powell or Corbett's time. In their place, there is standard hotel room furniture in keeping with the other rooms at the Outspan.

Jim and Maggie revived Baden-Powell's hobby of hand-feeding the large variety of birds in the Outspan & Paxtu gardens. There are still to this day a lovely variety of birds in the gardens. During my stay I spotted, white speckled mouse bird, pied crow, regal sunbirds, superb starlings, slender billed weavers, African green ibis, white eyed slaty flycatchers and many more. The white eyes (*Melaenornis fischeri*) were apparently the most responsive of all the birds Corbett fed, responding to a whistle and eating from the hand. A number of photos exist of Corbett at Paxtu hand-feeding the white eyes.

After the porter left, we spent some time just sitting on the porch of Paxtu Cottage. It was a peaceful place to rest with the sun on your face, surrounded by a variety of garden birds, overlooked by Mount Kenya. I had also brought along my copy of *Jim*

Corbett's India, and sat in one of the old wooden chairs on the porch, and read the chapter *Robin*.

The next morning after breakfast, we set off for the Aberdares National Park and our stay at Tree Tops Hotel.

Tree Tops

Eric Sherbrooke Walker of the Outspan Hotel was inspired to build a hotel and viewing platform in a tree by reading *Peter Pan* and *The Swiss Family Robinson*. Eric selected a site near a waterhole, and set about building their unique hotel in a 300-year-old fig tree.

Finally opened in 1932, the hotel started with a couple of simple guest rooms, and a small room for a white hunter. Over the years, due to increasing demand, the original hotel was expanded. Tree Tops Hotel reached international fame in 1952 when Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip stayed the night during their world tour. Famously, it was during her stay at Tree Tops that her father, King George VI, died, and essentially her accession to the throne took place.

Princess Elizabeth invited Jim Corbett to accompany them to Tree Tops. Due to his close proximity to the hotel he was a frequent visitor himself. He subsequently wrote a short 30-page book of their visit (*Tree Tops*, OUP 1955) published shortly after his death.

Nyeri and the Aberdares was a stronghold for the Mau Mau rebellion at the time of Kenyan unrest in the 1950's. Eric Sherbrooke Walker had suspected that Tree Tops would be targeted and made the decision in 1954 to abandon Tree Tops and remove the bulk of its furnishings. Shortly afterwards they saw a plume of smoke rising from the Aberdares and the police station 'phoned to advise' that Tree Tops had been burned to the ground by the Mau Mau.

The Mau Mau Emergency was officially classed as over in 1957 and that same year Eric Sherbrooke Walker rebuilt Tree Tops. Selecting a site just across the waterhole from the original Hotel, the new Tree Tops was much larger, and was to expand in size greatly over the years to come.

Eric Sherbrooke Walker retired to live in Majorca, Spain and died in 1976. Aberdare Safari Hotels later went on to acquire both the Outspan Hotel and Tree Tops Hotel, which they successfully run to this day.

After entering a small gate into the Tree Tops enclosure we arrived, after a short drive, at the back entrance. The hotel towered above us through some thick green trees. Its exterior walls covered with bark, and it's foundations supported by various trunks and pillars. After checking in, we enjoyed exploring the four floors of Tree Tops. The viewing platform is on the third floor, the bar and restaurant on the second floor, Reception on the first floor, and on the ground floor a bunker-like viewing room to view animals from their level.

Each corridor and bedroom was fitted with large, viewing windows to ensure you didn't miss any wildlife at the water hole or salt lick. Every bedroom was also fitted with a buzzer, so that you could be notified of the arrival of animals at the watering hole: 1 buzz for Hyena, 2 buzzes for Leopard, 3 buzzes for Rhino, 4 buzzes for Elephant.

On the third floor I was pleased to see a large wall display with photos of Corbett, a reproduction of one of Raymond Sheppard's sketches, and a short biography of Corbett.

As the sun began to set, we all settled down in the comfortable chairs on the third-floor viewing platform, awaiting the arrival of the elephants (the staff advised that a sighting that evening was highly likely). I was struggling with laryngitis that had come on a few days previously and as I sat reading *Jim Corbett's India* I had just got to the story of *The Mohan Man-eater*, in which, ironically, Corbett was suffering from laryngitis and disguised his cough while sitting up for the tiger by making an alarm call of a langur (*Semnopithecus entellus*). There was hardly any call for me to do the same but it did make me appreciate the more comfortable circumstances in which I was dealing with my own sore throat!

I also re-read Corbett's *Tree Tops* (OUP, 1955), and it was pleasing to sit spotting many of the animal species he mentions, including water buck, warthog, baboon and later, elephant.

Corbett wrote of the Princess's visit:

'A register is kept of visitors to Tree Tops, and of the animals seen. The day after the Princess visited Tree Tops the register was brought to me to write up. After recording the names of the Royal Party, the animals seen, and the incidents connected with them, I wrote: "For the first time in the history of the world a young girl climbed into a tree one day a Princess, and after having what she described as her most thrilling experience she climbed down from the tree the next day a Queen—God bless her."

I noticed that the hotel had a large record room with stacks of previous visitors' books, and asked if they had a copy of the original 1952 logbook. Although I had seen reproductions of the visitor's book from the 1952 visit, I had never seen a photo of Corbett's handwritten entry with those now-famous words. The helpful staff member I spoke to explained that, sadly, the logbooks from 1952 and 1953 were stolen a few years ago...

After dark, the hotel floodlights came on to assist with wildlife viewing. Shortly after the moon rose, the elephants arrived! It was the event that all guests were waiting for. We counted them as they gradually came around the corner into sight. There were six in total, including a mother and a calf. They focused their attention on the salt lick, and we watched as the mother elephant knelt down to dig at the ground with her tusks, and then scoop the salted earth with her trunk. The calf used this opportunity to try and suckle, but the mother gave a frustrated shriek and put the calf back in its place.

A lone old bull buffalo then came walking into view. His head and back caked with mud from wallowing around the corner; he walked with a distinctive limp. One of the younger elephants saw him, and with ears flapping wide, and trunk extended gave a warning trumpet and took a few steps towards him. The old buffalo took no notice and continued to limp past the young elephant bull until he got to the watering hole. The elephants stayed for over an hour, until they had had their fill and gradually moved off out of sight.

In the morning, we enquired about visiting the site of the original Tree Tops Hotel, and the staff was happy to arrange this. A 40-minute walk around the inside of the perimeter fence could be arranged with an armed guard for USD 10 per person. Following the inside of the electric fence that bordered the area around the hotel, we saw the property from a few different angles. On the final corner returning to the hotel was where the original site of the fig tree and first Tree Tops was marked by a plaque. You can actually see the site and plaque in the distance from the third-floor viewing platform of the new hotel.

This was our final morning in the Aberdares, as well as Kenya. It was a fitting point to end our trip, standing by the site of the original Tree Tops, looking back from a distance to appreciate the full view of the new hotel.

Corbett completes his short book, *Tree Tops* by writing:

“All that now remains of the ficus tree and the hut honoured by Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh, and visited for a quarter of a century by thousands of people from all parts of the world, is a dead and blackened stump standing in a bed of ashes. From those ashes a new Tree Tops will one day arise, and from another balcony a new generation will view other birds and animals”.

That evening we made the 3-hour journey back to Nairobi, sitting through the long traffic jams of the city with the blazing hot sun above us. As we boarded the plane just after midnight for our 8-hour flight home, we had time to reflect on what was a short, but incredible trip to Kenya.

It’s a country that has obviously gone through many changes since the time of the larger than life characters who lived there, such as J.A. Hunter, Denys Finch-Hatton and Jim Corbett. The Western influences are now all too familiar, and the endless vistas of wildlife of a hundred years ago have been reduced to pockets in National Parks. However, in the short time we spent there to scratch the surface of Kenya, we saw enough of its magic to give us some idea of what had drawn Jim Corbett there in his final days.

Once we landed back in England, I think that all four of us felt that we’d experienced something special. We could already feel the magnet of Kenya pulling at us, and were wondering, “When can we go back?”

Sources

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Editor's Note:

It was found after some investigation that the 'large wall display with photos of Corbett' that the author saw on the third level of Tree Tops Hotel, is the now-framed laminated poster, that was given to the Outspan Hotel's management in 1994 by David Blake, a fellow Corbett enthusiast, to whom we refer to some other places in this book (see also *Acknowledgements*).

The poster's text provides a brief biography of Corbett, with some quotes from his books, and is illustrated with a Raymond Sheppard sketch depicting the final scene of the Muktesar man-eater hunt and three photos, one of Corbett on Paxtu's veranda, one with a white-eye on his hand and finally, one of the headstones of his grave.

Previously, the only reference to Corbett having lived in Paxtu was on a wooden signboard in front of the cottage, stating that Corbett (and Baden-Powell) lived there, which, nowadays, is either inconspicuous or possibly non-existent (the author of *Kenya Trip* did not see it). Earlier, RJ Prickett, an avid Corbett fan, had set up what he called a 'Corbett Corner' in Tree Tops which is visible in the background of a photo appearing in his book (see reference above) of Queen Elizabeth II signing the guest-book in 1983.

Tree Tops no longer has a Corbett Corner and we can wonder if the Outspan/Tree Tops co-ownership and management decided that the poster, originally intended for display in Paxtu, would be a fitting replacement for the Corbett Corner in Tree Tops, especially since Corbett is closely associated with the historical event of the 6th February 1952 when Princess Elizabeth effectively became a Queen.

The Old Meets the New – Mini Jim Corbett

BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS

On the evening of the 4th April 2016 we were seated around our campfire in Syat, deep inside the *bhabar* jungle between Kaladhungi and Kota Bagh, making our plans for the next day while listening to the jungle folks, the peacock and the jungle babbler being our chief entertainers. Kamal had been out, for about an hour, to the busy parts of Kota Bagh to find a block of ice for us to chill our beers. When he returned, he announced that he not only had the ice but had also brought to meet us, a gentleman, a true living legend in Kumaon, known to everyone as Mini Jim Corbett. Like the Jim Corbett we all know, he is also a slayer of man-eating tigers and leopards alike. To his close relatives and acquaintances he is Thakur Dutt Joshi, 80 years old, a retired forest officer of the Uttarakhand Forest Division, formerly Uttar Pradesh.

Corbett's faithful old friend, his .275 Rigby rifle was with us at the camp (see '*Rudraprayag – Corbett and his rifle come together*' chapter in this book) and Kamal found it fitting to unite Corbett, through his rifle, to a worthy successor of him, in Thakur Dutt Joshi. The old (Corbett's rifle) meeting the new, Thakur Dutt Joshi and his single barrelled 12-bore shotgun, with which he shot most of his man-eaters.

Born in Kota Bagh on 9th March 1936, Thakur Dutt, a proud son of his father, Shri Durga Dutt Joshi, joined the Forest Department in 1958. Posted in the Dehra Dun division, he was later transferred to Corbett National Park (CNP) in 1973 as Deputy Forest Ranger for the newly launched 'Project Tiger'. At the time, CNP claimed some sixty tigers, which, according to him, was only an estimate, as he thinks there may have been fewer. Twenty five years later when he was retiring, he says, the number had doubled. In all, Thakur Dutt Joshi spent nearly forty years working for the Forest Department.

His first man-eater, a tigress, was shot in 1979 in the Kosi river valley, some twenty miles west of Naini Tal. She was a regular cattle lifter, turning to a diet of humans mainly during the time she was nursing cubs. Whereas Corbett found 'wounds and old age' to be the chief reasons for tigers and leopards resorting to man-eating, Thakur Dutt asserts that nowadays habitat loss is the chief reason. Disability of any kind, he says, is secondary. Tigers and leopards, driven out from their ever-diminishing natural habitat by their stronger counterparts, are denied natural prey. In addition, he pointed out, the fall in the ungulate/predator ratio caused by poaching and the invasive *lantana* (*L. camara*, a weed with large, woody stems that was introduced to India early in the 20th century. It displaces indigenous plants but no herbivore eats it) which, by the 1980's became a serious problem, reducing the number of prey animals still further. Moreover, in Thakur Dutt's early days, domestic cattle grazed quite freely without restriction just outside reserved forest areas. According to him, all these factors com-

bined can produce man-eaters since sometimes, for example, a tigress driven out of prime territory cannot find natural prey and could be attracted to cattle, especially if she were nursing cubs. In consequence, she might make accidental contact with humans, which could lead to a person being killed and later, possibly, eaten.

During his time and still now, the tiger, even if a man-eater, was protected under law. Only a District Magistrate, under the summons of the Chief Warden of the Forest Department, could give orders to shoot a tiger, and this only once it had been confirmed as a man-eater (having made more than three kills) and attempts to cage it after its third victim, had failed. After his retirement he says that the procedure of labelling a tiger or leopard as a man-eater has been much loosened and the hiring of people outside the Forest Department, who use technological tools for tracking them, have become quite legitimate. Camera-traps were not used in his early days. Poison was strictly forbidden, although he acknowledges that sometimes villagers used (and still use) strong herbicides and pesticides to poison a cattle-kill which, in turn, poisons the tiger when it returns to feed on the carcass. Fortunately, Thakur Dutt, who left this world a few months after our meeting, has been spared the indignity of witnessing the nursing tigress 'Avni's' death in Maharashtra in 2018, where a professional sharpshooter had been employed, using drones, laser-technology and infra-red cameras to track her down and kill her.

In all, Thakur Dutt says he has accounted for forty man-eaters, two thirds of them were leopards and the rest tigers. When questioned on why there were more leopards, he says that leopards, although only slightly more numerous than tigers in the wild, are more likely to live close to a village as they are more of an opportunistic predator than the tiger and, being much smaller than a tiger, can conceal themselves more easily than a tiger. Due to this he thinks that leopards, initially attracted to scavenge around a habitation will eventually find a stray dog, cat, or farm animal and will make its quarters there or nearby. Once the leopard's presence is known, the people will keep their animals close to their homes to protect them. One day, driven by hunger, the leopard might fall on someone who, for sanitary reasons, is relieving him or herself a little way away from the houses at night. In his career he has heard of such attacks during the night and has found children and lightly-built women to be among the most frequent victims of man-eating leopards. Such leopards, he says, are more easily caged than shot.

In his career, he has also successfully caged forty-four suspected man-eaters and /or cattle lifters, most of them being leopards. About half of them have successfully been relocated to jungles either near the Dehra Dun region (actually Rajaji TR) and beyond Tanakpur (Pihlibit TR) without them causing further problems. The rest have either relapsed and had to be shot, or have been placed in a zoo or wildlife refuge. Even to cage the animals, when the victim toll reached three, permission was needed. Thakur Dutt shot his last man-eater in 1998, after his retirement. This was a tiger near

Champawat where, incidentally, Corbett began his man-eater shooting career some ninety years earlier. Unlike Corbett and Kenneth Anderson however, Thakur Dutt has, during his career, encountered some female man-eating leopards.

Nowadays, Thakur Dutt hears casually of man-eaters (in the Kumaon region and its vicinity) and the last he heard of was in 2015, when a tigress suspected of being a man-eater, began operating in a vast region between Moradabad, Kathgodam and Ranibagh. This tigress, a typical 'sugarcane tiger' (See Manfred Walt's explanation of 'sugarcane tigers' in *Through Wounds and Old Age* in our 2016 edition of *Behind Jim Corbett's Stories*), was driven out of her haunts and, after being wounded by rangers, was beaten to death by an angry mob of villagers, shortly before our arrival in India for our 2018 trip. Those, like myself, not living 'under the shadow' of man-eating tigers'; who do not know the fear and heartbreak of doing so, will find it hard to understand such an act of vengeance.

Like Corbett, Thakur Dutt has written a book describing some of his exploits with his man-eaters. In this book twenty of his hunts are documented, detailing the date the animal was shot, its sex and the region where it was shot. Of those twenty animals, fifteen were leopards and five were tigers. Among the leopards, six were females and among the five tigers, two were males. Thakur Dutt says that every effort was made to investigate if the man-eating females were nursing cubs. If found and if small enough to be retrieved without employing elaborate means, the cubs were given to zoos willing to accept them. According to him, cubs can fend for themselves from eighteen months but before that they die when left on their own. On one particular occasion, after bringing to account a man-eating tigress which Thakur Dutt knew was nursing cubs, he looked for them but failed to find them. Sadly, a week later a dead litter of five cubs was found and retrieved. He writes more about these in his little book.

Unfortunately for his plans, shrewd publishing houses only offered him a paltry 2.5% royalty on sales and a contract to be signed, of which he understood only a bare minimum. Finally, a clause requiring him to indemnify the publishing house put him off it. Businessmen were not the only obstacles though. The DFO of Dehra Dun had in the meanwhile learned about his project and wasn't keen to let one of his ex-forest rangers write about killing the tigers they were supposed to protect. Environmental activists weighed in too and lobbied publishing enterprises not to undertake the project. I admit that I partially agree with the activists insofar as killing these animals is an extreme solution and less than ideal, especially when caging and later release is possible. Even though Thakur Dutt was retired, and his job in the Forest Department, from which he earned his living, permitted him to kill those animals lawfully, as ordered by a District Magistrate, his work does not sit well with the current consensus, and killing any wildlife in India is strictly forbidden by law (Indian actor Salman Khan surely knows this since his arrest in April 2018 in connection with the shooting of a black-buck in the State of Rajasthan some years earlier). Even for a man-eater, killing

is, or should be, the very last resort, although I wonder if now, by 2018, it has become the first resort, as in tigress Avni's case.

However, these attitudes came to full fruition after Thakur Dutt had worked through the majority of his career. In 2005, using his little savings, he committed to self-publishing his little book, typeset in Hindi, for a minimum order of 1000 copies with a printer in Dehra Dun. This also reminds us of Corbett (see the chapter *Maggie's Notes* under the heading *Jim's Books* elsewhere in this book). The little book, a pocket-sized paperback of about hundred and fifty pages, includes some plates of his man-eaters. In 2016 when we met him, he had not yet recovered his initial investment, for which he cared very little though. Bootleg copy 'vultures', unsurprisingly, have not spared him. However, he is immensely proud of his little book and eagerly showed us a copy. Unfortunately, although he wished to give us a copy he did not have any spare copies left. We told him we didn't want to buy a bootleg copy in Naini Tal and that we were just content to meet him and know his story.

To say the least, it is amazing that Thakur Dutt shot no less than forty man-eaters, most of them with his single-barreled weapon firing a powerful LG (Low Gauge) cartridge (containing only about nine balls of shot or a single heavy projectile, over a large charge of gunpowder, whereas, say, a No. 6 shot cartridge, adequate for birds and rabbits, contains hundreds of tiny pellets over a small charge of gunpowder) at distances we estimate of no more than thirty yards in order to be most effective and thereby ensure, hopefully, there was no need to reload for a second shot. He conceded that he rarely had put himself in reach of the animal he shot for he was always shooting either from a machan in a tree or, if on the ground, concealed in a cage, camouflaged with branches, near the last kill the man-eater had made, or a live bait. He only once shot a man-eating leopard on foot, and this was quite by accident. The story of this encounter is best told in his own words – freely translated by us:

"After sitting some eight hours overnight and the man-eater not returning to its kill, I decided to leave the machan and return to my quarters at early dawn, when it was usually quite safe to assume that a leopard would not go to its kill. After walking a short distance, there was sufficient light for me to see a faint and fleeting shadow, some fifty yards ahead, leaving a clearing and disappearing behind a bush to my right front. I was confident that the 'shadow' had not detected me as I was in thick cover all around and it appeared nonchalant and very relaxed while moving. From its movement, I concluded the 'shadow' was most certainly a leopard. I was very surprised at this late appearance of a leopard. I was only some twenty-five yards from the kill. If the leopard was the man-eater I had to either move silently back to my tree and climb hurriedly into it and reach the safety of the iron cage machan or, with some risks, cover the bush with the muzzle of my gun and hope that if the leopard charged, I could get a good aim and kill it before it reached me. However, I didn't have to do either of these things as, during the long minute I had been undecided, I had also been look-

ing at the kill from time to time, and as I did so again, much to my relief, I saw the leopard nosing it carefully. This can be the time a man-eater becomes suspicious, for we, on most occasions, replaced human bodies by cheap (stale) meat bought from the market, partly covered with the human victim's clothes, if the man-eater had left any on the kill. This was a most unpleasant job but had to be done to soothe the grieving family who would then be able to conduct the funeral, instead of waiting for as long as two or three days to get the corpse or part of it back, in conditions which I would best avoid describing. As I was now sure the leopard was the man-eater returning to its kill, I aimed carefully at its body just behind the elbow of his right foreleg, and fired a single shot. The leopard leaped sideways, as if it were avoiding the shot but I suspected I had hit him hard, for I had the impression of having heard both the roar of the barrel and the thud of the projectile striking his body. I opened the breech, pulled out the used cartridge and placed a fresh one in the chamber. As I closed the breech the leopard was still struggling as if caught in a poacher's snare, as I once previously witnessed, with his right fore leg appearing to be suspended and the body vigorously shaking under it. I aimed again at it but fortunately didn't have to shoot, as the leg went down and the body ceased to shake. I say fortunately because we forest rangers have to account for every cartridge used, be it on a man-eater or a missed shot if one was careless enough to do that. In addition to the two-page report I would have written for the shot that killed the man-eater, I would have had to write another three as to why I had fired a second shot at the same animal. However, this was my job and while some find making patrols painful or tedious, some find it painful or tedious to sit in an office with a pen, writing reports. I loved every day of my work, even when I had to destroy man-eaters."

Thakur Dutt says that sometimes he feels sorry for having shot and killed such beautiful animals but then thinks that it had to be done in order to save further lives and reduce pressure from the people, politicians and media alike on the Forest Department and its rangers. He says he never shot anything else, except once to put a chital deer that had been wounded by poachers, out of its misery. He also said that the type of cartridge he used to shoot the man-eaters are not sold anywhere in the district. They are only issued by the Forest Department to its rangers, with very strict orders to shoot only as a last resort, even if he encountered an armed poacher. Fortunately, in his career, he had never experienced the latter. Newly recruited forest rangers are trained with their weapon, which they keep from the very first day to the last, when they retire. Hence, Thakur Dutt has retained possession of his, the single barrelled 12-bore gun which he showed us proudly while posing next to Corbett's five-round magazine .275 Rigby-Mausser M98 action rifle. In his book he posed with a bolt-action magazine rifle.

Thakur Dutt relied simply on observation in his years of active service, sharpened by his ever-increasing knowledge of jungle lore. What he told us next shows his keenness as an environmentalist too:

“When I was young, the snow-fed tributaries of the Kosi and Ramganga coming from the Himalayan Glacier were very fierce and roaring but nowadays they are silent and calm. No doubt the evil-looking mist that can be seen in Delhi and Cawnpore has something to do with that. I heard that this mist has now reached Meerut and it might soon reach our foothills. I can no longer see the glaciers like they used to be long ago. I feel that the carbon-fuelled activities in the busy industrial towns are going to decrease the snow caps more and more and my small grandchildren will not see the same nature that I saw with my very eyes when I was their age.”

No doubt Thakur Dutt was right to think so. He didn't live to tell us more. When we returned to Kaladhungi in April 2018 this was the sad news Manfred and I received when Kamal announced that we would not be able to meet him again as he had passed away on the 22nd December 2016. I still remember the good advice Thakur Dutt gave to me and my daughters: To the latter he stressed that they must at all costs study to the highest level possible for them to be independent in later life; and to me (after expressing his disapproval of seeing me emptying mugs of beer, one after the other, I admit, after a strenuous day's trek) said calmly that one must live each day to the fullest but, however, to keep some thoughts and preparations ready for the next day.

Manfred wanted to have Thakur Dutt's book translated into English and even German and thereby make it accessible to the world outside India. This was Manfred's idea and he had been planning this for some time before we embarked on the April 2018 trip, not knowing that Thakur Dutt was no longer in this world. With news of his death, we now had to turn to his relatives. Therefore, at the end of the 2018 trip, we paid a visit to Thakur Dutt's family in Devi Rampur village in Kota Bagh. Manfred and I left our party after Chuka and made the journey to be greeted by Thakur Dutt's family. Dr Jordania and the other members of our group came to meet them a week later, after their trip to the Panar valley. Thakur Dutt's widow Shrimati Basanti Devi survives him together with his three sons and two daughters, who all live in the family compound there. His eldest son, Prakash Joshi told us he is already in the process of having the book translated and getting it published at large. Thakur Dutt's gun has been passed to his grandson, and transferred to his name, Kamal Joshi, who now has all the necessary permits relating to it. Once again, the old meets the new.

MYSTERY AND RESEARCH

A Mystery of Purnagiri Lights

BY JOSEPH JORDANIA, AUSTRALIA

One of the best-known unexplained events that Corbett described in his stories, is an observation of mysterious lights by Corbett and his men when they were on their way to hunt Talla Des man-eating tigress. So far there has never been an attempt for a scholarly explanation of the event, apart from the brief comment by the author of this chapter, made on “Jim Corbett International Research Group” FB group during 2018. In the text below I give a more detailed scholarly explanation of the event.

First of all, we should keep in mind, that by his character Corbett was a born scholar, and this feature of his character was particularly important when he was describing the events he could not explain. We should also keep in mind that during this hunting expedition Corbett was suffering from an abscess that was formed in his head after a hunting incident a few weeks ago. Corbett, according to his own words, was unable to hear in one of his ears, and to see with one of his eyes, and was experiencing a growing pain from the abscess.

The possible reason why Corbett decided to go on such a dangerous mission in his physical condition is discussed separately, in a separate chapter of this book.

Unlike another mysterious event from his life, the night of horrors at Champawat bungalow, which Corbett never described in detail, Corbett gives a very detailed account of what he saw and even what he thought. Even more, only days following seeing of the lights, Corbett published an article on the subject in the local newspaper, and this article got the local population interested (see in the Corbett’s text below).

To discuss this issue, let us, first of all, listen to Corbett himself, when and how he saw the mysterious lights. On April 5th, 1929, Corbett was on his way to Kala Agar, when they chose a place to spend a night on the Tanakpur-Chuka path, little past Lower Punagiri Temple. They were on the right side of the Sarda River, with Nepal on the other side of the river. He had several helpers from Nainital (Corbett gives the names of all of them, quite unusual for Corbett’s stories, possibly because he wrote the text only a few days after the event).

Here the event itself with Corbett’s description:

“Finding a suitable place on which to camp for die night [very dark night] was not easy, but after rejecting several places made dangerous by falling stones we eventually found a narrow shelf where the overhanging rock offered measure of safety. Here we decided to spend the night, and after I had eaten my dinner and while the men

were cooking their food with driftwood brought up from the river I undressed and lay down on my camp bed, the only article of camp equipment, excluding a washbasin and a forty-pound tent, that I had brought with me.

The day had been hot and we had covered some sixteen miles since detraining at Tanakpur. I was comfortably tired and was enjoying an after-dinner cigarette, when on the hill on the far side of the river I suddenly saw three lights appear. The forests in Nepal are burnt annually, the burning starting in April. Now, on seeing the lights I concluded that the wind blowing down the gorge had fanned to flame the smouldering embers in some dead wood. As I idly watched these fires two more appeared a little above them. Presently the left-hand one of these two new fires moved slowly down the hill and merged into the central one of the original three. I now realized that what I had assumed were fires, were not fires but lights, all of a uniform size of about two feet in diameter, burning steadily without a flicker or trace of smoke. When presently more lights appeared, some to the left and others farther up the hill, an explanation to account for them presented itself. A potentate [a very important man, autocrat] out on shikar had evidently lost some article he valued and had sent men armed with lanterns to search for it. Admittedly a strange explanation, but many strange things happen on the far side of that snow-fed river.

My men were as interested in the lights as I was, and as the river below us flowed without a ripple and the night was still, I asked them if they could hear voices or any other sounds - the distance across was about a hundred and fifty yards - but they said they could hear nothing. Speculation as to what was happening on the opposite hill was profitless, and as we were tired out after our strenuous day the camp was soon wrapped in slumber. Once during the night a ghooral sneezed in alarm on the cliff above us, and a little later a leopard called.

A long march and a difficult climb lay before us. I had warned my men that we would make an early start, and light was just showing in the east when I was given a cup of hot tea. Breaking camp, when only a few pots and pans had to be put away and a camp bed dismantled, was soon accomplished. As the cook and my Garhwalis streamed off in single file down a goat track into a deep ravine, which in Collier's day had been spanned by an iron bridge, I turned my eyes to the hill on which we had seen the lights. The sun was not far from rising, and distant objects were now clearly visible. From crest to water's edge and from water's edge to crest I scanned every foot of the hill, first with my naked eyes and then with field glasses. Not a sign of any human being could I see, or, reverting to my first theory was there any smouldering wood, and it only needed a glance to see that

the vegetation in this area had not been burnt for a year. The hill was rock from top to bottom, a few stunted trees and bushes growing where roothold had been found in crack or cranny. Where the lights had appeared was a perpendicular rock where no human being, unless suspended from above, could possibly have gone.

Nine days later, my mission to the hill people accomplished, I camped for a night at Kaladhunga. For a lover of nature, or for a keen fisherman, there are few places in Kumaon to compete with Kaladhunga. From the bungalow Collier built when extracting the timber Nepal gave India, the land slopes gently down in series of benches to the Sarda River. On these benches, where crops grew in the bygone days, there is now a luxuriant growth of grass. Here sambhar and cheetal are to be seen feeding morning and evening, and in the beautiful forests behind the bungalow live leopards and tigers, and a wealth of bird life including peafowl jungle fowl, and kalege pheasants. In the big pools and runs below the bungalow some of the best fishing in the Sarda River is to be had, either on a spinning rod with plug bait or on a light rod with salmon fly or fly spoon.

At crack of dawn next morning we left Kaladhunga, Ganga Ram taking the mountain track to Purnagiri and the rest of us the shorter way through the Sarda gorge. Ganga Ram's mission - which would entail an additional ten-miles walk - was to present our thank-offerings to the sacred Purnagiri shrine. Before he left me I instructed him to find out all he could, from the priests who served the shrine, about the lights we had seen when on our way up to Talla Des. When he rejoined me that evening at Tanakpur he gave me the following information, which he had gleaned from the priests and from his own observations.

Purnagiri, dedicated to the worship of the Goddess Bhagbatti and visited each year by tens of thousands of pilgrims, is accessible by two tracks. These, one from Baramdeo and the other from Kaladhunga, meet on the northern face of the mountain a short distance below the crest. At the junction of the tracks is situated the less sacred of the two Purnagiri shrines. The more sacred shrine is higher up and to the left. This holy of holies can only be reached by going along a narrow crack, or fault, running across the face of a more or less perpendicular rock cliff! Nervous people, children, and the aged are carried across the cliff in a basket slung on the back of a human. Only those whom the Goddess favours are able to reach the upper shrine; the others are struck blind and have to make their offerings at the lower shrine.

Puja (prayer) at the upper shrine starts at sunrise and ends at midday. After this hour no one is permitted to pass the lower shrine. Near the upper and more sacred shrine is a pinnacle of rock a hundred feet high, the climbing of which is forbidden by the Goddess. In the days of long ago a sadhu, more ambitious than his fellows, climbed

the pinnacle with the object of putting himself on an equality with the Goddess. Incensed at his disregard of her orders, the Goddess hurled the sadhu from the pinnacle to the hill on the far side of the snow-fed river. It is this sadhu who, banished forever from Purnagiri, worships the Goddess two thousand feet above him by lighting lamps to her. These votive lights only appear at certain times (we saw them on 5 April) and are only visible to favoured people. This favour was accorded to me and to the men with me, because I was on a mission to the hill folk over whom the Goddess watches.

That in brief was the information regarding the light which Ganga Ram brought back from Purnagiri and imparted to me while we were waiting for our train at Tanakpur. Some weeks later I received a visit from the Rawal (High Priest) of Purnagiri. He had come to see me about an article I had published in a local paper on the subject of the Purnagiri lights, and to congratulate me on being the only European ever to have been privileged to see them. In my article I gave the explanation for the lights as I have given it in these pages, and I added that if my readers were unable to accept this explanation and desired to find one for themselves, they should bear the following points in mind:

The lights did not appear simultaneously,
They were of a uniform size (about two feet in diameter),
They were not affected by wind,
They were able to move from one spot to another,

The High Priest was emphatic that the lights were an established fact which no one could dispute - in this I was in agreement with him for I had seen them for myself - and that no other explanation than the one I had given could be advanced to account for them.

The following year I was fishing the Sarda with Sir Malcolm (now Lord) Hailey who was Governor of the United Provinces at the time. Sir Malcolm had seen my article and as we approached the gorge he asked me to point out the spot where I had seen the lights. We had four dhimas (fishermen) with us who were piloting the sarnis (inflated skins) on which we were floating down the river from one fishing stand to the next. These men were part of a gang of twenty engaged by a contractor in floating pine sleepers from the high-level forests in Kumaon and Nepal to the boom at Raramdeo. This was a long, difficult, and very dangerous task, calling for great courage and a thorough knowledge of the river and its many hazards.

Below the shelf blasted out of the cliff by Collier, on which my men and I had spent the night when on our way up to Talla Des, was a narrow sandy beach. Here the dhimas at my request brought the sarnis to the bank, and we went ashore. After I had pointed out where

the lights had appeared, and traced their movements on the hill, Sir Malcolm said the dhimas could possibly provide an explanation, or at least throw some light on the subject. So he turned to them - he knew the correct approach to make to an Indian when seeking information and could speak the language perfectly - and elicited the following information. Their homes were in the Kangra Valley where they had some cultivation, but not sufficient to support them. They earned their living by floating sleepers down the Sarda River for Thakur Dan Singh Bist. They knew every foot of the river as far down as Baramdeo, for they had been up and down it countless times. They knew this part of Jar gorge very well, for there were backwaters in it that hung up the sleepers and gave them a great deal of trouble. They had never seen anything unusual in this part of the river in the way of lights, or anything else.

As he turned away from the dhimas I asked Sir Malcolm to put one more question to them. Had they in all the years they had been working on the Sarda ever spent a night in the gorge? Their answer to this question was a very emphatic No! Questioned further they said that not only had they never spent a night in the gorge but that they had never heard of anyone else ever having done so. The reason they gave for this was that the gorge was haunted by evil spirits.

Two thousand feet above us a narrow crack, worn smooth by the naked feet of generations upon generations of devotees, ran for fifty yards across a perpendicular rock cliff where there was no handhold of any kind. In spite of the precautions taken by the priests to safeguard the lives of pilgrims, casualties while negotiating that crack were heavy until H. H. The Maharaja of Mysore provided funds a few years ago for a steel cable to be stretched across the face of the cliff, from the lower shrine to the upper.

So there well might be spirits at the foot of that cliff but not, I think, evil ones."



In order to try to propose a scholarly explanation of what Corbett and his men saw on the evening of April 5th 1929, let us first check the list of features how Corbett himself characterizes the lights one more time:

- (1) The lights did not appear simultaneously,
- (2) They were of a uniform size (about two feet in diameter),
- (3) They were not affected by wind,
- (4) They were able to move from one spot to another,

We can also add a few other points that we can clearly deduce from the text:

- (5) Lights were first seen on a mountainside;
- (6) Lights stayed there, above Corbett and his men;
- (7) Lights were able to merge with each other,
- (8) They were burning without any flicker or any trace of smoke,
- (9) Corbett does not mention the maximum number of the lights but there were at least more than five of them.
- (10) Corbett does not mention for how long they were watching lights, but we know they decided to sleep quite soon, while lights were still there, so the lights were there more than a few minutes, possible for a half an hour or more.

Suggested explanation – “Ball Lightning”

From searching the available information on various natural phenomena, the author of the chapter came to the conclusion that Corbett and his men most likely witnessed a very interesting natural phenomenon, known as a “ball lightning.”

Ball lightning was not a subject of scholarly study until the 1960s. Today there are plenty of scholarly publications on the phenomenon of ball lightning, and although it has been seen many times, there is no accepted explanation of the phenomenon. Apart from scholarly articles, there is also a special report from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA, USA Governmental body). This document is known as “Nasa Technical Note: NASA TN D-3188. Initially a classified document, it is now freely available on the Internet (details see below in references: Rayle, 1966).

We can summarise the various scholarly articles on the subject of ball lightning by the following points:

- (1) The term “ball lightning” refers to reports of luminous, spherical objects that vary from pea-sized to several meters in diameter; most usual size is over 12 inches in diameter;
- (2) Ball lightning is an unexplained and potentially dangerous atmospheric electrical phenomenon;
- (3) Some early reports claim that the ball eventually explodes, sometimes with fatal consequences, although in most reports they cause no disturbances whatsoever;
- (4) After disappearing, they usually leave behind the odour of sulphur;
- (5) Though usually associated with thunderstorms, the phenomenon lasts considerably longer than the split-second flash of a lightning bolt, and can occur in perfectly still weather and can last for dozens of minutes;
- (6) Until the 1960s, most scientists treated reports of ball lightning sceptically, despite the fact that numerous accounts were available from around the world from the early centuries;

- (7) Laboratory experiments can produce effects that are visually similar to reports of ball lightning, although it is not known how they relate to the natural phenomenon;
- (8) The first-ever optical spectrum of what appears to have been a ball-lightning event was published in January 2014, and included a video at high frame-rate;
- (9) Scientists have proposed many hypotheses about ball lightning over the centuries. Scientific data on natural ball-lightning remains scarce, owing to its infrequency and unpredictability.
- (10) Owing to inconsistencies and to the lack of reliable data, the true nature of the ball lightning remains unknown.
- (11) In regards to the frequency of occurrence, according to a 1960 study, 5% of the population of the Earth reported having witnessed ball lightning. Another similar study analysed reports of 10,000 cases.
- (12) Almost universally the cases of ball lightning are traditionally considered to be connected to supernatural forces.

There are a large number of famous cases of seeing ball lightning throughout recorded human history. To read about the cases of ball lightning, readers can see the above mentioned NASA article, or a book dedicated to ball lightning (Singer, 1971). Understandably, more violent ones attracted more attention. Ball lightning found the way even in the popular music scene. The popular rock band “Foo Fighters” name came out of pilots in the World War II describing an unusual phenomenon most likely related to ball lightning: the pilots saw small balls of light moving in strange trajectories and these balls of light were referred to as “foo fighters.”

All the existing scholarly reviews note that the descriptions of ball lightning vary widely. It has been described as moving up and down, sideways or in unpredictable trajectories, hovering and moving with or against the wind; attracted to, unaffected by, or repelled from buildings, people, cars and other objects. Some accounts describe it as moving through solid masses of wood or metal without effect, while others describe it as destructive and melting or burning those substances. Its appearance has also been noted on the altitudes of 1,000 feet (300 m) and higher; during thunderstorms and perfectly calm weather. Ball lightning has been described mostly as transparent, evenly lit, radiating round ball-like object; Although it mostly appears as a single ball, instances of the appearance of several balls had also been recorded; The ball lightning can last from a few seconds to more than a half-hour; Their appearance and disappearance, as a rule, happens without any sound, although there had been cases of loud explosions; In most cases, it causes no damage or destruction, although there had been some distractions as well, from minor to quite catastrophic, causing distractions to buildings and fatalities among humans.

A review of the available literature published in 1972 identified the following properties of a “typical” ball lightning:

- They frequently appear almost simultaneously with cloud-to-ground lightning discharge.
- They are generally spherical or pear-shaped with fuzzy edges.
- Their diameters range from 1–100 centimetres (0.4–40 in), most commonly 10–20 cm (3.9–7.9 in).
- Their brightness corresponds to roughly that of a domestic lamp, so they can be seen clearly in daylight.
- A wide range of colours has been observed, red, orange, and yellow being the most common.
- The lifetime of each event is from 1 second to over a minute with the brightness remaining fairly constant during that time. In rare cases they can last up to half an hour or possibly more.
- They tend to move, most often in a horizontal direction at a few metres per second, but may also move vertically, remain stationary or wander erratically.
- Many are described as having rotational motion.
- It is rare that observers report the sensation of heat, although in some cases the disappearance of the ball is accompanied by the liberation of heat.
- Some display an affinity for metal objects and may move along conductors such as wires or metal fences.
- Some appear within buildings passing through closed doors and windows.
- Some have appeared within metal aircraft and have entered and left without causing damage.
- The disappearance of a ball is generally rapid and may be either silent or explosive.
- Odours resembling ozone, burning sulfur, or nitrogen oxides are often reported.

There is a great number of traditional and/or religious explanations for the appearance of ball lightning, from representing wandering spirits of the dead, and the work of the devil to the pranks of fairies. They are feared in some cultures as a portent of death, or seen as the positive forces. There are also folk beliefs that supernatural fires appear where a treasure is buried;

According to concluding remarks of the NASA article (pg 19-20),

- The frequency of the occurrence of ball lightning is much greater than is commonly believed. It might even approach the order of magnitude of the frequency of lightning strokes to the ground;

- There is little indication that ball lightning commonly involves large quantities of energy. Very bright, noisy or destructive occurrences were few. A mechanism for ball lightning need not account for megajoule energies to be satisfactory for the vast majority of cases;
- Ball lightning commonly does not change in appearance during its existence. This fact makes it very difficult to propose a mechanism involving the dissipation of stored energy and tends to support a process involving a continuous energy supply from an external source;
- Short duration events were more likely to end with a bang; they were also more likely to be connected with a lightning stroke to ground.
- Among the 112 descriptions, two groups of 12 each were found which appeared to describe two different types of events, Group A and Group B:
- Group A description: the ball lightning observations generally followed a lightning stroke to ground, and were reported to be seen in daytime. Balls were larger than 15 inches, and they approach ground within a foot;
- Group B description: lightning ball originates without lightning strokes and without accompanying bad weather. The ball is first seen in midair, does not approach the ground, and remains in midair throughout its life. The ball/balls were larger than 15 inches, less bright, and they disappear quietly.

The lights that were seen by Corbett and his men coincides with the description of ball lightning from Group B, but only if we assume that the lights were moving in the air, not in close proximity of the mountain on the Nepalese side of River Sarda. Is this possible? Corbett said the lights appeared on the hillside, but by the time of their appearance it was probably quite dark and would be difficult to estimate their closeness to the mountain slope. Seeing lights higher on the Nepalese side, Corbett naturally assumed they were close to the mountainside. As we remember, Corbett's both possible explanations for the lights were placing lights on the ground (1 – burning of the forest, and 2 – humans searching something on the ground). Another unusual feature is a large number of balls seen by Corbett and his men, and their unusually long existence, although the appearance of several lightning balls have been also documented in a number of cases, and very long existence of ball lightning has also been recorded.

Another interesting feature of the lights seen by Corbett and his men is the confirmed cases of seeing the lights by other witnesses on other occasions. Corbett does not mention the exact locations and the frequency of such events, so this detail will be impossible to discuss.

Another interesting element would be to evaluate if there are any other factors that cause the appearance of the ball lightning in the vicinity of Purnagiri, Temple, for example, (1) the presence of high rock pinnacle at the higher Purnagiri Temple, or (2) the possible presence of metal objects at the High Purnagiri Temple, or (3) more

remotely, the possible presence of iron deposits on the Nepalese side of the River Sarda in the vicinity of the Purnagiri Temple.

Whatever is the true explanation, the appearance of lights in close proximity of Purnagiri Temple is one of the most fascinating topics for Corbett researchers. In this chapter the author reached the conclusion on the evening of April 5, 1929, Corbett and his men most likely saw the natural phenomenon, known as “ball lightning,” and more precisely, using the classification given in the NASA article, they saw the ball lightning from group B.

This chapter is the first (and so far the only) scholarly explanation of the mysterious Purnagiri lights that Corbett saw on his way to hunting expedition for the Talla Des men eating tiger in 1929. The author hopes this chapter will provoke further research of this fascinating event. For example, interviews and discussions with the current Purnagiri priests might provide some new interesting facts.

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Why did Corbett Go After Talla Des Man-Eater in a Terrible Physical Condition?

BY JOSEPH JORDANIA, AUSTRALIA

Among stories from Jim Corbett's hunting adventures, there is hardly another story that seems so incredible as the story of Talla Des man-eater. The story was so unbelievably dramatic, that Corbett did not include the story in his first book, *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*. He was simply afraid that readers would not believe the true story. Only after Corbett's first book came out, was a huge success, was taken for face value, and was followed by several other successful books, Corbett felt confident to tell the readers the incredible true story of the hunt of Talla Des man-eating tiger.

The detail that makes this story so incredible is that Corbett was hunting the man-eater in a truly terrible physical shape. After a nearly fatal hunting accident, he completely lost hearing in his left ear, he could not open his left eye and could not move his head freely because of the huge swelling in his face, head, and neck. Probably above all, he was suffering excruciating pain, and every step and every head movement was giving him additional pain. A person in this condition would normally be under constant medical care, most likely in a hospital. Instead, Corbett was not only outside of medical care, but he was following a wounded man-eater for several days, and when his condition became critically bad, he went after the man-eater even through the night.

This behaviour borders to madness, and we will try to discuss what could be the real reason behind such carefree behaviour.

Corbett writes that he decided to go after the man-eater hoping that hunt would help to tide him over his bad times, but I have suspicions that this was not the real reason. In his vulnerable state, Corbett could have been attacked and killed by the man-eater, as apart from limited eyesight and hearing, there was an imminent danger that the growing abscess might affect his sense of balance and other mental functions. As a matter of fact, this did happen, and during the night pursuit of the man-eater, Corbett started losing balance and had to climb a tree with great difficulty to be safe from the man-eater.

By all means, Corbett would be in better shape to hunt a man-eating tiger if he waited for the bad times to be over. We can imagine how much persuasion and possibly tears are behind his words "I decided – much against the wishes of my sisters and the advice of Colonel Barber – to go away." Jim was at times a very stubborn man.

So why not wait? To discuss this issue, let us first recall what has happened and what was (in his own words) the reason for him going in his state after the man-eater.

The scene starts with an incident during the massive beat in February 1929, where Corbett almost became a hunting casualty:

"...We had gone along the bank of the stream for about a mile, picking up five more peafowl, four cock floricans - hens were barred - three snipe, and a hog deer with very good horns when the accidental (please turn your eyes away, Recording Angel) discharge of a heavy high-velocity rifle in the hands of a spectator sitting behind me in my howdah, scorched the inner lining of my left ear and burst the eardrum. For me the rest of that February day was torture. After a sleepless night I excused myself on the plea that I had urgent work to attend to (again, please, Recording Angel) and at dawn, while the camp was asleep, I set out on a twenty-five-mile walk to my home at Kaladhungi.

The doctor at Kaladhungi, a keen young man who had recently completed his medical training, confirmed my fears that my eardrum had been destroyed. A month later we moved up to our summer home at Naini Tal, and at the Ramsay Hospital I received further confirmation of this diagnosis from Colonel Barber, Civil Surgeon of Naini Tal. Days passed, and it became apparent that abscesses were forming in my head. My condition was distressing my two sisters as much as it was distressing me, and as the hospital was unable to do anything to relieve me I decided - much against the wishes of my sisters and the advice of Colonel Barber - to go away.

I have mentioned this 'accident' not with the object of enlisting sympathy but because it has a very important bearing on the story of the Talla Des man-eater which I shall now relate.

Bill Baynes and Ham Vivian were Deputy Commissioners of, respectively Almora and Naini Tal in the year 1929, and both were suffering from man-eaters, the former from the Talla Des man-eating tiger, and the latter from the Chowgarh man-eating tiger.

I had promised Vivian that I would try to shoot his tiger first, but as it had been less active during the winter months than Baynes's, I decided, with Vivian's approval, to try for the other first. The pursuit of this tiger would, I hoped, tide me over my bad time and enable me to adjust myself to my new condition. So to Talla Des I went.

My story concerns the Talla Des tiger, and I have refrained from telling it until I had written *Jungle Lore*. For without first reading *Jungle Lore*, and knowing that I had learnt - when a boy and later - how to walk in a jungle and use a rifle, and the credulity of all who were not present in Kumaon at that time would have been strained and this, after my previous stories had been accepted at their face value, was the last thing I desired."

This excerpt is interesting for several reasons.

- (1) To start with, what Corbett means when he adds to the words "accidental" ironic comment ("please turn your eyes away, Recording Angel")? Did some-

one sitting behind Corbett in the same howdah, want to harm Corbett? The full answer to this question can be found in Corbett's two letters written in Nyeri, Kenya to Hawkins (Oxford University Press, Bombay), dated 26/06/1954, and 10/07/1954. Corbett describes in detail how a young military man, obviously a trigger-happy and extremely irresponsible, almost killed two people in Corbett's howdah, where he was sitting as a spectator and was not supposed to shoot at all (for more details see "*Chowgarh letters*" by Preetum Gheerawo, in this volume)

- (2) It is obvious that Corbett was asked to kill Talla Des man-eater at the same (or almost the same time) as he was asked to get rid of the Chowgarh man-eater. This was most likely at the District Conference, a well-known fact from the book *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*. Listen to Corbett's words: "*Bill Baynes and Ham Vivian were Deputy Commissioners of, respectively Almora and Naini Tal in the year 1929, and both were suffering from man-eaters, the former from the Talla Des man-eating tiger, and the latter from the Chowgarh man-eating tiger. I had promised Vivian that I would try to shoot his tiger first [Chowgarh man-eater], but as it had been less active during the winter months than Baynes's, I decided, with Vivian's approval, to try for the other [Tala Des man-eater] first*". It is clear, as this was suggested in Volume One of our book by Preetum Gheerawo, that the real list of three man-eating tigers (Mohan, Chowgarh, Tala Des), was changed to a slightly different list of three man-eating tigers (Mohan, Chowgarh, Kanda – as presented in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*). The reason for this change is clear from Corbett words – because of the details of this hunt were so incredible, that Corbett was afraid of being accused of telling fairy tales. Corbett only included this story in another book, published ten years later, when he was already a household name around the World, and his integrity had the highest possible standing with readers.
- (3) And finally, let us now listen to the reason that Corbett mentions to explain why he went after the man-eater in his condition: "The pursuit of this tiger would, I hoped, tide me over my bad time and enable me to adjust myself to my new condition."

I already mentioned that Corbett's decision to go in his condition after the man-eater borders insanity. Of course, Corbett definitely had a unique knowledge of the jungle and tigers, but still, to go after hunting a man-eater on foot, when your hearing, vision, walking, and head movements are impaired, when you are suffering from a continuous excruciating pain, and when there are possibilities of complications on the brain functions from the out-of-control abscess, to put it mildly, is unwise. Hunting a man-eating tiger is an inherently highly dangerous activity, let alone on foot, and undertaking this activity in his physical condition, and at night, is very hard

to explain. We know that on several occasions Corbett closely escaped death during his hunts even in his usual fit condition, and we also know that he was only resorting to hunting chances at night while sitting on a machan or other relatively safe place; We also know from "*Jungle Lore*" that during the hunt he depended heavily on his eyesight and hearing, and these senses were not in a good shape in Talla Des case; We also know, and Corbett knew better than us that tiger's eyesight and hearing are much superior to human senses, particularly at night. So Corbett going after the tigress on that night of April 11-12th is absolutely incredible act and needs deep understanding of the forces behind his behaviour.

Now let me suggest what might have been the real reason that sent out-of-shape Corbett after the man-eating tiger in the dead of the night.

In my opinion, Corbett feared that the abscess would burst inside of his head, leading to the rapid contamination of his brain and causing death. And with his selfless character, instead of staying under medical care and increasing his chances of survival and rehabilitation, he decided whatever time he still had left to live, to try to kill the man-eating tiger.

Now, what evidence do I have to back up this suggestion?

Let us listen to Corbett himself. It is April 11th evening, the fifth day in pursuit of the man-eater:

"Back in camp I realized that the 'bad time' I had foreseen and dreaded was approaching. Electric shocks were stabbing through the enormous abscess, and the hammer blows were increasing in intensity Sleepless nights and a diet of tea had made a coward of me, and I could not face the prospect of sitting on my bed through another long night, racked with pain and waiting for something, I knew not what, to happen. I had come to Talla Des to try to rid the hill people of the terror that menaced them and to tide over my bad time, and all that I had accomplished so far was to make their condition worse. Deprived of the ability to secure her natural prey, the tigress, who in eight years had only killed a hundred and fifty people would now, unless she recovered from her wound, look to her easiest prey - human beings - to provide her with most of the food she needed. There was therefore an account to be settled between the tigress and myself, and that night was as suitable a time as any to settle it."

So Corbett, who was going to have a rest at night after another full day in the pursuit of the man-eating tiger (he was in pursuit of the tigress from April 7th) when suddenly feeling the complications worsening from bad to critical, instead of staying put with his men, suddenly decides to go after the tiger, in the dead of the night. We can feel from these words how Corbett blamed himself for not killing the tigress on the first day (April 7th), and how he was not sure what would happen to him as the result of his critical condition. To me, it is obvious, that Corbett feared that he had

only a few hours of life left, and wanted to use this time, possibly the last hours of his life, to shot the man-eater.

But why Corbett did not mention if this was the true reason in the story, the reader might ask. You need to know his character, including his disdain for his own interests and his hatred for elevated dramatic speeches. So instead of telling the readers the truth, that he wanted to use several hours, possibly left of his life, in pursuit of a man-eater, he writes that he “cowardly” could not face the prospect of pain and anticipation of unknown. And how he decided to help himself in his condition? – He went after the wounded man-eating tiger during the night.

If you still do not believe me that on that night Jim Corbett went on the suicidal mission, I suggest re-reading how Corbett describes his departure at night from his loyal men:

“Calling for a cup of tea – made hill-fashion with milk – which served me as dinner, I drank it while standing in the moonlight. Then, calling my eight men together, I instructed them to wait for me in the village until the following evening, and if I did not return by then to pack up my things and start early the next morning for Naini Tal. Having done this I picked up my rifle from where I put it on my bed, and headed down the valley. My men, all of whom had been with me for years, said not a word either to ask me where I was going or to try to dissuade me from going. They just stood silent in a group and watched me walk away. Maybe the glint I saw on their cheeks was only imagination, or maybe it was only the reflection of the moon. Anyway, when I looked back not a man had moved. They were just standing in a group as I had left them.”

This entire silent and profoundly dramatic scene, Corbett’s morbid instructions to his men, their silent obedience and their long silent farewell, for me is a clear proof, that Corbett knew he was going on a suicidal mission, and his men knew this as well. For them, this was the final farewell to their loyal and loved master and a friend.

If someone wants to put forward a contrary suggestion that Corbett did not have such fears, and he was expecting to feel better after the crisis would pass, then it would be natural that he would wait for the crisis to pass, as he could continue the pursuit of the man-eater in a much better physical condition and greater efficiency. But Corbett feared that he would not survive the huge abscess in his had, face and neck, that’s why he was so rushed to go after the man-eater. To convince you that Corbett had indeed fears for the worse, let us read another small excerpt from the story when the crisis reaches the highest point and the abscess busts during the midnight pursuit of the man-eater:

“As the tigress disappeared from view I bent down and ran forward on silent feet. Bending my head down and running was a very stupid mistake for me to have made, and I had only run a few yards when I was overcome by vertigo. Near me were two oak saplings, a few feet apart

and with inter-laced branches. Laying down my rifle I climbed up the saplings to a height of ten or twelve feet. Here I found a branch to sit on, another for my feet, and yet other small branches for me to rest against. Crossing my arms on the branches in front of me, I laid my head on them, and at that moment the abscess burst, **not into my brain as I feared it would**, but out through my nose and left ear."

Corbett's last thoughts before he passed out were probably the regret that he was leaving this world without getting rid of the Talla Des man-eater. Fortunately for him, after the abscess burst, he felt better: the swelling disappeared, the pain was gone, he was able to open his left eye and to see normally, (although he was suffering from the hearing problems for many years), and he was able to move his head freely. That's how he describes his relief:

"It was round about midnight when relief came to me, and the grey light was just beginning to show in the east when I raised my head from my crossed arms. Cramp in my legs resulting from my having sat on a thin branch for four hours had roused me, and for a little while I did not know where I was or what had happened to me. Realization was not long in coming. The great swelling on my head, face, and neck had gone and with it had gone the pain. I could now move my head as I liked, my left eye was open, and I could swallow without discomfort. I had lost an opportunity of shooting the tigress, but **that did that matter now**, for I was over my bad time and no matter where or how for the tigress went I would follow her, and sooner or later I would surely get another chance."

As we can see, after realizing that his life was not in an imminent danger anymore, and realizing that he had plenty of time to go after the Talla Des man-eater, Corbett finally started behaving rationally. He went back to his men, who were waiting for him for many hours, keeping a kettle with boiling water on a fire, had some sleep, and the next morning, with new energy and much better physical condition he went back after the man-eater and shot her nearby the village Tala Kote. The entire village was watching from the saddle of the village the final movements of the man-eating tiger and the hunter.

Martin Booth angered many Corbett fans by accusing Corbett to inflating his stories with incredible details. He proposed that Corbett was dramatizing stories to make them a better read. **I suggest that on the contrary, Corbett was sometimes downplaying the motifs and dangers he was putting himself through.** I do not know whether I managed to convince readers what was the real reason that sent Corbett in such a vulnerable physical shape after the Talla Des man-eating tiger, but I am sure that in this story he did not tell readers the entire truth for his seemingly crazy decisions, as he hated to look too dramatic and heroic.

It is incredible how many readers have read the story of Talla Des man-eater without fully realizing how close Corbett was (or he thought he was) to his death when he

was hunting the Talla Des man-eating tiger. The primary reason for this long delusion was Corbet himself. We, Corbett readers are so used to take Corbett's words for face value that when he does not mention his true motif we fail to see it, although the truth between Corbett's words is obvious. And probably the more important reason for this long concealment of his motif is that the reader is simply too engrossed in the story, so the unspoken emotions that moved Corbet in those incredible days, stay unnoticed.

In Maggie's words, she never asked her brother which of his hunting stories was his personal favourite. And still, there is a good reason to believe that the story of Talla Des man-eating tiger was Corbett's favourite story. Corbett mentioned this directly and openly in his letters to Cumberlege and Hawkins: "I'm glad I kept my best story (Talla-Des) for the last" [Corbett means the last book "Temple Tiger and More Man-Eaters of Kumaon", OUP, 1954]. Undoubtedly, this story would have been central in his first book "Man-Eaters of Kumaon", but it was deemed (correctly) too incredible to publish in the first book. It is also a telling fact that Corbett was thinking of writing an entire book about this hunt (see Corbett's unpublished letters in this volume).

At the beginning of the Talla Des hunting expedition Corbett and his loyal men saw the rarest phenomenon – the lights at the Purnagiri Temple. We discussed the possible scholarly explanation for these lights (see in this volume). But in case if this phenomenon had a divine origin as many believe in India, it was fitting that the lights appeared at the beginning of Talla Des hunting expedition, probably to bless Corbett as he was going to the most noble, virtually a suicidal mission to save lives, in full disregard of his own safety and life.

(Author of the chapter is very grateful to fellow researchers Priyvrat Gadhvi, Preetum Gheerawo, and Ali Akhtar for useful comments and suggestions)

One Day Short: The Timeline of the Thak Man-Eater Hunt

BY STUART GELZER, USA

The Problem

Many of Jim Corbett's written accounts of his man-eater hunts carry no date information at all: not only can the reader not tell how many total days or weeks Corbett spent on a particular hunt, in some cases you cannot even tell from the text what decade it happened, let alone what year or month or day.

'The Thak Man-eater' may be almost unique in providing not only the year (1938) but the exact dates, from start to finish, of both of Corbett's stays in the Chuka-Thak-Sem area in pursuit of the Thak man-eating tiger. Before returning to the Thak hunt a second time, only weeks after his initial failure, Corbett had promised his sister Maggie not only that this would be the last man-eater hunt of his career (he was 63 years old), but that he would quit and set off for home on Thursday, December 1st whether he had killed the tiger or not. As he puts it, "When leaving home on the 22nd I had promised that I would return in ten days, and that this would be my last expedition after man-eaters.... and if by 30 November I had not succeeded in killing this man-eater, others would have to be found who were willing to take on the task."

Since on his return visit Corbett did not reach Chuka till the morning of Thursday, November 24th, he knew from the start that he would have, as he says, "seven days and seven nights" and not one day more to kill the tiger. In narrative terms familiar to thriller writers, that deadline pressure adds a 'ticking clock' to the tension and suspense of the story like a time bomb counting down to zero that the hero must defuse before all is lost. And just like in a movie, where always the last bomb wire is cut and the world is saved at 00:00:01, Corbett killed the tiger in the final hours allotted and at almost the final second possible, given the fading light on the last day before he had to go home. And it's all true.

So what is the problem? Well, while Corbett the hunter must have been keenly aware of the dwindling days remaining, Corbett the writer – in spite of all his narrative apparatus of the countdown time-keeping – loses count. Corbett specifies November 24th and 25th and 26th, and then does not name the date again until November 29th and 30th, before his departure early on December 1st. That in itself is not a problem: you can keep going through the text after November 26th and mark every place where a new day starts, looking for lines like 'While breakfast was being prepared the following morning' or 'The men turned up at 8 a.m.' or 'I sat hour after hour until daylight succeeded moonlight.'

If you go through that exercise, you will find that when you arrive in your count at the start of November 28th, Corbett writes, 'It was then the morning of 29 November.' If you do the same count going backwards from what he declares to be November 29th, the same thing happens: you reach what should be the start of November 27th and Corbett writes, 'on the morning of the 26th.' In short, Corbett describes the events of six days and nights, but says that seven days and nights have passed. What happened to the lost day?

The Method

First, let us be clear that this timeline question is not a matter of great weight: getting it right will not settle or even shed much new light on more vital problems like the location of the Thak kill site rock. Second, any answer can only be at best plausible conjecture: in the absence of other new evidence, like a mythical Corbett journal or date book, there is no way to settle the question outside the text itself – there is no ground to examine, no witness to question. No theory can be proved. That said, onward with conjecture:

I start from the premise that it is a lost day, not an omitted day: that Corbett accidentally forgot to account for it, not that he purposely skipped over an unimportant day to streamline his story. The process I described above, of going through the text to mark the start and end of each day, shows that Corbett connects one event to the next to the next, and never uses a transition like 'a few days later' or 'another time' or a summing-up like 'after a couple of similar days' – transitional phrases that occur frequently in other Corbett accounts. Instead in the Thak narrative he uses the kind of bridge phrases that imply a continuous linking of actions: 'On arrival at the stump...' or 'The moon had been up for two hours...' or 'After watering and feeding the two buffaloes...' The narrative strongly implies that he is accounting for all of his time, one event after another, and not jumping ahead.

Next, I discard the idea that the reason Corbett describes only six days is that he was in fact there for only six days, not seven. The 'ticking clock' is so prominent in the narrative – as it must have been in his mind at the time – that he could not mistake either the first day or the last in his allotted span: November 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 – seven days and nights. Least of all could he mistake or forget Wednesday November 30th, the day of the Thak man-eater kill, a red-letter day in even Corbett's legendary career.

I am grateful to Dr. Joseph Jordania for offering the common-sense argument that Corbett – like any of us on a busy eventful trip somewhere for a couple of weeks – counts forward from the start ('that happened on the third day after we got there') but backward from the end: we would normally say 'two days before we came home' and not 'on the twelfth day we were there...' which may be logical but is an unlikely way to keep track. I grant that for a span of only one week, not two, most of us could

keep track of it all by counting from the start. But Corbett's week at Thak was not a vacation: he was constantly active and often in great danger, and above all he was working without much sleep. Before he killed the tiger at the end of the 30th Corbett had stayed up overnight on the 27th and the 28th and the 29th, and gone on functioning all of the days in between. It's amazing he only lost track of ONE day!

Therefore, following Dr. Jordania's suggestion, my method will be to assume that when Corbett names the date it's because he is sure, and because the calendar dates of the first and last couple of days are clearer in his memory than the middle of that week. He names November 24th, 25th, and 26th, and then November 29th and 30th. So we have narrowed the problem: from the morning of Saturday the 26th to the morning of Tuesday the 29th is an interval of three days, but Corbett describes events that fill only two days. Is there a way to determine which day dropped out?

If we follow the logical unfolding of the story as written, we can hope to find a point where the links fail, where the narrative flow is interrupted. We could work in from either end, but I feel more confident about Corbett's identification of the 29th than the 26th (I'll show why below). I will, therefore, work back from the morning of the Tuesday the 29th, looking for a break in the chain of connected events.

The Argument

(Because there are so many different editions of *Man-eaters of Kumaon*, I will locate lines in the text not by page but by paragraph number, restarting the count in each Roman-numeral section. Most of my references come from section III.)

Corbett knows that the morning he talked to the Thak headman over breakfast was Tuesday, November 29th (section IV paragraph 6), because immediately after breakfast he crossed over to Sem for a false alarm about a leopard, and from there he heard the tiger roaring up in Thak, and came back across, and met the timber workers – who were anxious because they knew he would leave them unprotected in two days. He says, 'I told the men that I still had two days and two nights...' It MUST be the start of the 29th because he knows the kill occurred at the end of Wednesday the 30th and he left on Thursday, December 1st.

Because Corbett's conversation the morning of the 29th with the Thak headman was about the mysterious 'ghost' scream from Thak, we know that the night he heard the scream MUST be the night of Monday the 28th, the 'previous night' (section III paragraph 44) to his interview with the headman.

What did Corbett do during the day of Monday the 28th that leads logically to the night of the scream? The action of that day runs from paragraph 28, 'The men turned up at 8 a.m.' to paragraph 39, 'I sat hour after hour until daylight succeeded moonlight...' Corbett was sitting up over buffalo #2, the one killed by a snake bite but then partly eaten by the tiger. He would have no reason to find the dead buffalo one day but then ignore it for a day before sitting up over it. Therefore all of the events that

follow his discovery of the dead buffalo MUST belong to the 28th. So starting with paragraph 29, 'The overnight rain had washed all the old tracks off the path,' which must be the morning of the 28th, all of the actions from there to the end of the story are sequentially linked.

Other things being equal, my own first guess would be to say that the most likely point in any day for Corbett to have a memory discontinuity would be after breakfast following a night sitting up on a *machan*:

(1) Even if he doesn't say so, that would be the most likely time for him to catch an hour or two of sleep, in camp at Chuka; and when you wake from sleep you have the experience of restarting, of resetting reality: a discontinuity of consciousness.

(2) Each overnight sitting up was an old business that logically followed the previous day's events. It was generally only after breakfast (and possibly sleep) that Corbett faced new business, new reports of events, new claims and demands, new plans for the day: a discontinuity of agenda.

So is the morning turnaround described in paragraph 28 – 'I returned to camp for a hot bath and a good meal, and then, accompanied by six of my men...' – is that the moment of discontinuity, in which Corbett skips a day? I don't think so: In paragraph 29 he says that his tracing of the tiger's movements, past buffalo #1 to the snake-bitten buffalo #2, depended on the 'overnight rain' having washed away old tracks and made it is easy to see fresh tracks. Therefore the morning of Monday the 28th MUST follow the night in the *machan* in which it rained, which must therefore be the night of Sunday the 27th.

So, again working backward as before, how much of the previous day's action leads logically to the night sitting up during the rain (over a goat, only partway up from Chuka)? At what point do the actions that supposedly (in the text) happened on Saturday the 26th actually belong instead to Sunday the 27th?

It cannot be ALL the actions, since in the text that day begins with paragraph 24, 'I set out to visit them on the morning of the 26th...' This assumes that we trust Corbett's date, and we should, since (by Dr. Jordania's reasoning about how we typically date events) only two days had passed since Corbett arrived back at Chuka on Thursday the 24th, and he shouldn't be confused already.

The overnight sitting up during the rain (the night of Sunday the 27th) was logically preceded by Corbett's men making a *machan* (paragraph 26). And he says that was preceded by his escorting the Thak villagers back down to Chuka, which of course was preceded by his escorting them up to Thak.

We are now backing up the events of Sunday the 27th (my date) very close to the start of Saturday the 26th (Corbett's date): will anything be left? But I believe we are now at the logical discontinuity, the break between the 26th and the 27th that Corbett lost track of.

In paragraph 24, here are the actions that begin Saturday the 26th: Corbett visited the buffalo in Sem; he visited the two buffaloes up near Thak; all were safe; he found pug marks on the path...

Paragraph 25 begins, 'On my return to Chuka...' – I think THAT is the moment of discontinuity, the break between Saturday the 26th and Sunday the 27th. Consider that Corbett was doing the same thing each day: going up to Thak and back down to Chuka, checking on the buffaloes and sometimes moving them, and seeing a pug marks. Until something changed, each return back down to Chuka was like the others, and therefore two returns on different days could easily be confused with each other. By contrast, the villagers' request for escort up to Thak was (a) a one-time event, and therefore easy to remember, and (b) unconnected by logic or necessity to his previous activity in the text, which was checking on his buffaloes.

In fact, the sequence of events as given in the text is puzzling: if the villagers wanted an escort up to Thak, why didn't they go with Corbett the first time, when he went up to check on his buffaloes, instead of waiting for him to come all the way down to Chuka just to make him go all the way back up again? (And those who have been there know how far and steeply up and down it is.) I believe the reason is, it didn't happen on the same day.

I grant that the isolated episode of escorting the villagers up to Thak and back to Chuka is logically unconnected to Corbett's routine at both start and finish, and therefore offers a chance for narrative discontinuity at both ends. Why then have I placed the break – the loss of a day – before and not after? In the necessary absence of any other evidence, I will stand by the structure of Corbett's own prose:

The first transition is a full paragraph break: At the end of paragraph 24, Corbett is discussing the tiger's pug marks seen up near Thak. Paragraph 25 begins, 'On my return to Chuka a deputation of Thak villagers....' The paragraph break marks a gap in both time and location – like a movie fadeout and fade-in. (You can almost imagine some of part of Corbett the writer's unconscious mind going, 'Is that really what came next? Hmm... Well, that's the next thing I can visualize.')

By contrast, here is the transition from the end of the villager-escorting episode back to the familiar activity of preparing to sit up over a bait goat, from paragraph 26: 'I then took the villagers back to Chuka and returned a few hundred yards up the hill for a scratch meal while my men were making the machan.' No paragraph break, not even a new sentence, just a conjunction, and the two activities are fastened together in both space and time by the smooth prose continuity of '...and returned a few hundred yards up the hill...' In this case Corbett the writer clearly and confidently associates the two events in sequence.

Therefore I will stand by my conjecture that paragraph 24 describes the morning of Saturday the 26th and paragraph 25 – while seeming to follow directly – actually jumps to sometime on Sunday the 27th, and that from this point on the story unfolds

continuously. I also contend that the jump is unintentional, since there is no reason why Corbett, if he chose consciously to jump forward past a day that had no impact on the overall story, would not have led into paragraph 25 with something like, ‘On the following day...’

As for how Corbett might have spent a whole day in ways that had so little effect on the overall story that he forgot to account for it, he gives clues in two places:

(1) In section III paragraph 18, which is a digression about the tree-cutting workers, not time-specific but placed within his account of Friday the 25th, he writes, ‘during the next few days I covered much ground and lost much valuable time in investigating false rumours of attacks and kills by the man-eater...’

(2) In section V paragraph 5, which is an account of his state of mind as he gave up the hunt in defeat at the end of Wednesday the 30th, he writes, ‘I have told you of some of the attempts I made during this period of seven days and seven nights to get a shot at the tigress, but these were by no means the only attempts I made.’

I think Corbett spent the missing day, from sometime Saturday the 26th to sometime Sunday the 27th, either making serious but fruitless efforts to close with the tiger or wasting his time on false alarms, or a bit of both.

The Timeline

If my reasoning above is correct, then the revised timeline MIGHT look like the following. (I use italics for my hypothetical reconstruction of the missing day.)

Thursday November 24th: Corbett reaches Chuka at dawn; he goes up to Thak (now empty) with buffalo #1; he sees pug marks over his footprints (the tiger waited for him in the village); he goes back down to Chuka; he plans to leave after six more days.

Friday 25th: Corbett goes up to Thak with buffalo #2; he sees that the tiger followed him down last night; he goes back down to Chuka; he goes over to Sem with buffalo #3.

Saturday 26th: Corbett goes over to Sem and then up to Thak to check on the buffaloes; he sees that the tiger visited both Thak buffaloes without harming them; he goes back down to Chuka... *MISSING ACTION FOR THE REST OF THIS DAY – possibly following false alarms.*

Sunday 27th: *MISSING ACTION FOR THE START OF THIS DAY – possibly checking again on his buffaloes in Sem and Thak, or following more false alarms; back to Chuka...* Corbett escorts the villagers up to Thak, then back down to Chuka; he goes up partway to Thak; he sits up overnight (in the rain) over a bait goat.

Monday 28th: Corbett goes back down to Chuka for a bath and a meal; he goes up to Thak; he finds that buffalo #2 was killed by a snake; he sits up overnight over the dead buffalo; he hears a mysterious scream from deserted Thak.

Tuesday 29th: Corbett goes back down to Chuka (the tiger was there overnight); at breakfast, he interviews the Thak headman about the scream; he goes over to Sem

on a false trail (a leopard); from Sem, he hears the tiger up by Thak; he goes up to Thak; he sits up overnight over the dead buffalo.

Wednesday 30th: Corbett goes back down to Chuka for tea and a bath (the tiger was there and at the work camps overnight); he goes up to Thak with two bait goats; he waits all day in a tree over the goats and the dead buffalo; at 5 p.m. he gives up and starts back; he calls up and kills the tiger.

Thursday, December 1st: Corbett leaves very early for Tanakpur.

I observed earlier that, besides being unprovable, tracking down the missing day in the Thak timeline is merely the exercise of a Corbett completist – it has no impact on solving weightier questions. But the timeline does confirm that when Corbett killed the tiger on Wednesday evening he had had no more than an occasional catnap of an hour or two since he rose from his camp bed Sunday morning: that is three nights and four days without solid sleep. (I think we can assume that on Saturday 26th, the missing night, if, rather than sleeping in his own tent, he had sat up overnight in a *machan* waiting for the tiger, he would remember it and would consider it important enough to mention.) The fact of that enormous sleep debt, even on an extraordinary constitution like Corbett's, must arguably have some bearing on the inconsistencies between text and terrain in the details of the final confrontation with the Thak tiger. If Jim Corbett could forget one whole day out of seven – and in writing his account not even notice that he had forgotten it – what else could he forget?

The Chowgarh Slate and the basic conditions of human memory

Or why we may never get absolute certainty about some locations and strict conformity with Corbett's descriptions (and shouldn't expect it either)

BY MANFRED WATTL, GERMANY

“The Chowgarh Tigers” was always one of my favorite stories of Jim Corbett. Since I was a boy I was fascinated by the big rock formed like a giant “school-slate” where on the sandy bed behind the tigress lay in wait for him and Corbett’s shot from a distance of eight feet ended the career of this ferocious animal that had killed at least 64 human beings. I always liked to imagine this scene and to put myself in the shoes of the bold and famous hunter.

My first visit here was only a short one. It was in March 2007 when inspired by Peter Byrnes book and with the help of Sid Anand from Camp Corbett I had made my first reasonable attempt in visiting some of the most important places in “Corbett country”. The night before we had stayed in the forest rest house of Paharpani (there is an interesting story about a man-eating tiger interfering with the construction of this building by Carrington-Turner) and having no camping equipment with us had to reach Mukteshwar for the following night. So there were just a few hours left for Chowgarh. From today’s point of view a ridiculous short time to have only a faint hope for success, but as a beginner I had the naïve optimism just to follow Jim’s description and Byrnes’s book and have a look at the rock.

Considering the little time, we did quite well. We saw the old Rest-house and the visitors book with an entry from March 1930 which might indicate Corbett’s visit (the name was not readable) and others from 1937 were the names of Mr. and Mrs. Ibbotson and Stiffle were clearly visible. From here we followed the forest road for 300- 400 yards when near the end of the village just about 10 yards to the right an impressive big boulder came in view. A closer look revealed it as the one Peter Byrne had suggested as the school-slate in his book. Size and shape from this “Peter Byrne’s rock” were indeed quite fine, but its location was beyond question utterly wrong. Besides, the material of the rock was composite stone and not smooth as Corbett had mentioned.

We continued on the forest road and just as Corbett had written, a mile from the bungalow it crossed a ridge and went from the north to the west face of the Kala Agar range. We called this place on our later visits: “The place where the (compass-) needle turns” and took it as a landmark for further research, as it is the last one we were definitely sure of. Immediately after the bend there is a valley on the right side. I will call it here the “first valley” as there is also a second one, I was not aware of this on my first visit. It is about 250 yards deep and halfway down an overgrown ravine

can be seen from above. There was no more time to go down, but at this time I was quite sure to have looked at the right place from above.

Coming back in 2012 with Kotecha, I surprised my friend with the extreme optimism that in not more than two hours we would be on the right place and – in case it would still exist – would stand in front of the big “school-slate”. But things turned out to be not so easy. After a look at the “first valley” we realized that 150-200 yards after the bend, the forest road crosses a clearly defined ridge. Kotecha later called it the “adjacent ridge” as it protrudes from the main massif in the western direction and comes to an end near Chamoli. This “adjacent ridge” separates the so-called “first valley” from a much bigger valley behind which I now will call the “second valley”. Upon this ridge is a footpath, villagers use it as a shortcut to Chamoli. Kotecha was very sure this “adjacent ridge” was the one Corbett had referred to when he met the party of firewood collecting men *“at a point a mile from the bungalow, where the road crosses a ridge and goes from the north to the west face of the Kala Agar range”*. In the first place I had identified Corbett’s “ridge” with the edge of the mountain, the forest road had turned around at very place of the bend. But looking at this “adjacent ridge” some yards in front of us, I had to admit Kotecha probably was right and that this terrain was a better match for the word “ridge”.

If we got things right, the central events of the story should have happened behind this “adjacent ridge” in the second valley, the forest road after having crossed the ridge encircles in a big bend. The bigger size of this valley is also appropriate to Corbett’s observation that *“a footpath, taking off close to where we had been sitting, went down the hill to the valley below and zigzagged up the opposite pine-clad slope to join the forest road two miles further on”*. So we decided, the valley Corbett was talking about could only be the “second valley” and we had to undertake a much longer and more strenuous search than we had expected. After a steep climb downhill from the far side of the “adjacent ridge” brought us to a ravine and a rock formation that looked quite promising at first view. But in a closer view, it had too many inconsistencies and so we later more or less abandoned the thought, it might be the right one. We even did not give this location a name.

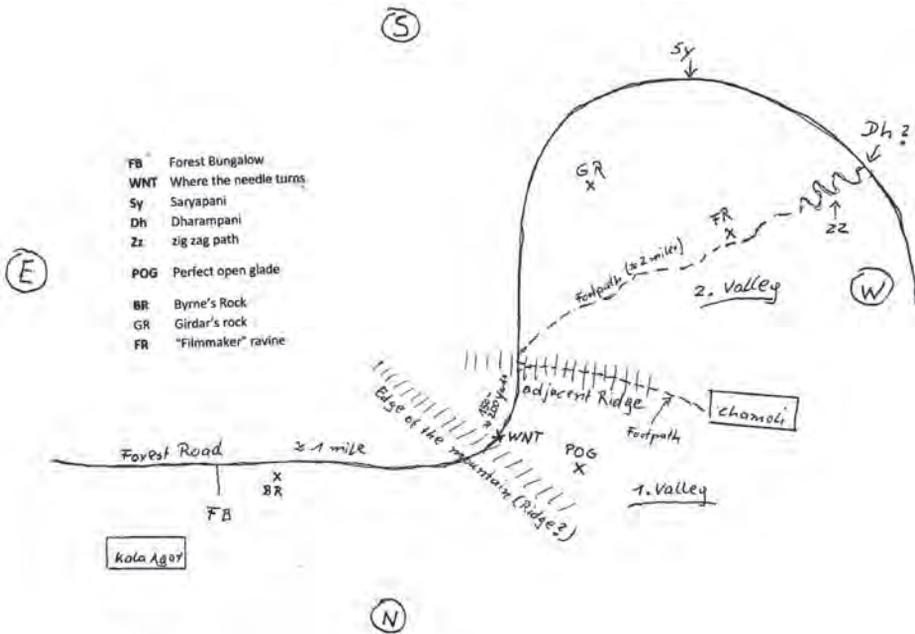
“You have to go further around”, these words of an old villager of Kala Agar accompanied us on our 2014 trip, where we again tried to solve the puzzle. So we went still further around on the forest road and – on the advice of a villager called Girdar – we were led to a rock formation in a ravine some hundred yards below Saryapani. Its location seemed quite fine and also the measurements made by Joseph Jordania and Kristoph Kotecha were promising. Nonetheless especially Priyvratt and I were not really convinced. Wasn’t it for the testimony of the villager, no one of us would ever have taken notice of this structure, we later called “villagers rock” or “Girdar rock”. They were not so different from many others we had already passed this day. No “school slate” or anything resembling it. On our way back my head was swirling

with different rocks and when we passed the bend “where the needle turns” I did not know anymore what I should have to believe.

Next day Joseph and Kotecha went again to “Girdars rock” to complete their measurements. Priyvrat and I decided to follow another trace. At this point of research, no one of us had gone down into the valley in front of the “adjacent ridge”, the so-called “first valley”. We had ruled this out, as the locality did not seem to fit Corbett’s description. But what if we had got anything wrong? I had set so much hope on this place on my first visit. What if despite all good arguments the school-slate would wait for us down here? Our friends were skeptical and thought of it as a waste of energy but anyway, we had no better idea and in a mixture of hope and desperation, Priyvrat and I went down. There was nothing resembling a “school slate” in any of the two ravines in question, but on our way back we were surprised by a startling discovery. Around 100 yards in height below the forest road we came across a place we called “the perfect open glade”. In every detail, it fitted to Corbett’s description of “*the open patch of ground which bordered the oak thicket in which the (Chamoli) lad had been killed*” and where Corbett tied the buffalo on a stump and stood watch about his men. This was a really interesting find that was worth considering and so even without our sought after school slate we went back in good spirit. Though our friends did not support the idea, for me and I think also for Priyvrat, was it from now at least a possibility that should not fully be ruled out, that the events of Corbett’s hunt might have occurred in the “first valley” in front of the adjacent ridge. At least the “open patch of ground” seemed to be there.

In 2018 there was no groundbreaking discovery either. In my diary I have told you about an attractive filming location, I called: The “filmmaker’s ravine”. It is still “further around” and deeper down into the second valley than “Girdars rock”. You will find it when coming down the “zigzag path from Dharampani” and follow a footpath for a few hundred yards up the opposite hill. It has many amazingly fitting details you can correlate very well to the story. It definitely would be a good place for a filmmaker. But he would have to choose angles and lenses carefully as the sizes of the slate, the glide, and the sandy bed are much too small. We enjoyed the finding that inspired our imagination but did not believe in it as the real place.

So at the moment you might really be confused about ridges, valleys, different rocks and paths. So before you continue reading, have a look at this **Sketch map** on which I have tried to give you an overview of the most important places:



The fundamental problem:

The apparently “never-ending story“ of Chowgarh gave me a serious headache and also a fair amount of frustration on our last trip. You may find similar difficulties in other places, for example in the question of the right bungalow in Champawat, but it was here where this problem annoyed me the most and lead me to think it over in a fundamental way. With each trip to this place, my uncertainty did not decrease – what I thought it should – but increased. I never had been so sure about the right place as on my first trip and never was so unsure as to when leaving in 2018. The number of possibilities had grown to the verge of confusion and there was no place that as a whole had been substantially better than the other. Maybe it was unfair to think so, but these were my thoughts on the way back and I asked myself why. I know it is not the worst thing and by no means unusual in scientific progress to raise more questions than getting answers, but my feeling of uncertainty went deeper than that. My question now is: Will it ever be possible – and I mean even theoretically possible – to find here in Chowgarh and perhaps also in other places the one location that meets all the requirements of the information Corbett gave to us. For some places as maybe the rock in the Champa gorge there might be a reasonable certainty, but for other places there is not and maybe never will be. Again, my question is not: Haven't we found the right place because we got something wrong, because the landscape had changed or we simply still not had searched long enough. My question is: Would it even be theoretically possible, to bring all the information provided by Corbett in one coherent

picture. My answer at the moment is “no, it never will be” and I will try to show it to you with a set of different possible scenarios that illustrate one basic problem.

Different scenarios and one dilemma:

The first scenario I will present to you is my original assumption that the ravine and the school-slate are in the first valley in front of the adjacent ridge. I know, most of us disagree with this assumption as it does not correspond with Corbett’s information that on top of the opposite pine-clad slope is the forest road. These critics are completely right as there is just a small footpath on top of this ridge and not the forest road. But for the shooting distance – Corbett indicates as 200-300 yards from the opposite slope – would be quite fine here – not to mention the “perfect open glade” Priyvrat and I had found in this valley.

Let us assume for a second scenario that the ravine with the slate is in the second and much bigger valley behind the adjacent ridge. Most of my friends would share this opinion. As this valley is circled around by the forest road, Corbett’s information corresponds perfectly with the actual terrain, that a path branching off after the adjacent ridge after crossing the valley and zigzagging up the opposite pine-clad slope will join the forest road again around two miles on. But there are two other distances Corbett gives us in respect of this valley. There is the already mentioned shooting distance from the opposite slope of 200-300 yards and the distance from the forest road to the place where the Chamoli boy was killed and Corbett tied the buffalo calf. This Corbett describes as “some five hundred yards” and later he tells us that from here he came to the ravine with the slate after “about a hundred yards along the path”. Remember, he had told us of a distance of two miles to the crest of the opposite slope, so if these details were just roughly correct, you would have to calculate a shooting distance of more than a mile even if we assume Corbett did not plan to shoot from the top of the ridge. This would be utterly impossible. If you take the shooting distance serious, the ravine had to be much nearer to the opposite slope. The “filmmaker ravine” would more or less match this requirement. But in this case, you would have to at least double the distance between the forest road and the place, the Chamoli boy had been killed.

I cannot see how it should be possible to bring the different information, Corbett gives to us, into one picture. This has fatal consequences for any researcher trying to present any given place as the right one. Unless he cannot present an unmistakable school slate in a perfect fitting ravine – what probably might be impossible by time induced changes in landscape – he will be rejected by any critic with Corbett’s own words. He will be condemned either for having neglected the shooting distance or ignored the distance of the Chamoli boy killing site from the forest road. In case he would have dared to argue for the first valley, critics will tell him that there is no forest road there and distances are much shorter than two miles anyway. I think, we all look at an obvious dilemma here and I have no other reasonable solution than to assume

that not every information Corbett gives to us is as exact as we maybe think it is. And as you see in this example, these are not just slight differences of a few yards but quite serious ones that are affecting hundreds of yards and doubling (or cut in half) distances. I firmly believe Corbett never gave false information intentionally. But as a human being – even provided with an admirably accurate memory – he underlies fundamental human conditions. And this brings me to some results of modern brain research. But before to begin with, I will make it perfectly clear: In no way I want to show any malfunction in Corbett’s brain. On the contrary, my belief is he has much better observation skills and memory performances than most of us. But he is not super-natural and so isn’t his brain and his memory.

“The memory illusion” – causes of unintentional memory errors

Back home this thoughts still pursued me and I tried to gain some basic information about modern brain science. By a positive review in a newspaper I came across Dr. Julia Shaws’ book, “The memory illusion. Remembering, Forgetting and the Science of False Memory”. Here I learned that it is very common to have memories that give the feeling of true memories, but they aren’t. We confuse external information with own personal memories and different memory traces can merge into one. Brains can be plastically formed and memories can get changed. If you ask, why evolution can create such imperfection in an as important structure as the human brain, scientists will tell you that this is no imperfection at all but the side effect of the adaptability and efficiency of the brain. Neurons connect to useful networks and these networks are modified under the impression of new experiences. If we would be unable to incorporate new information in existing neuronal networks we also wouldn’t be able to cope with changes in our environment. Would the brain try to remember every detail of a distinct situation without regard of its importance – for example the pattern of the shirt of the counterpart or the potted plant in the background -, its functions would become slower and less efficient. We might miss important details and maybe remember the potted plant instead of the relevant conversation. So the brain has to set priorities to be effective. But when recalling the situation later, the brain does not leave us with a blank background and maybe fills it with a random pot plant. All this is no fault but the evolutionary advantage of a shapeable and effective brain. But it has the inevitable side effect that memories can get changed.

There is an interesting theory called “retrieval induced forgetting”. It says that each time we recall a memory something of it will be forgotten or changed just by recalling it. This is because, in the process of recalling the information, it will be verified, recreated and saved again. So over time – in the example above – we might get fully convinced it was exactly this specific pot plant in the room of our conversation – but it is false memory indeed. This mechanism made me think of something similar to image editing in digital photography. Each time you open a file and work on it, some-

thing gets lost or changed. When you store the file again, you have a new version and no chance to come back to the original one. It seems to be the same with our brain. And think about how often Corbett recalled his memories for writing books or telling his stories to friends or school children. When recalled, each event in our brain gets vulnerable for distortion or change.

A theory that tries to explain the mechanism of creating false memories is the so-called “Fuzzy-Trace-Theory”. These memories are stored in two different forms, as “verbatim” with exact details and as “gist” (fuzzy), which means reduced to the essential significance of the event. If for example we remember a conversation with another person, we remember as well the exact words (verbatim) as the essence (positive, friendly...). It is important to know that both, the storage and the retrieval of verbatim and gist information operate in a parallel way via distinct pathways, independent of each other. One of these traces can be stronger and more easily accessible than the other. Over time verbatim traces are less stable and become inaccessible faster than gist traces. If verbatim traces of a distinct event have faded, the gist trace may create a new fitting verbatim or combine it with another fragment already in the brain. So if you have the memory of a nice talk with a friend in a distinct Café. It is possible that you remember correctly the friendly atmosphere of this conversation but no more the exact circumstances where the conversation took place. So your memory may create a false memory by combining the still accessible “gist trace” (concerning the essence of the meeting) with a verbatim trace of another Café (interior, on which table you were seated...) you are familiar with. You remember the meeting correct by its basic content, but you would swear it had happened in another Café, as it actually did. This is what the “Fuzzy-Trace-Theory” postulates: Memory failures can occur because all of our recollections are stored in different fragments and these fragments can sometimes be combined in a new way, that doesn't correspond anymore with the real events.

Are there persons with a perfect (photographic) memory?

Sometimes people speculate Jim Corbett might have had something like a photographic memory. In contrast, Julia Shaw insists that no person has an infallible memory and that a photographic memory in a strict sense does not exist at all. There are of course persons with brain skills that are better and worse, but not even the best ones are immune to distortion and error. This is also true for people with so-called HSAMs (Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory). There indeed seem to be persons with an eidetic memory who have pictures in their mind with an unbelievable amount of details, but they succumb also the same conditions, errors and distortions as any other persons. The real advantage these people have compared with others is maybe not so much a larger memory size than just a better and quicker way to get access to the stored facts. There is no proof for a sort of “Webcam” in our mind that retains everything in a secret place of our brain. There seems to be not even a “Life-selfie”

that produces perfect and permanent engrams of single situations. And even if we would have such a kind of a “Braincam”, there at the same time would be some kind of a “Brain-Photoshop” in us to modify the content. According to Shaw, we should not speak of a photographic memory, at least not in the sense of perfection and stability.

The influence of verbalization

Jim Corbett often had to put his own personal experiences and memories into words, be it in his letters to Maggie, talking to his friends and comrades, teaching school children about nature and of course by writing his books. Scientists have found there are distortions of memories while communicating with others. Especially the process of transferring visual encoded information in words is not without faults and every time we verbalize pictures, sounds or olfactory impressions we change or lose information. This process is called “verbal overshadowing”. One reason for this is that with the verbalization of an event we produce competing memories. It is no more just the memory of the event itself, but from now on also the memory of the situation we tried to describe the event. This second memory can weaken the original information.

Borrowing memories from others

To share memories with other persons is another source of creating false memories by a phenomenon called “memory borrowing”, what means to wave foreign information – be it intentional or unintentional – into one’s own memory. Memories can be infectious and foreign information can supplement or overlay our own. It is possible we forget the source and see it further on as part of our own experience. I don’t see any clue in Corbett’s work for such a “memory borrowing”, but it might be worth discussing this point in connection with the books of Kenneth Anderson, another by his books well-known hunter of south India. Many people think he has “made up” his experiences to give a better and more thrilling reading. Here is not the place to go deeper into this discussion, but Anderson seems to have been a quite communicative person who often spent time with friends and hunting comrades talking about their adventures. So intentional or unintentional “memory borrowing” might be a plausible background for some of his stories.

Memory failures and stress

Corbett definitely experienced profoundly stressful situations while hunting man-eating predators. This probably was the case especially around the climax of the stories, when he met for example the Chowgarh tigress just eight feet away on the sandy bed behind the “school slate” or was waiting for the Thak tigress at the big rock when darkness fell in. In which way stress or even traumatic situations affect human memory doesn’t seem to be answered uniformly. It is known that soldiers in combat

situations had suffered memory loss or did confuse the experiences of other soldiers with their own. Julia Shaw tells the story of Brian Williams, a war correspondent and TV-Moderator. He was sitting in one of four helicopters that came under fire during the Iraq war. After coming home he told everyone, his helicopter had been hit by an anti-tank-missile and they had to do an emergency landing in hostile territory. But soon it turned out that he never really sat in the attacked helicopter but in the one behind. The story he told was the story that happened to the helicopter in front of him. He was strongly criticized for adding some spice to his report and finally even lost his job. But Julia Shaw firmly believes it was not intentional but false memory in a highly emotional and stressful situation.

The “Traumatic Memory Argument” says, that we remember traumatic events worse than other kinds of experiences. Our memory of such situations would consist of memory fragments, emotions and sensory impressions without a coherent structure. But there are other more recent researchers who argue that there is no proof for memory fragmentation in traumatic or deeply emotional situations. They even suggest a “trauma superiority effect” that the memory of such events might be even stronger, more stable and more resistant against memory loss. But it has to be said too – and the story of the war correspondent in the helicopter seems to support this – that to remember events with profound clarity doesn’t prove for its accuracy.

A plausible explanation for these seemingly contradictory theories I have found in an article by Hanna Drimalla (supervised by Prof. Dr. Hans J. Markowitsch) “Gedächtnisunter Strom” (=memory under pressure). They argue that stress can as well block memory as improve its abilities. It depends on the situation and mainly on its intensity. Moderate stress focuses the attention on what does threaten us and what might save us from danger. Information that has saved our life can imprint itself deep in our memory. Moderate stress seems to work as a filter. Relevant information slips quickly in our memory while other impressions were cut out. On the other hand, intense and overwhelming stress can have the opposite effect on memory function. It seems as if the filter can also get too tight to let information pass through into memory. Thus in summary, moderate stress might improve memory (in stress-relevant details), while intense and overwhelming stress might affect it.

I am not completely sure what this implies for the reliability of Corbett’s memory. At least I think, we can say one thing for sure: Stress, even if moderate, leads to mask everything that is not in actual connection with the cause of stress. So we should not wonder Corbett might not describe structures that are not directly connected with the danger he was exposed to. They might have been blocked out by concentration on the safety of him and his men. But what’s with the nightjar eggs, you might ask? There was no danger to expect from them. True, but Hanna Drimalla also tells of an interesting experiment with rats. These animals remember details of a possible escape route best in moderate stressing situations – better than without stress and better than

while enduring life-threatening stress. So if we suppose moderate stress for Corbett in his pursuit of the tigress while not yet been in the actual confrontation, we can assume that he was very well able to notice on its way every detail what might be important for revealing the presence of the tigress.

More examples of possible memory-failures

When looking at certain articles of some of my Corbett friends it looks like some similar thoughts also occurred to them. Joseph Jordania, who usually will defend the accuracy of Corbett's descriptions, refers to a possible memory failure of our hero while discussing the two most probable candidates of rocks for the final "showdown" of the Thak story. The one is the rock found by himself (he calls "JJ's rock") and the other was first described by Joel Lyall and recently rediscovered by Mr. Quinton Ottley (he calls "JL's rock"). Jordania believes "JJ rock" to be better for its details and "JL's rock" better for its location. I will not go in details here because they will be discussed extensively at another place. But memory loss or false memories could be responsible for such discrepancies. So if one of these rocks is the right one – and I don't think of a reasonable alternative to this assumption – Corbett either did not describe the locality correctly or some details of the rock and his surroundings. Jordania in his comparison favors "JJ's rock". My personal opinion is that there is no clear winner and you could argue with a false-memory-theory for both sides. Anyway, similar to the Chowgarh dilemma, also in Thak it is not possible to bring every detail Corbett mentions in one clear picture. The explanation Dr Jordania suggests is "memory failure caused by extreme stress". He consulted some experts in the field of stress-related memory failures that confirmed the possibility that such stressful situations might well cause false memories and memory loss. Passage of time and the sleep deprivation, Corbett had to endure in the last days of the hunt, might be additional causes.

Another interesting observation was made by Preetum Gheerawo (Kotecha). He had noticed that the discrepancies between Corbett's books and other sources – for example, the letters to his sister Maggie – were stronger occurring in the cases, when Corbett was going after the same man-eater for the second time. Besides Panar, Rudraprayag and Thak this was also the case in Chowgarh. Dr. Jordania attributed this to an increased pressure when he had to come back from the first hunting expedition empty-handed. However it might as well have to do with the "shapeable-brain" and with what the "Fuzzy-Trace-Theory" postulates: Memory failures can occur because all of our recollections are stored in different fragments and these fragments can sometimes be combined in a new way, that doesn't correspond anymore with the real events. If this is the case, it would not be unreasonable to assume that if you have in your memory recollections of more than one visit at the same place, the chances of new combinations of memories and therefore failures are enhanced.

In his article “The Rudraprayag goat controversy”, PriyvratGadhvi deals with ‘situational inconsistencies’ in a special part the of Rudraprayag story. In the published book in the chapter “Death of a goat” Corbett tells of a life-threatening situation during his hunt and the big tension and fear he had experienced. In a letter to Maggie written shortly after this event (published in “My Kumaon”, 2012), the situation appears as quite normal and unspectacular. The main explanation for Priyvrat Gadhviis that Corbett did not want to reveal to Maggie and his family the great dangers he was exposed to on a daily basis.

In this context Gadhvi also raised the subject of Corbett’s memory. It is the Atkinson-Shiffrin model, he refers to, a three-part multi-store model from 1968 that asserts different separate components of human memory. On the base of this model he thinks, Corbett indeed had an exceptional episodic and pictorial memory, but a more ordinary semantic and data-orientated one. However in the Chowgarh dilemma we also have to deal with memory failure concerning locations what would fall in the theory mentioned by Gadhvi in the episodic-pictorial category. I think the “Fuzzy-Trace-Theory” might offer a better explanation with its distinction of “verbatim” (exact details) and “gist” (the essential significance of the event) information. As “gist” information (In the Rudraprayag story: Deep tension and fear) seem to be more stable, false memories could be raised by creating a new “verbatim” trace and exchanging it against the already faded original one.

Conclusion

In a review of the “Memory illusion” by Julia Shaw you will find the sentence: “When you have read this book will never trust any memory you have.” I will not go this far, not in respect of my own memory nor in respect of Jim Corbett’s. But of course we have to reckon that even an exceptional memory as his can be wrong. It might have changed during a long time of telling and retelling the events or for other reasons mentioned above. If we take into account the possible failures the human brain is subject to, the more we might find it admirable, how often Corbett’s descriptions proved perfectly accurate. So it is definitely no fault in a general way to rely on the authenticity of his accounts. But we also should not take it too dogmatic, keep an open mind and – if not everything falls in place – do not strictly exclude possibilities that on first sight seem to be contradictory. There might be lost information, a mixture of memory fragments or whatever else.

Let us come back to Chowgarh: Here Corbett’s brain might have mixed the information of the location of the more remote forest road with the nearer footpath to Chamoli, so the events might have happened in the first and nearer valley in front of the adjacent ridge. Or he was wrong with a specific distance so everything could have happened in the second valley. Maybe the memory of a longer space between the open glade and the ravine has faded. This might have been the case because nothing

worth telling and remembering had happened in between. If this is so it would even be possible that the open glade was in the first valley (Priyvrat and I might indeed have found the right one) and the ravine of the climax would be in the second one. I know, this is just speculation and there is no proof for it. But we have to take into account false information even by our admired Jim. We should not expect anything else by him as a human being and should not blame him for this.

The growing number of possibilities doesn't make research easier. They make it probably more frustrating for those, who want to find the exact places and be reasonably sure about them. But there is more we can do than just stay frustrated. I think we can do two things: The first one is to weigh the chances and possibilities as scientifically as possible. Not every error is equally probable. There are additional facts or structures described by Corbett that can be seen on one place and not on the other. So we can get fact related, reasonable opinions even if we might never get a hundred percent sure and not everyone will agree about them. We might even develop a method to weigh chances, as Dr. Jordania suggested in a letter to me after reading the first draft of this article. But even if we do, in some cases – and I think Chowgarh might be one of these – we will not succeed. If this is the case we can do one last but important thing and that is: Accepting it! If we do we maybe find new enjoyment in discussing possible scenarios, weighing chances and – most important of all – reminding us of the favour to be able to walk in beautiful Corbett country, full of stories and thrilling events and to bring them to life in the area of the real events – even if we don't have evidence of an “exact spot”. For me, the spirit of Corbett lives in these places and though I still want to find “the” ravine and “the” school slate, it is second to the joy of being here and let the story happen in my mind in midst of the original stage where everything took place. Some places we will be able to locate exactly, of others we might never be sure but just guess and come up with more or less probable scenarios. But anyway, let us keep searching and enjoying it!

Rudraprayag – Corbett and his Rifle ‘Come Together’

BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS

Spending two days with Corbett’s .275 rifle at Camp Kyari in Syat in the Bhabar jungle between Kaladhungi and Kota Bagh was the highlight of our April 2016 trip to India.

After a public presentation of the rifle in Ramnagar on 4th April 2016, the party of people hosted by John Rigby and Co, the UK-based gun manufacturer (the archived records of which hold the entry for the original sale of the rifle to Mantons of Calcutta on 19th April 1905) had made the very valuable donation of an anti-poaching vehicle to Corbett National Park (CNP), and was invited to the Park for a two-day safari. Since rifles, even unloaded ones, are strictly prohibited in CNP, the rest of our party, Dr Jordania, Manfred, Fernando and myself were left with the very pleasant task of ‘guarding’ Corbett’s rifle (Priyvrat had brought his family with us to Syat and, after the Ramnagar event, they left). We might say that we all marvelled at the idea of looking after Corbett’s old and faithful friend, the .275 Rigby. The very first night the rifle was with us Kamal had scheduled a very informal meeting for us with Thakur Dutt Joshi, who is affectionately known as ‘Mini Corbett’ here at the base of the Himalayan foothills. You can read his story in another chapter of this book, in which Corbett’s faithful old friend meets Thakur Dutt Joshi, ‘the old meeting the new’, as I termed it.

We spent the next two days in the memorable company of the rifle and the whole camp was soaked in a ‘Corbett atmosphere’ for the 48 hours that the rifle was with us. Corbett’s DNA was there, with us, in the camp! The next task for us on the 7th April 2016 was to ‘escort’ the rifle to Ramnagar, just outside the boundaries of CNP and return it to the care of Marc Newton who was heading the Rigby party (see Marc Newton’s writing about the Corbett rifle in his chapter “*Corbett Magic*” in our 2016 edition of *Behind Jim Corbett’s Stories*). From Amdanda (East Gate of CNP), just after where the Rigby party met us, we motored to Mansi where we had lunch on the bank of one of the tributaries of the Ramganga. From there on to Chaukutiya, then Ghairsain and Nawli, driving along the steep hills, which treated us to sights of the best mountain and valley views we had seen during our trips to India.

After a full twelve-hour trip, having started at Ramnagar, and some 180km of rough mountain driving, we reached Karanprayag, where the rivers Pindar and Alaknanda meet, quite late in the afternoon. After a brief stop in Karanprayag to admire the confluence, one of the ‘panch prayag of Ganga Mai’ [five confluences of Mother Ganges], we started the descent to Rudraprayag which we reached in pitch dark. Our hotel was in Golabrai, within walking distance of where the notorious man-eating

leopard of Rudraprayag was shot. It was after our shower, when we were relaxing in the hotel's lounge that Marc Newton introduced us to his sense of humour when he came to tell us that the tree machan on which Corbett sat for the leopard was still there!

The purpose of our visit to Rudraprayag was to re-unite the rifle with the place where the leopard was shot. Both seasoned and casual Corbett fans will know that in Golabrai a substantial masonry monument has been built on the spot where the leopard met its end. It would be at this particular spot that a gathering had been planned for the next day. The Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) and some officials from Rudraprayag and maybe from Pauri (the nearest big town) as well were invited to attend, together with local people – mainly the family of the 'Pundit' whom Corbett mentions as playing a key part in his story.

Exhausted after the long journey we had endured and because of the need to freshen up for the formal ceremony that was awaiting us the next day, we went to bed shortly after dinner and soon fell asleep. The next morning we discovered that our rooms had a commanding view of one of the main tributaries of the Ganges (the other one being the Baghirath river and both meet at Devaprayag further downstream), formed by the meeting of the Mandakini and Alaknanda rivers, which we could see a couple of kilometres further upstream at Rudraprayag. This tributary of the Ganges runs roughly parallel to the road between Golabrai and Rudraprayag. Atop the high bank of the Alaknanda, a few more yards upstream beyond the confluence but overlooking it, is the bungalow where Corbett stayed. The area at its rear is a low-walled, paved patio-type courtyard which provides a beautiful view of the confluence (see photograph of the confluence taken from this position). On the opposite side of the bungalow is another small courtyard area that borders the road, which is accessed through a little gate. It was on leaving the bungalow through this gate in the morning that Corbett often found the pugmarks of the man-eater, as recorded in his book.

Early morning, before breakfast, Kamal came to my room and asked me to accompany him urgently to check the arrangements. I set off hurriedly with Kamal, leaving my daughters in the room (they are quite grown-up now, four years after their first venture into Corbett country, and about whom you may have read in our 2016 edition of *Behind Jim Corbett's Stories*).

It was Kamal, our tour operator, who had the responsibility of making contact with the Forest Department and the Government officials of Garhwal district to make the event a success. To their credit I will say that they all did a thorough job. A tent had been erected on the place where the monument stands, just beside the mango tree, which is probably the one on which Corbett sat in a machan to shoot the man-eater. Chairs, for us and the officials, had already been placed and a microphone and its speaker system were being set up. Kamal told me that the people invited were composed of some ten members of the Pundit's immediate family and a maximum of six Government officials, including the DFO.

Fearing that there might be insufficient people to justify all the arrangements and size of the tent, Kamal suggested that we go to the school we had seen on our arrival, the Anoop Negi Memorial Public School, to meet the schoolmaster and invite some of the schoolchildren to the ceremony. There, the schoolmaster, Mr. Alok Singh Negi, a perfect gentleman, soft-spoken and calm all at once, told me that exams were due but promised to do his best to send some children to the gathering.

After our whole party had finally reached the tent, I anxiously watched the road to see if the children were coming, since the tent looked quite empty. Moments later I was relieved that Mr. Alok Singh had kept his word as schoolchildren arrived and sat on the ground, which was covered with a red carpet. At zero-hour, with all the invitees present and ready, the rifle was taken from the vehicle in which it came, and from its original box. It was then laid on the monument which bore a bust of Corbett, garlanded for the occasion.

One could feel the atmosphere, especially among the elders of the Pundit's family who were deeply moved by the return of the rifle which had possibly, if not probably, saved the lives of many of their past relatives, including some of their direct forebears and hence, were aware of owing their own lives to Corbett's use of that very rifle, which is almost sacred to them, after firing that single shot in the middle of the night of the 1st to the 2nd May 1926. Ninety years later, the bust of their saviour had been reunited with his faithful old friend, the .275 rifle, at the very place where their collective joint history had been created.

Nearly every official, and some of us, had been invited to address the assembly, composed mainly of the schoolchildren. The DFO made a moving speech to them, making an appeal for them to teach their parents about the ill effects of burning down the forests to make fresh grass for their cattle. I should like to think he went home that day with the satisfaction that the very eager assembly of children had understood him very well on this point.

The rifle then passed from hand to hand to all the relatives of the Pundit and the officials too. Everybody took turns and posed with it. It was then that I approached the most elderly member of the Pundit's family, asking if I could come and meet him at his home after the event. I was pleased but not surprised at all when he asked what we would like to have for dinner for, having toured many places Corbett identifies in his stories, I am now familiar with the generous hospitality of these simple hill folk, as described by Corbett and with whom he shared much mutual affection.

My object in meeting this elderly gentleman, Mr Kashi Ram Deoli (possibly spelled 'Dev-li') was to get acquainted with his family and to know how they are connected to the Pundit, one of the main characters in Corbett's Rudraprayag story. I

was very pleased to hear all the particulars of Mr Kashi Ram's reminiscences, which I am about to relate to you.

The Pundit's name was Ishwari Dutt Deoli and he was born around 1870 and died at the age of 70 years in 1941. He was not an ascetic in the true sense of a 'sadhu' [sage] and therefore he married and fathered two sons, Ram-Prasad and Bhaskaran. He had been officiating as a Pundit [God's Servant] since he was quite young and after his 'tapaasya' [initiation] in the forests around Badrinath, he later took up quarters in Golabrai. There he had obtained a lease of land right on the pilgrim's road to make a shelter for the pilgrims, some 150 yards from his house. He had an only brother whose name was Bholah Dutt Deoli and among the latter's descendants is Kashi Ram, my interlocutor.

Their land and main property along the pilgrim road is situated on the right when moving from Sreenagar to Rudraprayag. On the left, there is a tea stall and small shop, which belongs to the descendants of Bholah Dutt. It is on the same side as the tea stall (and about fifty yards away, in the direction of Rudraprayag) that the present day mango tree, from where the leopard of Rudraprayag was shot, is located. In this vicinity nowadays there are houses and small businesses, including the tea stall and other sundry trades. Almost right in front of their main property and nearly opposite the tea stall, there is a spring, which can also be observed in the photo Corbett took showing the mango tree from where the leopard was shot (in the right background). I will come back to this a little later.

According to Kashi Ram, the house of the Pundit was there before the pilgrim shelter was made and had been built by the Pundit's father, Bhawanee Dutt. His two sons, Ishwari and Bholah, shared this house until Bholah moved next to the pilgrim shelter. Upon the death of Pundit Ishwari, the pilgrim shelter ceased to exist and Bholah moved back to the Pundit's house and converted the shelter into the family's homes and places of trade. Bholah had three sons, Brahmanand, Gobindram and Madhuram.

Brahmanand, the eldest, also became a Pundit and therefore perpetuated the service to God and to humanity, characteristic of his uncle. He died in 1984 at the age of 68 years (he had lived all his young life 'under the shadow' of the man-eater until he was about ten years old, when Corbett visited the area to hunt and eventually shoot the man-eater). David Blake, a fellow Corbett enthusiast, explored Golabrai and Rudraprayag in 1978 with a friend, Hussein. From coloured photos David took during his visit I had seen Pundit Brahmanand and his tea shop, which still stands to date and is now run by his grand nephew, Kailash Dutt Deoli, also known as Chandra. I think I gave him a great surprise when I opened my laptop and showed him the photo of his grand uncle, Pundit Brahmanand which David Blake graciously sent me just a few days before I embarked on this India trip. Kailash Dutt told me none of his relatives knew that a photo of Pundit Brahmanand had ever been taken and therefore made the humble request that I send him a copy of it. When I returned home I duly

obliged by sending a print to Kamal, who forwarded it to Kailash Dutt some weeks after. Although I'm not a great tea drinker, I can say that Kailash Dutt serves the best tea in the region as compared to the expensive hotels and other resorts now scattered in and around Golabrai and Rudraprayag. Kailash Dutt is the grandson of Gobindram, Bholah Dutt's second son. His youngest son, Madhuram, died in 1998. Kashi Ram Deoli is the last of Madhuram's four sons, being born on 29th September 1940 and marrying on 25th April 1963.

Kashi Ram has a very good memory regarding his cousins on Pundit Ishwari's side (Kashi Ram is part of the lineage of Pundit Ishwari's brother, Bholah Dutt). The two sons of Pundit Ishwari, Ram-Prasad and Bhaskaran, had in all seven sons. The eldest of them, Tota Ram (also known as Tilak Ram), son of Ram-Prasad is worth mentioning in this context. In 1998, a Prabir Nath Banerji had visited Golabrai in connection with Corbett and the leopard. He wrote a published article about his visit (my thanks goes to my co-author Priyvrat for sending me this article) and cites Tilak Ram as the one who had carried the history and legacy of his grandfather, Pundit Ishwari, through the generations. Banerji says that Tilak Ram firmly defended the estate of the family against prospectors looking to buy it to perhaps convert it into some resort for tourists.

According to Banerji, the pilgrim shelter was still there in 1998 and shown to him by Tilak Ram along with the mango tree from where the leopard was shot, which still bore sweet fruits. Kashi Ram was not of that opinion concerning the pilgrim shelter, although he admits that the mango tree still produces fruits sporadically. Tilak Ram died around 2008 and the other grandsons on Pundit Ishwari's side are either dead or dispersed either to Bombay or Canada and only one of them is nearby in Sreenagar.

Therefore, I am more inclined to favour Kashi Ram's version that the pilgrim shelter had ceased operation after the Pundit's death in the 1940's (Banerji also said that Tilak Ram gave 1949 as the year of death of the Pundit, while Kashi Ram says 1941). Remarkably, Kashi Ram had stated to me all the names of his cousins and their death dates and places of residence. Just to be sure, I asked Kashi Ram again about the location of the former pilgrim shelter. He reiterated that his house is at the farthest end of what was formerly the pilgrim shelter, which had subsequently been renovated and improved and now forms the houses of his relatives. For him the reference by which he knows the old pilgrim shelter is the spring, which he said was just a few yards from it. This spring I found to be located only some fifty yards from Kashi Ram's house on the same side of the road. This is a definite landmark and still there today, as it was in Corbett's day.

Further questioned about the road, Kashi Ram states that he remembers there was a footpath in his younger days rather than a motor road, which, according to him, came in the late 1950's or even the early 1960's. He is adamant that the motor road followed the exact footpath as it was during Corbett's times. When the motor road was made, he thinks that it was the administration at Pauri that placed next to it the

first monument to Corbett. The one of today, which he says stands at the same place, has just been renovated and had a Corbett bust placed on it. He does not remember a monument when he was young. This creates a complication for me however – I would have liked to hear Kashi Ram tell me the road took an alternate path to the footpath and that the monument had been there before his birth. Let me explain why.

On first seeing the mango tree I was very sceptical of it being the one Corbett used because it had a fork with two branches at about 6 feet above the ground, while Corbett showed a mango tree which has its first fork well above the height of an average man, let's say eight feet as judged from a photo in his book. Another photo of Corbett's shows the mango tree on the right of the footpath (all directions referred to are from Golabrai towards Rudraprayag, some 2.5km ahead), appearing to be on the same side as the spring. If the motor road was constructed on the footpath, that's consistent with the spring and the buildings, but not with the present-day tree, which is now on the left of the road.

However, it seems this was a later adjustment. While the 'new' road followed the footpath for the majority of its length, Pundit Brahmanand emphasised to David Blake in 1978 that the road, or main path / track before it was tarmacked, used to pass (and did in Corbett's day) on the other side of the tree. The 'new' road, made long after Corbett's day, was for some reason (maybe erosion to both the left and right of the tree?), laid on the other side of the tree to the original path.

We had met Kashi Ram before sunset, in good light, and he had led us to the house of Pundit Ishwari, of which only two facades and the base structure still stand. An uphill lane leads to it, about twenty-five yards along the road and fifty yards up the hillside to the right of the road. Corbett writes: "In the morning, when the pundit arrived from his house on the hill above the mango tree..." and a little later: "...to give them accommodation in his house, which was fifty yards above the mango tree..." Therefore, if the pundit's house makes fifty yards directly to the road and if Corbett's measurement was dead accurate, then the mango tree should have been there, on the right or (allowing for Pundit Brahmanand's account) left of the road. It was not. So, either the mango tree with the monument is not in the correct position or the remains of what we were told was the pundit's house is not in the correct position.

Perhaps it is possible that two locations have been suggested for the Pundit's house. In 1978 Pundit Brahmanand (as mentioned above, alive at the time of the events) pointed out his uncle, Pundit Ishwari's, house to David Blake and his friend Hussein and it was, as described by Corbett, directly above and in line with the mango tree and that line was at a right angle to the direction of the road.

As I have been relying on Kashi Ram's indications I shall, for consistency, stick with the descriptions he gave me. To get a clear picture of the situation now, imagine you are walking from Golabrai towards Rudraprayag. You encounter a spring on your right, then some ten yards from the spring on the right are the houses and businesses

of the Pundit's family where, according to Kashi Ram, the pilgrim shelter was situated. It looks an elongated building nowadays. In front of it to the left of the road is the tea stall of Kailash Dutt, grand nephew of Pundit Brahmanand. Then fifty yards from the spring we reach the house of Kashi Ram on the right of the road. Twenty five yards from Kashi Ram's house, to the left, stands the monument and, of course, a mango tree in front of it. Twenty yards further up there is a lane on the right side of the road, leading uphill fifty yards or so to, supposedly, the former house of Pundit Ishwari (Corbett's pundit in the story).

Corbett writes: "That evening Ibbotson accompanied me to Golabrai and helped me to put up a machan in the mango tree a hundred yards from the pilgrim shelter and fifty yards below the pundit's house." I found the present-day mango tree and the monument next to it, some seventy five yards from the spring (reference for the pilgrim shelter) and also seventy five yards to, what we were told was the pundit's house (25 yards on the road and 50 yards up the hill).

Kashi Ram believes that the present-day mango tree is the original one; I did not wish to contradict him. My thoughts, that evening, which I shared with my friends, was to leave matters as they stood and refrain from writing or even telling about it. However, in many other 'Corbett places' we have been deceived by changes in actual topography. So it is about that which I am writing in this chapter. I do not wish, nor feel able, to make people change their belief about the present-day mango tree. Moreover, who am I to know better than the locals? Kashi Ram was a young boy only twenty years after the facts occurred. He remembered the annual fair in Rudraprayag, in commemoration of the shooting of the leopard which, according to him, was held until he was ten years old. He remembers that the monument came after and not before the end of the fair – perhaps as a substitute? I asked Kashi Ram's permission to go out and investigate again; so I called upon Manfred and we went out.

Leaving Dr Jordania to continue conversation with Kashi Ram, Manfred and I walked right up to the lane, about fifty yards from Kashi Ram's house, where we earlier climbed to what we were told was the pundit's old house. We knew we were standing within yards of the exact location where the leopard of Rudraprayag was shot but how many we were unable to say. The only mango tree to be seen in this vicinity was the one with the low forked branch some twenty five yards away from us, next to the monument, on which we had earlier that day garlanded Corbett's bust, standing proudly.

Regarding the forks in the tree, the same difficulty confronted David Blake in 1978 and he wondered if 52 years could turn the tree in Corbett's photograph into the tree he saw, and only satisfied himself that it could due to the tree's position in relation to the Pundit's house he saw i.e. the former being fifty yards directly below the latter. There were no other houses in the vicinity. He also noted that there were no other trees, let alone mango trees, in the vicinity, nor even stumps or other remains which could possibly be other candidates. How do mango tree forks grow and change with time? I

have to leave that for others to answer – and if our readers include any arborists, we would be happy to hear from them.

Moreover, David Blake stepped down off the road away from the mango tree, moving away from the very steep hillside, the pundit's house on it, and the tree, and followed the general direction, which the leopard, and later, Corbett had taken down the gently sloping hillside in the direction of the Ganges tributary, over uneven ground covered with many shallow mounds and hollows, and relatively short grass. In 1978, there were no other areas where this could easily be done. Towards Rudraprayag, after a few buildings, the ground to the left of the road became very even and formed the flat piece of ground where the old packman kept his goats. In the other direction from the tree were more buildings and Golabrai village.

We left Kashi Ram that evening satisfied at knowing that it was indeed a proud day for him and his family at the rifle ceremony. After taking his blessings, we proceeded the next day to Rishikesh, to have a try at locating the Maha Rishi's ashram (place of meditation), where George Harrison of the Beatles had undergone his initiation in meditation. We did not succeed in finding it however. We had crossed the suspended footbridge at Laxmanjhula from the right to the left bank of the Baghirath and asked people about the ashram. Nobody knew about it. On the bridge we were impressed by a giant langur monkey which was employed by the authorities to chase off the bands of rhesus monkeys that regularly steal popcorn from people's hands.

Two years later in August 2018 more tenacious researchers than we were found the place. It has since been restored and, to my amazement, it is located further downstream from where we had been searching, on the left bank of the Baghirath, in the jungles overlooking Haridwar. It is in this jungle that Corbett started tracking Sultana, trying to locate him and his camp (see *My India*). Nowadays, the place can be visited though it also has more regular visitors in the form of wildlife, including the occasional leopard or tiger.

As it was so often for Corbett hunting man-eaters a *Hard Day's Night* and sometimes for *Eight Days A Week*, so it was to imagine *Something* of the *Long and Winding Road* between Corbett and the Beatles, although they finally *Come Together* at this place.

Editor's Note: For our younger readers, the italicised words are song titles of the Beatles, used to make a word play in the last paragraph.

Further Research – New Dates and Facts

BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS

Welcoming Critics

One of the most pleasant feelings derived from researching Corbett is the discovery of new facts, especially when they confirm previously postulated and published theories and suggestions, as in the First Edition of our book *Behind Jim Corbett's Stories* of 2016 (BCJS 2016).

For example, we received justified criticism or perhaps it would be better to say, heard of differing beliefs, when we argued that Corbett was mistaken to say that he shot the Muktesar man-eater, the Panar man-eater and achieved the record of handling 5,500 tons of goods at Mokameh Ghat, all in the year 1910. I anticipated the shock to Corbett fans and when critics argued that I was wrong to assert that the Muktesar man-eater was shot in 1909, I decided to look for the original article in support of my assertion, having previously had no more evidence than a typeset copy of an article from 'My Kumaon' (OUP 2012).

I did not spare any effort and when, two years later, in 2018, I finally found the original article, I did not leap in joy for, as I say, critics are always welcome, whether they are right or wrong. If they were not, we would have rested in our armchairs and this present paper would not have been written at all; and the efforts to contribute to this Second Volume of *Behind Jim Corbett's Stories* would have been saved.

We are a research group and we make our efforts collectively and as professionally as we can, trying to be both scientific in our methods and as accurate as possible in our recording of information. We always invite criticism from among our members first and then from the public. If we cannot reconcile opposing views we 'agree to disagree'. Was it not Corbett who said that anyone can disagree with him about whatever he wrote, but still remain friends with him? If we make a mistake we always want to be the first to tell you, our readers, where we went wrong and, if we can, correct it. Just like Corbett, we also are human and make mistakes.

Date of Chowgarh Cub Confirmed

In the chapter "Chowgarh Cub Killing Date" in BJCS 2016, it was suggested that the cub could not have been shot in April 1929 as recorded in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* as Corbett says he shot the cub in a letter to Maggie dated 17 May 1928, quoted in the said chapter of our book and sourced from Martin Booth's *Carpet Sahib* (Constable 1986). Critics said that Martin Booth had 'doctored' letters by Corbett and I was not

right to have quoted Martin Booth. Sadly, Martin Booth is no longer with us in this world to defend himself.

It was difficult, very difficult indeed to trace this letter, for it was not at the OUP archives in the UK in 2016 when I first went to investigate. In 2018 I started re-searching again and when Patrick Cumberlege (see ‘*Acknowledgements*’) presented me with the letter, my first thought was ‘Wow! Now the critics will say that Geoffrey Cumberlege had doctored the letters!’ (Patrick is the son of Geoffrey, Corbett’s UK publisher). There is no profit, material or immaterial, in making up ‘facts’, ‘doctoring’ or modifying evidence in favour of what our research suggests. It gives us no pleasure to show that Corbett got some of his dates wrong in the write-up of *The Chowgarh Tigers*, and that Norah Vivian was quite right to have suggested that to Martin Booth when he met her in 1984. (Norah Vivian was the wife of the Deputy Commissioner of Naini Tal and the couple had had a try at the Chowgarh tigress in March 1930).

It is out of respect for Corbett’s attention to detail and accuracy, and the astonishing amount he recorded correctly after the passage of so many eventful years, that we offer these insights to Corbett fans, not in the sense of ‘correcting Corbett’ but in the sense of helping to put the pieces of the puzzle of his past in the right places, which is one of the values of our research work and the publishing of those in BJCS. We are quite sure, wherever he is right now, he would chuckle and agree with our edits.

Tracking down this hard-found letter, which showed no mistake had been made, led me to discover two mistakes which had been made in BJCS 2016, and which nobody had criticised till then! Here is how it happened.

Wide World Magazine. July 1930 – Featuring Corbett and the Talla-Des Man-Eater

Four days prior to our meeting with Patrick Cumberlege, I was seated with my daughter Reyna Jayalukshmi, in the pleasant company of David Blake in a small café in Oxford, UK, near the coach station. On this occasion David, a fellow Corbett enthusiast, surprised us by giving each one of us a present. Mine was an article from the Wide World Magazine edition July 1930, entitled *The Tiger Killer* by Eric H. N. Gill (F.Z.S.) in which Corbett reportedly relates his hunt for (what would later become known as) the Talla Des man-eater mainly and of the Chowgarh cub as a prequel to it. Such items are rare, much-prized and sold over the Internet these days and for David to make such a gift to me, knowing that now the contents will be scrutinised and the essence published out to Corbett fans, is very laudable indeed.

In the article, there is a photo of Corbett with the Bachelor of Powalgarh, wrongly captioned ‘Major Corbett with one of his man-eaters’ (The Bachelor, as we know, was not a man-eater). David rightly pointed out to me that there are two discrepancies between this article and BJCS 2016: The dates assigned for Corbett to be ranked as

Major; and the date of killing the Bachelor – which we assigned as July 1931 and November 1930 respectively.

The author of the article refers to Corbett as Major “Jim” Corbett, quite formally in the introduction of his article and gives a short description of Corbett as follows:

“There is nothing particularly remarkable about “Jim” Corbett’s appearance. Born and reared in Kumaon, he has roamed the mountains for years, until now he knows almost every track and game-trail by heart. Of average height and wiry build, he looks out upon the world with a pair of mild blue eyes which give no indication whatever of his iron constitution and nerves of steel, He is so modest and reticent that it is extremely difficult to get him to relate his adventures”

Corbett himself then takes up the narrative but there are reasons to think his words have been edited by the author of the article. His writing has not been put in inverted commas and some words assigned to Corbett’s are not from his vocabulary as we are accustomed to it in his books.

Discrepancies between the article and The Chowgarh Tigers

The article of the Wide World Magazine is mainly about the hunt for the Talla Des man-eater but Corbett starts by telling that he is after (what would become known in *Man-Eaters Of Kumaon* as) the Chowgarh man-eater:

“Take the case of a tigress that I have just been hunting – an extraordinarily cunning beast that has evaded me for months. Owing to a damaged paw she makes a curious splayed track which is unmistakable; in addition, she has a crippled jaw, and until quite recently enlisted the services of a younger and more able-bodied assistant tiger, who caught and held the victim while she did the killing. Recently this assistant has been shot, and the tigress, left to herself, has since badly mauled several people without being able to kill them outright.”

Corbett then describes the unfortunate woman who was badly wounded by the man-eater and who he treated afterwards. But the discrepancy with the account in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* is that Corbett, in the article, is reported to have said that:

“[the] Next day [Ed. :after wounding the woman] she attacked a man grazing a herd of buffaloes but again was only able to maul him; the buffaloes clustered together and drove the brute off”

In *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*, Corbett reported at least several days (ten to twelve) between the wounded woman and the attack on the man with his buffaloes. I have a good reason to believe that Corbett’s words were edited to make the article a better read: In any of his writing, Corbett never uses the words “beast” or “brute” for a tiger. As for the ‘next day’, I cannot say if Corbett said that precisely or if the author was mistaken or thought it would read better to follow the first attack by a second the next day. In any case, there is a discrepancy between the attack as related in the article and what follows later in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*.

Following after the attack on the man with his buffaloes, Corbett, in the article says that:

“Unfortunately I got to the scene of the occurrence a little too late and as I had to attend a conference of District Officials in the foothills I was obliged, very reluctantly to abandon the quest.

At this conference the problem of circumventing these man-eaters, which had become a serious menace, was discussed at great length.”

Unless there were two incidents of buffaloes and their herdsman being attacked, there are another two discrepancies in the first sentence of the above quote. The first controversy is that, in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*, Corbett says he left the man after handing him a cigarette and he got the particulars of the attack on the man ‘when I paid the district a second visit some months later’. The second discrepancy is that Corbett narrated in *Man-eaters of Kumaon* that it was after the District Conference of February 1929 that he went to Kala Agar in April 1929 and shot the Chowgarh cub shortly after. In this article it is suggested that the cub was shot BEFORE the District Conference, NOT AFTER, confirming, as referred to above, the account of the Chowgarh cub in BJCS 2016.

The Talla Des Man-Eater in The District Conference List

In the chapter “The Two Kanda Man-Eaters” in BJCS 2016, we strongly suggested that the Kanda man-eater could not have been on the list of man-eaters discussed at the District Conference of 1929 and postulated that the Talla-Des man-eater was FIRST in the list. This is now supported by this extract from the article of the Wide World Magazine:

“...before the meeting terminated I promised one of the party [Ed.: of the Conference] to go and see if I could put ‘paid’ to the long overdue reckoning of his particular pet aversion.

Accordingly on 7th April 1929, I left Naini Tal and after several long and arduous marches through the hills, covering about twenty miles a day, finally reached the scene of this man-eater’s activities.”

The man-eater which interrupted the Chowgarh man-eater hunt was the Talla Des man-eater. Corbett goes after it in first instance, soon after the conference. This confirms BJCS 2016 that the list discussed at the District Conference should have read as follows:

- 1st Talla-Des Man-Eater
- 2nd Chowgarh Man-Eater
- 3rd Mohan Man-Eater

The Talla Des Man-Eater Hunt

The Wide World Magazine (July 1930) account of (what would later become known as) the Talla Des Man-Eater is almost exactly the same as its later rendering in Corbett's book *The Temple Tiger and More Man-Eaters of Kumaon* (TT), except that the article does not mention that Corbett was suffering from his ear injury; and how the man-eater managed to escape, after its cubs were shot, is told slightly differently:

"...Then to my great surprise I saw a third tiger racing across the terrace lower down! That was a long and lucky shot, but down she went (the animal turned out to be a large tigress), clutched desperately for a foothold, and finally plunged over the edge of a precipice and was lost to view.

I followed as hard as I possibly could, but descending that cliff face was dizzy and nerve-racking work. Halfway down, however, I heard the men shouting and eventually located the tigress limping painfully up toward the ridge of the opposite hill. How she had survived the fall over the precipice was perfectly amazing, but there she was, as large as life, and there was no doubt whatever about her being the same animal.

Just as she neared the ridge I fired my fourth shot. I heard the smack of the bullet against flesh, followed by an angry grunt. Although I followed hard on her heels till sunset she eventually made good her escape over most impossible country."

I would like to suggest that in May 1930, talking to a stranger / journalist Corbett was embarrassed to relate how he had wasted the fifth bullet as described in TT. His books (except *Jungle Stories*, which did not include 'Talla Des' anyway) were 14 and 24 years later (not that he knew that at the time) so, would he want a stranger in possession of potentially embarrassing material before he had the chance (if ever) to give his own account?

We should also remember that he saved the Talla Des story until the very last, partly, as he said, that he did not want to strain the credulity of his readers that he hunted her while suffering from an ear abscess. This is supported by the citing below, of his reference to having a cold rather than reveal his ear abscess to the stranger. Establishing his credibility in his previous books also allowed him to admit to his having wasted the bullet later in TT.

For me, Corbett was very sure of the facts he wrote twenty five years later (in *The Temple tiger and More Man-Eaters of Kumaon* 1954). So sure, that he even wrote an epilogue for anyone who wished to go on his trails and meet the protagonists of his story, Dungar Singh, for instance. Hence, for me at least, the *Temple Tiger* book version is the fuller and most accurate account.

Supporting the suggestion that Corbett did not reveal all details to the stranger is that, a little later, Corbett narrates that the tigress escaped him again and refers to his extra-sensory perception not functioning fully but, as the reason for this, substitutes a 'bad cold' for ear abscess in the Wide World Magazine article:

“When you have lived in the jungles a lifetime your senses become very keenly developed, and a curious sixth sense, quite mysterious and inexplicable, begins to assert itself. On this particular occasion, however, I was suffering from a bad cold, and evidently my faculties were not so keen as usual, for the tigress slipped through the scrub ahead of me without giving me a chance to shoot and was seen by my men to limp across a bit of open ground and enter a narrow strip of jungle.”

New Date for THE BACHELOR

In the article of the Wide World Magazine, the historic photo of Corbett posing with the Bachelor of Powalgarh (hereinafter referred to as ‘The Bachelor’) in front of the ‘haldu’ tree in his Kaladhungi compound, appears on the first page of the article with the caption “Major Corbett with one of his man-eaters”. As we have already noted, while the caption is wrong in labelling the Bachelor a man-eater, it did suggest to me that the date of the Bachelor’s death in BJCS 2016 would need to be reviewed.

The date of the Bachelor’s death in the final chapter of BJCS 2016, ‘*Corbett’s Timeline*’ was suggested after a newly found photo of the Bachelor (with Kaladhungi villagers instead of Corbett, which we obtained courtesy of George Marshall, Corbett’s nephew), on the back of which was written ‘11 30’, which I (wrongly) interpreted as November 1930. Obviously, if a photo already existed by July 1930, then November 1930 was wrong and I would have to continue my research.

By referring to the story as it appears in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* and Marjorie Clough, who helps with her reference to 1930, (See *Current Biography* 1946 by Marjorie Clough in this book), let’s analyse the dates given by Corbett in the story.

“...I first saw the tiger who was known throughout the province as ‘The Bachelor of Powalgarh’ who from 1920 to 1930 was the most sought-after big-game trophy in the province. The sun had just risen one winter morning...”

After describing his meeting with the Bachelor and the failed attempts of other sportsmen to bag him, Corbett follows with:

“The winter following these and other unsuccessful attempts, I took Wyndham, our commissioner, who knows more about tigers than any other man in India...”

Wyndham and his assistants (shikaris) then gave an estimate of the size of the Bachelor, and Corbett says just after that:

“In 1930 the Forest Department started extensive felling in the area surrounding the Bachelor’s home...”

The year is alright, confirmed in Marjorie Clough’s account, and the hunt for the tiger starts just after that:

“Towards the end of winter an old dak runner, who passes our gate every morning and evening...”

In the story by Corbett, the Bachelor is shot a few days after the old dak runner sees its pugmarks. This is the most important clue given for a precise date when

Corbett hunted the Bachelor. Winter in the Northern Hemisphere, which obviously includes India, runs from November/December to February/March, the latter being 'End of winter'.

So, if our two sources are correct, the Bachelor is hunted by Corbett at the end of February or beginning of March 1930. (A line at the end of the story says that the estimates of Wyndham and co. were made seven years previously, so Wyndham made the estimates in 1923 and Corbett first saw the Bachelor in 1922.)

The date of the Corbett Interview in the Wide World Magazine

When did the author meet Corbett to get these particulars? The only date given in the article is April 7th 1929 (in TT he gives 4th April) and the edition date of the magazine is July 1930. So, the article is compiled after this date of 1929, but if we count that Corbett had to be treated for his ear (accident of February 1929 but his treatment with Colonel Dick did not commence until April 1929) just after then this gives the earliest date of Corbett's interview for the article as May 1929. What about the latest date? To answer this question, let's read the final paragraph of the article:

"The tigress with the damaged jaw? Well, I have promised the woman who was nearly scalped that I will punish her assailant; and I shall be returning there before long to see what can be done about it."

This is evidently the Chowgarh man-eater, and since Corbett was at Kala Agar in late May of 1929 (see *Chowgarh Letters* chapter in this book) and again in late March 1930, it can be affirmed that Corbett gave the interview either before going to Kala Agar at the end of May 1929 as per his letter to Maggie, or before 25th March 1930. Corbett goes for the Chowgarh man-eater about the 25th March 1930, as stated in his letters to Maggie and in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*.

However, as we have now established the date of the Bachelor's death as late February to early March 1930, and because the photo of the Bachelor appears in the article, Corbett most probably gave the interview in March 1930, just after he shot the Bachelor.

Corbett's Ranks in the Army

In the final chapter of BJCS 2016 *Corbett's Timeline* gives the date of May 1931 for Corbett achieving the rank of Major in the Indian Army Reserve of Officers. The article of the Wide World Magazine (July 1930) already ranked Corbett as Major. Our source for BJCS 2016 was D.C. Kala (*Jim Corbett of Kumaon*, Penguin 2009) who wrote that:

"He continued as senior vice chairman till 1926. The report for 1928 mentions his attending only two out of twelve meetings and the 1929 report three out of ten. In 1931, we find Corbett promoted to a Major in the Indian Army Reserve of Officers and heading a committee..."

Kala was referring to a Municipal Board Committee of which Corbett was Senior-Vice-Chairman at that time. I should like to think that Kala made the mistake as he was referring to the meeting minutes and quite possibly because the year 1930 is missing (see above quote). He saw that in the reports of 1929 Corbett was a Captain and then in the reports of 1931 he was a Major, therefore deciding that Corbett became a Major in the year 1931. Kala was not the only one who made that mistake.

In September 1945 Lord Hailey was asked by the OUP Bombay to write a biography of Corbett for the American Book-of-The-Month-Club as Corbett's *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* had been selected for their March 1946 issue. In January that year, Hailey had sent a copy to Corbett and though Corbett said that 'he does not recognise the Jim described in the text' he congratulated Hailey for his efforts. (Letter from Corbett to Hailey dated 21st January 1946 – Hailey's article reached Corbett on 4th January 1946)

In the biography Hailey wrote that:

"If I am right his first visit to England was paid when he was on leave from France [Ed.: First World War]. At the end of the war he returned with the rank of Major to resume his life in Kumaon."

A little later in 1946 Marjorie Clough (see elsewhere in this book) writes:

"On his return from France Jim was promoted Major and sent to the North West Frontier..."

Cumberlege in 1960 wrote for the introduction to World Classic Series edition of MEOK and TT:

"...at the end of the war he brought back 499 and re-settled them in their villages. He was then a Major and was soon sent to Afghanistan where he saw fighting."

Could it be that these three earliest biographers of Corbett were right? Let's check for evidence. The documents below show that Corbett was promoted to Major somewhere between September 1926 to March 1930. In chronological order they are as follows:

August 1921: Deputy Commissioner Office – Exemption for Fire Arms Act – Captain Corbett

May 1926: Rudraprayag leopard report – various newspaper clips – Captain Corbett

September 1926: Forest Department – Freedom of the Forests Award – Captain Corbett

March 1930: Article – Wide World Magazine – Major Corbett

June 1930: Chowgarh Tigers – letter of thanks – Major Corbett

August 1932: Review of the Week; Wildlife in the Village, an Appeal – Major Corbett

It is hard to think that Marjorie Clough who had stayed at Corbett's place for a few days in 1945 could have got such information wrong, or even Hailey who had by

1946 already spent fifteen years in Corbett's company. Cumberlege has some excuse, because he was relying on the first two biographers to write their accounts.

I could not trace any official letters or press cuttings from 1927, 1928 or 1929 addressed to Corbett or referring to him, except perhaps the Naini Tal Municipal Board meetings minutes cited by Kala, for which I have no transcript of them at the present. Personally speaking, I'm not satisfied to give only a range (Sept. 1926 to March 1930) for Corbett's rank as Major in the Indian Army Reserve of Officers. Until next time...

[All the ranks of Corbett have been achieved as member of the Indian Army Reserve of Officers (IARO), except the Kaiser-I-Hind medal. When quoting his name, one should write the rank followed by the name then by IARO, then his other titles. For instance, at Corbett's death he had already attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (as at 1944), therefore he was known at death as Lt. Col. Edward James Corbett IARO VD Kaiser-I-Hind OBE CIE (VD – Volunteer Decoration 1920; Kaiser-I-Hind (Gold Medal) – 1928; OBE 1942; CIE 1946)]

FROM CORBETT ARCHIVES

The Chowgarh Letters and Other Materials

BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS

Here are at least some of the letters sent by Jim to Maggie while hunting the Chowgarh man-eater. Most of the letters were found in a file compiled by Geoffrey Cumberlege in the late 1950's. These letters were given by Maggie to Cumberlege and he had them typeset. I cannot say if there were more letters originally than are given here or, as they omit the customary 'Dear Maggie' and 'Love, Jim', if they are the whole body of text or extracts from the letters.

All the letters include the address from which they were sent but some, while including date and month, omit the year they were sent. I have, however, *tried* to arrange them in chronological order by using the location mentioned in the letter and following the thread through the letters while comparing them with the story in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*. I have not edited them and the square brackets [...] are Geoffrey Cumberlege's notes.

It appears from these letters that the hunt of the Chowgarh man-eater took place over two years (1928 to 1930) and at least two separate visits, either to Dalkhania or Kala Agar or both. Though the year is not mentioned, two of the letters dated 23rd May and 29th May (sent from Kala Agar) must have been written either in 1928 or 1929 since the tigress was killed on the 11th April 1930. Initially I thought Cumberlege had left a clue in a bracket next to the name 'Lambert' but it does not yield anything since Lambert was acting Governor for Sir Malcolm (Later Lord) Hailey from October 1930 to April 1931 and therefore does not help us date the year of the letter. Due to my doubts, I have placed these two letters in between the last one dated 1928 and the first one dated 1930.

One of the letters refers to the killing of the man-eater and appeared in Martin Booth's *Carpet Sahib* (Constable 1986).

I am immensely indebted to Patrick Cumberlege for giving me access to these letters from his father's collection and to Dr. Martin Maw of OUP for permission to reproduce those that were found in the OUP archives. To Corbett fans wishing to express their views on them, I invite them to comment on the Facebook page of the Jim Corbett International Research Group.

Dalkhania 17th May 1928

The remaining man-eater does not appear to be able to kill without the help of her companion. Two women she has caught lately both got away with terribly wounded heads, I am doctoring them and think one will live. I had a shot at the tiger last night but it was pitch dark and I missed – my torch is about used up. I expect the tiger will move to some other parts of the patti now and she won't be inclined to kill a katra again and as she can't kill humans and won't show up in the day I am afraid it will be next to impossible to bag her.

Dalkhania 18th May

I don't think I can be more than 20 miles from Gurney in a straight line. From the lower end of the station you can see a sugar loaf hill called Kailas, a little to the south of Malwa Tal. Well I am only a few miles to the East of this hill. Looking from Naini one gets the impression that the hills in this direction are low but they are really not so, the hill just across the Nandhour and in front of this village must be at least 8500 feet and continues at this height right up to Mornaula. The hill at the back of my camp runs up very high and has the same sort of oak trees on it as grow on Cheena. It's hot in the day time down where I am, but the nights are beautifully cool. Above this village and between the cultivated land and oak forest there is thick scrub composed almost entirely of kilmora, karpal and yellow raspberries. I don't know how many maunds [old measure of weight] of karpal the men and I have eaten or how many pounds of raspberries I have consumed. I have these latter all to myself as the men and villagers leave them alone. They are supposed to be too cold in the mornings and evenings and too hot in the day. Some bushes have pounds and pounds of golden berries about the size of a sixpence and pulling a single bunch gives one a handful. Karpal are all right in their way but are troublesome for me to eat. The men, of course, swallow the stones and I too have swallowed a few thousand, but on the whole day they make one's tongue a bit sore and are not to be compared with the raspberries.

The kilmoras, great big blue ones are left to the bear for no one troubles to eat them. On the middle heights the orchids are in full bloom. I saw a grand one today on a hill side that had been lately burnt, shell pink fading down to ivory near the root. The whole plant was a single bloom and was about six inches high. Coming home this evening I got a big bunch of purple orchids, it was a really a pity to pick them. However they are now on my box dining table stuck in an empty tin.

I have not heard anything of the man-eater today. I was down at a village five miles away last night sitting up for a tiger that had killed two buffaloes and when I got back this morning the men in a village half a mile away told me the man-eater had called a lot during the night. I think she is missing her cub though she had set it adrift and only used it lately to help her to kill human beings. The last woman to get mauled was at the village where I went last night, where the so-called "kill" was

reported. The men who came with the news said the woman was dying as they left, so I did not take McWatters bottle with me, that was three days ago and when I left the village at 5 this morning the woman was still alive, only just alive and she might very well have pulled round if I had attended to her in time. I sent iodine for her yesterday but it was too long after the mauling to be of any good. The girl of this village who I treated with McWatters stuff is nearly alright and her wounds were quite as bad as the other woman's. News got round today that I was leaving in a few days and all day long deputations had been coming from the surrounding villages begging and praying me not to leave them to the mercy of the man-eater. It's difficult to know what to do. However, I might just shoot the man-eater and be able to stick to my original plan of leaving on the 28th. I am tying out more katras tomorrow and am hoping to get another kill within the next few days. Through the silly mistake of one of the men I have taken on here, I did not hear of the kill of a katra until it was too late to do anything and the next night when I sat up over the head and a bit of skin, the tiger gave me a fleeting shot and I missed in the dark. If I had only had the moon I would have been back with both man-eaters days ago. This katra I refer to is the only one the man-eater has killed.

Dalkhania 21st June 1928

The night after I fired at the man-eater in the dark she went along the ridge and called close to Kundal so yesterday I went down to prospect. I followed the tracks up a deep dark ravine and procuring a katra from Kundal sat up in the ravine. Shortly after dark two tigers turned up, the rocks on the ravine were white so I was able to see the tigers quite nicely (they looked like black leopards) and as one approached the katra I fired at it in a bit of a hurry, the second tiger took no notice of the shot and bounded forward and as she got the katra by the neck I put a bullet into her and she dashed off up the ravine. The men were in Kundal village about fifty yards above me and on hearing my shots called out and asked if they should come and hearing no answer they wisely sat tight. Some hours later I saw a tiger approaching the katra which appeared to be dead, and put a nice shot into its shoulder. It went down the ravine a little distance and then turned and went up the bank opposite to me. After a few yards it appeared to be joined by a second tiger and both went up the hill displacing big rocks and sitting down at short intervals. The men in the village above me heard the tigers more distinctly than I did for though they were on the far side of the nullah they were actually closer to the tigers than I was. When daylight came two dead tigers could be seen from the village and after skinning them I got back to the camp for breakfast and a bit of sleep. Both tigers were females, one I imagined was the sister of the one I shot a few weeks ago and the other was a very old tigress with a rotten fore-paw and a bullet wound in a hind leg. She may or may not be the mankiller, anyway

I will wait a few days (to give the skins time to dry) and if there are no more human kills I will pack up and make straight for home going by way of Malwa and Bhim Tal.

[Written from Muttra on his way to Bombay and on to Scotland] 2nd July 1928

I set off with just three hours to do the 14 miles which means going at the rate of 5 miles per hour

The older one gets the less inclined one feels to travel about. If it had not been for my promise to P.W. [Percy Wyndham] and Ibbotson I would have gladly chucked this trip. I can't stand trains a little bit and simply hate steamers, however I have got to go through with it now and instead of groaning should, I expect, think myself very fortunate to get the chance of some fishing (I would rather catch mahseer in Naini Lake)

Kala Agar 23rd May

Many thanks for your letters and for sending on my post. It's nice hearing from home and knowing all is well. The invitation from Government House is for the 3rd June (King's Birthday). I am accepting it and hope I will have the pleasure of seeing Lambert [Sir George Lambert, later Acting Governor for Hailey] getting what he so well deserves. Robert Anderson made me a dress suit for Barbossa [Governor's camp was there] which has not been unpacked yet. Will you please send it down to him and ask him to overhaul it and make it fit to wear on the 3rd. I think there is a small stain on the white waist coat.

I have had no luck here up to the present. If that beast Madho Singh had only carried out my orders, I could in all probability have got away from Kala Agar the day after I arrived. When Madho Singh was starting from Naini with that Dalkhani chap I ordered him to tie up a katra, where the woman was killed on the 9th and made him clearly understand that if the katra was killed he was to tie up another two nights later in the same place. Well, the two beauties got here on the 15th and tied up a katra on the 16th which was killed on the same night and instead of putting another katra on the 18th, Madho Singh who, having helped to skin five tigers and knows all about them, waits until the 20th and in the meantime the tiger, of course, left the locality and Heaven only knows what part of its 25 mile beat it is now at. I got here at 3pm on the 21st and if my orders had been carried out I would have had a kill to sit over and as the tigress had not been disturbed over her first kill she would have been sure to give me a shot over her second. If it were not for the 25 mile beat it would not matter so much but 25 miles by 10, say 250 square miles is a big area in which to find a tiger. In the mean time just because I am here the people feel themselves safe and are taking risks they would not otherwise take and all through the daylight hours any man I see coming towards me, I think is bringing me news of a human kill. For his sins' sake I have sent Madho Singh, the other chap is in Naini on a Mokadma [a court case], to Dalkhanian ten miles from here to tie up katras and find out if the tiger has gone to

that end of the beat. Two men came this evening to tell me a garao [sambhar] was calling below the bungalow so I went with them to investigate (They of course thought I would shoot the garao for them) and after going some distance below the bungalow, a garao started calling to our left. Going in the direction of the call I came to a small land slip and creeping forward to have a look over the edge, when one of the men said "the garao is not down there, Sahib, but on the other hill". I had just caught sight of a beautiful leopard when the man started talking and before I could get the sight on it, it disappeared into a small ravine. I followed it for some time but did not see it again.

After a late tea I sat on a rock near the bungalow and several, times a khakar called in the direction in which one of the katras is tied up. The leopard I saw was a little below this spot and would sooner or later cause a spoil, and maybe its wandering round it would be almost too much luck to expect the tiger to come back so soon.

Ganga Ram has just been in – 10pm to say the katra's bell was ringing very loudly but when I went on to the veranda with him I could hear nothing.

Kala Agar 29th May

I may well have been out of luck these days. The shot I fired at the leopard must have frightened the man-eater away, for not a single of my katras have been touched nor did she come close to any of them or to any of the drinking pools down the valley. She has probably by now left for some other parts of her beat and could be anywhere, and at this time of the year she will try to seek cover during hot daytime and not show up until it gets dark. I will move camp the next day or after to Dalkhania and if nothing is heard of the tiger there I will make way back for home.

Kala Agar 27th March 1930

The evening we arrived we were greeted with a thunder storm. Vivian told me the tiger has before my arrival, killed a katra, one he had tied near the spring on the forest road and had sat up for it. This katra the tiger hasn't touched and the Vivians have left for Naini and we have now taken quarters in the bungalow. Madho Singh has meanwhile returned with the buffaloes I had sent him for, from Dalkhania, and his presence there has stirred news of my arrival in Kala Agar. The people want me to come there but I know the tiger is still around. I had tied up two of the buffaloes along the forest road and yesterday morning I saw its tracks passing very near both of them. I should wait otherwise if the tiger makes a kill that the sky becomes clear, for it was raining again today.

Kala Agar 31st March 1930

I don't think old Nardeb was sorry I did not accept his company. He has had a hard of it and looked as though he needed a rest. Vivian, too, could do with a little sleep. Sitting up all night is not in his line and it was very plucky of him to do it.

I will put each day's doings down on a separate bit of paper and after you have read it you can send it along to Vivian and he can file it for future reference. It's no end of a help to know what took place for say a month before one arrived here. Where the tiger was heard and when, where its pugs were seen, where it killed etc. etc. I am not going to sit up as long as these thunder storms are about and when I do sit up I will build myself a big machan, take all my bedding with me and have a comfortable night. My friends at Dalkhania have sent a man to ask me to move camp there. They say they feel safe when they can see my tent in the day and my light at night.

Kala Agar 7th April 1930

When out this evening I met a lot of my Dalkhania friends they were on their way to an out-lying village to cut the wheat crop and were delighted to see me. About 6 pm when I was tying up a katra in a very likely place, a woman came along with a small child and told me she was coming from Lohar (6 miles all through heavy forest) and going to a village below Kala Agar (which she could not possibly have reached before dark). I, who never step out of the bungalow without a loaded rifle in my hands, marvel at the way people go about here, they appear to have no nerves and no fear.

Kala Agar 10th April

It takes a lot to discourage me but I was beginning to feel that it is hopeless trying to get a shot at the tigress. She is very restless at this time of the year and has such a lot of country to wander over that it is almost impossible to locate her. I have put fresh earth in dozens of places on the roads but she prefers to keep to the jungle and so far I have not seen her prints. Another thing, unless her kills are in thick cover she won't return to them.

Kala Agar 11th April 1930

Just a line to let you know that I shot the man-eater at 5 this evening. I will tell you all about it when I get home. It will take a couple of days to dry the skin and if today is Friday as Ganga Ram say it is, I will start on Monday and be at home on Tuesday night – but don't worry if I fail to turn up on Tuesday. I might be delayed over the skin. It has taken some getting and I don't want to risk its getting spoilt.

On second thought I think I had better give you a brief account of what actually happened this evening, for from the scraps of conversation I heard before dinner, the story, although only three hours old, is already badly distorted, and will be unrecognisable by the time it gets to Naini, per the bearer of this.

At three o'clock this afternoon I set out to tie a katra up at Saryapani where I had been tying up since the 31st. On the way out I changed my mind and instead of going to Saryapani turned down the forest track with the intention of tying the katra up where the Chamoli boy was killed on the 25th February. Most of the jungle had been

burnt out but about half a mile down the track I came on a nice bit of green grass on which several sambhar were feeding. It looked as good a place as any so I made the men (I had three with me) collect a few bundles of oak leaves, and before leaving the katra I made a man go up a tree growing on the edge of the Khud and call, as they do here when out with cattle. I, in the meantime, stood on a projecting rock nearby and once I thought I heard a movement down below me but could not be sure. Anyway the men had heard nothing so we left the katra, to go up the zig zag track to Dharampani where the Vivians and I had sat one evening looking down the valley. After going a few yards I came to a deep nala. As it looked a likely place for tracks I climbed down into it and found the tracks of the man-eater. The tracks were old, possibly made by the tiger when going away after eating out Vivian's katra. Anyway I decided to go down the nala and look for tracks where it joined the main ravine. The going was bad over huge rocks and in one place I wanted a free hand. By the way, I have forgotten to mention that I picked up two nightjar's eggs close to where the katra was tied so I handed the rifle to Madho Singh. I got down alright and as Madho Singh joined me he put the rifle in my right hand, I had the eggs in the other, and whispered that some animal had growled like a pig or a bear, he was not sure which. The nala was very narrow just here, to our right and overhanging us was an enormous rock the top of which was about eight feet above our heads. At the lower end of the rock the bed of the nala was on a level with the banks. I tip-toed forward without making a sound and as I cleared the rock I looked over my right shoulder and – looked straight into the tiger's face. She flattened down her ears and bared her teeth and slipped forward but by then I had slipped the safety over and the bullet went through her heart. It was all over in a heart beat and the tiger was dead as nails. I am glad I got her like this – no sitting up and no fuss. She was just what I expected her to be – old and thin, cracked pads and teeth worn down to the gums, but her coat, on the whole is not bad. I told Vivian last year that she was 8 – 4. I might be an inch out – no more. I did not break the eggs and the Nightjar was glad to get them back.

Pass the news on to Vivian and Stiffe, they will be relieved to know that the Chowgarh man-eater is dead.

Communiqué from Mr Ram Sah, Deputy Inspector of Schools, Naini Tal District dated 17th May 1930

The teachers are informed that the schools of Patti Chaugarh will remain closed for 5 days from the 4th to 8th June 1930, (2 days + 3 days Moharram Holidays) in honour of Major Corbett's success in shooting the man-eater which was causing havoc and reducing general attendance.

We should show our gratitude for the enterprising and beneficent act, and pray for his long life and happiness.

(Copy forwarded to Major Corbett, Gurney House, Naini Tal – 16 May 1930)

Corbett's writings from other sources than his books

BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS

This is a collection, of rare pieces and letters, many of which were previously unpublished. These writings directly from Corbett's pen or typewriter are minimally edited here to eliminate 'typos' for the convenience of the reader.

Corbett's very first published writing – but originally not intended for publication!

From the Indian newspaper 'The Pioneer' dated Saturday 26th December 1925 which included a report from Corbett to the Deputy Commissioner of Garhwal, A.W. Ibbotson about the Rudraprayag leopard

MAN-EATING LEOPARD OVER 100 VICTIMS – SHIKARI'S EFFORTS TO DESTROY GARHWAL PEST – UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT

Replying to a question in the United Provinces Council on Wednesday regarding the depredations of a man-eating leopard at a place called Rudraprayag in the Garhwal District, Mr Burn said that the Rudraprayag leopard, assuming that only one animal was concerned, had killed 114 human beings. Every endeavour had been made to destroy the pest. Sixteen paid shikaris had been employed, poison had been freely used, and since October the District Authorities had been fortunate in securing the voluntary assistance of a European gentleman of considerable experience and proved courage in their attempts to run the leopard down. He did not wish his name to be disclosed, but the Government were in possession of an account of his adventures, which would be communicated to the Press.

The following extracts from a letter describing the efforts to destroy the Rudraprayag leopard have now been received from the United Provinces Government –

"I interviewed the Patwari on my arrival and hearing from him that the last kill had taken place at Ketri. I spent the rest of the day in prospecting the west bank of the river. On the track, called the jhula road, I found the two-day old scratch marks of a leopard. I got four goats by the next morning, and in the afternoon I staked them out in likely places along the jhula road. The goat, I hoped most from, was tied where the forest track joins the jhula road, a short distance from the bridge. I sat on a tree near it as long as I could see, and when I went back next morning (13th) I found it had been killed and more than half of it eaten. Great efforts had been made to break the cotton rope, but it had held, as it was not my intention that the goat should be taken off the track. The other three goats had not been touched. There was nothing but my

own conviction to show that the killing had been done by the man-eater, and those convictions could be proved by a sit-up.

PREPARATIONS

There was thick jungle above and below the kill and if it was an ordinary leopard it would come out at the usual time, about sundown, and if the man-eater it would come late or not at all. Nothing happened until about 9 pm when some animal jumped down onto the road near the kill, and dislodged a stone that rolled down towards the tree I was sitting in. The animal stayed near the kill for a few minutes and appeared to nose it and then went off in the direction of the bridge. It was dark and impossible for me to see anything, but I could follow the animal's movements by the bema plants I had strewn near the kill for that object. (Bema is a small plant with long seedpods, dry at this time of the year, that rattle at the slightest touch.) That night the man-eater crossed the bridge. A goat tied up on the 14th where the previous one had been killed was not touched.

A GUN TRAP

On the 15th I set out to visit Ketri and inspect the jhula at Shevanand on my way back, but half way there I changed my mind and made back for Rudraprayag. A mile from the bridge I met a man sent by the patwari to tell me a kill had taken place at Chutti. After breakfast, accompanied by the patwari and qanungo [A Hindi/Kumaoni term meaning hereditary registrar of landed property in a subdivision of a district, or simply "an expounder of law". As Corbett does not write 'the' in front of qanungo, it is doubtful whether he meant that the patwari also carried the function of qanungo and were in fact one and same man, instead of two separate persons accompanying him to the kill – ed.], I started on the four-mile climb to Chutti. The kill was in a little nala running through fields a hundred yards from the village. In repeated visits to the kill, the leopard had made a track on the right bank of the nala. Across this track I decided to put a gun trap using my .275 and 28 bore for that purpose. When the trap was ready I found that the pressure required on the trigger strings to discharge the guns, was greater than the leopard under normal conditions was likely to exert; however there was the possibility of driving him into the trap if I could frighten him when he was facing in the right direction, and on this chance I banked. To give me something to aim at with my .450 I placed a white stone on the near side of the nala and in line with the kill. On the safe bank of the nala and thirty yards from the kill there was a walnut tree with a haystack in its branches. In the middle of the stack I made a place to sit in.

By 6 pm, everything was ready, guns nicely masked from the off-side, safety catches off with a final look round to see nothing had been forgotten I climbed into my nest.

At 6-30 a thunderstorm burst right overhead and in a minute I was wet to the skin; however that didn't matter much for I was already wet from the four-mile climb. At 7 the rain stopped and ten minutes later I heard a stone drop in the nala a little below the kill and at the same moment it came on to rain again. The rain coming from the north had caught him before it reached me, and in hurrying for shelter to my haystack he had taken the nala where it was a bit wide and had dislodged the stone. Some hay had drifted off the stack when I was climbing up and in this he made himself comfortable.

WITHIN SIX FEET OF THE LEOPARD

Then for an hour or more we sat within six feet of each other with the advantage in his favour for while he could move about and was quite dry and warm, I had to sit tight, was wet to the skin and was freezing in the cold wind that was blowing. All this time there was the most brilliant display of lightning I have ever seen and more than once the tree appeared to be in danger of being struck. About the middle of the storm I heard two men passing fifty yards above us and admired their courage at being out at that hour (I learnt afterwards that one of them was your man with the electric light.)

At 8 the storm ceased for good and a little later the leopard jumped down into the lower field, re-crossed the nala and approached the kill by the path he had made the previous night. To make sure of his firing the trap, I had put up two trigger strings he evidently got his head between the strings and took fright for he dashed off the kill and growled when he pulled up 60 or 70 yards away. I knew he would get over his fright in time, and half an hour later the white stone suddenly disappeared. I had not counted on this move in the game, the white stone was there to give me something to lay the sights on when I heard him eating and with it gone it would be impossible for me to plant a bullet within yards up where I wanted to.

“KISMAT”

The stone appeared in sight as suddenly as it had disappeared and a second later I saw and heard the leopard coming straight towards me. I now thought I had a good chance of shooting him as he returned to the kill, but unfortunately he did not go back the way he had come, and when after intervals of 20 to 30 minutes the stone disappeared and re-appeared for the third time I made up my mind to risk a shot, and as he passed under me for the third time I bent forward and fired. The field he was in was possibly two feet wide and I put a bullet in the middle of it and all the injury I did the leopard was to clip a few hairs from his neck – KISMAT.

If your man had arrived only two hours earlier – I have never wanted anything so much as I wanted the light, I think I could have hit him – again KISMAT.

MYSTERIOUS SOUNDS

I must give you my impressions of the leopard for I have told you I both saw and heard him. From the fact that he was visible on a dark night and overcast sky I conclude he is a very light coloured animal. He did not appear to be very long but looked thickset and powerfully built. Hearing him was the strangest experience I have ever had. I never heard any animal's body [*sound like it*] before and cannot in any way account for the sound. It was loud enough to be heard at 30 yards and was exactly like a woman walking in a stiff silk dress. The field had been lately planted with wheat and there was not a leaf or blade of grass in it. No, the sound did not come from his feet but from his body.

PLANS FOR ANOTHER ATTEMPT

As long as the leopard is on this bank I feel I have a chance but once he crosses the river, he is gone. I have therefore taken the liberty, and hope you won't mind, of issuing instructions to your patwaris up river close to the Chattupipal bridge and Shevanand Jhula at night, using thorn bushes and a lantern for the purpose, the bridge here I am looking after myself. It is a cold and poor game but one must do something. I [will] sit on the bridgehead and will have a game-net with running line fixed half way down the bridge. The idea is if I get a shot at the leopard on the bridge and miss, as I probably will, if he is moving, I will drive him into the net. I cannot swarm down the iron jugs with a rifle in my hand, so the job will have to be finished in the dark with a knife. There is a chance of us both going over the bridge in a mix up. However that after all is a very small chance."

From the periodical Indian Wild Life 1936 Edition – Title: *A Lost Paradise*

(Previously privately published by Corbett in *Jungle Stories* 1935)

Subject: Forest Fires in the Hills

"Stop. You fools. Stop!"

The warning was not given a moment too soon. I had kept an eye on the old Sal tree, since turning the corner in the wake of the men carrying my camp kit. Smoke was issuing from several holes in the hollow trunk, and only just in time I had noticed a tremor run through the scorched leaves, the first indication that the supporting fibres were giving away. Slowly at first and then with a mighty rush and roar the proud giant of a hundred years strikes the road, hesitates, and goes crashing down the khud ['ravine edge' – ed.] side amid a smother of ashes and dislodged stones, to come to rest in the valley below.

Three days previously the forest had taken fire and for seventy-two hours a small band of foresters, assisted by all the available man-power of adjacent villages, had fought the flames. Not until the whole block of seventy-five square miles had been

burnt out, had the devoted little band admitted defeat, and with swollen blood-shot eyes and blistered hands, turned their backs on the smouldering desolation.

The consensus of opinion was that the fire was incendiary [As all fires are ‘incendiary’, it is suspected that Corbett meant to say ‘natural’ – ed.] I was not inclined to agree with this opinion; for the serious loss of cattle and destruction of grazing grounds, resulting from the incendiary fires of 1922 was still green in the memory of the countryside, and later when camping in the area where the fire had originated, I came to the conclusion that smoke torches in the hands of careless honey collectors had been responsible for the conflagration.

It was late afternoon when I arrived at the edge of the burning forest. Earlier in the day a party of fire-fighters, while sweeping a track along a subsidiary ridge preparatory to counter-firing, had seen a tiger coming towards them. In the ravine immediately below them a tiny stream had formed a miniature pool. When the tiger reached this pool the watching men saw she was carrying two small cubs.

Crossing to the far side of the water she laid the cubs on the wet ground under an overhanging rock and, turning, bounded back in the direction of the fire. Were the cubs she had rescued, one of which had a portion of its right hind leg burnt off, only a part of her young family and had the devoted mother gone back in the forlorn hope of saving the others? Only one of countless similar tragedies that were being enacted in the seventy-five square miles of forest and in the adjoining blocks which were also on fire, for it was early May, the time of the year when our foot-hills teem with young bird and animal life. The moment the tiger was safely out of sight, the fire party annexed [a possible euphemism for ‘killed’ – ed.] the cubs, and when I arrived on the scene they were miles on their way to the Headquarters of the Range.

While camp was being made, a very simple operation when a 40 pound tent and camp bed are all that one needs, my old friend the Pradhan (Head-man) of the village where I was camped near, paid me a visit and urged me to sit up over the pool, for as he very rightly said, the tiger would be sure to return to look for her cubs. He was the same old friend, who twenty years previously had seen me miss a Khalij pheasant with my first barrel and after retrieving the bird from a long way down the khud, had remarked with disgust, that Europeans did not know how to shoot. “Flush a bird and then use two cartridges to kill it, was a waste of time and ammunition.” When he, or any of his friends, wanted a pheasant or jungle-fowl they watched until the birds went to roost, and then when the birds were bunched together, one carefully-aimed shot, and the whole covey came to earth as easily and simply as shaken ripe fruit from a mango tree. In twenty years his idea of sport had undergone no change, nor will it ever change.

My camp was only a short distance from the pool. Heat radiating from the smouldering forest made sleep impossible, and all through the long night I lay awake listening. No sound came up from the direction of the pool, and by morning I was

convinced the tiger had passed to "The Happy Hunting Grounds." A very gallant lady, who a few months previously had held up a whole line of elephants, to give her mate time to get out of a beat.

Ten days earlier I had camped through this same forest, and it was then as near a wild paradise as it is possible to imagine. The air, perfumed with the scent from a million blossoms, throbbled with the mating call of all the songsters of the forest. In the valley, rutting chital stag brayed challenge to rutting stag, and kakar called to kakar, and now ten short days later, all is desolation! Ashes, where blossom and green verdure had been. Acrid smell of burnt mould and decaying flesh, where had been heavenly perfume, and a brooding silence, where once the air had pulsed with joyful song. A silence broken every now and again by the crash of a forest giant as it comes to earth.

A lost Paradise, in very truth!

Unpublished Letters from Corbett (mainly extracts)

From Corbett (in France) to Maggie – Dated 16/06/1918

'... I had my first and my last flight in the air yesterday. I say my last flight because I do not think I am justified in taking any unnecessary risks. Not that I took any risks yesterday for I went up with the most expert man here and oh, it was just glorious. I can't attempt to describe on paper what the sensation was like but I will tell you all about it when I come home. No chance of my forgetting the smallest detail for an experience like that would remain bright green in one's memory for hundreds of years. You know what the (*hill*) station looks like from the top of Cheena, well you can imagine the view I had at two or three times that height on a bright sunny morning with nothing to impede the view, but the view, grand as it was, was not the best part of it. I was told that people usually get sick the first time they fly but though we went miles and miles and did all sorts of things in the air I never had time to think about getting sick. Ron, when passing through here, was given a fly and when he came down he said flying was an acquired taste like eating oysters, and he hated oysters. Every man to his own taste. I have never eaten an oyster but I know there is nothing in the world so glorious as flying...'

From Corbett (Lucknow) to Maggie – Dated 04/02/1919

'...I was sorry to see from Kathleen's letter to mother that John was suffering from a cold. John and Kathleen have been married about eighteen years, and not one single day of all those years have they or their children been free from sickness. When John writes, Kathleen and all the seven kids are dangerously ill, and when Kathleen writes, John and the rest of the family are ill. Poor John. I would have liked to go and spend a few days with him, but I am not due any leave and can't possibly get away. There is some talk of our being demobilised in May, in fact Walker [the 70th Kumaon Corps 2nd in command – ed.] writes and tells me he has seen it in orders. If I can get out of

the Army by May or earlier, Kathleen will then be in Naini [coming from Cawnpore – ed.] or somewhere else, and I will then go and spend a quiet ten days with John. I love kids but seven would get on my nerves. When mother had all her big family of Doyles, Deases and Corbetts round her, I am quite sure she made a better job of looking after them on an income of next to nothing, than some people do on a pay in those days, was unheard of. That Dad never got more than Rs150, on that small sum mother clothed and fed us and kept us fit and well and I am sure that there was no happier family than ours in all India. I can't remember that you ever had more than one frock, one hat and one bit of ribbon (sometimes it was the fringe of an old durry) nor can I remember that small details of that kind ever interfered with your health or happiness. Glad I am that I have not got a modern wife and family of seven to provide for. In the old days, a wife and each child as it came was written down on the credit side of a man's ledger. In these days they all, wife included, go down on the debit side. If any man contemplating matrimony was to ask my advice, I would tell him if he wanted to be happy, to marry the poorest girl he could lay his hands on. Poorest people are the happiest in all the world..'

From Corbett (Lucknow) to Maggie – Dated 08/02/1919

'...Miller told me that Walker had written to England after he saw me in Naini recommending me for promotion and that on receipt of the home board's reply, he had applied to the Military Authorities at Simla to return my services to the Railway. The Home Board have given me Rs500 to start with and Miller says I can count on getting a district within a year. Miller has a large house and he wants me to share it with him and Paton. Paton, by the way, is suffering from heart trouble and will probably have to go on leave. Westwood is losing the sight of his right eye and has been ordered to leave India. Hannay, who was never a strong chap, is a little worse than usual now and is trying to get sick leave. O'Brien is older now than he was three years ago in Naini, so altogether the Railway is in a bad way, hence Walker's and Miller's anxiety to get me back. What do you all think of the whole matter? I must do something for I don't feel ancient enough yet to sit down and wait for old age. The only question is whether I could do anything better for us all than take this billet at Gorakhpur. I would have liked to go to British East Africa and British Columbia, but the question is whether we could have stood the transplanting at our time of life. After my free and easy life I will not take very kindly to an office stool but I could stand it if I thought it was for the best..'

From Corbett (Mokameh Ghat) to Maggie – Dated 21/04/1920

'...I, when I retire, shall look for my pleasures in the silent places of the earth – Kumaon back of the snow range, Kashmir, the Rocky mountains, or Africa, just where my fancy takes me. One year you will accompany me, and Mary the next, and

the third year, while I stay at home and keep house with mother, you and Mary will journey together, Japan, California, just where your fancy takes you. To what end have we saved and denied ourselves all our lives if we are not to have a good time during the few years that remain to us. Our wants at the best of times are few and even if they were otherwise and we spent all the money we have saved, we would not be injuring anyone...'

[Quite possibly this extract is from one of the last letters from Mokameh Ghat – ed.]

From Corbett (Unknown location) to Maggie – Dated ../07/1923

'...my days are always one hour short of my requirements...

...It takes a lifetime to learn that it does not pay to tax one's strength beyond the limit of endurance. It's funny that while one half of mankind are getting old before their time by trying to do too much, the other half are getting old for quite the opposite reason...'

[Underline is Corbett's own – ed.]

From Corbett (Tanganyika) to Maggie – Dated ../07/1923

[*Meanwhile the other lion had approached*] and was watching his companion. The distance between us was short and the shot a perfect one, but I was greedy. To have fired at the one with the long mane would have sent the other which was looking straight in my direction dashing off without at least the chance of a flying shot. To get them both I would have to wait until one at least was not looking in my direction, but I was not going to take my chances with long shots. After long last the foremost lion walked deliberately up to the old kill (I had of course kept a bead on him all the time) as he came along he kept opening his lips as though he was tasting something nice, possibly his method of testing the air for – I was going to say danger but he has nothing to fear, so possibly it is only a habit they have, like the tigers habit of keeping his mouth half open. Past him I must say a lion is a grander looking animal than a tiger. He walks with his head held high and when in addition he is an out size animal and has a flowing mane blown about by the wind he has a grand and imposing presence. The lion, the kill and I were in a straight line and when he raised his eyes from the kill he looked straight into my face. For a minute or so he had a puzzled look on his face and once he laid back his ears, but eventually he decided I was only a vulture or some other harmless object and after taking a look over his shoulder to see where his companion was walked across to the fresh kill. All this time the second lion had stood like a statue looking in my direction (he was about 40 yards away) but when his brother moved off to the left he went to the right in the direction from which P.W. [Percy Wyndham – ed.] had dragged the old kill. Now was my chance but when I turned my eyes it was only to find the first lion looking at me again, however he soon

turned his head away giving me an opportunity of bringing the rifle round and at a range of 15 yards I hit him just clear of the shoulder and as he bounded off roaring I swung round and sent the second barrel behind the shoulder of the other lion which also went off roaring. Spare cartridges were handy and the second lion had not gone many yards when I had him covered but he needed no more lead...

Editor's note for this letter:

Currently, only these two pages of this Corbett's handwritten letter are available and as such, a suggested beginning of the first sentence has been inserted in italics for the convenience of reading only. The indulgence of the reader is highly sought here, while the search for the remainder continues.

As a general remark, we can observe and infer that the lion's movement of his lips and the tiger holding his mouth half open could be related (if not to temperature regulation) to the gesture known as *flehmen*, itself linked with chemical communication within numerous species of the cat family (for a full account of this and other aspects of chemical communication between big cats see *Framing Fearful Symmetries* referred to in *Acknowledgements*).

Also, Corbett's reference to possibly being mistaken for a vulture by the lion would indicate that he was probably on one knee while aiming his rifle. The unique human upright stance is immediately recognised by lions (if not the whole animal kingdom). Large vultures could present a bulk approximating the scale of a kneeling human being and, no doubt, Corbett's hunting experience ensured his movements were minimal or absent. Moreover, the lion had something of interest under his nose i.e. a kill and research suggests that, whilst big cats' eyes have in their retinas cone cells, which allow for sharp focus and colour perception, the information they transmit is not as significant for big cats as that of the rod cells, which distinguish light and dark, and broad outlines. (End of Note)

From Corbett (Maldhan) to Maggie – Dated 25/04/1933

'...I had on the whole a very amusing time with the poachers.

I went out after an early breakfast yesterday and had been sitting up about two hours at a place where I had seen a lot of gond [swamp deer – ed.] and cheatle [spotted deer, also spelt as 'chital' – ed.] the previous day, when I saw two carts crossing the upper end of the maidan [Hindi word meaning open grassland or glade, also spelt as 'meydan' – ed.] about $\frac{3}{4}$ or a mile away. Just as the carts were going behind a fringe of trees I saw a flash in the leading cart. A gun thought I. Fifteen minutes later I heard a shot followed in a couple of minutes by two more shots.

Leaving the camera and water bottle in the tree I slipped down and whistled to Dowlut Singh's brother who was on another tree a little way from me, to follow me and set off running. On the far side of the fringe of trees there was a long glade about

200 yards wide and on the far side the carts were standing and six men were clustered round something on the ground. So intent were the men on the matter in hand that they did not see me until they I was quite close to them. On catching sight of me they grabbed hold of the two guns and made off in the jungle leaving the carts and a dead gond (female).

The carts were the small type of vehicle called tonga [light two-wheeled cart – ed.] and were full of an assortment of articles in the way of dhurries [cotton/linen rug – ed.], sheets, coats (with keys and cigarettes), tiffin carriers, water bottles, cartridges, shoes, etc, etc. As the owners had gone the only thing I could do was to enter into possession. First we tried to load up the gond but the bullocks objected so we had to abandon it. The bullocks were otherwise quite amenable and let us climb into the carts and I leading the way, drove off in state and as we did so a cloud of vultures came from nowhere and finished the gond.

After we had gone half a mile I looked back and saw two men following us, so I drew up and waited for them. When they came up, one of them said he wanted his coat and the other said he wanted his cart which had been hired for the day at Kashipur. I told them I would give them half an hour to produce the two guns and then they could have their property back less the gond which the vultures had eaten. They went off and returned about half an hour later with a third man and without the guns. The guns they said had gone and they wanted their coats and shoes. I told them they could have them with pleasure in Ramnagar, and the jhampani [‘cart driver’ – ed.] and I then continued our drive, while the three men all talked together at the same time, one saying that he could not walk without shoes, another that he must have his coat and the third that he would be ruined if he did not get back his cart.

The country we were in, is criss-crossed with nalas [seasonal dry ‘river beds’ – ed.], all of them over ten feet deep and we had the time of our lives getting to Maldhan (while the bullocks were having a breather I sent the jhampani back for my camera). One does not know what an elephant can do until one has been on his back in hilly country, and one does not know what bullocks can do until one has driven them over country that is cut up by deep nalas. Much to my surprise the carts held together and much to Ram Singh’s surprise I drove into the compound at fast trot with the jhampani a yard behind. As a matter of fact he had the better pair of bullocks.

The forest guard and his assistant having seen us a far off, were also pleased to welcome us and when I dismounted I presented him with both turnouts and all they contained, much to his embarrassment. The ranger arrived today and in full of glee, for a vernacular daily in the pocket of the coat that was so badly wanted, bears the full address of the ranger’s best beloved enemy, the arms vendor of Kashipur..’

[Maldhan, from where this letter is sent, is the place-name of the region between the forest blocks of Ramnagar and Kashipur – ed.]

From Corbett (writing on board a steamer ship on his way to Mombassa) to Maggie – Dated 07/06/1936

‘...It is beastly going away from home. If I ever have to do it again and I hope I won’t, I will get up at mid-night and creep off without anyone knowing.

Poor old puppie and Robin, I was afraid to look at them for fear the latter should set up a howl and make me feel-if possible, even worse than I was already feeling...

...Tell Rob that I did not feel up to saying goodbye but will make up for it when I get back...’

[Rob is evidently Robin and ‘puppie’ is quite possibly the first David of the Corbetts (see *Maggie’s Notes* elsewhere in this book) – and it appears from *Maggie’s Notes*, that Robin died that very year of 1936. We did not succeed to find if Corbett ever saw Robin again after that letter was written as we did not find a definite date for Robin’s death, but for sure it was also Corbett’s last trip to Tanganyika for the purpose of his coffee estate – ed.]

On another occasion Corbett wrote from Gurney House to Maggie on an April Fool’s day in an undated year – ‘...A crow joined us at lunch at Ghatgar, the tamest bird I have ever seen. After the dogs had had a feed I gave the crow a bone Rob had set his heart on. The crow flew off with the bone, though it was quite a big one, with Rob chasing after him and when Rob came back, he threw himself down near us and started howling...’

From Corbett (from Chuka) to Maggie – Dated 20/04/1938

‘...Just a line to let you know the man-eater [Chuka man-eater – ed.] is dead.

It was not a female however, but an old male with a broken tooth. The people have insisted all along that the man-eater had four teeth but that one only made a mark in the victims it attacked and did not penetrate the skin. This tooth is broken and blunted and would have left just the mark indicated. Whether the man-eater was a male or female could not, of course, be determined by the people and was of no interest to them, all they wanted was a tiger with a broken tooth to be shot and it was shot last evening without giving us any trouble. We are just off to skin the animal and tomorrow we are starting on our way back to Naini and home which we hope to reach on the 28th...’

From Corbett (Kaladhungi) to Lord Malcolm Hailey (Former Governor UP) – Dated 02/02/1939

‘...After many weeks I have been able to get my hands on this machine and have sat down to thank you for your very welcome letter, and for the beautiful picture of black partridge. I did not know that Gould’s pictures were sold separately, for the only ones I have so far seen were in that book Warrick showed us at Patwar Danga. By the way Warrick is still alive. Gould must have been as great lover of birds, as he was an

artist, for no one who did not love his subjects could have made them look as though they were breathing.

Strangely enough when Maggie was opening your parcel for me, I heard a black partridge calling for the first time this winter in a field just below the house. I have been confined to the house for four weeks. A tiger was calling one day in the jungle above the canal and I went off to try and get a picture. After sitting up for three hours I decided to go home and for some reason that I cannot account for, I dived head foremost off the branch on which I had been sitting. I had got up high to overlook the surrounding jungle, and it was a miracle I was not killed. I have not broken any bones and hope to be on my feet again in a few weeks...'

From Corbett (Viceroy's House, New Delhi) to Maggie – Dated 06/03/1939

'...They have better nibs here than at Lucknow...'

...It was nice finding your letter waiting for me. Major Goschen [one Viceroy's staff – ed.] met me at the station and I had breakfast on my arrival with a number of other guests. At lunch, I met the family [of the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow – ed.], with the exception of the girls who were out of Delhi. The sons are nice boys and very like their sisters.

The Governor of Bombay [Sir Lumley – ed.] and his wife arrived by air at 2pm and tonight after dinner, I am going to show my pictures. The Superintendent of the Viceregal Estates is going to do the projecting while I do the talking. The show will take place in the morning room. The only thing I am concerned about is the screen. It is a folding one and is used for shows of this kind, and I am hoping it will be large enough for me to give a good-sized picture.

I am glad to have Bahadur's news about the tigers. Tell him, please not to spare the katras [young buffaloes – ed.] and to tie up in any new places he sees pugmarks in. I am afraid we will have to sacrifice the leopard near the canal, for the boys are dying to shoot one. The five who came in last April do not want to shoot and are coming "to see that beautiful place again" and to watch – if I will permit them – the boys shooting. Sir Eric Hambro and his wife will be with the party; also Christie-Miller, Stable and Maxwell are not coming. The former is going home and John Toogood is taking his place. Maxwell is seeing his wife off in Bombay...'

[Editor's Note: The 'sons' referred to in the letter are Lord Linlithgow's sons and the 'girls' are his daughters, who are mentioned in *Jungle Lore* in a tiger drive that happened in March 1937. See elsewhere in this book for Lord Linlithgow's youngest daughter Lady Doreen (Bunty) Hope-Palmer's account of the drive. Thereafter, subsequently every spring and sometimes at the end of autumn, Viceregal and Governor parties came to spend a few days at Kaladhungi when the former were changing quarters from Simla to Delhi or from Delhi to Simla and the latter from Allahabad or Lucknow, to Naini Tal and vice-versa. The names 'Stable' and 'Maxwell' are well

known, for having been introduced in the book *Jungle Lore* as Hugh Stable, Military Secretary to the Viceroy and Mouse Maxwell as Controller of the Viceroy's household]

From Corbett (Gurney House, Naini Tal) to Lord Malcolm Hailey (Former Governor UP) – Dated 22/05/1939

'...I have regretted our trouble, and my accident [fall from a tree in January 1939 – ed.], many times this winter, but never more than when I received your letter. For years I have dreamed of fishing in Ireland, and now that your generosity has removed my main difficulty and made the dream possible, I find I cannot leave India. The trip will have done me a world of good, would in fact have set me on my feet again, and even though I might now have been able to do any serious fishing, I would so gladly have accepted your more than kind invitation merely for the pleasure of being with you again; if my presence here had not been necessary.

The delay in acknowledging your letter – for which I beg you will forgive me – is due to my having only just returned from a visit to the 'Hailey National Park' with the Viceroy. After shooting one tiger in a block across the river the Viceroy concentrated on fishing, and though he is a very expert fisherman he did not kill in ten days as many fish as you and I used to kill in a single morning. For one thing the river was very low (we have had no rain since the monsoon gave over last September), and for another, he has learned to fish in Scotland where the fish I imagine are not as sensitive to sound and movement, as our fish are. We made Dhikala our headquarters and by using a car to get about, the Viceroy was able to fish from Chaknakl, to within a few miles of Kalagarh, and in all that long stretch of river the heaviest fish he killed was only 4 ½ pounds. Now that all Forest Officials use cars the roads in the Park have been greatly improved and by next winter it will be possible to motor in the Park one way, and out another way, passing right through the area in which game is most plentiful. It would be gratifying to you to see how the animals in the Park have increased, and how tame they are. Motoring of an evening, along the new road that skirts the edge of the Dhikala maidan ['maidan' is a Hindi word for plain open grassland – ed.] one can see five hundred head of game at a range of ten yards onwards. On several occasions when motoring in the middle of the day we saw tigers and bear right out in the open. I stayed back for a few days after the Viceroy left and took a number of cinema pictures – some of tigers which I stalked – but unfortunately owing to a printer's error in a pamphlet I received from America, I gave a wrong exposure and ruined most of my films. Champion, the one who writes books, is in charge of the Park and is very put out because the Park Rules do not permit flashlight photography. He has never done any daylight photography and though he now chases tigers round on his elephant he has not so far been able to get any photographs.

Next winter Maggie, the dogs, and I will charter a lorry and spend a month in the Park fishing and taking pictures. We will take tents with us and will be independent

of bungalows. Kaladhungi is becoming more unhealthy owing to the rapid spread of lantana, and in a short time the whole area will revert to jungle. During these last two years Sir Harry [Haig, the Governor of the UP, Hailey's successor – ed.] and the Viceroy have shot twelve tigers on land which you saw under crops.

A meeting is being held in Naini this week to devise ways and means of increasing the cultivation, and bettering the lot of the tenants in the T & B [Terai and Bhabar – ed.]. The meeting is an official one and can be relied on to pass the resolutions, and make the suggestions, expected of it...

...Before going to Dhikala I went out on the lake several times with Branford. The lake is full of fish but he had no luck. I can only look on, for any movement of my arms inflames my back, I am however mending past and can now use my legs without any discomfort and will, in time, be able to use my arms also.

Thanks and thanks again for your more than kind invitation...'

From Corbett (from the Maharaja's of Jind's camp, Mohan) to Maggie – Dated 17/06/1939

'...I travelled as far as Ramnagar with Carless, had an hour fishing with him on the Kosi and came on to Mohan in the car the Raja sent to Ramnagar for me. We went out murgi [jungle fowl – ed.] shooting this morning and this evening while the Raja is sitting up for a tiger I am going fishing with Dr. Chatterjee. It's a bit hot in the middle of the day and quite cold at night (the Dadu% blows down the Kosi and hits this bungalow which is on the edge of the rowkah [river course – ed.], the actual river is about 500 yards from this bank). We were out at 7 a.m. and the Raja was quite pleased with our bag of two murgis, neither of which he shot. His dogs work beautifully and only live to please him. The whole family is here and I have all my meals with them, the staff have their meals in their own tents. I have been given a big tent with very swagger furniture and several A.D.C's [Aide de Camp of the Maharaja – ed.] have been told off to look after me. If I don't put on five stone it will be my own fault. Later I caught 9 fish this evening, the same number I caught with Carless yesterday. The doctor did not catch anything. Carless yesterday caught one.

The Raja did not get a shot at the tiger. It came back during the day and had a big feed so there is no chance of it wanting another feed this evening. I think the Raja would rather shoot one murgi than shoot a tiger. I hope David is not giving any trouble. The Raja was very disappointed at my not having brought him. I don't know what David would have done having 25 or more dogs that are in camp with us. The dogs don't fight among themselves but I imagine they would eat a strange dog...'

[% Dadu is the wind blowing down from the high foothills in late evening – ed.]

From Corbett (Kaladhungi) to Lord Malcolm Hailey (Former Governor UP) – Dated 08/01/1940

‘...I was most surprised and was very glad to receive your telegram yesterday. I have had a feeling all along that Lady Hailey would take you to Benares and that was why I posted a letter to you on the 6th. With all that is going on in Benares, you should have a lovely time. I expect this visit of H.E’s [The Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow] is really in connection with the M.C.C. [Marylebone Cricket Club of England – ed.] team’s match with Vizanghanis eleven. If the weather is kind you will have a chance of seeing some real cricket for the first time in your life. The M.C.C. team are world famous and every one in India will try and see them on this tour. Ram Singh must be delighted at this opportunity of seeing the Benares temples...

...I have been trying to finish off the remaining 37 feet of film in my camera but have had no opportunity so far. No animals have called since you left and I have not so much as seen the tracks of any leopards on the many occasions I have been out. It’s very cloudy and cold today and after I have posted this letter I am going to have a try at Chakalwa where I saw fresh tracks on the 31st. I did not tell you that I fired the last shot of the Christmas shoot. We were beating that triangular bit between the old Gularbogh road and the rowkah; and when every one had handed over their guns, two peafowl got up out of the very last bit of lantana and I killed both of them in one shot. I have only done this double kill on two previous occasions, once when I shot a chakor [pheasant – ed.] and black partridge and on another occasion when I shot two murgis [jungle fowl – ed.]. It’s a very satisfactory shot and gives one’s a warm feeling all down one’s back...’

From Major Corbett (Gurney House, Naini Tal) to OUP Bombay – Dated 15/08/1943

‘...I am writing to ask if you will undertake to publish a book for me...

...Briefly the book, which has about 100 thousand words, and eight illustrations, has eight stories in it, four of which are about man-eating tigers...

...His Excellency the Viceroy and H.E. Sir Maurice Hallett, Governor of the United Provinces, have very kindly written a Foreword and an Introduction for the book, copies of which are enclosed, together with an appeal which I should like to appear on the paper cover of the book...

From Major Corbett (Gurney House, Naini Tal) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay) – Dated 6/11/1943

‘... I have today despatched to you by Registered Letter Post a small book entitled “Jungle Stories”* which a friend printed for me on a hand press. I distributed 99 of the 100 copies he printed for me among my friends, and retained the copy I have now sent you, for myself. I should like you to read the book and see if there are any stories in it which you would care to substitute for “The Man-Eater of the Ladhya Valley”...’

[*as of 1959 still extant in Oxford House, Bombay – ed.]

From Major Corbett (Kaladhungi) to Lord Malcolm Hailey – Dated 21/01/1944

‘...Since stamps became legal tender I don’t know how many airgraphs have reached you (this form has an embossed stamp!) so I am harking back to give you news of myself.

I joined up on the outbreak and after working two and a half years between Dehra [Dun] and Delhi I was put on the same kind of job I had at the beginning of last war [recruiting civilians as volunteers for the District Soldiers’ Board – ed.]. Six months later I contracted tick typhus and after spending three months in the Ramsay [Hospital – ed.] left the hospital weighing eight stone and for a year now I have been crawling about trying to get fit enough to take up another job I have been offered. During the year I have written a book (The Man-Eaters of Kumaon) which is being published by the Oxford Press, Bombay, for the benefit of St. Dunstans.

I am now on my feet to the extent that I can walk to all the places where we shot birds together. Ammunition is hard to get but that does not matter for birds are few and our requirements for the table are small. Water in the streams is getting less every year, and cultivation is shrinking. We are not short of essentials and can get all we need – at a price...

...you are remembered by every one in these parts with very warm feelings. Bahadur is still going strong and hopes to have the pleasure some day of beating a murgi [jungle fowl – ed.] for you to shoot.

The David you gave us died last year but we have another dog now, of the same family who is keen as his grandfather was, and who will be a companion for Maggie when I take up this new job...’

From Major Corbett (c/o Army Post Office, Saharanpur) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay) – Dated 14/04/1944

‘...My antics take me half over India. A couple of weeks ago I was in the jungles to the S.E. of Bombay and I am now up in the frontiers of the Himalayas. So you must not mind if you do not hear from me promptly...’

From Colonel Corbett (Viceroy’s House, New Delhi) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay) – Dated 03/03/1945

‘... I am delighted to learn that there is a prospect of the book [*Man-Eaters of Kumaon* – ed.] being printed at home [England – ed.], and I am also delighted to learn that you contemplate a reprint in India. If your people at home or you in India have any difficulty about paper please let me know.

I should like to donate all royalties, on the first print, of the home edition to St. Dunstans and for this reason I should like the royalty to be no less than 12 ½ %.

I hope it will be possible to reproduce in the home edition a few more photographs I sent you. I have been asked repeatedly why a picture of Robin has not been included.

[A copy to be sent to HM the King]...’

From Colonel Corbett (Gurney House, Naini Tal) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay) – Dated 6/10/1945

‘... As I told you in a previous letter I am now settled in Naini Tal and as soon as I get a little stronger and can collect my wits I will go on with “Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag” for which I have collected a mass of material, and a number of good photographs. I am hoping to make a complete book of about 80,000 words of this one story..’

From Corbett (Gurney House, Naini Tal) to Lord Malcolm Hailey (Former Governor UP) – Dated 11/10/1945

‘...I am up here on sick leave awaiting discharge from the Army. I was wet throughout the monsoon in the Saharanpur and Central Provinces forests and ended up with a bad go of malaria and some spotted form of jungle fever, so came up and spent a month in bed. I have been on my feet now for a week and am getting stronger every day. The Army very kindly said they could use my services for the rest of my life but as the war was over, and I was sick anyway, I thought it best to leave now. The going has been a little hard, even so, I have enjoyed these years I have spent in the jungle in the course of which I have tried to teach boys and men of all ranks and from all parts of the empire how to live on, and fight in a jungle..’

From Colonel Corbett (Kaladhungi) to Lord Malcolm Hailey – Dated 21/01/1946

‘...many thanks for your letter of 4th January, and for the copy of your article for the ‘Book of the Month Club’. The fact that I do not recognise the ‘Jim’ of your article, does not make me any the less deeply grateful for your great kindness in having taken the trouble to write it. I have always envied you for your mastery over the pen and for your great gift of words, and never more than now, when I am trying to thank you for the very great service you rendered me by supplying my readers with such a vivid description of the country and the people round whom my stories have been written. Maggie read your article to me and as I listened to her I compared it, in my mind, to that part of the canal above the Kham Bungalow, where it flows smoothly and without a ripple, through most beautiful surroundings...

...I have met your friend Wylie and can now understand why he has so many good friends. I was told in the Central Provinces that he was the most popular official who had served in that province, and I am sure he will be just as popular with us. Brother Connolly in writing about him says he is the only Governor at Government House since you left. Wylie has come at a very difficult time...

...Wylie invited us to a murgi shoot on 26th December a few miles from Kaladhungi – he was staying at Government House in Naini Tal at the time. For many years I have not been to a Government House shoot...

...the bags at these shoots have ranged between two and twelve birds; at the shoot on the 26th eight guns got eleven birds – Wylie did not have a single shot. What went

wrong was that an attempt was made to drive the birds out of heavy tree jungle into the open with the result that they went into trees and allowed the beaters – of whom there were a hundred – to walk under them.

Next time I will offer to run the shoot, and in the meantime I have asked Wylie to try and spare a few days in March to fish the Ramganga at Gairal and Dhikala. He has no rod but that does not matter for I have one that he can use...'

From Colonel Corbett (Gurney House, Naini Tal) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay) – Dated 6/04/1946

'... We are going to Lucknow on Monday the 8th to spend a few days with the Wylies, and on our return I have promised the villagers in the Ladhya river valley, five days march from here, to try and contact a man-eater (tiger) that has recently eaten fifteen of their number. When I am free of this job I intend treating myself to some fishing on the Ramganga. While in the Ladhya valley, and on the Ramganga, I will get opportunities of taking jungle pictures and it is for this purpose that I am accepting your offer of trying to get me films...'

From Colonel Corbett (Gurney House, Naini Tal) to L. Brander (OUP London) – Dated 09/08/1946

'...Many thanks for your letter of 2nd July. We have been indulging in a Postal strike, and you must accept that as my excuse for not having written to you earlier. Judging from the number of letters I was receiving before the strike, and the number I received during the strike – and after it – I would at a rough guess put the number of letters that the strike has lost me, at two hundred. The worst of it is that I shall probably never know whose letters to or from me, have gone astray. Another thing the beastly strike has done is, giving colour to the rumour that I have been killed by a man-eater. I laughed at the rumour at first, but now, it is giving me a lot of trouble, and causing complications. I did think of asking you and your people in New York to deny the rumour, but on second thought, I refrained from writing to you, fearing it might look like an attempt at cheap advertisement. I did write to Hawkins on the subject, and in a letter I received from him yesterday he tells me he heard the rumour from London.

Many thanks for your advice – taken in the spirit in which it was offered. The 'Digest' ['Reader's Digest' magazine – ed.] are taking an interest in the new book [Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag – ed.], but I will do nothing without consulting Mrs. Carrick.

The representative of 'Life' ['Life' magazine – ed.] and the representatives of several other American magazines have found where I live and are anxious to send their professional photographers to accompany me on all my 'hunting expeditions'. I have cried off on the score that I am not well enough to do any hunting – at present. I was told that Life has a circulation of twenty million, but even that did not make me feel well enough to go into our jungles in the monsoon.

From two Air Letters, delayed in the Post, and received last night, I see that pre-publication reviews are appearing in some home papers [England – ed.]. I take it for granted that you will arrange for press-cuttings to be sent to me, and debit my account with the cost.

Only the last chapter of the new book remain to be written. I will be very interested and very anxious, to know what you, Hawkins, Mrs. Carrick, and the editor of the Digest think of this new book. If I, as one of the general public, or a man keen on sport, was asked my opinion of the two books, I would unhesitatingly say the second was better than the first. I most sincerely hope that you and the others who matter, will think the same, and I think you will, provided you follow me step by step, as I have tried to make you do.

I have received hundreds of cuttings from American papers and in two of these cuttings the public are warned not to read “Man-Eaters”, unless they are prepared for gruesome tales. In the new book there are many more gruesome tales than in “Man-Eaters”, but I can’t help this for if I did not paint the whole picture as I saw it, there would be no point in my trying to paint it at all. Don’t you agree? In these days many things are said in books that make one’s skin creep, so I do not see why anyone should object, in a book on sport to my mentioning human kills or the condition in which I found them, for I am writing about facts, and not drawing on my imagination for the purpose of harrowing my readers’ feelings. True there were only two partly adverse reviews, but even these two out of many hundreds stick in my throat...’

From Colonel Corbett (Gurney House, P.O. Kaladhungi) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay)
– Dated 11/12/1946

‘... Ibbotson undertook to write up the story [of *The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag* – ed.] and after ten years he abandoned the attempt, and I am glad he did, for being a Senior Wrangler, his brain works on too high a plane for him to be able to tell a simple story in simple words. And another thing, I had a suspicion that his object in writing the story was to say more about me than I wanted him to say, so – I am glad he gave up his attempt...’

From Colonel Corbett (P.O. Kaladhungi) to Mrs Virginia Carrick (OUP New York)
– Dated 20/12/1946

‘...There is one thing in connection with the reviews on “Man-Eaters” [the book *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* – ed.] that I should like to bring to your notice for it has given me a lot of uneasiness, and placed me in a false position. Just how the idea originated I don’t know but the public in America appear to have got the impression that I am a sort of paid servant, employed by Government to exterminate man-eaters. A friend of mine just back from Washington heard a book-store keeper telling a girl that the book in her hand had been written by a guy who was paid by the Indian Government to

kill man-eaters. I don't know how you can help me in this matter, but if you can help me, I shall be very grateful, for after having spent my own money – of which at that time I had very little – in trying to help others who were unable to help themselves (this just between you and I) I have a great aversion to anyone thinking I was risking my neck for a wage, or for any other reward. The trouble is that if people who read “Man-Eaters” get the impression that I was a professional hunter, they will be under the same impression when reading the Rudraprayag story and this thought is hateful to me for it makes me feel so cheap..’

From Colonel Corbett (P.O. Kaladhungi) to L. Brander (OUP London) – Dated 21/02/1947

‘... Henderson of the Readers Digest and Hawkins want me to write a book on the Supernatural but I feel that this is a subject above my head, and any way I have not sufficient material to make a book – not a book of this kind. So I won't attempt to write a book on this subject or for the matter of that on any subject; this might as you say be a pity for if I were to write the book that I, at one time, had in mind it would contain all I had learnt about jungle lore in a long lifetime. The book would have been for boys and it would have started like this:-

“Your father Jack was a great sportsman and if he had lived he would have taught you more in one season than I can hope to teach you in ten, however, he took my promise with him that I would do the best I could for you, and with your keenness and my perseverance we are between us going to make a sportsman of you of whom he would have been proud.”

Jack's father was my eldest brother and Jack (Tom in real life) was his only son, and I made the promise...

...I didn't sleep during the night of the 20th for there was too much to think about. If there is any uprooting it will have to be done with care for neither my sister nor myself are young enough and fit enough to stand more than one transplanting. The necessity may never arise, but if it does, it would be unwise to be caught on the wrong leg.

We have taken extra trouble over our garden this winter and it is now a blaze of colour and the resort of a host of birds; our pied robin appears to like the sound of this machine for whenever I am typing he sits on the door step and whistles, and the doves come right into the house to ask for their grain..’

[Jim Corbett's eldest brother was Thomas Bartholomew Corbett – born September 1860, died November 1891 – and his son, referred to as ‘Jack’ in this prose, born in June 1888 would later be known as Lt. Gen T.W. Corbett after a highly successful career in the Army– ed.]

From Colonel Corbett (Gurney House, Naini Tal) to L. Brander (OUP London) – Dated 13/07/1947

‘... My sister read me your letter of 12th May while I was laid up in hospital with pneumonia and malignant malaria which I have contracted while on a fishing trip; the best fishing trip I have ever had – and the last I shall have in Kumaon. I was with the Wylies (he is our Governor) and in four days fishing on one river we killed 125 fish, heaviest eighteen pounds, on light fly rods and ¼ inch home made brass spoons. The Wylies were new to the game but it did not take them long to learn how to hook and handle a fish and at the end of our ten days trip, during which we fished three rivers, they were expert anglers. Before putting up our rods we made many plans for this coming winter but those plans have had to be scrapped for long before winter comes the Wylies will be in England, and my sister and I, with luck, will be in Kenya.

One of the most beastly things I know of is selling up an old home, but it must be gone through with, for it is no longer possible for us to live in India not because of hostility for I know that our Indian friends will be delighted to have us remain but because we cannot face the prospect of being the only White people in our part of the country, so the roots that we planted in India two hundred years ago must be pulled up – a beastly job ...

...we have decided to try Kenya. When we have built a new home for ourselves and made it comfortable you must come out and stay with us and sample the Kenya trout and black bass fishing. A nephew of ours has a small farm in the Highlands and if we like the locality and the climate suits us I will get him to give us ten acres and I will build a house on the same plans as the one (*in which*) we are now living; there will be a spare bed room in this house for you. We are up against the question of passages but the Army has very kindly come to our assistance and we are hoping to get away in November or December.

When we have settled down in Kenya, and I have back the wind the pneumonia took out of me, I will write one more book...’

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay) – Dated 23/07/1948

‘... I don’t know if I told you that we are living at the Outspan Hotel in the cottage in which Baden Powell spent the last years of his life. In this cottage, in which we are very comfortable, I will write “My India” while the hotel build a new cottage for us [the new cottage never materialised – ed.] in which we will be more private, and will have more accommodation for our friends – when they come to us to forget their troubles...’

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay) – Dated 20/08/1948

‘... Did you ever hear of our famous dacoit Sultana? I should like to write a long chapter on him – he was hanged for a murder committed near our village at Kalad-

hungi – and hope you do not think there would be any objection for my doing so. The account would be written from memory and would only deal with the events in which I took part. Freddy Young, the Policeman who was deputed to catch Sultana, is a great friend of mine and I know he would be only too glad to furnish me with a copy of his report to Government, but if I ask him for a copy, I will have to follow the report, and my difficulty is that I am not clever enough to make a story out of another man's report. So if I write the story it will have to be from memory and I might be a little out in some of my statements, though I do not think this will matter, and on this point I hope you will agree with me. Sultana was hanged in 25 [1925 – ed.] and only Freddy Young will be in a position to criticise my account, and that I know he will not do..'

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Cumberlege (OUP London) – Dated 07/11/1948 (for the attention of Henry Z. Walck of OUP New York)

'... If you receive any applications for the film rights of '*The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag*' I think it would be better to sell the rights outright for a lump sum, than participate in profits as we are doing in the case of '*Man-Eaters of Kumaon*'. I should like you to pass this suggestion on to your New York office..'

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Mr Wilton (Corbett's ex-classmate and later schoolmaster of Naini Tal, now in Canada) – Dated 03/04/1949

...What has pleased me most about the book I have written "*Man-Eaters of Kumaon*" and "*The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag*" are the contacts they have made for me, with old friends in all parts of the world, some of whom I lost touch with, over half a century ago.

My sister Maggie and I left India after the massacres in December '47 (My mother and my half sister Mary Doyle died many years ago) and after touring all over Kenya by car, decided to settle down in Nyeri where the management of the Outspan Hotel offered us the use of Baden-Powell's cottage. We have been in the cottage now for over a year and are very happy and comfortable. Quite a lot of our friends from India have settled down near us, and we have made many new friends, and if you were to come in our veranda any day round about coffee time (11 a.m.) you will find every chair our cottage contains occupied. The veranda looks out across a wide valley to snow-capped Mount Kenya, and it was this mountain that decided us to make our home here. Our days are very full in writing to our friends; writing another book; fishing, and with bird and animal photography. A few days ago while returning from [our nephew's] farm, I ran into a herd of from fifty to a hundred elephants, five miles from our cottage, and as I had my cine-camera and a hundred feet of coloured films with me, I got a beautiful picture. I have been taking movie pictures for over twenty years – with the object of working up interest, in the younger generation, in the fast disappearing wild life...

...Neither Maggie nor I married. I served during the first war in France and in Afghanistan and, in the second war I served in India and in Burma. The second war lasted one month too long for me for during that month I contacted the worst form of malaria of both countries and ended up with pneumonia which left my lungs very weak. It was in an effort to get fit again that we came to Kenya. I trained troops for jungle warfare during the second war, a job I loved for it kept me in the jungles all year round, and brought me in contact with a grand lot of men.

We remember you, your wife and 'old Griffin' very well and often wondered how you were getting on in Canada and whether you were keeping up your music...

...Have you remained in India you would today have been a wanderer on the face of the earth looking – like thousands of others – for a place in which to lay your head. In Naini Tal today there are only some six white people, who are too old or too poor to leave. Philander Smith and Wellesley have closed down, and All Saints and Sherwood will probably close this year. The Convent and St Joseph are carrying on, mostly with Indian students. In the Government of the UP there are now only five white men...

...I should like you to read my second book "*The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag*" which was published in India, the UK and in America a year ago and which the critics say is better than the first book. I hope you will also read the third book, "*My India*" when it is published for it is about village life in the part of India you knew. When "*My India*" is off my hands I want to write one last book which will contain all I know about Jungle Lore. It will be an interesting book to write for it will carry me back to the days when I was a boy in God's country...

...Homesick? Yes at times, terribly homesick...

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay) – Dated 25/03/1951

'... I have finished writing Jungle Lore and will send you the MS as soon as my sister has corrected it. After you have read the MS, laid it aside, and read it for a second time, I want you to let me know if you think it necessary or advisable to include the man-eater story I told you I was keeping in reserve. This man-eater story if told as I should like to tell it, and without any packing, will take not less than a hundred pages, possibly more, and I have a very uneasy feeling that it will smother the first part of the book. The reason why I did not include the story in "Man-Eaters"[of Kumaon – ed.], or in any of the other books, was because the story was unusual and no one who had not first read Jungle Lore would believe it. It was for this reason that I kept the story back and now I feel it will be too much for Jungle Lore, and that it will smother the first part of the book, which would be a pity.

The story I refer to is a good one and would make a complete book. I know the public complain that our books are too short, and the MS I am sending you is on the short side, but a better book than a top heavy one, so if you agree with me, we will omit the man-eater story.

Thanks for you letter of 16th March, just received. I am glad to know that my delay in returning the agreement has not interfered with the publication of *My India*. Yes thanks, I am quite well, and now that *Jungle Lore* is off my chest I can concentrate on my flying visit to Scotland. I will only be away three weeks and hope during that time to kill a record number of salmon on the Lochy near Fort William. Later I will go back to Scotland, with my sister, and shoot grouse with Linlithgow ...'

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay) – Dated 13/04/1951

'... I receive a great number of letters asking me to tell some of my supernatural stories, and I also receive a great number of letters from parents telling me how pleased and surprised they are to find that my stories do not frighten their children. The reason why my stories do not frighten any one is because I only write about real things, and real things do not frighten. It is the supernatural things that all of us, including children, are frightened of, and for this reason I do not intend including any supernatural stories in any of our books.

My present plans are to leave here on 6 May and return on 2 June. This will be a fishing trip to Lochy, and then on 1 August I will go back to Scotland with my sister and return to Kenya at the end of September. I will not have time to write the additional chapter before I leave in May so I will write it when I get back in June. I am greatly looking forward to catching a salmon in May, and to shooting a grouse with Linlithgow in August. After doing these pleasant things my brain will be more ready to tackle the man-eater story [*The Talla Des Man-Eater* – ed.] The story from start to finish, is as clear as crystal in my memory and all I have to do is to put it into words...'

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Cumberlege (OUP London) – Dated 10/02/1952

'... You will have seen from the press, and heard over the wireless, that the Princess, now the Queen has been to Nyeri on a short visit. One of the three nights she was here she spent at Tree Tops, a little wooden hut in the branches of a tree in the heart of the forest. I, your humble friend, was honoured by being asked to stay with her and her husband for the twenty hours they spent in the tree. When I helped her into the tree she was a Princess, and when I helped her down she was a Queen. In the whole of Africa I do not think there were two happier people than the Princess and the Duke that night. And during all the years that the Tree Tops has been in existence there has never been a better time for viewing game, than there was that night. We climbed into the tree at 2:30pm and at 4:30 when the Princess was told that tea was ready in the room behind her, she said, "Oh please may I have it here", she was on the balcony, "I don't want to miss a minute of this." During those two hours she had been watching, and photographing with a cine camera, a herd of 47 elephants, some of which were under the balcony and nearly within reach of a fishing rod. Shortly afterwards there

was a fight between two bull waterbucks which ended in the vanquished one dyeing the pool in front of us red with its blood. Later there was a fight between two rhinos.

Now, all the above is for your private eyes only, and is a prelude to a request. The Princess has read *Man-Eaters* [of Kumaon – ed.], and knows the book from cover to cover. When she left Nyeri on the evening of the day we came down from Tree Tops, to fly home, she is said to have taken the leopard book [*The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag* – ed.] with her. She told me she was looking forward to reading it. My request is, that you have one copy each of our three books, *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*, *The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag* and *My India*, specially bound for the Queen. Also one copy of our illustrated *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* for boys specially bound for Prince Charles.

I would suggest all four books being bound in soft green leather, with the titles and the tiger's head stamped on them in gold. If you can do this for me, at my cost, and send the books to me when ready, I will sign them and beg Her Majesty to accept them...'

[Underlines are Corbett's own – ed.]

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Cumberlege (OUP London) – Dated 30/01/1953

'... This gentleman, the Assessor [of Income Tax], started off by apologising for giving me that trouble of visiting him for, he said, nothing had given him greater pleasure than reading our books. Needless to say my visit to him was a very pleasant one.

I omitted to tell you, when sending you the MS for *JUNGLE LORE*, that I had revised the copy you read, and added another 15,000 words to it. So the copy you now have is complete except for three illustrations, which I hope to send you shortly. These three illustrations are:-

Arundle Castle. Our old home at Kaladhungi.

Leopard's and tiger's method of killing

Illustrating jungle sensitiveness

MORE MAN-EATERS. This book will have five stories, roughly, 50,000 words. Half the book has been written. The other half – in spite of the Mau Mau – will be written before the end of the year...'

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Cumberlege (OUP London) – Dated 08/04/1954

'... You will see from the attached that I have told Oman I have asked you to have two copies made of the MS of our new book, one copy for him and one copy for Hawkins. If it is all the same to you, I should like these to be exact copies, for Oman and Hawkins will want to make their own adjustments, to suit their readers, and the script won't stand up to two corrections. I am very sorry to give you this trouble, but I am not up to making these additional copies myself and there is no one here who can

do the job without making ten mistakes on each page. I make many mistakes myself but then I do not profess to be a trained typist and do all my typing with one finger, and with my one good eye.

I hope you will approve of one of the titles I have suggested for our new book. Both Maggie and I like the second, better than the first. I realise that there may be technical objections to using it for our last book, a title so similar to the one we used for our first, but as the last book is a continuation of the first I am hoping that you will be able to overcome the objections, and that the book will be published under the title of:-

MAN-EATERS OF KUMAON CONTINUED

In the set of ten photographs I have asked Oman to send you, there is only one that is not first class, this is the photo of the two cubs lying in front of my tent. Bad as this photo is I should like it to be included in the book for I want sportsmen to see – from the size of the cubs – that I was justified in thinking that one of them was the man-eater.

I will dispatch the MS to you by Air Mail as soon as we have packed it up. If you have the time I should like you to read the last story that I claim is the best true tiger story that has ever come out of India. In my letter to Oman I omitted the word, true...'

[capitalisation and underlining are Corbett's own – ed.]

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Cumberlege (OUP London) – Dated 21/04/1954

'... Herewith the MS of our next book. I should like you to send a copy to Oman [Layout and Graphics Editor, OUP– ed.], and a copy to Hawkins.

After the three of you have read the MS you will be in a position to select a title for the book. In my letter of 8th April I suggested, MAN-EATERS OF KUMAON CONTINUED. I don't like this title and I am sure you will be able to think of a more suitable one.

Instead of sitting at this typewriter five thousand miles from you listening to bombs bursting, I wish I was sitting in your office for there are many things in connection with this last book of ours, that I should have liked to consult you about ...'

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay) – Dated 22/04/1954

'... Nyeri with all its distractions of bombing, shelling, machine-gun fire and troops dashing about from here to there is not a suitable place in which to do any writing and as I can see no end to our troubles, I doubt whether I shall do any more writing. It is for this reason I am so anxious that MORE MAN-EATER STORIES [later called *The Temple Tiger and More Man-Eaters of Kumaon* – ed.], should be our best book. We made our reputation – thanks to you – with man-eater stories, and I have now come to the end of these stories. I am glad I kept the best of my stories, Talla Des, for the last ...'

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Ray Goffin (Deputy Publisher to Cumberlege, OUP London) – Dated 03/05/1954

‘... I was glad to learn from your letter of 29 April that the typescript had arrived safely. The day after I despatched it I received a letter from Cumberlege telling me he was going to America and Canada on a short holiday. In this letter Cumberlege said he did not like either of the titles I had suggested for our new book, and he suggested giving it the name of the last story in the book with, Man-eaters of Kumaon as a sub-title. Better than either Cumberlege’s suggestion or mine, is Hawkin’s suggestion of:

MORE MAN-EATER STORIES

I like this title very much and hope that you and Cumberlege, and your people in New York, will agree to adopt it. In addition to being short, it links up with our other publications and gives an indication of the contents of the book.

I note you are sending copies of the slip proof to New York and Bombay. I will await your verdict on the book with very great interest. The stories are good, and the last of their kind in my collection, but I do not know if I have made the best of them ...’

[capitalisation and underlining are Corbett’s own – ed.]

[in the absence of Cumberlege who was on leave, Ray Goffin replies to Corbett on the 14th May 1954, and suggests *The Temple Tiger and More Man-Eaters of Kumaon* which is subsequently adopted as the title of the book – ed.]

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Ray Goffin (Deputy Publisher to Cumberlege OUP London) – Dated 23/06/1954

‘... Please forgive me for the long delay in answering your letter of 14 May. I have writers’ cramp so can’t use a pen and the tip of the one finger I use for typing got rubbed away while typing the MS of my last book [*Temple Tiger* – ed.], and I had to give it a rest for several weeks. The finger is well now, and the blood washed off the typewriter, so I am fit to go into action once again.

First let me tell you how glad I am that you and Ward [Deputy Publisher, OUP London – ed.] are pleased with the new book. Your opinion means a lot to me and I am hoping that Cumberlege, when he has the time to read the sheet prints will endorse your opinion. I am glad you are sending copies of the typescript to New York and Bombay. I shall await the opinion of these two cities with great interest.

Your suggestion for a title cannot be bettered. It was very kind of you to think of it and I should like you to pass it on to New York and Bombay. The other titles suggested were certainly flat and uninteresting, whereas the one you suggested is both striking and interesting.

I have sent Oman another set of five photographs and have asked him to have them copied and to send a set of each to you, and to Hawkins. Two of the photographs, the snipe and the swamp deer, will have to appear in combination for the two subjects are mentioned together in the Talla Des Man-eater story ...’

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Cumberlege (OUP London) – Dated 26/06/1954

‘... Hawkins has written to me about some spelling of some place-names in our new book. He points out that in the map that appeared in *Man-Eaters* [of Kumaon] Purnagiri is spelt Punagiri, and Talla Des, Talla Desh, and he suggests that the spelling in the book be altered to conform with the spelling in the map.

I have told him the map is a copy of an old Government map and the old spelling adhered to, whereas when I have used the names I have spelt them as they are pronounced by the people on the spot.

On the other matter. If I am mentioned on the dust jacket of the *Temple Tiger*, or anywhere else, I should like it to be stated that I am living in Pax Two [Corbett writes Paxtu as ‘Pax Two’ – ed.] in Nyeri and not in Nairobi. A great number of letters are addressed to me at Nairobi and apart from this giving the Postal Department a lot of trouble I am sure it results in the loss of many letters ...’

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay) – Dated 26/06/1954

‘... Your letter of the 21st has this minute come to hand and I am sitting down straight away to tell you how relieved and how glad I am to hear that you are not disappointed with the *Temple Tiger*. I enjoyed writing every word of the five stories in the book for, while doing so, I lived over again some of my happiest days. Time smooths out the rough portions of the ground over which one has travelled and for this reason I think a suitable period should elapse before experiences are related. Had I written up my experiences immediately after meeting with them I might have said things that I would later have regretted.

For instance, when I returned to Muktesar at midnight tired and worn out I found my men had been beaten up and my things thrown out of the Dak Bungalow* to which I had gone by mistake, and this had been done by the man who had asked Government for my help.

And again the blowing out of my ear-drum was a criminal act which caused untold suffering, not only to myself but also to others, and for which there was no excuse for the man responsible was a soldier and accustomed to the handling of rifles. And further he was a spectator sitting behind me in my howdah, and he was not supposed to shoot ...’

[*it might be interesting for the reader to know that we heard and saw evidence of this incident when we visited the Dak Bungalow in Muktesar in 2014. After showing us a very old teapot, the chowkidar (bungalow attendant) told us the story that has obviously been told and passed on throughout the generations of the chowkidars: “Corbett Sahib had stayed in this bungalow when he came to hunt the (Muktesar) man-eater and this is the teapot which Corbett Sahib and his men left after they left in a hurry.” Although we had a doubt in 2014, Corbett himself has now provided a

reason to believe that the teapot really did belong to him and had been left behind after his men had been beaten and forcibly thrown out of the bungalow – ed.]

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Mr Gangola (Corbett's friend and Taxidermist, Ramnagar) – Dated 26/06/1954

...Your letter of 21st June just came to hand this morning...

Now I want you to do me a favour. I have just written a book [*Temple Tiger* – ed.] in which I have mentioned the big rock at Dabhidura and the shrine, or temple that is built near it. I want a photograph of the rock and shrine to illustrate my book. If you have such a photo or if you can get me one in Almora, please send it to me by air mail, for the book is in the press now, and is to be published in August. I will have a copy of it sent to you. If however, no photo is available in Almora, could you please send a man on a pony to Dabidhura to photograph the rock and shrine, and send me a copy of the photo by air mail? On hearing from you I will send you a cable money order to cover all expenses.

Yes, there is a lot of political trouble here, but being a sadhu I don't take any part in it...

[The book '*Temple Tiger*' referred to in this extract went without a photo of the Dabhidura temple rock – ed.]

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to A.C. Ward (Deputy Publisher, OUP London) – Dated 10/07/1954

'... Re: The Temple Tiger

Your selection of a frontispiece is very suitable, so I have numbered it, No.1. [the Purnagiri Hill – ed.]

No.2, page 69, is a photo of the Panar Man-Eater. This is an additional illustration and I hope it will be in time to be included in the book. It is a good photo and gives some idea of the animal that killed 400 human beings, so get it in if you can.

No. 5, page 123. Please omit, "Lady Ibbotson in background".

It is misleading to say she took the photograph and that she is in the background. As a matter of fact I took the photo with her camera while she was leaning over watching the men skinning the tiger [the Chuka man-eater; however, the mistake did pass on in the first editions of the book where the plate appeared – ed.] ...'

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay) – Dated 10/07/1954

'...I am not surprised that my reference to the Recording Angel has puzzled you. I had to mention the incident to make the Talla Des story intelligible. This is what happened:

One of the guns at Bindukhera that day was a young army man, a R.E. [Royal Engineer – ed.], who was not known to any of us in camp and who had arrived un-

expectedly with Rutledge while we were having breakfast. Rutledge did not want to shoot but the R.E. did, so I mounted him on a pad elephant and put him at the end of the line. After firing 200 rounds without touching a bird the R.E. shouted from down the line that he did not want to shoot any more, and could he please come and sit in my howdah with me.

I stopped the line, called up his elephant, and transferred him into my howdah. I offered him the front seat but he said as he was not shooting he would prefer to sit behind. I put his shotgun in the rack and as there was no room for his rifle, he said he would carry it in his hands. Within two minutes of starting the line, two pigs got up right in front of me. One went to the left, and the other straight ahead. Audrey Stiffe [wife of the Deputy Commissioner of Naini Tal – ed.] was the next gun to me on my left and as she was raising her rifle to fire I saw her lurch backwards into her howdah and at the same moment heard the report of the R.E.'s heavy rifle behind me. "For God's sake be careful," I said, "You nearly shot her."

Thirty seconds later he fired at the second pig which was now 200 yards away to my right front. We were both sitting down and he was shooting from his right shoulder so you can imagine where the muzzle of his rifle was when he blew out the ear-drum of my left ear. I did not know he was going to fire and if I had moved a fraction of an inch he would have blown the side of my head off. I did not say a word, there was nothing to say, but I pointed to his elephant which was alongside and as he climbed out of the howdah he said, "In the army a man often gets deaf by having a gun fired near him, but he soon gets over it." He was an R.E. and an expert on explosives ...'

[the underlining is Corbett's own for emphasis – ed.]

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Hawkins (OUP Bombay) – Dated 12/11/1954

'... My sister and I are planning to fly home [England – ed.] next spring to have our eyes operated on for cataract. It will be nice to get our sight back, and it will be nice to get her away for a little while from this troubled area. Maggie has stood the strain without a word of complaint, but even for her, two years has been a long time, and I would like to get her away from the sound of battle ...'

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Cumberlege (OUP London) – Dated 17/11/1954

'...I am so glad to learn from your letter of 9 November that our new book is going so well. A second edition within a month, of the fifth book while the other four are still selling well, is an achievement of which we can justifiably proud. The dock strike has unfortunately delayed the dispatch of the book from England, and anxiety is being felt in Kenya that it will not arrive in time for the Christmas market...

...There is no improvement in the situation here however, it could be worse and grouching won't make it any better. We will enjoy the peace and quiet of England when

we take our holiday next year. 'Next year' sounds a long way off, but the time will soon pass for we have lots to do in the house and in the garden, and we can still see well enough to do a little reading and writing. I have had to give up photography but hope to be able to take it up again after my eyes have been operated on in London. Eye operations out here are not always a success, and we can't afford to take risks.

The sun is shining after a night of rain; the jacarandas are in full bloom, and our garden is a blaze of colour and – a few miles away – bombs are bursting. Human beings are never happy unless they are fighting, or going on strike over small matters that could be settled over a bottle of beer...'

From Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) to Cumberlege (OUP London) – Dated 01/04/1955

'... You will forgive me for the long delay in writing to you when I tell you that I have been trying to conserve what sight is left to me, to write a short book on Princess Elizabeth's visit to Nyeri and the time I spent with her at Tree Tops. The book, if the Queen approves of its publication, will I think be of interest not only to the Queen and the Duke, but also to the thousands of people from all parts of the world who visited Tree Tops. The idea I have in mind is a book of some five thousand words on the style, but of course not as exciting or as well written, of Paul Gallico's, "The Snow Goose". A girl, Robin Tomkinson who has recently had an exhibition of her drawings in London, has consented to do a few sketches of animals to illustrate the book. I will bring the MS with me and if Parker, who was present at Tree Tops, approves of it he might undertake to show it to the Queen and get her sanction to its publication. I will show you first and will be very interested to know what you think of it ...'

[Raymond Sheppard's illustrations were used on publication – ed.]

Prior to Tree Tops Corbett's last published piece was not published by OUP but by ...

World Scouting "Scoutisme Mondial" Volume One – April 1955

HALT! Your attention, please!

by Jim Corbett

"Should any Scouter not know the books by Colonel Jim Corbett, he is advised to read them as soon as possible since they are rich in material for good yarns for Scouts. Few men, if any, have the wealth of knowledge of jungle life that Jim Corbett gained during his long years in India. He is now living in retirement in Nyeri, Kenya, in the very bungalow in which B. P. [Lord Baden Powell] spent his last days. It is appropriate that this yarn specially written for Scouts, should have been addressed from Paxtu."

It was spring in the Himalayas, and all Nature was rejoicing. Trees and bushes that had stood gaunt and naked throughout the long winter months were putting on

a mantle of tender young leaves of varying shapes of green and bronze, and from far and near came the joyful songs of birds and the strumming of a multitude of cicadae. A light shower of rain the previous night had washed the atmosphere clear of haze and dust and the sun, on this glorious spring morning, was shining in a cloudless sky of intense blue.

On a road running across the face of a steep and well-wooded hill two boys were walking. It was the last Saturday of the month and a school holiday, and the boys were on their way to the first cricket match of the season, against a rival school. One was in cricketing flannels and carried a bat over his shoulder, the other, in a dark lounge suit, had a catapult in his hand. As the two boys turned a sharp corner in the road a striated thrush alighted on a wooden post to which the three strands of fencing wire were attached. These Himalayan striated thrushes are a little smaller than their European cousins, and are of a uniform dust brown colour. To compensate them for their modest plumage they have been given the sweetest of songs which they sing in a clear voice while dancing, with feathers fluffed out and tails spread like a fan, on the topmost twig of a bush, or other commending position. Their eggs, four or five in number and of a heavenly shade of blue, are laid in a nest constructed of moss and lined with hair and feathers. The sight selected for the nest is invariably on a low bush. For some reason unknown to me, these thrushes have a very laboured flight and they can only fly downhill, or in a straight flight for a few yards. The bird on the wooded post was holding a fat green caterpillar in its beak and while was hesitating whether to try and cross the road in front of the boys, or fly down the hill and wait until they had gone, the catapult in the hands of the boy in a dark suit twanged, and the bird fell dead at the foot of the post.

"Good shot" said the boy in flannels, as he went forward to pick it up, adding "I will carry it for you."

Continuing their conversation, which the thrush had interrupted, the boys had proceeded for a short distance when the one carrying the bird stopped and said, "Oh, Dick, look at this!" and he stretched out his flannel-clad right leg, on which there was a spot of crimson blood.

"I am sorry," said Dick as he took out his handkerchief to try and wipe off the offending blood, and as he was doing so, his companion asked "you don't want this thing, do you?"

And Dick answered, "No, I don't want it."

So, the poor unwanted bird, with the caterpillar still held in its dead beak, was tossed down the side of the hill.

Two weeks previously, while walking along that same stretch of road, I heard in the distance a number of birds mobbing a snake. As I approached nearer I identified the birds, *from their calls* as Indian great tits, yellow-cheeked tits, blue-winged tits, red-billed tits, white-eyed tits, verditer fly-catchers, black-throated jays, a pair of scimitar

babblers, a yellow-billed whistling thrush and a striated thrush. When I turned the corner, from where the catapult had done its work, I came in the view of the birds, which were excitedly hopping about on a bush, some twenty yards above the road.

A perpendicular rock face prevented a direct approach, so retracing my steps for a short distance I climbed the hill and approached the bush from above. The birds paid little attention to me and as I neared the bush I saw a black rock snake about six feet in length lying near it, and protruding from its mouth was the tail of a striated thrush it was in the act of swallowing.

I was carrying what in the Himalayas is called a “khud stick”, and in Europe an Alpine stalk. With this stick I killed the snake, and picking it up by its tail, dropped it into a deep cleft in the rock.

With their enemy gone, the birds soon dispersed leaving only one of their number, a striated thrush, sitting on the bush near which I had killed the snake. As I passed the bush I saw a thrush’s nest in its upper branches and in the nest were four fledglings which had very recently seen the light of the day, for the shells of the blue eggs from which they had just emerged were still lying round them. It was in defence of this nest that the cock bird had lost its life.

For two weeks the devoted mother, single-handed, protected and cared for her young until that glorious spring morning she too fell a victim, not to a natural enemy but to a boy with a catapult. And now as she lay, unwanted, on the hillside the fledglings sat in the nest throughout the long day, opening their beaks to every sound they heard. A heavy rainstorm came on during the night and weakened by hunger and lacking the warmth and the protection of their mother’s body and feathers, the fledglings died.

When my sister and I came to Nyeri in January 1948 we were given Paxtu, the cottage that had been built for Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout Movement. Lord Baden-Powell occupied the cottage during the declining years of his life, and the many friends he made in Nyeri, and who still speak of him with great affection, tell me he spent much of his time either sitting on the veranda writing and painting or sitting in the sun on his lawn delighting in the company of the birds he had collected round him and looking across the Chania valley at snow-capped Mount Kenya, a view he never tired of, for the mountain is always beautiful, and it changes its colour from hour to hour.

As long as he was able to do so he visited his friends’ farms in the neighbourhood, sitting for hours sketching and observing wild life, of which there was abundance and for which he had a great and abiding love.

In the five years that elapsed between Lord Baden-Powell’s death and our arrival in Nyeri the birds he had collected had scattered and gone, and when we took over Paxtu not a bird was to be seen. Wherever we have been my sister and I have always cultivated the friendship of birds, and of animals too where possible, so one of the first

things we did was to scatter bread crumbs and crushed maize on the small cement platform that Lord Baden-Powell constructed near the bird-bath at the foot of the steps leading up into the veranda.

Nothing happened for several days, and then one morning when we returned from breakfast – our cottage is situated in the grounds of the Outspan Hotel and we take all our meals in the public rooms – we saw a cardinal waxbill picking up the crumbs we had scattered on the platform. The little bird, one of the smallest in Africa, was nervous and on seeing us flew away. Next morning there were three waxbills on the platform, and the morning after, the waxbills were joined by two masked weavers, birds about the size and with much, the same colouring as the canary.

And so our family of birds started to collect round us, until today you can count them by the hundred, and identify twenty or more varieties. Many of our birds have been with us for seven years and some are tame enough to feed out of our hands.

An American on a world tour was having coffee with us on our veranda a few mornings ago, and when he held out his hand with a few crumbs on it a white-eyed flycatcher, followed by its young one, alighted on his hand and very deliberately started to feed the young one. When the meal was over the American said, "My! This is the most wonderful experience I have ever had."

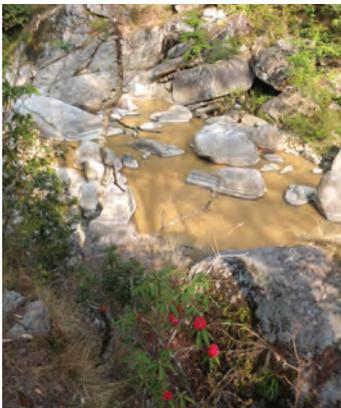
Our birds have been photographed and filmed by bird lovers from many parts of the world, among them being the Chief Scout, Lord Rowallan, of whose clan we have the honour of being members. Lord Rowallan is as interested in and as fond of birds as Lord Baden-Powell was, and I can imagine how grieved he would have been if he had seen Boy Scouts do what the two boys did on the spring morning in the Himalayas. Boys are not deliberately cruel, but they are at times thoughtlessly so, and I feel sure that if those two boys had paused to consider what they were doing the thrush and her young would not have died. For they were not hungry and did not want the bird for food. They were not collectors and did not want the bird for a museum. Then why kill merely to toss their victim near the hillside? And again, they were unobservant for it was spring when the birds are nesting – in proof of this the thrush was carrying a caterpillar – when all true sportsmen, be they young or be they old, put away their catapults and their guns. I have often wondered, when I have seen boys with catapults or air guns shooting at every bird they saw, and for which they had no use, whether they say, *all those who provided them with the means of killing* ever paused to consider how silent, dull and uninteresting our world would be if there were no birds in it. I walked on one occasion for five miles through a forest of giant trees where not a single bird was to be seen or heard and I have never felt so lonely, or known miles to be so long. On countless other occasions I have walked from dawn to dusk through forests, or along roads, where there were birds to be seen or heard and I have not felt lonely for a moment, or been conscious of the miles that have passed under me.

Wild life in general, and birds in particular, have many enemies and few friends and I can think of nothing that could have given Lord Baden-Powell greater pleasure to have known that the great and honourable army of the Boy Scouts which he founded was carrying out his wishes of being kind to wild life. Championing wild life brings no honours but a Boy Scout does not seek honours: his duty is to protect the weak and the helpless and his reward will be the satisfaction of knowing that in doing his duty he is contributing to making this world a happier, a brighter and a more cheerful place for all to live in.

[italics in the text are Corbett's own, for emphasis – ed.]



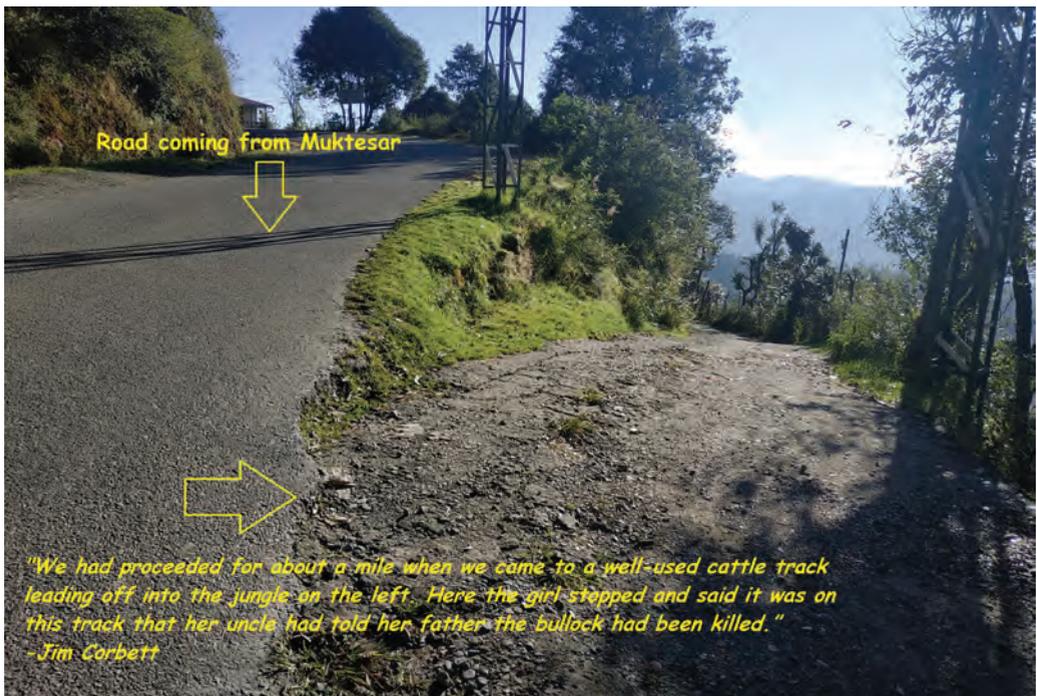
Our group in Thak Village, on April 6, 2018. It was here that Corbett and the Thak tigress followed each other for many days. Top: Paata Natsvlshvili & Preetum Gheerawo; In the middle: Manfred Waltl (standing), Stuart Gelzer & Joseph Jordania; Front: Priyvrat Gadhvi, Fernando Quevedo de Oliveira & Rohit Bakshi (standing).



(Left) Champawat tigress killing site viewed from above, on the opposite hill, where from Corbett had to sprint down the hill to meet the tigress. Photo features the overhanging rock in top right-middle, the precipitous rock face on the left; and the river which turns left, at this point to the North. (Right) Level view of the killing place from the side where the tigress was coming from. It was about here that the tigress jumped over the river, unaware that Corbett was waiting for her. You can see the overhanging rock (with a human figure on it) where the wounded tigress climbed and met her end.



Place where most likely the house of Putli's uncle was situated in 1909. It is here that eight-year old brave girl Putli, brought a bullock back to his uncle, under Corbett's escort, while the Muktesar man-eater was still at large.



The cattle track, the same that existed in 1909, branching from the central road. Corbett went down here and found the Muktesar man-eater's last kill – the white bullock that belonged to Putli's uncle.



The remains of the house of Badri Sah in Muktesar in 2018. It is here that Corbett and his friend watched a langur injuring the latter's dog.



Badri Sah' house from another side



Dr. Jordania and Ali Akhtar at the place where Corbett left the cattle track and went down through the jungle parallel to it and afterwards finding the place where the cattle stampeded after the tiger attack.



A very steep road going down to Badri Sah's guest House and his apple orchard.



20-foot high bank, at the foot of which the bullock kill was lying.



Overview of Muktesar man-eater trail: 1. Muktesar Dak Bungalow reserved for Government Officials. 2. Muktesar Post office. 3. Indian Veterinary Research Institute Gate. 4. Muktesar Dak Bungalow reserved for General Public. 5. Putli's uncle's house location. 6. A well-used cattle track leading off into the jungle on the Left. 7. The road to Badri Sah's Guest House and his Apple Orchard. 8. The place where Corbett met Putli. 9. Corbett's point of return after he covered six miles on Dhari Road. 10. Where the Cattle Stampeded. 11. Twenty feet high bank at the foot of which the bullock kill was lying. 12. Locality of Corbett's night vigil on a stunted tree. 13. Head of a deep ravine. 14. Badri Sah's Guest House. (With apologies, that due to lack of space, the characters appearing in the map are not quite visible. Interested readers may wish to visit our website jimcorbettdiscussions.weebly.com to see a better image.



Sanouli village elders (from Left to Right) Kharak Singh Negi, Diwan Singh Negi and Durga Singh Negi. We are grateful to them for the valuable contribution to the oral history for the search of the Panar Leopard kill site. (Photo: SG)



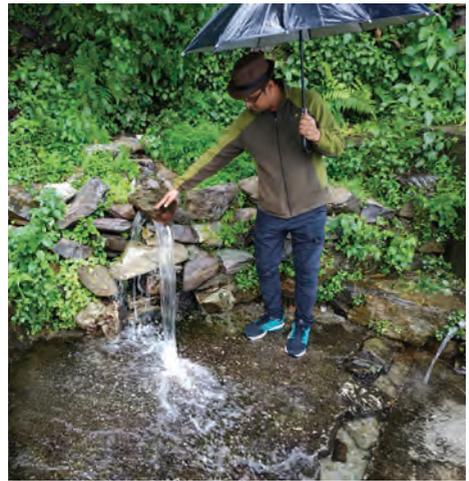
The Panar Leopard kill site, situated in the field called Sheela-Deb, looking south up the Kutar River valley. The abandoned village site of Sanouli is nearby, uphill to the right. (Photo: SG)



Uphill view from Sheela-Deb toward the old abandoned village. (Photo: SG)



The terrace wall on the uphill side of Sheela-Deb. Fernando and Dr. Jordania standing near the probable location of the tree (now gone) in which Corbett waited for the leopard. (Photo: SG)



(Left) A bend in the ravine with a water spring. Corbett writes: “..in turning a corner in a ravine where there is some dense undergrowth, I came on a woman filling an earthenware pitcher from a little trickle of water flowing down a wooden trough.” (Right) A closeup view of the spring where Corbett saw a woman filling an earthenware pitcher. The spring is still functioning and provides fresh water to nearby villages.



The overhanging rock as seen by Manfred in 2007. Photos taken from both sides of the rock shows the extent of what remains of that landmark from the Mohan man-eater story.



Photo by Ali Akhtar in 2018 shows the remnants of the overhanging rock and the cleared-out road passing adjacent to it. The hill is as described by Corbett as ‘very steep and overgrown with dense foliage, trees, and scrub jungle having the remnants of great rock jutting out of it’. Corbett passed this rock with a great difficulty in the apprehension of man-eater lying on the flat bit of ground above the rock.



The great rock (20 feet high) to the right of which the tiger skirted while carrying the buffalo kill. Corbett sat on this rock and saw the buffalo kill 40 or 50 yards below. The basic features of the rock are matching with Corbett's description and it was 'flush with the ground on the approach side'.



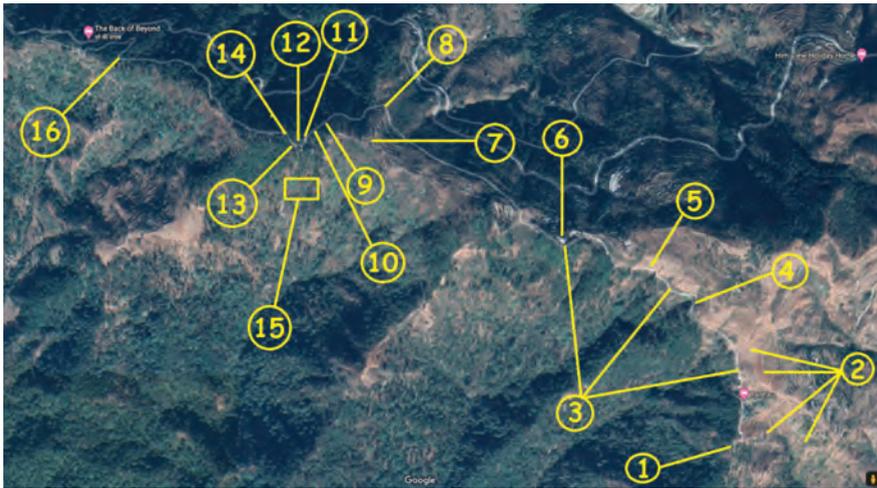
Twenty feet square flat bit of ground where Corbett shot the Mohan man-eater at point blank range while the tiger was sleeping. This photo is taken while standing in the middle of the flat bit of ground looking west. The fallen tree was lying on the far side of the flat bit of ground and beyond this point the hill appears to be more or less perpendicular.



Close to a stagnant pool of water there is a rock about three feet high, on the khud side of the road. By standing on it Corbett looked over the hump in the road where the buffalo was tied forty yards away. The hump is still seen in the road however some portion of the top side has been cut away to accommodate the new motorable road.



Sitting on the great rock (20-feet high) and looking down fifty-yard below where Corbett found the buffalo kill. The rock offers a good view of the dell and of the surrounding jungle.



Google map – A complete overview of Mohan man-eater trail. 1. The edge of the cultivated land. 2. Old Terraced fields. 3. Level stretch of the road running across the face of the hill. 4. A turn at the spring 5. Footpath running up the hill 6. Foresters Hut 7. Triangular hill 8. ‘The road turned to the left after leaving the cultivated ground’. 9. The overhanging rock. 10. The bend 30 yards from rock. 11. ‘The road comes out on the ridge’. 12. A stagnant pool of water. 13. Three-Foot high rock. 14. Buffalo was tied here. 15. Killing site. 16. First hairpin bend where Corbett found the pug marks of the tiger.



Thak village, one of the abandoned houses, where nature is taking back its rights. (Photo: PN)



Chuka village. You can see the foot of the mountain, in the background, where after going uphill for about 3 km you will reach Thak village. (Photo: PN)



The view of Sarda river from Thak village. (Photo: PN)



Joel Lyall's rock where from Corbett possibly shot the Thak tigress. However the ease of standing behind the rock, without the need to be seated precariously on the ledge, seriously puts the hypothesis of it being the correct location, without any dispute, in doubt. (Photo: PN)



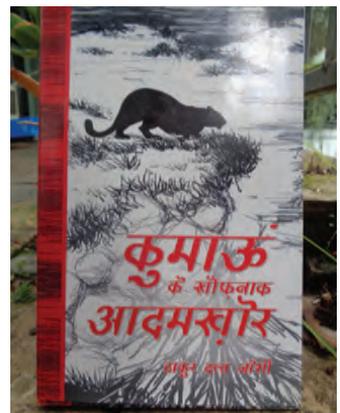
Reconstruction of the final scene of waiting for the Thak man-eater at the rock found by Dr. Joseph Jordania in 2011.



(Left) The remnants of the old building and the room in Chakati village, where arguably Corbett spent a night in the leper's room. (Right) Discussion in Chakati (Chagethi) village, with the new row of buildings in the background. (Photos: SG)



(Left) Three generations of a family of Chakati. Here, the village headman, whose granddad met Corbett in 1909 and his son and grandson. (Right) Chakati village with the buildings. (Photos: SG)



(Left) The old bungalow in Champawat some 7 kms from the amphitheatre. (See Diaries 2016 and 2018) (Right) Thakur Dutt Joshi's book – (See diary 2016 and 2018 and chapter "Old meets the New").



Corbett's .275 Rigby Mauser rifle with which he accounted for many of his man-eaters, with members of the JCIRG in Camp Kyari, Syat in April 2016



House of the Pundit in Golabrai, Rudraprayag – In 1998 on the left and the remains of it in 2016



(Left) The monument for the Leopard of Rudraprayag in 1998. (Right) The filmmaker's ravine, as named by Manfred, in Kala Agar – See Diary 2018



Flying the Union Flag at Chateau Gorgier (Berthoud 1980, p.6)



(Left) The “aristocratic” Alphonse Berthoud, Charles’ father (Ref: Berthoud 1980, p.17) (Right) Charles Berthoud and bearer with tiger (Ref: Hewett, 1938, pg.138)



Drawings of Arundel 'Castle', Corbett's childhood home in Kaladhungi. Drawing by pencil (Left) was never published before. Charcoal drawing of same (Right) appeared in 'Jungle Lore' 1st Edition of 1953. Drawings courtesy of OUP, Oxford.



Arundel Castle in 1910. The only known photo of Corbett's childhood home, published for the very first time here, was taken by Corbett himself. (Courtesy OUP & Patrick Cumberlege)



The canal adjoining the garden of Arundel (Left) and 'Bijli Dant' (Right), the bridge which was struck by lightning and this new one, a replica, was rebuilt on the Kota Road to Ramnagar, at a different location, due to superstition. Photos by Corbett. (Courtesy OUP, Oxford)



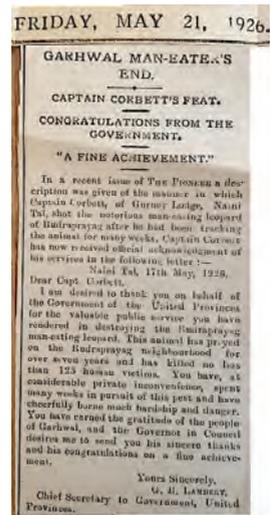
The tree in Golabrai, Rudraprayag, from where Corbett shot the Rudraprayag man-eater. The hand-written note “Tree from which I shot leopard” is by Corbett (Left photo) and is dated 1926. The coloured photo (Right) of the tree, with monument of Corbett at its back, was taken by us in 2016. The height of the today tree’s fork, and its positioning on the left of the road, caused us to doubt about them being the same tree at the same location. (see “Rudraprayag” Chapter)



Kashi Ram Deoli, with Corbett’s .275 rifle at the event in Golabrai in April 2016. Photo on the right shows pundit Ishwari Dutt Deoli (from Corbett’s Story) and his nephew, Maduram Deoli, Kashi Ram’s father. (See “Rudraprayag” Chapter)



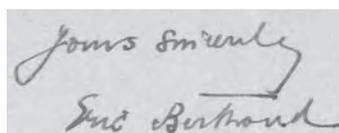
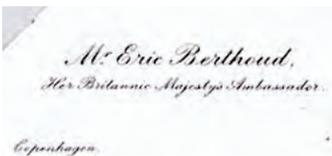
The road in Golabrai at the only spring of the village, shown with Corbett’s photo of the same locality taken in 1926. Even today the spring supplies water from a trough as Corbett mentioned. We actually brought Corbett’s photo there in 2016 and had observed that not much had changed except the modernity of the buildings.



School children of Golabrai with the youngest members, Rushika and Reyna, of the JCIRG at the April 2016 event when Corbett's .275 rifle came back to be re-united to the historic place where the man-eater was shot 80 years earlier. (Right) Newspaper clip of the 'Pioneer' of 21 May 1926 for the official congratulations from the Government to Corbett. (Thanks to Patrick Cumberlege)



Coloured photos of 1978 by David Blake. Left photo is the mango tree where the Rudraprayag leopard met its end; and right photo is the confluence at Rudraprayag where the Mandakini River (upper) meets the Alaknanda River (lower). The shrine was still there in 2016.



From Charles Berthoud's nephew, Eric, to Corbett in 1953. See chapters "Charles Henry Berthoud" and "Other People on Corbett".



Veranda of Paxtu Cottage (Left) where Corbett used to feed the birds, photo of 2019 by Michael Barton. (Right) Corbett in Nyeri with a bird in hand in Paxtu garden, originally intended for the back cover of the UK Editions of his books.



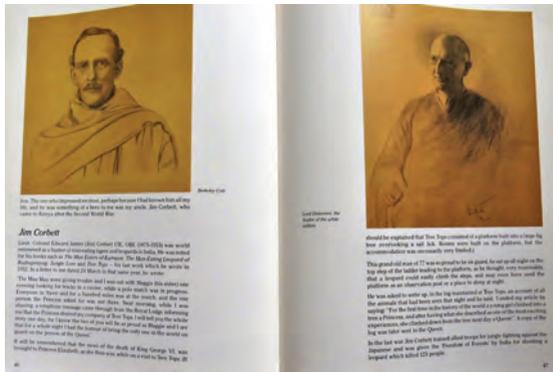
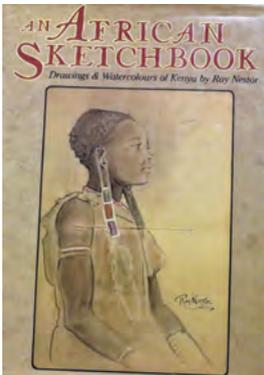
Michael Barton at the balcony of Tree Tops viewing the same landscape which Corbett saw while in company of Princess Elizabeth on the afternoon of the 6th February 1952 (Left) and next to Corbett's grave in Nyeri (Right), photos of him during his 2019 Kenya trip.



The original signboard of Paxtu cottage as it was in 1993 (Left). Now no longer seen there. Photo is by David Blake, who created and gave this Corbett poster (Right) a year later to the Outspan Hotel, to be placed in Paxtu, but which they finally chose to place in Tree Tops Hotel, where it is still there as photographed by Michael Barton in 2019.



Dorothy Lincoln-Gordon and her husband Jeffrey in Kenya in 1962 (Photo (Left) courtesy of Glenn Boyes); and her family pictured, in order, from left to right: her aunt Mary Doyle, uncle John Quinton, grandmother Mary Jane, uncle Jim and aunt Maggie. Family photo, courtesy of OUP Oxford, presumably dated in 1899 as inscribed on the back of it.



Glimpses of “An African Sketchbook” by Ray Nestor. The cover is pictured on the left; and on the right is the passage where Ray writes about his uncle. To Ray’s disappointment, the book went without a drawing of Corbett. Corbett features prominently however in the book in company of Denys Finch-Hatton, Berkeley Cole and Lord Delamere, amongst others.



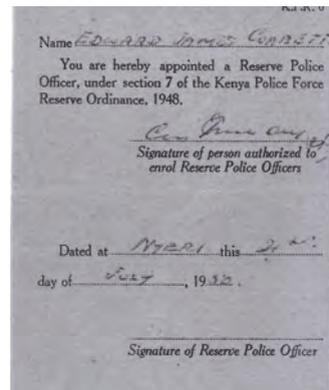
Denys Finch-Hatton as portrayed by Ray Nestor in his book. Corbett’s 450/400 D.B by Jeffery & Co. pictured here (right) in its original box and accessories, now under the custody of Bill Jones. (See Chapter: “Guardian of the Historic Past”, for an overview of Hatton and Corbett’s rifle)



Bill Jones, consultant of the JCIRG with Corbett's 450/400 rifle which accounted, amongst others, for the Kanda man-eater, pictured (Right) with the father of one of its victims, a lad of 18 years old. The latter photo is a still from a 16-mm film which Corbett made after the shooting of the tiger.



Bill Jones and his wife, Liz, at the public presentation event of Corbett's .275 rifle in Ramnagar in April 2016, in company of the youngest members of the JCIRG, also pictured on the right with the anti-poaching vehicle donated by John Rigby and Co. during the occasion.



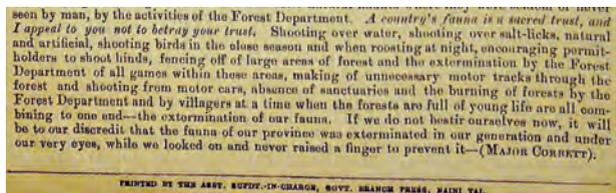
Corbett's grave in Kenya in 1993 (behind the cross on the right), with its subsided headstone. The headstone was restored a year later by the head of the Jim Corbett Foundation of Canada. The document on the right shows the appointment of Corbett as 'Reserve Police officer' of Nyeri. Both items courtesy of David Blake.



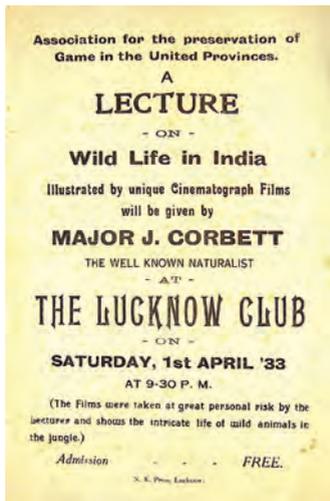
The old meets the new...Dr Jordania with Corbett's .275 Rigby Mauser meets Takur Dutt Joshi with his 12bore single barrel shotgun (See chapter: "The Old Meets the New") in Camp Kyari, Syat in April 2016. Pictured on the right is a young Thakur Dutt Joshi during his induction as Deputy Ranger in Corbett National Park in 1973.



(Left) Thakur Dutt Joshi with a man-eating leopard, shot in 1986 on the western boundary of Corbett National Park. Thakur Dutt's family (Right) in April 2018. From left to right are pictured, his grandson, his son, his widow and daughter-in-law respectively. His grandson has taken over Thakur Dutt's shotgun and had just been awarded the Government licence for it. The old meets the new again...



Corbett's article "Wild life in the village: An Appeal" published in "Review of the Week" of August 31, 1932. The original publication is shown here, with the last part of the article, notably ending with "... and we never raised a finger to prevent it." (See 'Preface')



The 1930's marks the end of an era of trophy shooting for Corbett and begins his active years of wild life cine photography and lectures for schoolchildren on sensitisation for the needs of preserving wild life (Left picture, courtesy of OUP, Oxford). However, Corbett was still being requested by villagers to rid them of a man-eating tiger, such as the Kanda man-eater, pictured on the right, with grateful villagers, dated 16 July 1932. (From a cine-film by Corbett, courtesy of the BFI Archives)



The Rudraprayag leopard with Corbett and relieved villagers. This photo which has never been published before, shows a recurrence of the instance where Corbett invites the locals to pose with a dead man-eater. The 'shadow' on the right of the photo is an overexposure which we have tried to correct digitally. Photo is courtesy of Patrick Cumberlege.



“...the weapons that were produced that day would have stocked a museum.” Seized guns in the district over the years have stocked a room in the District Magistrate’s Headquarters of Champawat where more than 400 of them were assembled as at 2018 when we visited it. Right photo is on the Lohaghat-Champawat road taken in 1993 by David Blake. Nowadays these road signs have gone.



JCIRG members inspecting an old Kumaon map upon invitation of the District Magistrate of Champawat (Left); and the passports and ID’s of the members and friends of the JCIRG on display on a rock next to the banks of the Sarda River. Both photos are dated April 2018.



From Corbett’s unpublished photos. Left is Lake Naini at the Malli Tal end in the 1920’s. Seen in this photo is one among the earliest electricity poles to the right. The other photo showing a beat on elephant back like the one described in “Jungle Lore”. Thanks to Patrick Cumberlege.

13-19 December 1986



Changing aims: on the governor's tiger hunt Corbett (Frederick Treves) swaps his rifle for a movie camera, but up in Haini Tal (right) Corbett's daughter sporting trophies adorn the home he shared with Maggie (Anna Cropper)

able to see, while we looked on and never raised a finger against it.
The governor is duly astonished that the Corbets' unpretentious knowledge of the jungle, and



Form titled 'Royal National Parks of Kenya' with handwritten details. No. 191. Holder: 11-Colonel J. Corbett. Holder's title: Honorary Officer of the Parks. Date: 19/12/1955. Signature: J.H. Miller, Director.

Article of "Radio Times" magazine of 13th -19th December 1986 issue, reporting the filming of the BBC docudrama "The Natural World – Man-Eaters of Kumaon" starring Frederick Treves as Corbett and Anna Cropper as Maggie. The film depicts the gradual change-over in Corbett's mind which turns him into a pioneer conservationist and the guardian-angel of wild animals, such as his last assignment as Honorary Game Warden in Kenya. (Right picture) – With thanks to David Blake for both documents.

THE LAKE ZEPHYR A Social Weekly. Circulated at all the principal stations in KUMAON AND THE UNITED PROVINCES OF AGRA & OGDH, EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING. Vol. XXIV, No. 2. (NAINITAL, WEDNESDAY EVENING, APRIL 21, 1909. [Shamoo Press, No. 1].)

Things in General.

The Field and Flow of the Highland Light Infantry arrived last Monday, and will probably start their progression next Saturday.

The weekly entertainment on our levee had since Saturday, but has been exceedingly solemne, and will, we hope, see the situation in common view. The Springs had a social repast, especially the large one on Appartee, and the States will locate suitably. The water was somewhat sparkling, and the lake was keeping their plants and young vegetation watered from considerable. The hillside and looking delightful green and the diffusion the last few days has made it quite remarkable.

We understood that Colonel Boney is now the Secretary of the Naini Tal, Poon Area Society, having succeeded Mr. Withfield in that office. (C. I. Boney's residence in Kullu, and inquiries regarding the next Exhibition may be addressed to him there.

The wedding that took place at St. John's Church on Monday was bright and pretty. The bride, Miss Mabel, looked quite charming, her dress of cream satin was really lovely with its trimmings of rich lace and short and long tulle. She carried a beautiful bouquet and wore the regulation wreath and veil. Her one little bridesmaid was Miss Dorothy Stuart, who is quite so fat on these occasions, having a lady called into a similar capacity at the wedding of Miss Knox, and Mrs. Florence. The little bridesmaid wore a very pretty costume of dress and the bridesmaids all in gold brocade and chain. The bridegroom, Mr. Martin of the Poon People, attended by his best man Mr. Savage, was only in attendance on the church. The wedding was shortening, just about the time fixed for the wedding, a clock was to strike past 2 o'clock, and it was a relief to the sitting congregation that the bride arrived before a departure. She was led up the aisle by Mr. Murray, a. and given away by Mrs. Savage. The Ven. the Archbishop of Lucknow read the marriage service and gave

the usual exhortation to the married pair at the altar, and then their religious duties. Miss Savage presided at the organ, and the choir was led by girls from the Poon School, who sang all through in a white and sang the well-known marriage hymns "The Voice that breathed our Eden" and "O perfect love, how deep the charity the bride's prayer proceeded down the Church to the strains of the Wedding March, the church lights burnt out promptly and the bride left in her ride down for some time, the residence of Mr and Mrs Stuart from whose house the wedding took place. Here Mrs. Stuart held a reception, and Mr and Mrs Cecil Martin received the congratulations of their friends. The best person's wedding was met by the ladies to eat, her wedding cake, and healths were drunk in champagne. The newly married pair then left as early as possible, for the journey to Kullu by least undertaken by daylight. The bride's going away dress was of brown with a lot of tulle.

Of all the daring deeds in the world of which there is perhaps nothing to beat the way in which Mr. James Corbett has just again all the district of a man-eating tigers, which during the last four or five months had killed several natives within a couple of miles of Muktesar. Some of the historical stuff there had not up to now over the tigers. He without being able to get a shot, and had at last appeared to the Deputy Commissioner to make some arrangements for its destruction. On news reaching Mr. Corbett, he at once started off and after much riding night spent in the jungle, he reached the tiger's and tigress's den, so he crept over some rocks, and saw a tiger covered with heavy brushwood and coming within close firing distance. He had a difficult shot from his double barrel rifle and missed, before he had even time to reload the cartridge, the tiger snarled at and their respective faces hung upon the angle-rendering creature in the hole. Mr. Corbett aimed the rifle with perfect coolness and when the tigress was within about three yards he bowled her over dead. Bravo, Sir!

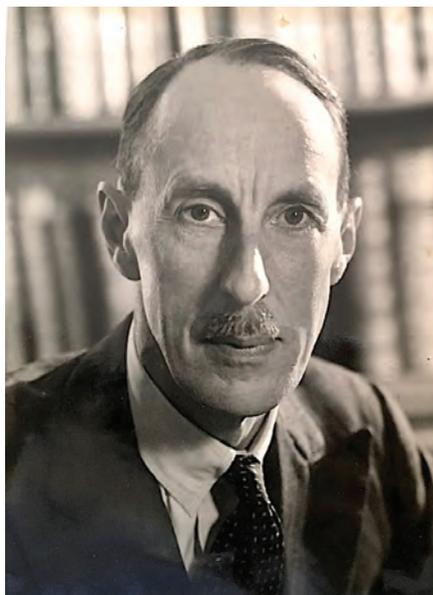
Form titled 'Muzal & North-Western Railway-Licensed Telegrams'. Class: P, Code: 11, No. 191. Recipient: Corbett, Mrs. Murray. Address: 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170. Date: 11/11/09.

close firing distance he had a difficult shot from his double barrel rifle and missed; before he had even time to replace the cartridge, the brute infuriated at being disturbed simply flung herself at her assailant, and their respective fates hung upon the single remaining cartridge in the rifle but Mr. Corbett awaited the rush with perfect coolness and when the tigress was within about three yards he bowled her over dead. Bravo, Sir!

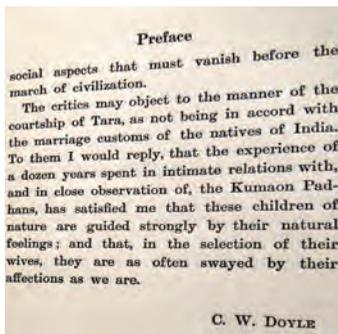
The original "Lake Zephyr" weekly publication of Naini Tal of 21 April 1909 confirming what we asserted in the 1st Volume of this book that the Muktesar man-eater was shot in 1909, and not in 1910, as Corbett had stated. An enlarged view of the article is provided to the right. Further, the telegram dated 1st March 1910 in top right shows that Corbett's record of handling goods at Mokameh Ghat occurred in 1910. (See chapter "Further Research") – Telegram courtesy of OUP Oxford.



Manfred with Corbett's kettle in Muktesar. See an account of how Corbett and his men left this kettle behind in Muktesar, in chapter "Corbett's Writings from other sources than his books".



(Left) Photo of the New York Times of 1946 showing Corbett's two publishers, Henry Z. Walck (OUP New York) on the left and 'Jock' Cumberlege (OUP London) on the right at an OUP (New York) event in Waldorf, Astoria. (Right) is the photo of Jock taken in 1948 at the library of the OUP in London, just after taking office there as head publisher.



CONTENTS	
	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
A JUNGLE VENDETTA	11
CHAPTER II	
HASTEEN	17
CHAPTER III	
THE HUNTING OF CURRITA DUTT	24
CHAPTER IV	
THE SPOILING OF NYAGONG	30
CHAPTER V	
THE WOMAN IN THE CARRIAGE	50
CHAPTER VI	
FOR THE TRAINING OF BRHO	64
CHAPTER VII	
CHANDSI	76
	9

Glimpses of “The Taming of the Jungle” by C. W. Doyle, Corbett’s half brother. Shown from left to right are: the cover and extracts of the book’s contents and preface. See “A Review” by Michael Barton



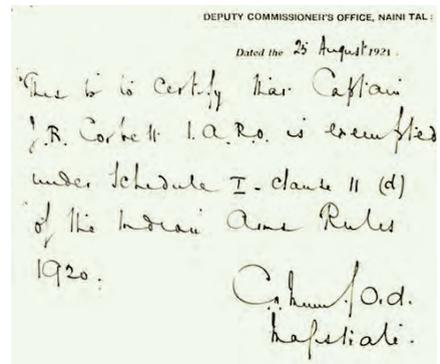
Robin, “..all the gold in India would not buy him..”, pictured left; and in the other photo, crouched near Maggie, with Corbett standing on the porch of their ‘Irish Cottage’ of Kaladhungi. Photos courtesy of BFI (Robin) and OUP (Oxford) for Corbett and Maggie.



(Left) Corbett with Dr Robertson in Scotland (See ‘Maggie’s Notes’) – (Right) Corbett’s Irish Cottage in Kaladhungi, the earliest known photo of this building, which hosts today’s Corbett’s museum in India.



Marjorie Clough, Corbett's biographer of 1946, is pictured here (Left) while on duty for the American Red Cross (ARC) in the NW Province, and on the other photo, in company of Betty Walbolt, another ARC volunteer, and Corbett, while visiting the latter in Kaladhungi in October 1945.



(Left) Photo from the "Wide World Magazine" of July 1930 showing the Talla Des man-eater with Talla Kote villagers (Photo by Corbett, courtesy of David Blake)— and (Right) document for the "Exemption of Firearms Act" to which Corbett was entitled as decreed by the District Magistrate of Naini Tal (Courtesy of OUP, Oxford)



Corbett's love for fishing was unparalleled. Pictured on the left, he is with Maggie on lake Naini during his last years in India; and to the right, with Lionel Fortescue on an inflated goatskin raft on the Chenab river, around year 1920. (Photos courtesy of OUP Oxford)

Man Eaters of Kumaon—Jim Corbett. Published by Oxford University Press of India, Calcutta. Price Rs. 5--.

A second edition of this exciting book has recently been published. The readers will be pleased to note that the book has been selected by the Book of the Month Club of America for distribution to its members sometime in 1946. The publishers are to be congratulated as they have reduced the price of this new edition from Rs. 7/8/- to Rs. 5/- though more illustrations have been added.

Printed in England.
July 1944 (Last Page.)

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ANY ENQUIRY RESPECTING THIS TELEGRAM SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE FORM AND MAY BE MADE AT ANY OF THE COMPANY'S OFFICES.

Newspaper clip (Left) of the 'Saturday Mail of Calcutta' dated 15 December 1945 announcing the double event that a second edition of "Man-Eaters of Kumaon" has just been published and selected for the American-Book-of-the-Month-Club (ABOCM). (Right) Telegram from Henry Z. Walck (OUP New York), dated 25 October 1945, to inform Cumberlege (OUP UK) about the acceptance of "Man- Eaters of Kumaon" for the ABOCM of March 1946.



Corbett with John Savary (see "Maggie's Notes") in January 1955 during the latter's visit to Paxtu where he had been gifted a signed copy of "The Temple Tiger" by Corbett. No other photo of Corbett which have been taken in 1955 have been found by us. Possibly the very last one...



Modern-day Tree Tops Hotel in 2019, as photographed by Michael Barton, built on another location from the original one, which was burned down during the Mau Mau uprising of 1953.



Corbett's grave in November 2019. Flowers with insert "From Corbett admirers from all over the world" courtesy of Paata and Dr. Jordania

“Notes and Biographical Sketches” by Maggie Corbett

BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS

For a life of Jim Corbett one must read his six books. His autobiography is scattered throughout their pages”

Such were the first lines of the Introduction to the World Classic Series 1960 edition of *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* and *The Temple Tiger* combined, a five-page biography written by Geoffrey Cumberlege (‘Jock’ to his friends, including Maggie¹) in his attempt to draw a written portrait of Corbett to familiarise readers with its author, but this was not the first biography of Corbett.

It was Lord Malcolm Hailey who wrote the first ever biographical sketch of Corbett in September 1945, which he did when Corbett was still alive. Hailey, the very first Corbett scholar, to give him due credit, was asked by the Indian Branch (Bombay) of the Oxford University Press (OUP) to write on Corbett when *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* was selected to appear in the American-Book-of-the-Month-Club of March 1946, as requested by the New York branch of OUP. He produced a small, biographical leaflet inserted in that edition, by drawing on his own knowledge and by corresponding with Corbett himself.

It is worth noting that when the request was put to Lord Hailey, the New York branch of OUP, simultaneously asked Marjorie Clough, an American Red Cross volunteer who was stationed at Agra at that time, to contact Corbett and get particulars from him in order to write some biographical notes. These notes, never revealed before, let alone published, have at last been found and can be read in a separate chapter of this book.

In his attempt at a biography for the World Classic Series, Jock used both Clough’s and Hailey’s notes and had, in the meanwhile, further enriched his knowledge on Corbettiana² through extensive correspondence and long talks with Maggie when she visited the Cumberleges (Jock and his wife Vera) and the OUP offices (then in London) on two separate occasions in 1957. The result, whether one finds it satisfactory or not, was the 5-page introduction, already mentioned above.

Maggie’s contribution was not limited to these five pages, however. Jock had retired from OUP in 1956 and initially Maggie wanted him to write a proper biography of her brother, in book form. Jock still had assistance from his trusted former secretary Ms.

1 It is hoped he would not mind ‘Jock’ being used herein as a convenient way to distinguish him from other Cumberleges and to maintain the informality of the notes.

2 Corbettiana is a term which was first suggested by Dereck Hudson, publisher at OUP London in a letter to Jock dated 21 July 1960

Elizabeth Knight who still worked for the OUP under the new head publisher, John (Bruno) Brown. Elizabeth took up the task of typesetting Maggie's dictation about her brother which, together with other handwritten pages jotted down by Jock when Maggie stayed at his residence in Sussex, came to about some seventy foolscap typeset pages, which are referred to as 'Biographical Sketches and Notes by Maggie Corbett' or, here, simply as 'Maggie's Notes'.

Again, this was not Maggie's only contribution. She handed to Jock almost all of Corbett's letters, ranging from Mokameh Ghat, the wars, the man-eaters and sundry trips, during which Corbett wrote to her or the family while on these assignments to 'keep her/them much in the picture while away from home'. She also gave many original documents ranging from telegrams, press cuttings and other materials that she had collected about her dear brother. Jock ran through these letters and materials thoroughly, taking the essence out, and making his own notes. The biography project had started well but ended abruptly and incompletely when the World Classic Series came about in 1959.

For whatever reasons, the full biography, which had taken good shape with chapter headings etc., did not materialise. It appears that the 'cream' of it went to the World Classics Series' Introduction. We did not find any more correspondence from Maggie to Jock after 1960/61, though we found letters from her to Bruno or to OUP through Elizabeth after that period. Much later, after Maggie's death (26/12/1963) we find Bruno asking Jock if he wished to return some Corbett materials to the OUP, 'to be kept in the library museum'.

We, however, know that Maggie did not give up on her attempts to have a Corbett biography written. We find her turning to her friend and neighbour of Nyeri, Ruby Beyts, during the last years of her life. Ruby Beyts' notes by Maggie were included in D.C. Kala's book *Jim Corbett of Kumaon* (first published in 1979) but Maggie's original notes comprise more material than appears there. In this second volume of *Behind Jim Corbett's Stories* all this material, including Ruby Beyts' notes, is published integrally as Maggie hoped it would have been more than sixty years ago and is a composite of the following sources:

Dictation by Maggie and typeset by Elizabeth Knight, secretary of OUP London in 1957

Dictation and letters from Maggie to Geoffrey Cumberlege at the latter's residence
Hand written notes by Maggie and sent by post to Cumberlege from Kenya (some had been typeset and others not)

These sources were scattered among three different locations: Two parts were at the OUP library in Oxford; one in the Cumberlege archives (mainly World Classic Series documents), one in the Corbett archives; and the third was in Cumberlege's private library kept by one of his sons, Patrick Cumberlege, who took over his books and publication materials after Jock's death. Only minimal minor edits have been made to

these notes, such as removing too many 'and's and 'so's to reduce very long sentences, and correcting some spelling, syntax and obvious grammatical mistakes. In short, the edits have been made to slightly change the wording from spoken to written English, while keeping the content and manner of Maggie's recollections intact.

Despite their disarranged order, they are now assembled under suitable sub-headings, most of which Jock had already done. The end result, albeit non-linear in many parts, is more or less satisfactory and reads quite smoothly.

Since this final product comes from three sources, there were repetitions, most of which have been omitted here. Some seasoned Corbett fans will find some of the writings word for word as they appear in *Jim Corbett of Kumaon* (Penguin India, 2009) in what D.C. Kala called Ruby Beyts' notes. Others might complain that these notes are bland and unappealing. True, some dates, names and other details are, frustratingly, missing and Maggie does not give many personal details. However, these notes do reveal new facts in addition to what was already known about Corbett from the works of all previous biographers, and do also include some hitherto unknown autobiographical notes on Maggie herself.

In the three original sources we find edits with pen and/or pencil made in three different handwritings; Maggie's, Cumberlege's and an unidentified third; most probably Elizabeth Knight's. They appear in square brackets [...]. Sometimes such hand-written edits were in the form of a question mark at the end, or as a written question. If and when we found an answer in a letter from Maggie to Cumberlege it has also been included in square brackets.

Maggie, in many parts of the text, refers to the book *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* simply as 'Man-Eaters'. In some places 'of Kumaon' has been added to it, in square brackets, so as not to confuse the reader but in other places where no confusion could result, it has been left out. Similarly, Maggie calls the book on the leopard of Rudraprayag simply as 'the leopard'.

I had an associate, David Blake, a very keen Corbett enthusiast, with me, to go on this extensive research tour through the UK in 2016 and 2018. I am hugely indebted to him and respect his decision not to be mentioned more than I have already done here. That's why these last paragraphs are written in the first person.

At the time of writing I discovered that Elizabeth Knight is still among us. Her son was contacted and said that, sadly, she is now suffering from loss of memory due to age and would, therefore, be unavailable for an interview. My regrets at such a lost opportunity are unmitigated. I would have hoped to meet her some day, just to shake her hand, share a cup of tea, and present her with a copy of this book to thank her for having taken part in what Maggie started and what I am about to bring to conclusion here.

Contact with Patrick Cumberlege had however been made and I am ever thankful that he led me to his late father's library and his collection on Corbettiana including

a prime copy of *Temple Tiger* and the MS of *Tree Tops*, both signed by Corbett himself. I would also wish to thank Ms. Beverley McCulloch and Dr. Martin Maw, both of OUP in Oxford for the wonderful welcome I received on my visits there in 2016 and 2018 and for facilitating my research by leading me to the archives pertaining to Cumberlege, John Brown and, of course, Corbett.

Maggie's Notes (c. 1960)

Our Family

Our family came to India in the early days of British Rule about 200 years ago in sailing vessels through the Cape of Good Hope, and the connection was not broken until we left India to go to Kenya in 1947. Since then Jim and I have lived in Kenya in Lord Baden-Powell's cottage in Nyeri and since his death a few years ago I am the last living member of that generation of our family from India.

My mother was born in Barrackpore, Calcutta on March 12th 1837. Her name at birth was Mary Jane Prussia and [she] was the youngest in a family of three children – two sons and a daughter. My mother and her two brothers attended Sunday school there in Barrackpore, which was run by Mrs. Marshman, a well-known pioneer missionary.

[Our grandfather] John Prussia died quite young [at the age of 40] in 1844 [at Serampore where he was working], leaving his wife [Mary Olive Prussia] to bring up the children. When the boys were old enough to go to school [in Calcutta], Mary Olive Prussia decided to join her brother at Ferozepore, in Punjab, taking with her the little girl, Mary Jane who was [about] seven [years old]. She went there with her young mother from Calcutta to Punjab by bullock cart and by country boat on the river. It took several months until they arrived safely at their destination where they were warmly welcomed by the brother and his family. It shows how safe the country was when a woman and her child could travel all that way by themselves without an escort.

My mother lived in Ferozepore until she got married there [to Charles Doyle, an Irishman, who was just twenty-one] when she was still very young at about 14 [in 1851]. They moved to Agra shortly after her marriage. She had four children from this marriage, two sons [Charles and George] and two daughters: Evangeline, who died in infancy, and the youngest, Eugene Mary [named after the Empress], who was born there in the year preceding the mutiny. All three children became doctors and did their medical training in England.

Charles went for his studies in London first, then, after returning briefly to India, went to Aberdeen and Edinburgh where he passed his medical degree with honours. He then established a practice in Norwich in 1876, where he settled for some time. He then went to Australia and much later settled in California where he became a

successful author, publishing several books, in particular *The Taming of the Jungle*³ and several volumes of poems.

George studied in India then went to Aberdeen where he took his medical degree. He joined brother Charlie in Norwich first then had a practice in Henfield in Sussex [in 1886]. Owing to ill health, he was forced to give up this practice. He went to the West Indies where he was a medical agent and afterwards became a ship's doctor settling for some time in British Guyana. He died in Mussorie to where he had returned and developed a practice in his final year. Mary stayed a little while with Charles in England and, after her studies, returned to India to work in a hospital and later became a medical missionary.

During the mutiny my mother lived in the Agra Fort all the time. It was the hottest summer but she was so anxious about her husband out fighting the rebels that she said she didn't notice the heat. She had her three children with her. All through the time of the Mutiny, our mother and her three children, with all the other women and children, remained in the Agra Fort, where they had been taken for safety and where, in that great stone building, it was extremely hot all through the summer months.

Her husband had been building a house but it was wrecked by the mutineers: they had meant to sit on the roof and pot at the mutineers but the mutiny proved to be a bigger thing than they anticipated. Her husband [then] raised a mounted levy which he commanded as Private Doyle, 81st Foot (Loyal Lincoln Volunteers). He was wounded once or twice but always went back to the fighting. At the end of the mutiny [at Shahganj] he was following up a rebel force making for Nepal when his horse was shot under him. He and a Dr Watson from the Agra Militia were carried off the field by Major Showers under very heavy fire from the enemy but [when later the rebels charged them] they were mortally wounded. He was cut-up so badly that my mother was not allowed to see him.

Charles Doyle had also been present at the Battles of Moodkee and Ferozshah, during the Sutlej Campaign [Sikh War], and had the honour of wearing a medal and clasp for the same. He was a gallant soldier. He was buried in Etawah, and in the church is a tablet to his memory, put there by his comrades in arms, in which he is described as "True hearted, gentle and generous as he was brave."

My mother then took her children and moved to Mussorie, a Himalayan hill station, after the mutiny. On October 13th, 1859 she married our father, Christopher William Corbett a widower, with a young son and daughter, when she was still only about twenty two; she was twenty one when her first husband was killed. The marriage took place at Landour, a suburb of Mussorie. Christopher William's first wife's name was Mary Ann (née Morrow) who died in 1858. [Christopher William also had a sister named Mary Ann]

3 A review of this title is available elsewhere in this book

Our father [an Irishman born in 1822] had also taken part in the Sikh Wars [Sutlej Campaign] of the 1840's, the first Afghan War; and the Indian Mutiny in the rank of apothecary in the 2nd Bengal European Fusiliers, and had, by the time he married our mother, joined the Postal Service and been posted to Mussorie. Here, their first two children, Thomas and Harriett were born in 1860 and 1861 respectively. [All his medals, clasps and honours certificates have been passed on to my elder brothers after my mother's death.]

In 1862 our father was transferred to Naini Tal, another very beautiful hill station. As there was no railway, the journey had to be undertaken by *dhoolie dak* – a *dhoolie* being a sort of large box-like contrivance suspended from poles and carried by stalwart *dhoolie* bearers. They travelled by night as well as by day; the road, for many miles of the way, running through dense jungles teeming with wild life. Often the men would put down the *dhoolie* suddenly and say there was a tiger roaring in the jungle, and then my mother would have to tear up strips of bed sheets so that they could soak them in kerosene oil and make flares to drive away the wild animals.

Our mother lived at Naini Tal practically up to the time of her death in 1924. Ours was one of the first families to go there to settle. Our father had ridden across from Mussorie and when he arrived in Naini Tal he thought it was such a dreadful place that he told the pony man not to go because he wanted to go straight back. But he lived to love it. On arrival at Kaladhungi, at the Naini Tal foothills, the *dhoolie* was exchanged for a dandy – the dandy, in those days, being something resembling a hammock suspended from a pole, the occupant keeping herself in position by crooking her arms over the pole; a more uncomfortable mode of travel can hardly be imagined! Only the women and children travelled in this way, the men preferring to ride on horseback.

The road from Kaladhungi to Naini Tal, a distance of fifteen miles, runs steeply up, first through heavy forest, then through cultivation past a lovely mountain lake [Khurpa Tal].

Our family increased rapidly, five sons and two daughters being born after the arrival of our parents in Naini Tal [Christopher, John, Edith, Maurice, Me, Jim and Archie]. Jim, being the youngest but one, of the family, was born on July 25th 1875 in Naini Tal, the youngest Archie (Archibald D'Arcy) coming four years later. I was born in 1874 in the sacred city of the Hindus which was Benares (modern-day Varanasi).

Our eldest brother, Tom (Thomas Bartholomew), whom Jim was greatly inspired of, married in 1887 and had two children, before his death four years later in 1891. [His elder son, Thomas William had been a Lieutenant General in the army and later had also settled in Kenya.] Tom never recovered from the pneumonia he contracted some time before his death despite being sent for treatment at Aligarh. He was only thirty one years old. Maurice, who was three years older than me, died later in 1894.

Our eldest sister Harriet died quite young too [also at the age of thirty one]. She was married two years before Tom and when she died in 1892 her two young children,

Ray and Vivian [Nestor] stayed under our care. [Both Ray and Vivian later settled in Kenya]. Then sister Edith married and left home some years after Harriet's death; and brothers John and Christopher also married and left home for their respective work and new homes.

Little did our people imagine on their arrival in Naini Tal, that the place was destined to become the home of the family for the next eighty-five years, up to the time Jim and I, the only two remaining, with very deep regret, left that beloved spot to make a new home for ourselves in Kenya.

Naini Tal (The lake – Tal – sacred to the Goddess Naini) – The Early Days

Naini Tal is a lovely spot in the Himalayas surrounding a lake. We used to think of it as the pearl of the Himalayas. There were two little temples to the Goddess Naini and the priests would walk about ringing bells; people used to fish in the lake. There were little yachts. Our first house on the eastern slope of the hill overlooking the lake was surrounded by an untidy colourful garden, all up in terraces and lots of colour; a very unpretentious house but big enough for a big family. We were a very big family to start with.

[Naini Tal] is especially beautiful under snow. There were about 400 houses surrounding the lake. When they were travelling there no one knew how to find the lake. There was an Indian in Almora who was said to know the way. So he showed them across, and when they came within view of this beautiful settlement they were looking down at it from the top of a hill. The deer used to go and drink the water from the lake in those days, and one day a bear came along and swam across the lake and went up the other side. My eldest brother and Jim used to fish on the Naini Lake – much later fly-fishing from a boat. We spent the summers there in the Himalayas at a height of about 7000ft where we had our home.

Naini Tal was actually 20 years old as a European settlement when we got there. There was [a] priest there who rather resented white people coming in and some of them took him in a boat and said if he didn't give them the lease of the place they would drown him. They were only joking of course but he was very frightened.

In 1880 Naini Tal experienced a very severe landslide, which buried most of the shops, a big hotel, a Hindu Temple and the Assembly Rooms, the cause of the disaster being heavy and continuous rain, combined with an earthquake. The landslide which came down in two portions, was responsible for a heavy loss of life of the rescuers, composed mostly of young British soldiers from a depot at the other end of Naini Tal, who did splendid work. While engaged in trying to rescue those who were buried under the first fall of hillside, they were themselves buried by the second fall.

Sir William Wilcocks, who later became famous for his irrigation scheme in Egypt, responded to an invitation to give expert advice on the drainage system of Naini Tal,

for it was considered that defective drainage had contributed largely towards the causes of the disaster.

Fearing the recurrence of a similar disaster, people avoided visiting Naini Tal for some time, with the result that many houses remained untenanted, among them being two owned by us, which our father by means of the strictest economy and much self-denial, had saved enough money to build. Shortly after his death in 1881 – as the houses were bringing no rents – our mother sold one at nominal price and dismantled the other, with the materials of which she built a house on what was considered the safe side of Naini Tal. This house, which she named “Gurney House” (Brother Charlie had named his house as such when settling in Norwich in 1878) became our permanent and much loved home.

We were too young to remember our father, who [was born in 1822 and] died in 1881, leaving our mother with this big family to bring up and educate, but from what she has told us of him, he was loved and respected by Indians and Europeans alike, for his kindly and sympathetic nature and for his sense of justice. He had suffered greatly from a life lived on the strictest of economy and self-denial and had always been thoughtful about the welfare of his family and of the community. He had struggled in life since a young age as he had lost both his parents while he was very young. [Our grandfather Joseph Corbett died in 1830 and our grandmother Harriet in 1827, both in Meerut] His first wife [Mary Ann Morrow] died quite young too and he had been raising his children [with the help of his sister] until he met our mother and married her. Our mother had children too and together with my aunt’s children [the Deases] they started with a big family.

Our mother was full of courage and shouldered her burden bravely. I have often thought that Jim inherited many of her characteristics: courage, generosity, unselfishness, and with always a stern sense of duty. Although she never punished us, she expected implicit obedience from us, and I do not think she was disappointed. She was the right sort of mother to bring up boys, and she did not fuss over them and allowed them to follow the natural bent in the things that interested them. She was petite with pink cheeks and very blue eyes.

[Much later in life] Jim became a member of the municipal board of Naini Tal and in the winters had to go up from Kaladhungi to attend meetings. He would get up early enough in the morning to start after 4. It was a distance of 15 miles and part of it very steep. He would be in Naini before many of the people had got out of bed. After the meeting he would usually walk along the lake talking to friends and discussing the meeting, and towards evening he would start back, and sometimes arrive after midnight having come through dense forests.

Childhood Days

My first recollection of my brother, just after father died, was as a small boy with big blue-grey eyes and a mop of golden curls; with a catapult in one hand and a dead sparrow – his first trophy – in the other. He didn't know whether to be more pleased at his marksmanship or distressed at having taken the life of the little bird, which he had shot while sitting in a jasmine over the garden gate. What consoled him was the burying of the little bird under the apricot tree at the lower end of the garden.

At a very early age Jim took to sport; at first it was the catapult, the stones for which he selected among the nicely rounded ones in the river beds. He never liked to kill wantonly or for the lust of blood. He skinned and cured the birds he shot, and many of the specimens were intended as illustrations for a nature book, which was being written by a cousin of ours, Stephen Dease who was a medical missionary. Later Jim took to the bow and pellets, with which he became equally expert.

Stephen was the son of my aunt [our father's sister Mary Ann] whose husband Patrick Dease was severely wounded during the Mutiny and died a little later [in Meerut]; and later after our aunt's death, Stephen and his brothers were taken care of by our parents. Stephen was sent to school in Mussorie and was later in charge of the Native Mission School in Naini Tal in 1872. He then went to America and passed his medical exams in Philadelphia and three years later returned to India to officiate as Reverend at the American Methodist Mission at Bareilly in spite of his medical degree. He later joined the Methodist Episcopal Church Mission as medical missionary in 1881 and, after our father's death, came and stayed with us in Naini Tal every summer.

Stephen was much devoted to my brother and later he gifted him with his first gun, a muzzle loader. Much later, one day when Jim was returning from Kashmir, on one of the railway platforms he heard a man telling another that he was on his way to Naini Tal to attend our cousin's funeral. This was a great shock as Jim was very fond of this cousin and [so suddenly] he had heard the news of his death. Stephen was a great naturalist; the beautiful book which he had made and illustrated by himself was given by his widow to my brother. He was like an elder brother to us. [Jim later gave this book to the American Natural History Museum, of which he had become a life member]

Jim's constant companion was our young brother, Archibald (Archie). The two boys were devoted to each other. They enjoyed doing things together and had the same love of sport, and of all that is beautiful in nature. Archie's admiration for Jim, his senior by four years, was unbounded, and I do not think there was ever an unkind word spoken between the two boys, so great was their affection for each other.

The lake in Naini Tal was a source of great enjoyment to us, as with small "ringhals" [bamboo-like plants grown in the Himalayas] rods, thread and bent pin we extracted many a small fish from its placid waters. When Jim began to catch bigger fish, he was stopped one day on his way home with his catch by the Deputy Commissioner, who

told him jokingly, though Jim took it very seriously, that if he was going to catch such big fish he would have to take out a licence.

In our childhood we hadn't many toys, especially as we were such a big family. We more or less made our own – hoops made from iron bands [of] round barrels, and willow strands made skipping ropes. The only real hoop we ever had was given to us by Dansay; it was a great surprise when it was found under the bed in the morning where he had put it. We enjoyed going out and spending [many hours] with our boy and girl friends – but about midday we wanted to go home, although we liked our friends so much.

When we reached the teenage years we were sometimes allowed to have a dance in the drawing room at Gurney House, when we would have great fun with our young friends, the girls taking turns at the piano and Jim would sing. He had a lovely tenor voice [which in later life enabled him to imitate the calls of nearly all animals of the jungle] and played the flute. We became familiar with the popular dances of the day, the Schottische, the Mazurka and the Polka, besides all the square dances such as the Lancers, Roger de Coverley, quadrilles, etc.

Jim was never very fond of lessons, but loved books of adventure, Fenimore Cooper being a favourite author. At night in the dormitory, the boys would cluster round Jim's bed while he read *The Pathfinder* or some other exciting book to them. I have heard the same has been done with one of Jim's own books in a school in England. [On one of our trips there] I remember a little boy of about ten sitting just gazing up at my brother. He had read *Man-Eaters* [of Kumaon] eighteen times and always slept with it under his pillow.

When Jim was a boy he loved climbing trees [and often] he would take a book and sit away up in a tree on a slender little branch for hours.

There were two children that we were very fond of, whose father was a planter in the United Provinces. They used to spend the summer up in Naini Tal and lived near to us so we played together really every day, and eventually a very sad thing happened years after; when the boy had grown up, he and his cousin fought a duel and he was killed. We never knew what it was about.

Once some children had been left by their parents with a nanny in their house in Naini Tal while the parents went off on tour. While they were away one of the children got very ill and the nanny came to tell us, and Jim set out to try and find these people, not having much idea where they were, but knowing that it was about thirty miles away. He walked the whole of that distance, found them, and walked back in one day – over sixty miles, and the last part of this road was up a very steep hill and he was carrying his shot gun, cartridges and two pheasants that he had shot on the way. When he reached the top of the hill he fired a shot into the air to let us know that he had arrived so far safely, because it was night and he knew we should be anxious.

From there he had still to go down into the valley and then climb our hill. The parents of the sick child were able to get back in time to nurse it back to health.

Jim grew up to become a handsome young man of just over six feet in height with a slim figure which he never lost. His eyes were intensely blue and his hair was reddish at that time. His clothes were of the best and spotlessly clean. He made friends with all those he met.

Schooling

We spent all our summers in Naini Tal and all our schooling was done there and our holidays were in the winter in the foothills. My mother was terribly keen on education. I don't think she spared any financial effort to send our older brothers to Mussorie for their schooling. This was the Stokes School which ran as an English Public School where all the mistresses were English. Of my brothers, Tom went first. He would later become a postmaster at Kabul, then at Cawnpore; and finally at Naini Tal, replacing our father who had retired two years previous to his death.

Christopher, John and Maurice all went to Stokes School. Earlier my cousin Stephen [Dease] had been there followed by my half brothers Charles and George [Doyle]; and my other half brother William [Corbett-Morrow] who was brought up by my mother equally as one of her own [sons]. They all did brilliantly and did honour the efforts made by our parents to send them there and all had successful careers subsequently. Only Jim did not go there. But it wasn't his fault.

Young Maurice had been sent to England first, when brother Charlie settled in Norwich. He was very brilliant and had been at the prestigious King Edward VI Grammar School. At the age of 14 he was writing all the Greek verses. Maurice returned to India when Charlie left Norwich and completed his secondary schooling at Stokes in Mussorie. He subsequently enlisted in the IFS [Indian Forestry Service] in Dehra [Dun] and, unfortunately, in the same year he was struck with typhoid fever and died a little later. Brother John entered the ICS [Indian Civil Service] after school and became Inspector of Police and [before marrying his wife Kathleen] was posted to the North West Frontier. Later he was transferred to Agra and much later to Cawnpore [his children were born in Agra and Cawnpore]. He left India much before we did and went to Australia first and finally settled with his wife and children in South Africa. Christopher stayed and married [his childhood friend Ellen Marie] in Naini Tal and had run his own business successfully. All the younger children were first educated at home.

Our half-sister, Mary, was a great help to our mother in the education and general upbringing of the younger children. A room in the house was set aside as a school room in which school routine was observed, with regular hours and strict discipline. [Jim, Archie and I] were taught at home by our half-sister, who was very systematic

and gave a lot of time to teaching us: we had stern discipline. We used to grumble and say that if we were at school we would have better hours and more fun.

At about [age] 11 for me and 10 for Jim we went to school and took our place with other children of our own age and both climbed to the top of our schools. Jim was always a great favourite with the boys in his school, just as he was right through life. He was very good at sports – a wonderful runner and walker; he always used to get the prizes.

Unlike Jim who was a boarder, I went to [Wellesley Girls] school as a day scholar and the other girls used to envy me because I could do my homework till all hours (I was often up to midnight) and they had regular hours. One day when I arrived at the school the girls of my class were all waiting at the gate to give me the joyful news that our teacher had got enteric [fever]. We thought we were going to have a lovely time but the padre of the church undertook to teach us and he used to come down every day and give us regular lessons just like our teacher, or some days we would go up to his house. And he was very strict with us especially in Euclid [Geometry]. If we made any sort of bloomer he would call out to his wife and tell her what we'd said. I had more time for studying than the boarders in school.

Jim at first attended Naini Tal Diocesan Boys, a small private school and Archie was sent to Agra [St John's College] and both were not very happy. Then Jim moved to Oak Openings run by the American Methodist Mission [and] Archie went on to Stoke's School in Mussorie. Archie was a fair, good looking young boy, and a most adorable young brother. Jim later left Oak Openings for St Joseph's College.

We had a lovely childhood because we lived in such a beautiful part of the world. There was nothing humdrum about it. It was packed with excitement and pleasure and happiness.

Kaladhungi – Our Winter Home

Not long after the arrival of our family in Naini Tal, the Commissioner of Kumaon, Sir Henry Ramsay, whom Jim mentions in *Jungle Lore* [perhaps *My India* too] gave our father a grant of land in Kaladhungi, on which to build a house for the family to spend their winters in, and so to escape the cold of a Himalayan Hill Station. Building materials were readily to hand, stone from the riverbeds, lime, burnt on the spot, and wood from the adjoining forests. Labour too was cheap and plentiful, nearly all the builders along the foothills being artisans, who had come down from the hills to escape the cold. These people were known as 'Gham-tappas', sun-baskers, and migrated in their thousands, leaving their crops to ripen, while they worked in the foothills.

The house built by our father there [which he fondly named Arundel 'Castle'] was roomy and comfortable and had a wide veranda running round three sides of it, and stood in a picturesque setting of big trees and bamboos. The canal, to which Jim refers in *Jungle Lore*, formed the northern boundary of the estate, and it was here that we

all learnt to swim, on inflated pillowcases to start with, until we gained confidence. Our father had planted an orchard, which was a sort of great delight to us as children.

Kaladhungi, where we spent our winter holidays, was our real playground, with its jungles to roam in, its running water with its lovely pools in which to bathe and fish, the delightful picnicking grounds, the long shady walks and our house and garden, and orchard full of a variety of fruit.

There were seven of our own brothers and sisters; and equally seven children from the Nestor family in Kaladhungi. Despite the age differences, we were all friends and played all sorts of games all together. I was the youngest girl, Jim was the youngest boy; and among the eldest were brother Christopher and Ellen Marie [Nestor]; and at times there were also Neil and Dansay who used to come when they had taken leave from work. The canal where we used to bathe and the jungle around, where we were free to wander, were our main sources of enjoyment. I feel that Jim has told so much of our [early] life in Kaladhungi [in *Jungle Lore*] that there is little that I can add to it.

While still a very young boy, Jim would go off into the jungles, and be away for a few days at a time with our old gardener to carry his roll of bedding [and no other camp equipage] and a small bag of "atta" – wholemeal flour – with which to make chapattis.

It was then that Jim began to know and learn the ways of animals and birds and to imitate their calls. At night he would spread his bedding under a tree and lie down to sleep without fear of anything, knowing he was quite safe and then he would hear [the night calls of the jungle folks] the bell of a sambhar and the hoot of an owl. If he was awakened by the call of a tiger, he would get up and replenish the fire that was burning nearby, then lie down again and sleep soundly 'till awakened by the shrill crow of the red jungle cock at dawn.

I remember on one such occasion, a retired doctor, who spent some of his winters in Kaladhungi, and [who] was very fond of [young] Jim and often took him [when going around], coming across late one evening to our house and, while walking agitatedly up and down the big room, scolding our mother for allowing Jim to go off alone on these outings of his, exposing himself to the dangers of the jungle.

[Later the old doctor who] was a very keen sportsman himself often used to take Jim out. [Their] camping out was perfectly safe though because nothing would have wanted to attack [them], being unprovoked, and there were no man-eaters there. My mother never tried to hinder him from doing anything that he had an urge to do like that.

I am glad now to think that our mother never tried to curb Jim's adventurous spirit when he was young, and it was just the same when the time came for him to go after man-eaters. She never put obstacles in his way, but that does not mean to say that she was not anxious when he was risking his life.

As with the catapult and with the bow, Jim was a good shot with the gun and the rifle. His first big trophy was a bear which was shot while he was out with Tom. There was quite a flutter in the family when the bear was brought home and it was carried in to the bedroom of a sister who was lying ill at the time. The next winter I remember Jim calling me in excitement to come and look at the first leopard he had shot while out alone. It was as big as him!

Later when our family diminished in size we left the big house [Arundel] which our father had built for us and in which we had spent so many happy winters and which, as it remained unoccupied, gradually fell into ruins. As time went on a dense forest grew up round it, and it became a sanctuary for wild life of all sorts, including an occasional tiger or leopard.

In the meantime, around the year 1920, Jim had purchased a small house at the upper end of our Choti Haldwani village and added an annexe to it, and here we spent our winters up to the time Jim and I left India in 1947. Jim sold this house to his friend [Chiranjil Lal] some months before we departed and [we] bade farewell to our tenants [in Choti Haldwani] at the end of March that year with the promise that they will be free from the rent.

Work

Jim left Oak Openings [for St Joseph's College] but had to stop a year and a half later when Maurice died [in 1894] at the young age of 23. Jim's great anxiety, on leaving school, was to get work and help with the family finances, which, as may well be imagined, were nearly always at a low ebb, and caused Jim much concern. His first attempt to get a job was disappointing. He had been granted an interview by one of the big men of our Province, but when he saw Jim he told him that he was too young to begin work. Jim very indignantly replied, "You tell me that I am too young to begin work; if I were to come to you next year you would say I was too old." And so ended the interview.

Not long after this unsatisfactory interview, Jim was offered, and very gladly accepted, the post of fuel inspector at Mankapur on the Bengal & North Western Railway. The pay was small and the job only a temporary one, but that mattered not to Jim, who was only too glad to get to work.

As the family finances were running tight Jim took this first job immediately. Jim knew it was now his turn to step in as the head of the family. He was not yet 20. [He] then provided the money for Archie's school. Twice Jim had been denied the opportunity of going to School in Mussorie after our elder brothers died but I don't think he regretted he never got such an opportunity for himself. Such was his life, in generosity of thinking and caring for others more than for himself.

Archie did very well and afterwards he went to the Society for Propagation of the Gospel for training as an ecclesiastic. The society, originally from Burma, had a

branch in Calcutta. Unfortunately, Archie was struck with Bright's disease and died a little later at the age of 20 – a brilliantly clever boy – always top of his school and who carried off prizes with ease. Jim felt this loss bitterly as they were so close in age and had lived their young lives together happily. He took leave from his work several hundred miles away to attend the funeral.

[At Mankapur] Jim lived in a small tent in the forest all through the hot weather and the rains, and this being his first experience of spending a summer on the plains, after having lived all his life in the hills, he must have suffered much, but he never complained and we did not realise all he was going through.

[This] first job was a forest job really, getting wood out of the forest for the railway. He tells about this in the story about the deer and the python and the partridge [and] all in his tent. The men had finished off the job in the forest in a hurry and rushed off to the next job, and in their hurry they had miscalculated what was owed, so Jim went up to the railway agent to report the end of the job and put a bag with the extra money (to cover the miscalculation) on his desk, and [the agent] said: "What is this?" So Jim told him, and he asked him to stay on after the satisfactory conclusion of his job. Jim was later offered the post of transshipment inspector by the agent of the Bengal & North Western Railway. He was [not yet] twenty two. He had to do all sorts of things on the railway – he learned to drive an engine. He had to go through the mill and learn everything that could be learned about railways. He made lots of friends: They used to say he was the only man on the railway who could go into the house of the agent of the railway and into the house of the ticket collector and be just as welcomed and just as at home in each.

In the chapter *Life at Mokameh Ghat* which occurs in his book *My India*, Jim gives an account of his work and the people who helped him in it. Life was indeed very strenuous for them all, but they worked very happily together. Jim's staff, and in fact all his labour, had a very great affection for him. During all the years he worked on the railway I don't think there had been a situation of unrest among his men. On his return from his usual month's leave in Kaladhungi, they would make a thank offering of flowers to the Ganges for him having come safely through the dangers as they considered them, especially from tigers he had faced in the jungles. Our mother and I usually spent the winter months with him [the first in 1905], and we were always very sad at having to leave him to face the hot weather by himself, when the time came for us to return to our home in Naini Tal.

We had a letter not long ago from a man who had with his friends gone out shooting in that area, and when they returned to the railway station they had no money left. The coolies who had been handling their stuff, not only gave them something to eat but paid for their railway fares. They had learnt this attitude from my brother.

At War

Jim wanted to go to the South African War but the Railway would not release him. Immediately on the outbreak of the First World War he went to Calcutta and applied for a commission, but was told that he was too old and could not be given one. Thirty years later he was training troops in jungle warfare! Although he was considered too old in 1914 he was given a commission in 1917 and he raised a Labour Corps – the 70th Kumaon Labour Corps – which he took to France. Their work there consisted in salvage and laying of railway lines, for which they were congratulated by Army Headquarters. It was there that Jim experienced a snowfall for the first time (for the winters we were always down in Kaladhungi, where it never snowed). He wrote home very often and always described the beautiful birds and small game that he encountered there around his camp.

[Twice the army had lowered the age limit for enlistment, once in 1917 brought about by the shortage of volunteers for works and the second time in 1940 to free younger men from Army Welfare work to join active service.]

When he came back with his men, who were Hindus, they had to pass through a place called Muttra [correct spelling is *Mathura*] – a very sacred place of the Hindus – and he let them all go to the temple and purify themselves after they had been over the waters. They used to call the ocean the Black Water, but since the wars all that fear of loss of caste has been done away with in this connection.

They arrived in Naini Tal and his men were all scattered, the corps was broken up and they were back to their houses in the hills. When they were paid off in India they had the very smallest coinage in paper money, and these men were paid in paper and came to me and said “what are we to do with this paper?” They wanted silver, and said that going to their homes all the money would melt in the rain. “Stones would be better than this paper money!” But it was all adjusted [and the men eventually got paid in newly minted silver coins] and everything was all right. As for Jim, he waived his entire allowance in favour of the Government of the United Provinces. The money Jim requested to be used for the construction of a bandstand at the upper end of the lake for the benefits of the people of Naini Tal; and for the construction of a reading room for the benefit of soldiers. This had later been converted to the Municipal library.

Jim had been in the Third Afghan War in 1919 immediately after his return from France in the First World War. Upon their return to India, Jim helped to raise another Labour Corps, the 144th Labour Battalion which was to take part in the Third Afghan War. This was a big corps, about twelve hundred strong, and their work consisted of constructing bridges and making roads. He was not demobbed, but after a few months they sent him up to the frontier. They were at the Thal when it was besieged by Nadir Shah's forces, and it was there [that] Jim's second in command, Captain Wakefield, was killed. They were sniped. There was a well called the Roberts Well (after Lord Roberts)

and they had to go there for water because there was nowhere else, and there they lost a number of men to snipers.

While he was up there he had learned to ride a motor cycle; when he was first learning he had had to stop suddenly at the edge of a precipice – he didn't know much about stopping – and the sole was torn off one of his shoes. After the Afghan campaign, he returned to Mokameh Ghat and stayed only a while. As he was satisfied that work was running smoothly, he left for good to be with us at home. Again Jim donated all his war allowance to the United Provinces Government. He requested them to use the money to erect a canteen for the benefit of Soldiers stationed at Kathgodam. This act had not gone unnoticed and the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford later sent Jim an acknowledgement in recognition of his kindness; and words of thanks.

On the outbreak of the Second World War Jim again offered his services in any capacity. He was the very first to do so in Naini Tal in September 1939. His endeavour was highly appreciated by the Governor and subsequently Jim was appointed to be Deputy Vice President of the District Soldiers' Board [Meerut Division] where he acted as liaison officer between the men overseas and their families. This meant extensive touring by car, over hot and dusty roads, often into obscure villages, where a European had never been seen.

He did welfare work, trying to keep contact between the Indian soldiers and their families. He had to go about among the villages and give them news about their men away at the war. He was doing it in the hottest weather on the plains. One day in crossing a river where they thought [there] was a crossing but there wasn't, the car got submerged and he and his driver were trying to get the car out of the water for hours and hours. Eventually someone came and helped them to pull it out with a rope. The car was our own – Model 1939 Chrysler Plymouth Station Wagon – and in 1942 when Jim had to stop because of illness he generously offered the car to the UP Government. [It took the Government two years to accept this gift – until the time Sir Maurice Hallett came to office and acknowledged receipt of it]

Knowing the vernacular as he did, Jim was able to converse freely with the people and to sympathise with them in their joys and sorrows, to write their letters for them and to reassure them of the well-being of their men overseas. Although this job was strenuous and very exhausting at times, especially in the hot weather, Jim found it very interesting and enjoyed it thoroughly. [After that assignment Jim was elevated to the rank of Commandant of the Civil Pioneer Force of the United Province where the main job consisted of recruiting volunteers and soldiers]

Jim fell very ill during his service with the Civil Pioneer Force. He was treated in hospital [at Agra] for some months and after restoring some of his strength he came back home. I was always amazed by his resilience, how he made the journey back home and how he was ready to take up another appointment when he was again called

up by Army Headquarters in Agra [this time] to train the [Allied] troops for Jungle Warfare prior to being posted on the Burma front.

Often in Kenya we came across men whom he had trained in Jungle Warfare. He trained English, American, and Indian troops in two provinces in India. Besides training them in observation in the jungles he used to have to give lectures. He spoke the languages, he was told, better than the Indians themselves, so he was able to lecture these men; there would be about 600 men all sitting, listening.

The Army asked him to go across to Burma and compare the jungles with the Indian jungles. His idea was to teach a man that if he went into the jungle he need not starve, because of all the resources of the jungle – berries, fruit, roots, water and even medicinal plants. One of the generals sent for Jim and asked what he taught them, and he said he taught them how to live in the jungle, and how to get out of the jungle. That they learnt by being observant and noticing what they passed on the way. His appointment, however, had again to be terminated on grounds of severe illness.

[For his services at war and to the Indian Empire, Jim had been decorated several times and among his merits he had attained the Volunteer Decoration in 1920, the Kaiser-I-Hind Gold Medal of 1928, the Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 1942 and the Most Excellent Companion of the Indian Empire in 1946. Only the Kaiser-I-Hind medal was not a war decoration]

Later life in Kaladhungi

In *Jungle Lore* Jim tells about our times in Kaladhungi. That was the place in the foothills where we all used to bathe in the canal. Of course we spent a marvellous time in those jungles, and learned a lot about the wild animals. In the winters we went down to the foothills of Kaladhungi [which means Black Stone and] which has now become famous all over the world. Our house there (Arundel) has now been completely overrun by the jungle and the wild animals have moved in; we didn't want to give it to any one else. We left it to fall into a ruin.

Jim had a year earlier purchased the small house, Irish cottage like, nearly opposite to the bazaar. Then, after he returned from the Afghan War, he started to build an annexe to it with the help of some villagers. In the meantime, mother, Mary and I had already moved in with our servants the previous winter. Jim spent his nights outside in the tent that he pitched between the two buildings on a platform. After mother died in 1924 Jim would alternately use his tent and the new building for sleeping.

There was no jungle of course up at Naini Tal but at Kaladhungi we used to wander about the jungles an awful lot. If there was just a slight hoof-mark Jim would know exactly how it came. Sometimes it would only be made by the tip of a deer's horn touching the ground as it was being carried along by a tiger or a leopard. Jim was a frightfully observant person.

Often we used to come across the carcass of an animal right up on a high tree stuck in the cleft of a branch; it had been put there by a leopard. They would even carry a wild boar up into a tree although they are so heavy. One day Jim was out with some people on elephant; he always used to go out on foot but they had this elephant. He was describing a very big tree in which he had seen a carcass stored in this way when they looked up and in a tall tree overhead saw a chital's carcass. We went back there next morning because we thought our men would like to have it to eat; when we got it down we found that it had one defective leg; Jim said it had probably been deformed since birth.

I once saw a leopard carrying a wild boar across the road – a tiger had frightened it and it was taking its kill to a safe place. We had heard the tiger roaring in the jungle.

We used to have lovely camps in a very primitive way. We would walk from place to place and just have our things carried on a bullock cart. We never stopped in regulation camping places – just stopped where we could get wood and water. As often as not my brother would just make a shelter of branches and sleep in it. One night he saw a big black face looking in when he woke up in the night. It was a cow. The cows used to come round the camp fires for protection from wild animals. When we arrived at the camping place a big fire would be made in the middle and it would burn for as long as we remained – several days. We would just sit on the ground near it and have our meals. [Another] night I woke up hearing my brother with his rifle; I knew at once that he had heard a tiger calling and said: "Where is it?" On that occasion a man with his bullock cart got behind the bullocks when the tiger was heard, thinking it would have been the safest place for him, but it would have been the worst because the tiger, not being a man-eater, would have come for the bullocks.

It used to be rather amusing sometimes in the evening. We would have been sitting on the top of a hill and Jim would call like a tiger, and the next morning one of the villagers would come and say "Sahib, did you hear that tiger calling on the top of the hill last night?" My brother would be quite innocent [while I would get away from the scene to avoid bursting in laughter]. Often when he called a tiger would answer and come nearer and nearer as he called.

When we used to go down to Kaladhungi we used to have to pass above a lake in the village and in this village was a very high caste, priest caste, Hindu who lived there. My brother and Lord Hailey used often to go there and fish in that lake. There was a sacred tree so Lord Hailey presented this man with a silver bell on a chain to hang to this tree, so when we used to go down and they knew we were coming the bell would be rung for us, although it was a sort of a temple bell. This man would be on the road waiting for us and would go ahead of our procession. He once led the way with a long pole decorated with a big bunch of chrysanthemums. He would always garland us. His name was Ranjit Singh. He used to go up the steep hill to Naini Tal bringing big bunches of blue hydrangeas and to keep them from withering he would

carry them in a big kerosene tin of water. He had a lovely stone built house by the lake with a courtyard surrounded by a low wall and some bamboo trees.

Further down the road going down to Kaladhungi there was an old villager very keen on gardening who used to grow a few bananas and various fruits. They knew we were coming down because our luggage would go the day before and every one would come out and meet us. Jim liked the old man and would give him a cigarette and talk about the crops while we were getting lunch ready to have under a tree. My brother would say that those treks of ours were like Abraham going off with his flocks and herds – we used to take some cows with their calves to complete the procession.

We were sitting at dinner one night when we heard a great commotion. It was the Moharram festival with beating of drums and calling and cymbals. We were listening to this while we were having dinner when in ran one of the village people to say that there was trouble. The Mohammedan procession along the road would pass a Hindu shrine in a tree and the Hindus didn't want to let them go past this sacred place. My brother thought he had better go and try and calm these people down. Some of the village Hindus had their guns with them though they hadn't done any firing; when he taxed them with this they said they had been in the jungles and were going home with their guns. He got hold of the leaders of both sides and made them shake hands, and then made them start up the procession again and he marched at the head of it. When they neared our gate he came and said they wanted us to go and see it. The head Mohammedan asked me to come and touch the *tazia*, which was a wonderful thing because it was their most sacred thing and the excuse for the procession.

The Village

Early in the century [in around 1915] Jim purchased Choti Haldwani, a village in Kaladhungi. The village was in a derelict condition, the fields with a few exceptions being out of cultivation and covered with scrub, the water course choked with wild flowers and ferns, and most of the houses in ruins. The cause of all this devastation being that most of the villagers had either died or had moved on to other places, leaving the village practically deserted.

As soon as Jim took over, he realised that the only way to bring the village back into cultivation was by fencing it round, so as to keep wild animals from straying in. This Jim immediately proceeded to do. He sent away for a mile of wire fencing, and before it had time to arrive, he demarcated the line it was to take, and began clearing the ground of obstacles, such as bushes and rocks, a lot of which he did with his own hands. When the fencing was up and people began to see that the village was likely to become a desirable place in which to take up land, there was no lack of applicants for holdings. Gradually, as Jim could afford it, he extended the wire fencing to encircle the whole village, which meant he had to get another two miles of it.

The next thing Jim did was to build new houses, and to repair old ones. These were soon occupied and the work of ploughing and fertilising the ground started. There was no shortage of water, for by this time, Jim had had the furrow made 'pukka' (Hindi for solid, substantial, the best) – that is built with lime and stone – so that instead of the water soaking into the ground, it reached the farthest limits of the village, and no one went short.

There were about forty holdings, all of which were soon taken up and the village gradually became what Jim hoped it would be, the best village in that part of the foot-hills. Often as I walked along its paths as the sun went down with the evening light on the ripening corn and the blue hills in the background, I would think there could not be a more beautiful village in the world.

He encouraged the people to grow their own fruit and he sent away to a horticultural garden in Saharanpur for young fruit trees and grape vines, so that in time the tenants had enough fruits not only for their own consumption, but also to put on the market, together with the vegetables they were growing. From Tanganyika [modern-day Tanzania], Jim brought banana plants of the best varieties and maize seeds that he distributed among the tenants. Soon after they were producing maize cobs double the size they had been growing up to this time.

As time went on and as when his means permitted, Jim substituted the wire fencing by a six-foot high masonry wall, with gates at intervals by which to let the cattle in and out.

Kaladhungi was surrounded by jungle and occasionally despite the wall a wild animal would still wander inside the village. There was once a poor tiger wounded by someone, and in the middle of the day (we were up in the hills at that time) it came right down into the village and walked into a house and then came out and managed to make its way on to the edge of the field which bordered the forest and there it lived for months getting what small animals it could pick up. Gradually, after some time it recovered and went back to its natural food and the jungle. Another time he came down and walked into a field and was again shot and wounded, this time by the headman of our village. Wounded creatures get very high fever and become delirious, or would never walk into human habitations like that. [This was the tiger called the Pipal Pani tiger, which Jim tells about in *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*]

He always paid our Choti Haldwani villagers' taxes so as to make things easy for them, and continued doing so even after leaving India and up to his death. After Jim's death I continued sending the annual villager's land rates 'till now [1960].

Christmas Treat

At Christmas there was always a treat, organised by our sister Mary, for the tenants and their families, and these were very popular, with both young and old. To begin with the treat was intended for only the people of our own village, supposedly for the

children only but soon there would be no age limit, and there would be babies-in-arms, young men and women, and grey-haired grandparents.

The treat was held in our garden, but gradually, as people in adjacent villages and in the bazaar heard about it they also came along, until the number increased to some hundreds [about four hundred], and a large open space had to be found on which to hold the treat, which consisted in the distribution of sweets and fruit, among the assembled men, women and children, as they sat in a big circle.

The treat was timed to start at 3 p.m., but long before that, on the great day, from early in the morning a steady trickle of guests started to arrive. They would be content just to wait, chattering and laughing with their friends until zero hour arrived. When all the guests had been assembled, sitting on the ground in a large circle, the distribution of sweets began. After the sweets, fruits would go round, oranges and bananas being the chief favourites.

After that the fun began, with games and races for the children in which some of the grown-ups would join. The game that children enjoyed most was that in which a blindfolded child had to pierce with a stick a paper bag filled to brim with sweets, and suspended to a horizontal pole. This continued until the sun sank low in the west and the babies' heads began to nod, when the gathering would break up and we would all return to our homes, tired but happy.

Our doctoring

One can't live in a village without sick people coming for treatment, and we had our full share. To begin with, our sister, Mary [who had worked for many years at St Catherine's Hospital in Amritsar and had later been a medical missionary] did the doctoring. Mary did her medical training in England and in India. She was much loved by the local population as she used to travel round the villages giving medical aid and could speak many dialects. Gradually, Jim and I took over the doctoring, and much enjoyed it.

We had no proper dispensary, but always took down with us to Kaladhungi a good supply of medicines, and we attended to our patients on two cemented platforms, which could be washed and kept clean, under the mango trees in the garden.

People always used to be coming to us to be cured of various ailments. They came from all the villages round about, and even from distant villages, and we used to treat them for everything you can think of. They would introduce themselves by saying, "We heard your name and came." Needless to say, they were always welcome and we did what we could for them.

Most cases were those of people suffering from malaria, and the after effects of this scourge, from which hardly any one escaped. Even babies in arms suffered. Their systems would become so debilitated by the malaria that they could not stand the cold of the winter months and there were many cases of pneumonia. Besides sickness,

many came with injuries, mostly to women, caused by falling off trees while cutting leaves to feed their cattle; others cutting themselves with axes while hacking wood, being stung by scorpions, being gored by bullocks or torn by jackals and in one case, a woman badly mauled while trying to separate two fighting wild cats. She was in a dreadful state and was carried into our compound by four men with a white sheet over her, and was a wreck with her nerves as much as her wounds.

They used to keep saying: "What will we do when you go away?" We used to tell them simple remedies – honey and lime juice for a cold. They had wonderful faith in us. They thought we could do anything. It was most touching.

You always had to soothe their nerves to start with – a hot cup of tea and words of comfort to calm them down, and then begin to treat them. Malaria was the main thing they all suffered from. At one time quinine was being rationed: my brother and I were having malaria at the same time but we let them have our ration. They used to get pneumonia in the winter because they were so run down with malaria, and used to be very seriously ill. One man got impaled on a thing for cleaning a canal – that was the father of the girl who was hurt by the wild cats. We did enjoy all our doctoring. It was nice to see all those people getting better. The children used to come holding their wrists and saying "my fever won't break". A child used often to be brought to us with terrible ear ache, and it was always a tick in the ear. The remedy was to pour warm oil into the ear and that loosened it. But some times we didn't know if people came for treatment or for other reasons.

One day a poor mad man came to the house while I was there alone. I was in my bedroom tidying the linen and heard a sound and there he was behind me: I walked past him out on to the veranda and he followed me and I talked to him there for a little while. Then I went back in, but he came in after me again, so again I went on to the veranda. One of the dogs was tied to the veranda post so I didn't say that he would bite him or anything, but I just said I was going to let him off the lead now. And he said at once "Will he bite me?" so I said I didn't know, and he picked up his bundle of rags which he had left in the garden and went quickly off. They are usually frightened of dogs. My brother was away doing jungle warfare then.

There was another poor mad person, a woman who looked like a Nubian; she may have been a gypsy. She would come and stare down at you without any expression whatever in her face. One day she came in the door and stood staring at us, so my sister went inside and got a warm night dress and gave it to her. Another night my mother came into my room and said there was a man calling at her window. My brother was staying out in the tent in the garden so I went and called from my window and told him. He came and saw that the man was blind and all he had was an old tin, so my brother put his hand on his shoulder and led him to the gate: he was heading for the jungle but my brother turned him towards the bazaar and set him off. Then he stayed awake until he heard the bazaar dogs barking and knew the man was safe.

I remember the day when Jim and I were on our veranda; I was knitting a scarf for him as he had been coughing repeatedly since the day before, and a man whom we did not recognise but who appeared to know us came leaning on our gate's pillar. A few moments [later] he entered our yard, and came straight to the veranda. From the way he was trying to smile with shut lips I concluded he must be someone known to us as well. He was speaking to Jim and after he opened his safari suit to show old wounds on his body we immediately recognised him. That was the man who was saved by his brother after a tiger attack and whose story Jim tells [in *My India*].

I was alone that day when his brother rushed him into our courtyard in a cot as, fortunately for him, the villagers had shown him our house, for the brother was heading for the hospital in Haldwani, many miles away. The poor man was in agony and his wounds were terrible. After soothing him and sterilising his wounds I sent for a doctor who was living in Kaladhungi at that time. Despite the care he received from the doctor, there was not much hope that he would live but Jim remained stubbornly convinced that the man could be saved. Many years later he was right here in front of us and just wanted to come by and thank us. Jim wanted the brave brother to have some recognition. Lord Hailey had been [liaising with the Viceroy's office] at that time and despite acknowledging that this brave act deserved at least a merit, I think he met some resistance from his subordinate staff and reluctance by the Indian civil servants, for the brothers belonged to the depressed class. Had Lord Hailey persisted this would have been a cause of precedence; a thing Jim would have least wanted for his good friend.

Shoots at Kaladhungi

Mr Wyndham, the Commissioner of Kumaon, held an annual conference, known as the Partridge Conference, composed of the officials of Kumaon and Garhwal, his object being to get them together to discuss matters concerning their districts, and at the same time to indulge in a little sport, in the way of bird shooting from the backs of elephants. Jim was always invited to assist. It was at these conferences that sometimes the District Commissioners or their deputies discussed the problems of man-eaters in their respective districts. These conferences continued until the time Mr Wyndham retired and they were then carried on by his successors.

Jim always enjoyed organising and taking part in these shoots, and always had the willing co-operation of our villagers, in preparing the ground for them by opening lanes through the bushes, after having chosen suitable places for the beats. Then, on the day of the shoot they would all assemble, each one to be given his appointed place, and when the beat began they would move along with the elephants, clapping their hands and shouting to disturb the birds and to get them to rise.

Long before the actual time appointed for the shoot, elephants had to be arranged for, and some Rajas and one of the Ranis of the Province were always very kind in

lending their elephants, which had, in some cases, to come [from] long distances. Jim got to know each of these elephants and their mahouts by name, and which were the most reliable, staunch and willing, and so on.

Kaladhungi was a favourite spot for these shoots, for, in addition to the scrub jungle and open spaces for bird shooting, there were the forests along the foothills for those who were keen on big game shooting.

Sometimes big game shoots also took place during the time that the Government offices were being moved from their winter headquarters on the plains, to those up in the hills [in Simla], and the Viceroy or Governor then had a few days in which to indulge in sport.

Among the Viceroy families were the Linlithgows and they loved Kaladhungi; Lord Linlithgow came to know Jim from his little book: *Jungle Stories*. He was lent a copy by Lord Hailey and was so interested in it that he expressed a wish to have a copy for himself. His wish was conveyed to Jim who sent him a copy. I think it was the reading of this little book that led to the Viceroy's desire to visit the scene of some of the stories, for in the spring of the following year Jim received a message from one of the viceregal staff asking him if he could suggest a place in which the Viceroy could spend a holiday and get some shooting. Jim suggested Kaladhungi, and we were greatly honoured by invitations to house Lord and Lady Linlithgow on several occasions and also to visit them in Simla.

The Governors used to [come to Kaladhungi] and used to love the peaceful life and the change from convention. The villagers used to love them to come. It gave them a little excitement and they used to beat *murghi* [for them]. ['murghi' is jungle fowl]. We had all the Governors of our province – Lord Hailey came very often and he was so nice to the village people that they got quite fond of him. On one occasion he gave one of the villagers a pullover, and not content with giving it to him he insisted on putting it on him. You should have seen that old man's face as the Governor of the province was pulling on his pullover!

Jim made many good friends among those who came, and they were always most appreciative of whatever he tried to do for their enjoyment. The governor's staff were so nice. The only time I saw a tiger from the back of an elephant I was out with one of the ADC's. [Aide-de-Camp of the Viceroy Staff]

A friend of his came once on a short visit to us at Kaladhungi. He was rather contemptuous and said: "Let's go out and see some of these tigers of yours." So he sauntered out and went along a jungle track, and after a while my brother heard some wild red jungle fowl. He had his 28-bore with him and went to get one for the pot. I kept on with our guest and hadn't gone very far when we heard a terrific roaring; there were two tigers fighting, and when two tigers fight the jungle seems to shake. My brother was frightened that we had come on them; he whistled and I foolishly just

whistled back instead of calling and he didn't hear and called again. Then he came out on the track as white as a sheet [and was relieved upon seeing us unharmed].

One night from my bedroom window I heard two tigers fighting. It was fascinating to stand and hear them. They kept it up for ages.

We once had a really terrible experience. It was at Christmas time and some friend of ours and [Joseph] Clay and his family were camping nearby and we took them out one day after birds. They had beaten through what was a sort of island between dry beds of a river. They got to the top of this stretch of long dry grass and suddenly out jumped a roaring, angry tiger. Just opposite to where it jumped down to the river bed was Clay, one of the three guns; and his wife and daughters and the friend were there. They and I were all sitting behind him on a sort of ridge. The tiger chased Clay and providentially he tripped and fell flat on his face and at once the tiger sheered off and headed into the jungle. It saved his life and perhaps ours too. The tiger passed right over my parasol where I had been sitting and went to the forest on the other side. When my brother heard all this he came running to us looking very anxiously because he had arranged the shoot but for some reason never suspected that there had been a tiger there or he would never have had it beaten. The tiger made such a terrific roaring that the people in a distant village heard and came to find out what had happened.

Another time we were at the top of a ridge at the beginning of the Siwalik range which starts in Kaladhungi and runs for miles. We had gone up when we heard a sambhar belling. We were on a forest road and so when we heard this we turned back and retraced our steps towards it and sat down in an inconspicuous place near a tree with Robin hidden behind us. While we were looking down the road we saw a tiger come out onto the road and it was almost immediately joined by another and after moving about for a little time on the road one of them suddenly caught sight of us. It came nearer and nearer as any curious animal would, and it looked simply magnificent in the evening light – huge and strong. It got near to us and sat down on the road and kept lashing its tail. It sat there for a long time watching us while we sat quietly and watched it. My brother didn't want to shoot it. He had known about there being these two tigers in that jungle and had been keen on filming them but hadn't had an opportunity. After watching and being watched for a long time my brother said: "We will get up quietly now and move off" – in the jungle we must not do anything in jerks. We moved off in perfect safety, while the tiger still sat watching us. [The two tigers were later induced to take part in Jim's wild life film]

I used to think I was very lucky because all the tigers I saw, I saw on foot. I only once saw a tiger from the back of an elephant and that was in a beat. We had opportunities of just walking quietly about the forest and seeing things like that.

Our Pets

We were never without a dog and the first I can remember was a small red rough-haired creature, with very bright eyes, which Tom had picked up, wandering about the streets of Kabul during the Second Afghan War, and had brought home with him. 'Poppy', as we named the little dog, became our devoted companion, and wherever we went, she went with us. One of the things she seemed to enjoy most was accompanying us when we went fishing in the Naini Tal lake. While we were engaged with rod and line, she would stand, perfectly still, in shallow water, waiting for tiny fish to nibble at her paws, when she would make a sudden dab, in an attempt to get one. I do not remember that she succeeded very often but it afforded her the greatest amusement – and sport!

Next came Magog and Nellie, two springer spaniels. Magog was big and strong enough to enjoy carrying Jim about on his back, just for fun.

When my brother was a school boy he used to go out with his gun [for bird shooting] and a very special dog called Dizzie (short for Disraeli). Dizzie was a rough-haired terrier, a wonderful little gun dog, so keen and willing. This dog was marvellous but would not hunt for anybody but my brother. People used to borrow him, having seen or heard of his prowess, but he would stick at their heels, and they would be very resentful and not ask to borrow him again.

Long, very long, after this, came Robin, who needs no introduction, for I think all Jim's readers have learned to know and to love him. Robin came very much into our life during his short lifetime in the jungles. I remember [we had him] a few years after we moved into our small house in Kaladhungi until [he died] in 1936 (he was named after our 'first Robin' who had an even shorter life). Robin was almost human. It was wonderful how he understood jungle sounds. He was sitting against the veranda pillar one morning shivering with excitement. Although there was nothing to be seen a monkey was calling an alarm call for a leopard, and Robin knew it meant danger. It was the big, black-faced monkey with a long silvery coat (a langur). All these creatures have their alarm calls. For us, the call of a jackal for danger is not so different from its normal call but Robin knew the difference. One night I heard one calling in our garden, and next morning found the prints of a leopard. We had a walled garden in Kaladhungi and the leopard had come along the road and jumped over into our garden and disturbed the jackal.

We were out one day with Robin and there was a leopard in the jungle on one side of us that we could hear calling and we made sure it was going to cross the track at a certain point, so we sat down with Robin hidden behind us (because he was conspicuous with his white patches) under a tree and waited. And then people began to come along the road, more and more people and bullocks and so on, and we were getting impatient because as long as the traffic lasted the leopard would not come out and then it could be too dark to take pictures. My brother began to call to the leopard to

come, and a man coming along the road heard and dashed back and got some stones and threw them and then dodged back again; my brother called several times, and at last we got up and the man saw us and came running and asked if we had heard the leopard near our tree. I couldn't keep serious and had to turn away, but Jim was as solemn as a judge and cross-questioned the man about the calls. Of course, the leopard never came out after all this commotion and, even if it had, it would have been too late for taking pictures due to the lack of light.

We had had other dogs besides these, a very loveable one being David, a springer spaniel who, when we were leaving India, was taken over by Geoff Hopkins, who gave him a very happy life, out in the forests. This was our second David. The first David was gifted to me by Lord Hailey and he kept me company after sister Mary's death when Jim had to leave for his appointment at the District Soldiers' Board.

We used to follow the tracks of leopards and tigers along our village wall. My brother had built a wall right round our village about three miles long. We used to walk along the outside of this wall in the evenings, and often found tracks. For a long time there had been no leopards around our house. So my brother would often let David go into the nearby forest after some birds that were there. Then, one evening while returning from our walk with David, we suddenly heard him barking and saw him followed by something dashing out of the forest. Out came a big leopard, right past us; my brother thought it was going to knock me down, it was so close. Nothing happened. It dashed past us and disappeared. David had had a bit of a fright. It is surprising that the leopard didn't kill him.

We never brought young animals away with us out of the jungles but they were sometimes brought to us by the villagers. One of these was a baby chital (spotted deer) whom Jim named Jonathan Wild, who became a great friend and companion of Robin's. The two young things would drink together out of the same dish of milk, quite naturally.

Jonathan became very domesticated and would sit among us round the fire on cold winter nights, or throw himself down on the rug and go fast asleep in sheer contentment and comfort. He grew a beautiful coat, by being brushed with a hard fibre brush, which he loved, and would stand or lie perfectly still during the performance.

The Man-Eaters

Jim spent his annual leave from the railway during the early years going on shoots with his friends. He became known as a sportsman; though he was not very keen on shooting just for sport he must have been known as a good shot in the province, and in 1907 he was asked to deal with his first man-eater, and then, over a period of years up to 1939 [November 1938 to be precise] he shot man-eaters. Of course, he had his job as well and had from time to time to take leave from his work to go after the man-eaters. As far as I remember he never refused to attend to the summons of

a District Commissioner or even villagers asking him to rid them of the menace of a man-eater. Invariably, he would take several days to several weeks [sometimes on unpaid leave when he was working] trying to accomplish that. Of course, all the District or Deputy Commissioners knew him.

The first man-eater was the 'Champawat' in 1907. At that time he had a small pony, a little white *Bhutia* pony with a shaggy coat. It was such a tame little creature. He had it out on that occasion and when he came home he had something in front of him on the saddle. I said: "What is that?" And he said: "That is what I went for." It was the man-eater's skin.

The last man-eater he killed was the 'Thak' in 1938. I don't know that he ever tracked a man-eater without it tracking him. In the morning he would go back and find its prints superimposed on his. He would be out for two or three days without food except any berries he might have been able to find. He used to tell his men: "If I don't come back within a certain time..." they would have to go and look [for him].

We were all anxious at home whenever Jim was out after a man-eater. Whether he was at the railway, at war, in Tanganyika or after a man-eater he always kept me updated, almost daily, whenever he could write and find a runner to dispatch the letter to the nearest post office. Similarly I would often write back to him and send him any commodity that he would need. That way I think he did not feel lonely although I knew our men were with him and that they were stoutly devoted to his safety and comfort.

He used to write to our mother to tell her about the state of things during these hunts. In the letter where Jim writes [to our mother] about the record of goods handling at Mokameh Ghat he mentions to her the difficulties he was having in getting leave from work and that if it were granted he would go after the Panar [man-eater]. That was in 1910.

Although Jim always kept me much in the picture there were [two] periods, I think, when he was after the Rudraprayag and Chowgarh [man-eaters] that we, Mary and I, were thoroughly worried. On these occasions he had been away from home after these animals for weeks and sometimes months for consecutive years or more. He was always thoughtful about us. He used to keep writing, if ever he could send a letter, and saying "I am taking no risks". He used to write nearly every day when he was away from home. I kept all of his letters.

I think he grew more careful later on with the man-eaters he hunted and he knew when it was time to stop going after these dangerous creatures. The last man-eater Jim shot was the Thak [man-eater] in 1938 and Mary, our half-sister, was very ill at that time and he promised he would no longer hunt man-eaters after that. In all, during thirty two years, he shot ten man-eaters including the two leopards [man-eaters of Panar and Rudraprayag].

I don't think Jim ever referred to any of his letters which he wrote [to us] when he was later writing the man-eater stories. He had a very good memory. He could

remember places, trees, rocks, footpaths and even patties' [small habitations] names in the locality he used to hunt the man-eaters, without referring to a map. He was always conscious of the smallest details, even describing the flowers and the colourful insects to me in his letters and could remember these many years after, when writing the stories.

The *Man-Eaters* [of Kumaon] was made into a film but 'Hollywoodised'. I never saw it but Jim did and they had it scaled down to 16mm so that it could be shown at the Outspan (hotel in Nyeri, in the grounds of which we had our cottage). We had a wonderful dress made for an Indian girl in the story (a correct hill costume) but whether or not it was worn, I don't know. Jim wanted the film to be made in our part of India with loyal people to whom he could have explained what was wanted of them but that would have been too expensive and the administrative delays too lengthy, and I think most of it was made in Mexico. Jim thought that there were many mistakes in [the film] and that he was responsible for them, for he was not able to travel there to supervise the making of it or to take the part of the white man, as he was asked to do. He thought however that the tiger acted superbly and made up for the ignorance of the human actors.

Our Servants

Our men (*Garhwalis* – they call them house-boys in Kenya) in India were generally awfully nice. Among them there was the man who had swallowed the Demon of Trisul [Bala Singh]. He was an awfully nice man. I remember when my brother was taking his men to France [in 1917] he assembled them about 12 miles from Naini Tal. I went and stayed with him there, and when he was to start he told me to go up on to the hill side and stay there; I watched him start off and [Bala Singh] who used to carry my "chair" was standing behind me and when my brother marched off I looked round and tears were trickling down his cheeks.

Then there was old Mothi Singh whom you will certainly know from what Jim wrote in *My India*. Mothi, however, was more of a bearer than a [house] servant to us and stayed faithful to my brother for a very long time. Mothi used to also look after our home during the summers. After he died his sons took over serving my brother with the same devotion.

Bahadur, the headman of our village, was equally devoted to Jim and served him as his most trusted bearer faithfully and loyally for many years. After we settled in Nyeri, Bahadur heard the very unpleasant rumour that Jim had been mauled and killed by a lion and he fell very sick. I think he was equally shocked when he received a letter from Jim some time after! Jim, who also heard that this rumour had reached Kaladhungi, had written to tell him he was all fine. From then on, thanks-giving prayers for Jim's safety were often offered in the mosques and temples and the children given sweets.

The loyalty of our people there, towards us, often brings tears to one's eyes. Bahadur died a little later in March 1950.

For [nearly] thirty years we had a Garhwali called Ram Singh. High caste men [like Ram Singh] could not touch any of your food; they could dust and clean shoes but would not touch food except the morning tea – they didn't mind our tea cups! Ram Singh accompanied Jim throughout the second war. When they were [touring the district and] doing jungle warfare it was very trying for a hillman going from province to province in the hottest time of the year. Sometimes when my brother came up on a few days leave Ram Singh would say to me that he could not go back. So I would say: "Don't you love the Sahib enough to stay with him?" And then he would be rather shamefaced and he never brought himself to leave him.

When we were leaving India Ram Singh wanted to come with us to Kenya, and when we said he couldn't come because he wouldn't be happy there, he said "Let me come with you as far as Bombay"; but my brother would not let him because he said he would have been killed on the way back. So he said "If I can't come to Kenya with you and I can't come to Bombay, let me come to Lucknow", so we took him as far as that and stayed there for a night or two, and when we got into the train for Bombay he just stood on the platform and wept.

Ram Singh didn't go with Jim to the first war; we had another man [Madho Singh] who went and who was equally faithful. He had been a Garhwali soldier for eight years and already been in the first war. He was among the very first to arrive [prior to Jim departing to] France. Later, when he had finished his military service [in the Civil Pioneer Force] he came to us as our bearer. This man stuck to my brother through thick and thin and accompanied him through many of his man-eater hunts.

Our men used to have all sorts of wonderful things to tell us. One day, when Madho Singh was on a return journey to us he was passing a hut and people were singing inside. He went in and they said they were singing about the Sahib who came and shot the man-eater [of Rudraprayag]. Their devotion was very touching. They loved a white man like my brother who was in sympathy with them.

Our Camping

During our winter months in Kaladhungi, Jim and I would go out camping for a few days at a time. No elaborate preparations were needed. A bullock cart would carry the few things we required, our two small tents and two camp cots. Little else was necessary in the way of furniture, for we sat on the ground besides the camp fire to have our meals, and never missed the luxury of a chair. We always avoided the regular camping grounds, but two essentials – wood and water – had to be taken into account when choosing a site in which to camp, so that we always stayed beside a stream, which not only provided us with clear, fresh water, but also with drift-wood, which had come down when the stream was in flood, during the monsoon.

Jim's devoted old bearer, Ram Singh, delighted in these occasions. He would go ahead with the bullock cart to the appointed place and have everything ready for us by the time we arrived, the camp nicely laid out under big trees, and the kettle boiling for tea, to refresh us after our walk from Kaladhungi.

We loved being out in those beautiful forests with the wild life around us and hearing the calls of animals, the roar of a tiger, the sawing call of a leopard, the bark of a khakar, and most beautiful of all jungle sounds, the bell of [a] sambhar. My brother was so experienced in those matters that he knew by the tone of voice of an animal, even though it might not have had a special alarm call, whether it was calling for danger or just an inquiring note.

Jim took many of his beautiful jungle pictures on these occasions.

Jim also liked very much to spend his nights outside our house in Kaladhungi. He usually had his tent pitched in the garden, it was a tiny tent with his bed along the length of it, and one morning we found a leopard's print on the ground right along the side of the tent but unless these creatures are man-eaters, they are very peace-loving.

Fishing

Jim used to go fishing in lake Naini with Tom when he was very young. On some occasions I accompanied him and, with a ringal rod, thread and bent pins, we extracted many small fish from its placid waters.

Soon Jim would learn fly-fishing and became very keen on this as his favourite sport. Jim was always clever with his hands. He used to tie his own fishing flies. He used the lightest tackle and would stand for hours in a boat, fly-fishing.

All the officials of the Province had fished with Jim and the Viceroy too. Lord Hailey loved fishing on the Ramganga, so did [Governor] Wylie and Lord Linlithgow. Jim would go out with them for a few days staying in camp at a time when they were off duty during the end of summer or beginning of winter.

Although, as time went on, and Jim fished in many parts of the world, he always said he preferred fishing on the Naini Tal lake to anywhere else but he also very much enjoyed fishing, especially fly-fishing, on the surrounding lakes, Bhim Tal, Saat Tal, Nankutchta Tal and Khurpa Tal – ours was a lake district.

We would start from home early enough to be at the further end of the lake by dawn, when Jim would begin fishing and continue until we caught sight of our servant coming down the hill with our *chota hazri* [breakfast]. The boat would then be drawn up to a quiet spot on the bank where we would enjoy the very welcome meal of toast and tea which Mary had prepared for us.

Once he hooked a very big fish and played it from 11 in the morning till 5:30 in the evening. I was feeling very anxious because he was just getting over an attack of malaria and I thought he might be feeling faint. I was just getting into a boat to dash off and ask him to give up the chase, when somebody came along in a yacht and

frightened it off the hook. He never intended to keep the fish because it had put up such a splendid fight; he just meant to take it to a weighing place and get it weighed [and then let it go]. All the professional fishermen knew this fish [and everyone tried to land it but were always unsuccessful] and asked why he had not brought it to where they were so that they could have helped him land it.

[Some other day] he landed another one, a record fish of over 60lbs after playing it for about 1-½ hours. It was a Mahseer; they are beautiful creatures, bronze and green and gold. It was so big we felt it should go to an institution where there were a lot of people to eat it, so took it to the YWCA and they said it was one of the best they had ever eaten. I took it up with two men carrying it slung from a pole; as we carried it up the road all the people from the [Malli Tal] bazaar came out to see the enormous fish.

Jim's Friends

From our earliest childhood Jim was very quick to make friends, it seemed to come so naturally to him, and we got to know lots of very nice children. When we were children Jim was always the one to make friends first and then introduce me to them. He was [a] very friendly child.

He made friends with everyone. One day he was sitting on the road side as a small boy and a very important man in our province [the District Commissioner] saw him and talked to him and said "if you ever want anything come to me" and he retained this friendship with Jim for years. Later when he had to go on tour he placed his horse at Jim's disposal while he was away, and he gave him a watch. Of course, my brother had very charming manners always.

One very special friend of Jim was a boy named Godfrey, who lived in a big house with a lovely garden in which we used to play. Godfrey and Jim liked to imagine themselves as knights of old, and styled themselves Sir Godfrey Davenant and Sir Jim Davenant, and tried to act as those knights of old would have. 'Sir Godfrey' had a sister, Mary, of whom he was very fond, and we all played very happily together.

As a schoolboy, Jim made many friends, and the masters and boys all liked him. He took part in all the games, in most of which he excelled, but he always made a good loser. It was amusing to see on the annual sports day a small boy proudly carrying Jim's coat as he followed him round, quite a coveted honour!

On the 'Flats', a big playing field in the middle of Naini Tal, inter-school matches were held – football and hockey – with big crowds looking on and there would be lots of excitement, with people backing the opposite teams.

After a match Jim and the other members of the team, tired as they were, would vie with each other as to who should do the climb up to the school in the shortest time, which could not have been very good for them, for the school, Oak Openings, claimed to be the highest High School in the world, was perched up on a high hill,

about two thousand feet above the level of the Flats, and the road was very steep. Boys however, are like that and who would have them different?

He had a lovely trip up to Kashmir with a young man called Lionel Fortescue who had been asked to write a history of the war in the east. He had come to India after finishing the book and was very keen on fishing; he asked Jim where to go and said if he went to Kashmir Jim must go with him. So he went and had a wonderful time fishing. There was a valley there called the Pandi valley that he described to me and said it was carpeted entirely with blue poppies. He loved all the wild flowers, and the Himalayas are very rich in flowers of wonderful variety.

Geoff Hopkins and his wonderful wife were long time friends with us. Ever since his appointment in the Forest Department when he was posted in Kaladhungi we became friends, he and Jim, and I with his wife. He stayed not quite far from us in the Forest Department quarters and we often wandered in the jungles together on the back of his elephant. He was then [posted] in the Terai and returned to Kaladhungi around the time Jim was touring for the District Soldiers Board during the Second War.

In the Forest Department there was also David Davis and his wife Joan. David was the Divisional Forest Officer and when in Kaladhungi had spent some lovely winters with us. The Clay family lived in Naini Tal. Joseph Clay was the District Commissioner and his wife Daisy and their daughters Audrey and Betty were staying in Naini Tal at one time. We became good friends and Joseph went on shoots with Jim during the winters in Kaladhungi. Unfortunately, the Clays lost their youngest daughter Betty some years later. She had gone for a mountain walk in Naini Tal and had an accidental fall from the slope of Mount Cheena into the ravine below. We were all shattered on hearing the news.

Among Jim's greatest friends there is Lord Hailey. He was Governor of our province for two separate terms. He and Jim shared a lifetime friendship. No one knows Jim better than Lord Hailey. Ibbotson and Wyndham, who were both District Commissioners, also remained lifetime friends with Jim. Governor Wylie, the last we had known in our province also became friends with Jim. They used to spend much time fishing together on the Ramganga.

The Linlithgows visited Kaladhungi several times. They used to stay at the Forest Department bungalow and sometimes they would be invited to our home for tea or lunch. We were then invited to visit them in Simla, and later, in Delhi at the Viceroy's house, where we stayed. The last occasion was a farewell visit on the eve of Lord and Lady Linlithgow's departure from India. Much later in 1951 when we went to Scotland, we were invited to stay at their place. After Lord Linlithgow, Lord Wavell came to office and he also became very good friends with Jim.

Jim had the honour of accompanying all the Viceroys and the Governors of the United Province on shooting trips and had also the pleasure of accompanying Trubee Davison, president of the Natural History Society of New York and Philips, late Pres-

ident Roosevelt's [Franklin D. Roosevelt, who died in 1945] representative on similar trips.

Jim also came across a few Congress men of our province and one of them, Sri Govind Ballabh [Pant], became very fond of him and remained a lifelong friend of his. Sri Govind Ballabh and Jim continued to write to each other after we came to Kenya. Later, after Jim's death, Sri Govind Ballabh, who by then was the State Minister of UP, wrote to Lord Hailey informing him of his request being accepted to name the Ramganga Park (formerly Hailey Park) as Corbett National Park in honour of Jim and 'for what he did for the people of Kumaon'. Sadly, the re-naming only came in 1957, two years after Jim's death although the request had been made in 1954.

We later had a wonderful friend called John Savary who had been a paper man in India and had followed Kipling in various papers. He is a brilliantly clever man and used to review books a lot. He had worked for the *Pioneer* and the *Englishman*. He had a farm in Kenya where he got very ill and my brother used to go over to see him: eventually, when he got better, my brother got him to come and live in the Outspan hotel and we saw an awful lot of him. He would come in and say "I can only stay a minute" but stayed for a couple of hours. They had so much in common – especially India, and he was such a good talker, and so interested in my brother's books: he used to come and read the reviews of the books aloud to us. He liked a review best if it was long. He had a bad heart and could not continue living at that altitude so went off. At the end of 1953 he went to the Seychelles and bought himself a house, a car and a boat. He came back for a short period hoping to make us go back with him to stay at the Seychelles but we felt we would be cut off from the world there because their only mail comes by boat and the boats are very infrequent. He sent me a wonderful letter saying that a young man had said to him that he would rather be Jim Corbett than any one in the world; and not because of his opportunities for good shooting but because of his courage and modesty and the philosophy that appears in his books. John was very saddened upon learning of Jim's death. He came from the Seychelles as soon as he heard the sad news and had in the meanwhile written a very moving tribute to Jim entitled 'The Artlessness of his Art', which he gave the publishers for it to go in later editions of [Jim's] books.

Our Trips

Until we began to travel I had spent the whole of my life up there [in Kumaon]. I had never seen the sea until we went to Kenya. I never liked to leave my mother and sister and we were very happy in each other's company and in the Himalayas. I have done all my travelling in the last seven or eight years. Nyeri of course is just about on the Equator, and is at 6,200 ft. but it used to get hotter in Naini Tal. Yet, I think the sun's rays are more direct in Kenya.

Jim had always travelled by the sea. He used to go to the coffee estate in Tanganyika almost each year from 1922 to 1936. He hated to leave home and dreaded the voyage for he was always the worst of sailors and the sea there was always at its worst. I think the first time he flew was during the Second War⁴ from the Army Headquarters at Agra to the training camps in the Central Provinces and Burma. Then, later, when we settled in Nyeri, we both travelled by air to England in 1951. For me it was the first time I had been to England, Jim had been there in 1928. It was also the first time I went on an airplane. I never took to the sea again.

Jim never lost his way in the jungles as he did in London [in July 1928]. He went there by sea and, when he landed, a Thomas Cook employee got him a taxi and told the taximan where to take him and he went in and disposed of his things and then thought he would go out and get a cup of tea. After he had had it he walked out of the door and, when he had gone some distance, although finding it all unfamiliar, he went on walking and walking but knew he was absolutely lost. He had never been to London before and he walked the best part of that night. A policeman asked him where he wanted to go and he didn't know. All he could say was that he was Jim Corbett from India, and that didn't help. Eventually, he arrived at a place where he could see through the door a palm in a pot with a broken leaf, and then he knew that was the place because he had noticed the palm. He was so tired having been up all night that he slept for the rest of the day. He always thought that traffic in the street was much more dangerous than anything he could meet in the jungles.

When we were here [in September 1951] we wanted to go to Edinburgh but the plane was diverted to Glasgow and we had to go from there to Edinburgh and didn't arrive until about one in the morning. Our host in Edinburgh [Dr. Robertson] was an old doctor and he was waiting there for us at that late time.

Jim came to England twice that year, and he met this old man, Dr. Robertson, in May when he was in Edinburgh and heard about him. He was very fond of *Man-eaters* [of Kumaon] but wasn't very well and wasn't expected to live long. He was terribly thrilled to meet my brother and it seemed to give him a new lease of life. He asked Jim to stay, and when he brought me later that year from Kenya the old man said we must both go and stay with him.

My brother went first to shoot grouse with Lord Linlithgow and his party; and I stayed with the old doctor. We spent two months in Scotland. We went and stayed with the Linlithgows too and stayed with other friends in Kincardine. We very much enjoyed our time in Scotland. We spent a month in London too but our time was rather spoilt because we had been told in Kenya that there would be no trouble getting air passages at short notice for when we wanted them but, of course, when we asked in London, there were none to be had. There was trouble in Egypt soon after and

4 It looks like Maggie did not remember in the late 1950's that about forty years earlier in 1919, Jim wrote to her from France to tell that he had his first flight. An extract from this letter is included in the chapter "*Unedited Corbett Writings*".

consequent cancellations, so we got a plane. While we were waiting for the passages we didn't go about much, just stayed in the hotel. We did go up to West Kirkby for a visit as well.

Coffee Estate in Tanganyika (modern-day Tanzania)

In 1922 Jim went into partnership with Mr Percy Wyndham, Commissioner of Kumaon, in a coffee estate in Tanganyika [named Kikafu Estate] and from then on, with the exception of the years 1928 and 1929 [during which he had been to England; actively hunted the Chowgarh and Talla Des man-eaters; and suffered an ear injury early in 1929], he spent several months [during the monsoon] of each year on the estate, helping during the busy season [until 1936]. It was hard work, but Jim found it very interesting, and learnt all he could about the growing of coffee and the various processes it went through. He learned the language of the country and got to know and to like the labour on the estate, all of whom worked together willingly and happily. Jim enjoyed hearing them singing hymns as they came down the slopes of Kilimanjaro on their way to work in the mornings.

Towards the end of the year 1924, Major Robert Bellairs, a tea-planter from Kumaon and an old friend of Jim's, joined in the partnership, and became a valuable asset to the estate. He worked hard, threw himself whole-heartedly into the interests of the estate, and was most efficient. The plantation flourished amazingly and the seed from there was acknowledged to be the best in Tanganyika.

As there was no proper living accommodation on the estate, nothing but huts, Jim set to work, and with his own hands laid every brick of a two-storeyed house, with a veranda upstairs. He was very pleased to find, on measuring the building when it was finished, that it was not out by an inch anywhere. His only help in the work was a cannibal⁵, who mixed the mortar. He was evidently impressed by the results of Jim's labours, for he asked him how much he earned as a mason in India. The woodwork, all cedar, was done by Mr. Wyndham, who was keen on carpentry, with the help of a young Sikh carpenter. Major Bellairs managed the estate until 1947 when it was sold, just before our arrival in Kenya in 1948.

While in Tanganyika, Jim did some shooting, but except for having bagged two lions and an oryx, he shot little else.

Photography

Jim took to photography soon after he began life on the railway, and derived the greatest pleasure from this fascinating hobby. We used to go on shoots with Lord Strathcona and when he went home to Scotland [Christmas of 1928] he gave Jim a

5 It is doubtful if Maggie used this term in its actual connotation or if she meant to be somewhat sarcastic about an unusual character.

cine-camera and this was the beginning of his cine-photography. Before that he had taken stills and was very successful from the first and, of course, had opportunities of taking all sorts of wild life photographs. He then went in enthusiastically for movie photography of wild life and spent much of his spare time in the jungles taking pictures of the various animals, but not of tigers, who didn't show themselves for the camera.

At that time came a book by Fred Champion in which he had taken flash stills of tigers at night. That inspired Jim to go two steps further by taking cine pictures of tigers in broad daylight. After many years and many unsuccessful attempts he finally succeeded. A unique picture being one of a group of seven tigers on their way to the spot, on the edge of a river bed, where they were photographed. Jim's weapon of defence, in case of any trouble as he was very near to the tigers, was a khaki cushion.

To prevent the tigers from being disturbed by the whirr of the camera while they were being photographed, Jim arranged for a trickle of water to run over a rough and stony surface, or, if that were not possible, he would give bird calls and whistles to drown the sound of the camera.

There were other interesting pictures, one being of a goat butting and driving off a full grown leopard, another of a young leopard and a goat standing nose to nose, until the cub is called away by its mother. Then there was a bear which Jim photographed while he walked besides it for some distance.

Besides these pictures, Jim took several of the beautiful deer abounding in those forests – sambhar, chital, gond [swamp deer] and khakar, the most beautiful of these being the chital.

Jim did not take his jungle pictures merely for his own pleasure, but to encourage others to become interested in wild life and its preservation. With this object in view, and also to give pleasure, he showed his pictures in big public halls, and in schools and colleges, where he always had very appreciative audiences, and was listened to intently as he gave his running commentaries.

In India Jim used to go to Lucknow to give lectures on wild life on Lord Hailey's invitation. Schools were invited and in this way Jim awakened a new interest in the lives of the boys and girls, who went home for their holidays, and were able to tell their friends and relatives what they had seen and heard, and so aroused in their turn an interest in others in wild life and its preservation and protection. Later he would do such lectures in Naini Tal and I did often accompany him. Jim also showed his pictures to various institutions in England. His films aroused so much interest that he was offered money to show them but he resisted all such attempts. He would rather slip away with his projector to show them for free at a school or an old people's institution.

[I remember] his first attempt at public speaking: He stood up in front of the audience and could not utter a word – absolutely tongue-tied. And then he had a sudden inspiration and took a small piece of paper not much bigger than a postage stamp from his pocket on which nothing was written. Somehow or other that released his tongue,

because he began to speak and spoke with complete confidence. A forest officer who was there was amused when we were talking about it afterwards and said that the little bit of paper had given Jim the confidence he needed to get started.

[Later, in June 1955] after Jim's death I had the honour of presiding over the screening of Jim's films at the Natural History Museum in London in the presence of Gavin de Beer, director of the museum. On that occasion I had also come to London upon invitation of the Royal family for the Queen's birthday where I received the Queen's condolences for Jim's death. Earlier, the [American Natural History] museum's former director Trubee Davison had written to Jim formally acknowledging that his cine filming of wild tigers was the very first of its kind.

At a meeting in Naini Tal recently they resolved that the Government be asked to make a Game Sanctuary as near to our home as possible in memory of my brother, and to help preserve the tiger.

Jim's Books

Jim's very first book was a small paper-bound one called *Jungle Stories*, of seven stories, not written for publication, but just as a gift for his friends. The difficulty was to get it put into print. There was, however, a small local paper, called the Lake Zephyr, the owner [London Press of Naini Tal] of which Jim had known for many years, and who, with some persuasion, undertook to print the book. It was anything but an easy task, for his stock of type was so small, that after each page was printed, the type had to be broken up and then re-arranged.

The result was quite satisfactory, and Jim was very pleased with the hundred copies produced by the small press. Out of the hundred copies that were printed he distributed ninety nine to his friends and retained just one copy. This little book later formed the basis for *Man-Eaters*.

Jim at first did not want to publish his book for the larger audience, despite being urged to do so by his friends, the Governors of our province for instance. It was Lord Hailey who lent his copy of *Jungle Stories* to Sir Maurice Hallett. This copy had also passed through the hands of Lord Linlithgow some years earlier. I think all these copies distributed by Jim to his friends drifted that way from hand to hand until the owner wanted it back. It was then that Jim became aware that indeed he had to get more copies by getting it published.

After reading *Jungle Stories*, Sir Hallett thought that the book, if published, [would] be useful for soldiers who are being trained in modern methods of jungle warfare and so wrote an introduction to that effect. Jim, in the meanwhile, fell sick on duty and was relieved of his appointment with the Civil Pioneer Force. While lying in hospital, after contracting tick typhus, he slowly made his recovery and returned home during late winter. It was then that he undertook to enlarge the manuscript of the little book by adding four more stories totalling in all about a hundred thousand words.

However, the war was on and there was a shortage of paper and therefore, no publisher wanted to take the risk. Lord Linlithgow who visited us in Kaladhungi while Jim was sick, recommended that Jim send his manuscript to the Oxford [University] Press in Bombay and he wrote a foreword for it. Jim then told him of his idea for an appeal to also appear in the paper cover of the book in favour of soldiers who were blinded while serving in war. I think he met many of those blinded soldiers while at Agra [Hospital] and at Saharanpur⁶ and had seen those soldiers who had to retire because of their blindness while he was touring our province during his appointment with the Soldier's Board. He wanted to donate all the proceeds from the sale of his book in favour of St Dunstons for Indian Soldiers 'who have been blinded during the present war'. Jim added in his appeal that 'in buying a copy you will be helping those gallant sons of India who have suffered that you might benefit'.

After reading the manuscript several times to ensure that it was reading smoothly everywhere, we talked it over and thought it worth obtaining a publisher's opinion. At first, Jim sent only abstracts of the stories to Bombay. He did not meet Hawkins⁷ at first, they were only writing letters. Jim then sent the whole manuscript, along with eight photographs for the illustrations of his stories. Our 'home copy' of *Jungle Stories*, the very last one of the hundred copies which he had printed, was also sent to Hawkins. However, it was Hawkins who suggested that, instead of *Jungle Stories*, the book should be called *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*, in reference to the man-eater stories in the book. That was just before Jim's appointment for training troops in Jungle Warfare. When the book came out, Jim was again lying sick in bed, this time with malaria and with fever of the jungles, as I was too with malaria.

Jim loved writing his books and when, with the request for his autograph, he was asked to write some little thing besides his name, he would often add, "I hope you will enjoy reading this book as much as I enjoyed writing it".

He worked very hard; did his own typing, all with one finger, and made four copies of each book – three for the publishers, London, New York and Bombay, and the fourth copy for ourselves, known as "The Home Copy". He was very neat and if there were even one mistake on a page, he would scrap the page and type it all over again. He always wanted a sentence to read 'smoothly' and would take infinite pains in making it do so.

I never thought of asking Jim which of his books he liked best, or thought to be the best, but the reviews on all of them from many parts of the world were wonderful, India being, perhaps, one of the most enthusiastic, for there, the books were not only reviewed in the papers, but also from broadcasting stations, and in one broadcast, referring to Jim, they said, "This is an adopted son of whom India may well be proud."

6 District Soldiers Board headquarters at Saharanpur

7 Roy E. Hawkins was the head publisher of the Oxford University Press of Bombay

Jim was deeply touched by all this appreciation for he was very modest and never knew [when he was writing them] how his books would be received. It was very sad that he did not live to see his last book – *Tree Tops* – in print. He had finished writing it only a few days before he died.

Leaving India

In 1940 after Mary died there were only Jim and I remaining from the big family we had been before. Then Independence came to India [and] after seeing our British friends leaving we began to realise that it would be difficult for us to remain. We therefore took the very reluctant decision to leave India. The reason being that neither of us could face the thought of living on in either our house in Naini Tal or the little house in Kaladhungi, when only one of us was left, for neither of us was young and time could not be far distant when the parting would have to come, and it would be easier in some new place than in one of the old homes.

We didn't feel insecure [with Independence] however. We were invited at the flying of the new India flag in [Naini Tal]. It was at a big playing ground [on the Flats]. All the Europeans were invited and all the schools were there. When my brother and I arrived there was quite a big crowd; it was raining and an Indian held his umbrella over my head all the time. Jim and I were separated because there weren't two seats together. After it was over the Indian said "Come up here and watch the crowds" and we climbed up to the top of the stand and saw them dispersing. It was quite a ceremony.

It was hard for us to imagine ourselves living anywhere but in India. Our home and the home of our ancestors which we so dearly loved, with its simple kindly people, with its beautiful mountains, lakes and rivers, all seemed a part of our very selves; but the time came when we felt we should leave India, and find a new home for ourselves in some other part of the world. We decided on Kenya, a country in which conditions, as to climate and the way of life, would be much the same as those we had always been used to in India. Two of our nephews and our niece had already gone and settled in Kenya with their families. The Ibbotsons had also left and were already [there]. We felt we wouldn't be lonely there.

Gradually we began and settle up our affairs, preparatory to our departure. It was going to be a big wrench, pulling up the old roots which had penetrated so deeply. Then the last day, and we had to turn our backs on the beloved home and take leave of the servants. I can see them now, as they stood in a group, wet-eyed and sad, one of them with his hands raised to Heaven.

After that, the walk down to the motor terminus, and while our car was being loaded up, looking up over the lake and seeing it hazy and blue-grey in the morning light. We knew we should never look on it again.

When we were to leave Naini Tal to go and get our boat in Bombay they changed the timing of the boat five different times – we kept getting telegrams. We finally left

Naini Tal by car on 30th November 1947 and went down to Kathgodam. From there, with our luggage we proceeded, after a brief halt in Bareilly, to Lucknow where we stayed to wait for our train. We left Ram Singh there, our most faithful servant, crying on the platform when we boarded the train to Bombay and felt very sad all along the trip. We reached Bombay two days later. We had no place to stay while we waited for our ship to sail.

At last there was a man in Bombay whom we had never even heard of, but friends who had gone a little earlier than ourselves had stayed with him, and he asked us to go and stay with him on our way down. He had a beautiful flat overlooking the sea in a very nice part of Bombay. There was no other accommodation to be had in Bombay. He made us very comfortable and tried to invite people he thought we would like to meet. Here we spent about a week before starting on the voyage to Kenya. And when we were leaving he said he wished we would stay longer. Jim had crossed the Indian Ocean many times, but it was the first time I had ever been on – or even seen – the sea.

We also kept hearing about incidents bearing communal or ethnic tones when the partition was to be declared. Jim always thought of his Indian friends whom he knew lived like brothers despite being of different religion, caste or belief. Some services had as a result been interrupted and supplies became short at times.

After we had settled there in Kenya, we got news from our friends back in India. When the troubles came [with the partitioning of India] a woman friend of ours gave a Mohammedan family, who came to her for shelter, somewhere to live in a part of her house; later a Sikh family came for shelter too, so she put them in another part of the house, and when the Sikhs came after blood – looking for Mohammedans – she would not show them the Mohammedan family. At last they ran short of food so she went down to Simla to get supplies. There were terrible riots in the town and there were soldiers with their swords dripping with blood. They asked her what she wanted and she told them it was food. All the stores had been plundered and were spilling out on the pavement but they let her go through, warning her not to go round a certain corner or she'd see things she wouldn't like.

The same woman was taken by an Indian with another English woman to one of Gandhi's prayer meetings and they were put in a place of honour right near the front of the audience in this room in the sweepers' quarter where he used to have his meetings. There was a man wandering around on the outskirts before Gandhi came and they thought he might have been looking for a good place to take some pictures, but he was looking for a place to throw a bomb. When the meeting had begun there was a terrible explosion but it did not harm Gandhi. [However], the next week he was assassinated.

Life in Nyeri

We reached Mombassa on the 15th December 1947. One nephew [Ray Nestor] had come to meet us and he brought us to Nairobi where we met the Ibbotsons. We stayed in Nairobi in the house that the Ibbotsons had rented, while theirs was being built. Jim bought a car and the next few days we went touring round. Touring the vast countryside looking for a convenient place to settle was tiring. Jim had been seriously ill some months before we left India but he kept on with the object to find a place that could please both of us. We moved from Nairobi and stayed at our nephew's place, a farm between Eldoret and Victoria Nyanza, for most of the time but soon after we came to Nyeri, and found accommodation in the Outspan Hotel, in Lord Baden-Powell's cottage, 'Paxtu'. It is a charming cottage, nicely planned, light and airy, with a wide veranda. The veranda looks out across a wide valley to snow-capped Mount Kenya, and it was this mountain that decided us to make our home here.

The veranda is a great joy to us: we can sit there and feed the birds. Lord Baden-Powell's bedroom was Jim's bedroom and has the biggest bathroom in Kenya! One man said he would get tired walking from one end of it to the other. I understand it was built for Lord Baden-Powell's sun-bathing in his bath. Lord Baden-Powell was very fond of the wild life at the cottage. (He wrote a book called *Birds and Beasts of Africa*) There was a hole in the wall in his room and at first we thought it was for him to watch the birds from, but they were so tame that there was no need to be so cautious. We found out afterwards that it was for a little animal he had, a hyrax or rock rabbit (supposed to be the coney of the Bible) which was their pet, and used to go every where on Lady Baden-Powell's shoulder.

We had a beautiful walk at the Outspan. You went down a hillside and along a lovely furrow till you came to a bench looking over a beautiful pool. You walk down the veranda steps and come to the birds' feeding ground which is about 4 feet by 7, and from that to a pond about the same size for the birds to bathe. The bath has been very well planned because the further end of it has been made shallow so that even the smallest birds can stand there and bathe [Ray Nestor has made a water colour sketch of the garden and veranda]. Often they would have some food and then dash off to the pond and have a drink and bathe again.

Jim counted twenty six varieties of birds. We had several kinds of weavers, besides robins, thrushes, glossy starlings and white eyes, these last being the most responsive of all, coming to the call of a whistle. The tiny cardinal waxbills were perhaps the most confiding of all, picking up at our feet the crumbs dropped by other birds. The feeding ground and tank are surrounded by bright red cannas where smaller birds take cover if there is danger like a hawk, whereas the bigger birds fly up into the creepers on the cottage: there are two or three kinds of bougainvillea, and a giant honeysuckle. We have our own garden surrounded by a fence, full of colour. Some one looking at our lawn said it was the best in Kenya because it is so green and deep. It was here in this

peaceful spot within sight of Mount Kenya that Jim wrote all his books with the exception of *Man-Eaters* [and the Leopard of Rudraprayag] and [the small book] *Jungle Stories*, of which he had only a hundred copies printed by a small printing press in Naini Tal to give to friends.

Jim had hoped to do some fishing in Nyeri, where trout fishing in the many rivers is excellent, but he soon found this form of sport too strenuous and gave it up after trying it a few times. He enjoyed to the full filming of wild life, of which there was a great variety round about Nyeri, and up at Tree Tops [hotel]. He even travelled by railway to Uganda and took many more films there. All Jim's films were in colour and very beautiful.

Together with Ibbotson and some other associate, Jim took over a safari company with the object of discouraging killing and encouraging photography. It became a big success with many more applicants than they could have handled, coming from all over the world. It necessitated employing people knowing a number of languages and office staff of European origin to be able to deal with all the clients. In addition, the company had to handle the party of the Metro Goldwyn Mayer Hollywood film company. The party spent four months for the making of the film which was released under the title of *King Solomon's Mines*.

In Africa there are no deer, only antelope – none with branchy horns, whereas in India we have a great variety of deer. About twenty miles from where we live at the Outspan there is a big plain called Coles Plain which extends for hundreds of acres. We used to go there and watch the animals – Thompson's gazelle, bush buck and water buck and ostrich. If not frightened, these would come close enough for us to have a very good view, and so we used to go out and enjoy it very much. On two occasions we saw puff adders on the road; they are bright yellow with a very distinctive criss-cross black marking; not very long but a very fat snake. Snakes always like rocky places because they get the heat from the rocks and bask on them.

A friend of ours had a great experience with a wounded rhino which came out onto the road and heaved its horn through the floor of his car, and he dashed off and got into a tree, and then it attacked another car. Eventually the police came along and shot it which was a mercy because the poor thing was wounded. All we saw of it was the remains some time after when we went along that road.

When I was in hospital with my broken leg my brother used to bring the car and they would put me in it and we would go right up into the reserves, beautiful country, and when we got to the edge of the forest I almost felt myself back in India – that cold, damp feeling that you can get up in the heights of the Himalayas; big trees and bracken. We used to take up sweets for the children and they were very polite in thanking you in English or Kikuyu. One small boy one day took fright – perhaps he had never seen a white face before – and dashed up a steep hill screaming, with all the other children trying to pacify him, but he would not be pacified.

There is beautiful country in the reserves but it was not always very safe living on the edge of those reserves. From where we stayed we sometimes heard the bombs that the Mau-Mau terrorists had set to explode outside the reserves in estates and buildings belonging to White settlers. We had a dear friend and his wife living up the hill a little way from us and they had been having a battle just outside their house one morning with the terrorists taking shelter in the fields. Before the emergency we used to go out and visit our friends and nephews in distant farms but later things became very difficult indeed and one cannot take risks and give people trouble. All our nephews had left Kenya as a result of the uprising of the Mau-Mau terrorists. Only our niece's family and us had remained.

Our driver is a Kikuyu and he adores the car, which he looks upon as his own and keeps it so spick and span that people seeing it think it is a new car, and he looks very shy and embarrassed. We have a *Citroen*, pale green and silver. He loves the garden too, and loves to see the result of his labours there. I have to send him away in the evening when it gets dark or he wouldn't go home. He says: "You give me jobs and I like doing them"; he loves housework, cleaning shoes, polishing brass, washing vases; and he washes down the veranda – all self-imposed tasks which he enjoys doing.

There were a lot of interesting people in Kenya from all parts of the world, and many from India. One day someone came to the cottage in Kenya and when she walked in it was a Parsee girl who used to do a lot of Girl Guide training in India and used to come to our camps. As district secretary of the Girl Guides [in India], I used to receive all the applications and deal with them, arrange for a place for the camp, get a house, and make the arrangements. They used to tell me mine was the worst job but I enjoyed it – ordering all the equipment, arranging for the camps, arranging all the meetings and sending out the agenda and minutes, and finding people to sit on the committee. It was very interesting. We were very pleased to meet each other. She had come to see Baden-Powell's cottage and it was a complete surprise to find us there. After she had gone the area commandant [Girl Guides of Nyeri] wrote and asked me to take on the district secretary-ship; but I was going to [England] then [and couldn't take the appointment].

My brother and I belonged to every single committee in Naini Tal. I was on the board of governors of a European Girls' College, President of the YWCA, Secretary of the Girl Guides, Secretary of the Hospital Comfort Funds and was on a welfare committee. They did a lot to try and help the men who just lived out on doorsteps and things like that; they would just sleep out on a veranda, and we were trying to do what we could to better their conditions. In the hospital we used to do what we could for the comfort of the patients; blankets, pyjamas, clothes for the women and babies. We worked mainly for the women and the men got jealous, so I spoke to the Governor Haig's wife and she said "Let them do something for themselves!" I was also secretary for the Lady Haig Needlework Fund to encourage needlework among

the Indian women, and we used to have a big exhibition, one in Naini Tal and one at Lucknow every year. I used to collect all the exhibits. All this was terribly interesting but when I came to Kenya I thought there was nothing much for me to do. The only thing I did help with was an African girl's work party run by a padre's wife. This woman was splendid, and the girls loved the work. I used to help them knitting; they were so quick to learn. One day when I went into the hall there were just two African girls there dancing and singing and when I came in they were very shy but I coaxed them to start again. But really there was a lot to be done there.

I broke my leg soon after I went to Kenya. When it was out of plaster and I could start using it again my brother brought me some crutches that he had had made and taught me how to use them. You would have thought he had looked after people with broken legs all his life. He used to make me push a small chair before me, and then got me a stick with a rubber ferrule. But he couldn't bear to see me walking with a stick. As I got stronger I began to find my legs.

Jim's time, however, was almost entirely taken up in writing his books. He would sit for hours every day typing at the little desk, which had been Lord Baden-Powell's, and would allow himself little or no relaxation. He never spared himself and worked too hard, especially as he was not strong, for a severe attack of pneumonia, from which he had suffered shortly before leaving India, had sapped much of his strength, but he would not give in. He went on working hard right up to the end, and finished writing *Tree Tops*, which he did not have the joy of seeing in print, with its beautiful illustrations, only a fortnight before he died.

Our cottage garden in time became a small bird sanctuary and the birds got so used to us, that some of them would even feed out of our hands. The robin being the best songster of them all.

Jim had been made an honorary game warden, and had become a member of the Kenya Fly Fishers Club on our arrival in Kenya. Later he was also an honorary officer for the Royal National Parks of Kenya and was also appointed as a Reserve Police Officer of the Kenya Police Force.

In Nairobi Jim would show his films in schools and colleges to get children interested in wild life and preserving it, as he did earlier in India as well. This had been his fight in life for the best part of it.

Jim's Health and Until the End

Early in 1955 we had planned for both of us to go back to England. Jim would have his eyes operated on by our friend Dr. Milne in London and we also planned that we would then stay with Ray and Dorothy in South London until he recovered. [Ray and Dorothy left Kenya on the outbreak of the Mau-Mau rebellion and came to settle in South London at Wimbledon in 1953]. However, our trip to England never

materialised. Early in April Jim had finished writing *Tree Tops* and a few days later he started complaining about chest pains.

In fact, Jim never kept well in Nyeri. When training Allied troops during the Second War in the Central Provinces and Burma, Jim contracted perhaps the worst form of malaria of both these places. After he did not quite recover from malaria, he ended up with pneumonia and his lungs became very weak.

The pneumonia he had contracted in the year we left India had left him with adhesions in his lungs which made breathing difficult, more particularly owing to the lack of oxygen in the air and the volcanic dust which one breathed constantly, especially during the dry season. Jim was in hospital two or three times with bronchitis and after each attack his breathing became more difficult. I used to think we should not continue to live in Nyeri but Jim would say: "One has to live somewhere." He gradually lost ground and grew very weak. He was still at his typewriter though, writing to his publisher to inform him about his finished manuscript. The last year he lived he could not use the fountain pen properly and had to resort to the typewriter for answering the letters, which he used to get from his readers all over the world. I still get such letters addressed to him. One of his young readers from India tells me he will sit on the mango tree [in Rudraprayag] exactly thirty years after my brother shot the man-eater.

Throughout his life Jim had some mixed blessings with accidents and injuries as well. When we were children he would climb up a tree and break the dry twigs and bring them in for the fire. He could climb anything – just like a monkey. I used to be so afraid of his crashing. He must have had wonderful poise.

He did fall and break his [back] on one occasion. He went out one evening to try to get the picture of a tiger that he knew was in that jungle. There was a forest officer [Geoff Hopkins] and his wife coming and we were expecting them, so he said he would come back early, but darkness came and still no sign of him. I began to be terribly anxious, and then I looked towards the door and saw his very white face. He said he had had a fall. We used to have to cross an aqueduct with a very steep drop on each side, and I asked if he had fallen from that. He said he had but he really didn't know what he was saying. There was a village doctor so I sent off post haste for this man. He then told me that he had fallen off a very high tree, and he was in terrible pain; he said he didn't know you could suffer such pain and still live. We didn't realise at that moment that he had actually broken his back. I sat all night with him. First thing next morning I went to see [Hopkins] and [asked] him to go to the next railway station and get the civil surgeon to come. We looked out for this man's horse and towards evening he came and attended to my brother, but he remained in very great pain for quite a long time. [Some] years after [when he was at Agra in the Second War] the doctors were making an X-ray of his back because he was having a lot of trouble with it and they found it had been broken.

When they X-rayed his hand they discovered it had an old injury that had not properly been treated. Sharp points [possibly tiny bone splinters] would work out through the skin. This was all connected with a visit, years before, by a man from South Africa who was a tree expert and who had come to lecture in Delhi in the early 1920's. While he was in Delhi he asked if he might come and see us in Kaladhungi, which he did, and one late afternoon Jim said that we would go out and try and show him some wild life. So we went to a beautiful spot in Kaladhungi and were able to show him a sambhar, and then Jim came on the prints of a tiger and said he would follow them up and see what had happened and for this man and me to go on home. After we had gone some distance, I heard a shot and noticed at the time that the shot had a peculiar sound. So we went on home and were there for a long time, and suddenly I heard my brother call from the back of the house and he said he wanted to change his clothes; they had got wet because he had fallen into the water.

What had happened was that in following up the prints of the tiger his foot had slipped on wet rock and as his foot slipped the gun fell from his hand. The butt hit one of the rocks in the river bed, fired, and somehow or other the shot went past his head but his shoulder had been injured and a furrow had been cut right through his hand. He had to cross the stream and there was no bridge but a tree had fallen across the stream; so he walked along the tree and when he got to the other side he somehow still got wet. After I found him at the foot of the steps, he went towards his tent holding his hand behind his back but I saw it and there was a stream of blood and cordite right up his arm. He sat in his tent and I called our [half] sister who was a doctor and I also sent for the village doctor. Jim was in very great pain.

On that occasion too I sent up to Naini Tal for the civil surgeon. I said Jim had a gunshot wound in the hand, so when he got the letter he didn't know whether it was a case for amputation or what. We had sent two men up because they had to go through a dense jungle about 15 miles before they could get to where the doctor was and they got there about 2 or 3 in the morning and the surgeon had to go to the hospital and get what he thought he would need. When he came I took my mother inside because it was too much for her to see, and we didn't know what would have to be done. After we had been inside some time the surgeon came and said it would not be necessary to amputate. He was awfully kind and stayed the night and the next day with us, and said if the wound became septic Jim would have to go at once into hospital. Luckily, it didn't become septic but he had trouble with it for some time. It was not really through any carelessness because he was frightfully careful. That was his .275 which he mentions very often in his books. His friends used to wonder at his shooting those big animals with such a small gun but he had five shots with the .275 (single barrel) against two in his bigger rifle [D.B. 450/400].

Jim had to abandon rifle shooting in his last years though he had hardly used them ever since we both came to Kenya. The very last shots he fired were with a light shotgun

when he had hunted grouse in Scotland with Lord Linlithgow. Persistent cramps in his right hand and wrists made it very difficult for him to keep steady to handle a rifle. This also caused him a lot of difficulty for writing and confined him to using his left forefinger at the typewriter with which he was very uneasy. On the second eve of his death, while suffering from cramps and frequent pains in the chest he was still typing letters, one of them he wrote to a young fan of his from India and the other to our grand nephew; in which he told them to 'live this day as if it would be your very last'.

How Jim managed to suffer in pain or sickness without much complaint is beyond my understanding. I would now think he did not want any one of us to get anxious for him. He didn't complain until it was too much for him to bear. In the early morning [that day] he unusually complained about chest pains. I thought it was serious enough so I called upon our driver and we helped him into the car and drove to the hospital [in Nyeri]. He reassured me many times that he is going to get back home the same day and that there was nothing to be worried about. However, the doctor decided that he should be admitted and when they laid him in bed I could see in his eyes that he was not well at all. He called upon our driver and asked him to take me back home, wishing us a safe drive; we didn't leave though. His thoughts to the last were always for others, and the last words he said to me were: "Always be brave and try to make the world a happier place for others to live in". He left us a little later on that day April 19th, 1955.

First Biography of Jim Corbett by Marjorie Clough

BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS

In response to a request from OUP (New York Branch) for notes on author Jim Corbett, whose book *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* has been selected for the Book-of-the-Month-Club edition of March 1946 – Copy to Henry Z. Walck, Publishing Director.

Copy of letter dated 7 January 1946 from Marjorie Clough, American Red Cross, APO 884, c/o Postmaster, N.Y. to Mrs. Virginia B. Carrick, Publicity Director, Oxford University Press, New York.

Marjorie Clough writes:

This past October it was my privilege to meet Lt. Col. James Corbett, author of “Man-Eaters of Kumaon”, at Agra, India, and to succeed in engaging him to speak to our G.I.’s at Repairadise Inn, American Red Cross club in Agra of which I was club director. Though in Agra for the purpose of addressing his own RAF boys, Col. Corbett graciously consented to show his films to our boys and speak of some of his experiences in the jungles. To say that he spell-bound some 300 men that evening is to say only half. We listened attentively to his earnest appeal to begin to observe the life that is teaming all about us, taking it all in and leaving no slight detail unnoticed. We were touched by his humility in presenting his jungle film, the result of ten years of patient work in the jungles where he forsook rifle for camera that thousands might be able actually to see tigers in their native haunts; and we were moved by his appraisal of us as “the most distinguished Audience” he had ever addressed. That was in October, 1945.

Several weeks ago I returned from Kaladhungi, a village [down] the Kumaon Hills where Jim Corbett and his sister Maggie have lived the best part of their lives. I and a friend had the privilege of spending four days in their, what they call, “Irish cottage”, and a more exciting though restful four days I have never spent. While their guest I realised the possibility of rendering a slight service to Jim Corbett by making use of our American APO mails for the purpose of expediting a message to you. He had showed me his file of correspondence pertaining to the publication of his book, including his proposed trip to the States and request from you for material about himself. I asked for the privilege of sending a few spontaneous words along to you, with a copy to him at Kaladhungi for information and correction. He was pleased with my small offer because, self-effacing that he is, he has not felt disposed to give this information to you himself, and Mr. Hawkins of Oxford University Press at Bombay left recently for a four-month leave in England.

May I say first that I am due to arrive in the States sometime in February, having spent eight months in the C.B.I. as an ARC club worker. I will sail from Calcutta

around the middle of January and be cleared in Seattle, Washington. It is my plan to go directly to New York, and there I may be reached in care of my aunt: Mrs. Alice E. McGuire, 80-15 Gremfall, Kew Gardens, Long Island. My home address is: c/o Joseph B. Clough, 2317 Lamberton Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

I will consider it a privilege to make your acquaintance while in New York for the purpose of giving you any further information I might be able to give about Colonel Corbett. I shall communicate with you by telephone upon arrival in New York.

Following are some interesting highlights in the Colonel's life as I was able to draw from him during my stay in Kaladhungi. Born in 1875 at Naini Tal, U.P., the second last of 13 children. His father served in the Indian Army (British) on the Northwest frontier, and died when Jim was four years old, leaving his mother to rear the large family. The three oldest children were Doyles, by Jim's mother's first husband.

Jungle everywhere surrounds the original homestead of Kaladhungi. Their land, together with timber for the house, was given to his father back in 1860 as a free grant by General Ramsey [Ramsay], a Scotsman known for twenty-eight years as "King of Kumaon". Since boyhood, the family residence during the winter months has been at Kaladhungi, and the hot summer months have been spent at cool Naini Tal some fifteen miles away and 7,000 feet in the mountains. Jim's mother, whom he loved so devotedly and speaks of so tenderly, built the homestead there. Naini Tal is one of the widely known hill stations in India, and is the seat of the Government of the United Provinces during the summer months.

A favourite older brother taught Jim at an early age how to conduct himself in the jungle, and how to shoot. He studied birds and their calls, collected birds' eggs and learned the habits of hundreds of the jungle fold [folk] that lived in the surrounding thickets.

Jim's early education was in Naini Tal at a private school, and later at a public school. His ambition from boyhood was to become an engineer, but being the second youngest child, when time came for him to enter engineering college, the funds were not available. Desiring to help himself and to contribute to the family budget, at something under fifteen he applied to the Postal Department for a job. The Postmaster General, thinking to frighten him off, threw a bundle of envelopes to him written in one of the local dialects, saying, "You're too young for a job at the post office; can you decipher any of these, for instance?". When Jim began reading them off the Postmaster General was amazed, but urged him nevertheless to go back to his books for a few more years. At eighteen he was given a job by a railway company cutting fuel for locomotives, and worked hard at this for a year and a half. I can't remember the reason for his having to terminate this job, but it is an interesting episode in his life that I should like to recount because it shows his fine character at such an early age. When the job was finished he asked all the men who had worked under his direction at cutting the timber to estimate the amount of wood cut and the number of hours

given to his work. Hundreds of villagers were involved but each man made an independent estimate. Jim had been given funds by the railway to pay the men, and after each man had been paid according to the agreed estimate and had gone away to his respective village, Jim found to his amazement that more wood had been cut than any of them had realised, and that he had 300 rupees (about 100 dollars) remaining. Jim took the money to the railway company and handed it over to the Superintendent. At first the man wouldn't accept it, saying that the books had been audited and it would be difficult to explain the overage, but Jim knew he could never find the men who had earned it and believed that it therefore belonged to the railway company. The upshot of this experience was that they gave him a contract which he held for twenty years, and which terminated then at his own volition. His work under this contract, generally speaking, was to expedite the trans-shipping, loading and unloading, of material from cars on broad gauge to cars on narrow gauge tracks at a railway junction in Bengal. I believe this was a point called Mokamah [Mokameh] Ghat, near Dinapore. Further to reveal his character and the faith the Indian people had in him at so early an age, let me tell that he agreed at the beginning to do this work at a rate of rupees 1/5- per thousand maunds [Old Indian unit of weight about 37kg], a rate that the lowliest coolie would laugh at today, he told me. In our terms this would be approximately 35 cents to handle 40 tons. For the first three months under the contract he received no money from the company to pay his workmen. During this time not a man left him. They had faith in him and his word, which he was able to make good when the money finally came. During the subsequent years Jim held this contract he told me that he hadn't a day's trouble from a single man of the 1,000 employed. Small wonder, though, that they loved and they respected him, as, in an offhand manner, he told me that during those years he bought up lands for them, built their houses and doctored them with medicines bought from his own funds. This strong sense of humanity and honesty has been a telling factor in his life, as evidence the fact that during World War II he recruited the sons of the men whom he had recruited and taken to France during World War I.

The railway company wouldn't release Jim to go the Boer Wars, but when World War I broke out (he was then 39) he was determined that nothing should stand in his way of serving. His trusty manager took over the work under the railway contract for him. He sold the personal effects that had accumulated at MokamehGhat (his mother and sisters had come to spend the winters with him) and off he went to Calcutta to offer his services. There the recruiting officer told him something that, on two occasions in his life, has failed to discourage him, that he was too old to serve his country at war. He implored them to take him in any capacity. They refused but said he might obtain a commission if he had friends in the Army with influence. Determined not to seek a commission in that way he returned to Naini Tal in very low spirits. The Commissioner of Kumaon, a staunch believer in the Corbett character, unbeknownst

to Jim put pressure to bear, and in due time he was offered a captain's commission assisting in recruiting men for a labour corps. 4000 men, all hand-picked there in the Kumaon Hills, were finally recruited, and by good fortune he was given the privilege of taking the 70th Kumaon Labor Corps to France—the first men to go to France from the U.P. He left with 500 men, and a year and a half later brought back 499. Again by way of showing his humanity, the 500th man had been hospitalised in Egypt for sea sickness, and was left behind only after a large effort on Jim's part to persuade the medical authorities to allow him to assume responsibility for the man's safe journey to France. When they refused, he promised the Indian he would come back for him; but as predicted by the man himself, he died there alone of a broken heart a few days after the corps' departure – a calamity Jim lays to the crass indifference of the medicos in Egypt at the time.

During the time they were in France Jim was given an opportunity to visit for the first time his beloved England, but knowing the needs of his men, their living and eating habits so peculiar to Europeans, he refused to leave them. During their stay in France, too, he had given them not a pice [hundredth of a rupee] of their army pay, knowing that it would be spent unwisely. Instead he paid from his own pocket for any souvenirs the men wished to take back with them and then when they had safely returned to their Indian hills and villages he arranged that they be paid in full and freshly minted silver rupees. One can imagine their joy and Jim's satisfaction as they gathered to them their piles of money and went immediately to invest it in village homes and small businesses.

On return from France Jim was promoted Major and sent to the North West Frontier as Commandant of the 144th Labour Battalion to take part in the Third Afghan War, thus maintaining his family's continuity of trans-border warfare, for his father had fought in the First and his eldest brother in the Second Afghanistan wars.

While serving his country in war he was still under contract with the railway company and was still the owner of a small engineering business at Naini Tal known as Mathews & Company. He had gone into partnership with Mathews some years earlier, so keen was he on engineering, and upon the early death of the partner he undertook to support his widow until her death three years later, when he became sole owner.

Going off to wars, as much as he had desired to, and engaging in business to support his mother and sisters[1], all cut deeply into the time he yearned to spend in the jungles, and so in 1924 when his mother died he determined to simplify his life by selling the engineering business and becoming free of the railway contract. He sold miscellaneous property and houses, too, and invested his money in three-way annuity insurance to protect Maggie, Mary and himself for the rest of their lives. When he had done all this he began to feel the first freedom in his life and could spend unlimited time in the jungles surrounding his winter home at Kaladhungi. (Interesting dates: First man-eater killed in 1907; last one in 1939)

It is of particular interest to know that Jim Corbett was the first man in India, to buy joint annuity insurance. He wanted equal protection for the three of them and requested Sun Life to write the policy for him. They sent a representative to Naini Tal to find out what he was asking for, and in due time Jim Corbett's name was the first to appear on this kind of policy. He has invested money in like policies with Manufacturers of Canada. Mary died in 1940.

At this point it would be well to write something about Maggie, Jim's favourite sister always, and a remarkable woman in her own rights. The mention of Maggie or his mother brings a dewy mist to Jim's eyes. Upon my asking why he had never married he answered: "It has been my privilege, no, I had the honour, to make a home for the best mother and sisters in the world. Maggie has spent her life spoiling me." Watching Maggie move quietly about their little home making things comfortable for Jim, one knows that for her too this arrangement has been a privilege. She is small, has white bobbed hair, is very blue of eyes, and fragile looking as a piece of Dresden China. But any sense of delicacy this sight may impose on the visitor is belied by the vigour which she strides out behind Jim on their walks through the jungle. Because of chilly nights and cool days at Kaladhungi, Maggie dresses in smartly tailored tweeds and slacks. Jim's felt hat that accompanies him through the jungles is worn at a rakish angle that becomes his twinkling Irish eyes, but Maggie's hat is "put on properly" and she looks out at you shyly from under its brim. Maggie is an accomplished musician, and has taught piano to hundreds of pupils at Naini Tal. She is also a botanist of considerable fame in the Kumaon Hills. According to Jim, she knows the name of every variety of flora and fauna in the entire region. Maggie's life has been devoted to her mother, to Jim and, from what I observed with my own eyes there at Kaladhungi, to any native villager who has the strength to crawl into the Corbett compound for medical attention. As many as ten villagers come every day to be administered to for ailments ranging from malaria to hiccoughs, and only one who has lived in India can know what the poorer classes of India suffer from general malnutrition and disease. During these war years, with medical supplies at a premium to civilians, if available at all, a good many of the cures have been faith cures, according to Maggie. But as long as her dwindling supplies of mercurochrome [compound used as germicide and antiseptic] and other remedies lasts in her little medicine cabinet, just so long will Maggie stand to the sick and needy.

It would be of interest to know that the late Stephen Dease, a cousin of the Corbetts and man of considerable fame as a lecturer and medical missionary to India (He received his medical training in a mental hospital in New York) made a hobby of painting birds. Jim supplied all the bird specimens from the jungles, and Maggie augmented the study by supplying hundreds of specimens from the flora world. Dease made copious notes and annotations to these specimens, gathering them altogether

into one comprehensive volume and illustrating profusely with his own inimitable paintings from life.

The book has been in America twice; once, when taken by Dease to explore the possibility of having it published, and a second time when sent by Jim to the New York Museum of Natural History at the request of Truby [Trubee] Davison.

The book is at present at the Corbett's summer house at Naini Tal and it was my misfortune not to be able to see it or some of the now-famous tiger skins that are carefully stored there. (Jim told me that unlike most hunters who bedeck their homes and hunting lodges with trophies of the kill, the skins in his possession can be seen only if one asks to see them. How I should love to have seen the skin of the Bachelor of Powalgarh, the last tiger killed by Corbett for the sport of the hunt (1930), though he told me he has been at the scene of the killing of some four to five score tigers since then. How Jim Corbett deplores the type of hunter who traps through the jungle stirring up the wild life and killing at random, often wounding tigers and leopards and leaving them there to suffer until death or to menace the lives of numbers of people who do not know they are there.

Jim Corbett, Percy Wyndham and a Robert Bellairs are the joint owners of a plantation in Africa on the slopes of Kilimanjaro. Some of the best coffee and maize in all of Africa is grown in this plantation; the Government of Africa buys up all its produce because of its excellence. Between 1920 and 1936 Jim spent half the year in India and half in Africa doing his part of the work on the plantation. Irrigation was his particular job, bringing snow waters down to the plantation from lofty 18,000 ft. high Kilimanjaro. It was during these years, too, that Jim did his hunting in the African jungles. (He made his one and only trip to England in 1928)

In 1929 Lord Strathcona made a present to Jim Corbett of a 16mm. movie camera, and he started immediately the difficult task of photographing his tigers in their native haunts. He called most of them up to him and stood as close as ten feet from them, whistling softly some jungle bird song to deaden the whirr of the camera.

When World War II broke out in 1939 Jim Corbett, then aged 64, went to General Broad, Eastern Command, and again offered his services to his country in war, and once again was told he was too old. But he prevailed as before, and between 1940 and 1942 took a job known as Deputy Military Vice-President of District Soldiers Boards. A necessity arose for raising a civil pioneer corps and he was offered the job of organising this corps. But that meant staying in Delhi, and not being an office man he didn't want to undertake a job that would keep him behind a desk. He undertook instead to raise one of the ten battalions wanted for this corps. He went back, as has been his custom, to the hills of Kumaon to raise a battalion to consist of 1400 men. He recruited the grandsons of the men he had taken to France. He had the accumulated goodwill of the next of kin of those 499 men he had brought back from France. He recruited sons and fathers throughout the huge area he had freed from the menace

of Man-eaters. Shortly after finishing this work he contracted tick typhus, and at the end of three months when he left the hospital the doctor told him that all he would be able to do for the rest of his life would be sit on a chair on the veranda. They said he would never be fit again. He went again to loved Kaladhungi where Maggie nursed him back to health, and then in February 1944, at the summons of British General Frank Moore, Division Commander of the 39th Training Division, he was commissioned a Lt. Col. and undertook the rigours of training men for jungle warfare. He went immediately to Burma and stayed a month learning the flora and fauna of the Burmese jungles, quite unlike the jungles in India. It was officers and men who flew him about, he says and were very good to him. He loves to tell of his flight from a point in Burma to Agra, Headquarters of the Indian Army 14th and 39th Training Divisions, when the American officers who had flown him there pleaded with him to stay abroad and go to America with them. They promised to have him back within fourteen days, but conscientious Jim had engagements to keep in Agra and only succeeded in disengaging himself from their company by promising to go to America another time. How he wishes he might have had the courage to throw to the winds all thought of responsibility and make that “unauthorised flight”.

In September 1945, after almost two years of strenuous training of British soldiers in Central and United Province jungles, he contracted malaria, and retired again to Kaladhungi to regain his strength and health. This time Maggie too was ill with malaria, and they made the heroic struggle together.

It was in October, just after his bout with malaria, that I met Jim Corbett and he spoke to our men. His generous invitation to me to visit him and Maggie could not be resisted, so early in December I and another Red Cross girl by the name of Betty Walbolt of Toledo, Ohio, hied [hurried] ourselves to Kaladhungi bearing gifts from our overfull foodlockers. Including a few American foodstuffs, these ranged from sugar to sachets, and each simple thing was accepted with a grace that people only of real gentility can display.

I wish that time would permit me to set down in writing some of the exciting incidents and moments of peace that were ours in Jim's and Maggie's company. Suffice it to say for now on our first day we walked for two hours to the scene of the killing of the Bachelor of Powalgarh, where he constructed the story for us. As we had walked directly to it, I was surprised at Jim's surprise at the change in the terrain. When we returned to the cottage and I learned that the Bachelor had been killed in 1930 and that this was the first time he had returned to the scene, I was dumbfounded. On our return journey that day we walked in grasses higher than our heads. We sensed Jim's apprehension so walked silently behind him. At a stream's crossing he pointed out fresh pug marks of two tigers and we followed them to a point where he says that a killing occurred. A sambhar has been dragged into the thicket, he said. Later that evening he told us that a less experienced hunter would not have walked through such grasses

armed only with a shotgun (and with two starry-eyed girls tagging along behind, he had the grace not to add) but that he knew the jungle folk would have warned him of any immediate danger. He confessed to us that we were not more than five minutes behind the tigers who killed the sambhar up ahead of us.

Our second day proved to be as thrilling. Jim had arranged that Betty and I should have our first elephant ride. We were graciously invited to join the Finlay family, he being deputy commissioner of Kumaon, I believe, and hadn't just a ride, but spent five hours atop an 81 years old "efelump" of magnificent proportions. When alighting after this extended period I underestimated the distance from my charpoy seat to the ground when the elephant was kneeling, and somersaulted in mid air before coming to a perfect one-point landing. Again we spotted the fresh pug marks of, this time, a larger ten-foot tiger, and plans were laid for Mrs. Finlay to hunt it down in February. We "crashed our way silently" is the only way I can describe it, through jungle growth I wouldn't have believed it possible for any living thing to penetrate. My love for the faithful, obedient elephant flamed anew. I learned things about the jungle from Jim on that eventful rife that I couldn't have learnt in years from book-reading.

On the eve of our departure Jim, Maggie, Betty and I took a long quiet walk along another jungle road, and by this time I too could detect the pug mark of a tiger. We followed one of several that showed signs of having to listen for the possible call of a tiger ahead. He said he would call it up if he heard it. We waited breathlessly, but fast-falling dusk made it impossible to linger longer. We hurried our steps towards home knowing that the jungle was full of leopards that found wee doggies a toothsome morsel. David [Corbett's dog], who trembled with delight when we made "going-out-walking" noises that afternoon, scouted home close at the head of Jim and with his tail powerfully between his legs when his intelligent sixth sense informed him we were out looking for tigers, not birdies. After another delightful dinner of red jungle fowl that evening, Jim let us read his unfinished manuscript of a story about the man-eating leopard he killed. Devotees of Jim's tiger stories have a thrill ahead in the reading of this book when it is published. It tops all the rest for out-and-out horrific detail. Knowing that leopards frequently jumped over the compound wall there at Kaladhungi, and knowing also that the monkeys had put up a fearsome chatter just the night before because of the presence of a leopard, Betty and I made as little noise as possible preparing for bed that night in our little bedroom across the flagstones from the main house. We bolted ourselves in too, I may say without fear of shame.

I know you will be anxious to know how Jim Corbett looks today, and so I am parting with the only pictures I have, in hopes of getting more from Betty and knowing they are going to a worthy cause. I am sorry they are not larger and that I do not have the negatives. Jim Corbett stand an erect six feet tall. He has a ruddy complexion, blue eyes that laugh and are sad all at once. Though quite "bald on top" his hair is

very white and abundant. He and Maggie cut each other's. His kneeling to pet David (in the picture) is a pretext, I feel, to be at the feet of Maggie. They have surely lived the years together, and in this most recent venture of story writing Maggie has been of inestimable value to him with her keen memory of dates and events, and flair for writing. They sit together night after night before their wood fire, he at his typewriter and she brewing the after-dinner cup of tea. They ponder over words to properly describe to the outside world, you might say, something of the inmost secrets of the jungle they love and know so well. Maggie has had more than a hand in writing his book. Whether or not he can bring her to America with him is something that depends upon many things. I have not mentioned the countless interests she has at Naini Tal, being on the hospital board and a member of every civic and social committee. Between them they know the background of every family in those parts. Numbers of boys and girls look to them for guidance, and you can believe that they give it with their whole hearts. No matter what the outcome of Anglo-Indian relationships, I am convinced, with Jim Corbett and Maggie, that their home for all their lives will be in India there at Kaladhungi and Naini Tal. India gave them their earliest recollections and fondest memories, and the Indian people, I am convinced too, will always appreciate and protect them. There is a reward for living and loving like the Corbetts have, and that reward is in being loved.

[1] As a matter of fact, both Maggie and Mary had been earners. Mary, Jim's half sister, had studied medicine at Lahore and was a nurse of good reputation.

Other people on Corbett – From Corbett’s acquaintances and correspondents

BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS

These are letters (mainly extracts), press references, interviews of acquaintances and general correspondence from people who are referring to Corbett and/or directly addressing to him. None of these have been ever published before.

From the Viceroy of India, Sir Francis Chelmsford (Viceregal Lodge, Simla) to Captain Corbett (Naini Tal) – 21/06/1920

‘...I should like to write a line to express to you my sincere appreciation of your most generous gift of five thousand rupees to the Monro Soldiers’ Canteen at Kathgodam and to assure you of my personal thanks for your generosity.

Your gift will not only be of great value to the Institution but will also make the British Soldier in India realise that his needs and those of his dependants are not forgotten...’

From Charles (Later Sir) Monro (General of the Army, Commander in Chief office, Simla) to Captain Corbett (Naini Tal) – 02/07/1920

‘...I am writing this to you to express on behalf of the Army in India, and on my own, our sense of deep gratitude for your generous gift of Rs. 5,000 for the Monro canteen at Kathgodam.

These canteens are of inestimable value, and I can think of no act of individual generosity which will appeal so much to all soldiers.

The lasting benefits you are conferring on both present and future generations of soldiers will I am sure cause your name to be remembered with grateful and sincere regard...’

From Maurice Hallet (Governor of UP, Governor’s Camp, Simla) to Lt. Colonel Corbett (Naini Tal) – 13/07/1944

‘...I have just heard of the very generous gift which you have made to the UP Government of your Chrysler Station Wagon and I write to thank you and Miss Corbett most sincerely for it. We are running very short of cars for Government officers and this car will be a most useful addition, but the fact that you have chosen to give this car to us rather than sell it when Government would have been very ready to buy, is another example of the generous support which you have so consistently given us...’

From Lord Wavell (The Viceroy's House, New Delhi) to Colonel Corbett (Naini Tal) – 19/09/1944

'...Thank you so much indeed for sending me a copy of your book. [First edition of *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*, for which Lord Linlithgow, the previous Viceroy, wrote the Preface, Ed.] I am very much looking forward to reading it.

I was sorry not to see you when I was in Naini Tal, you were away somewhere, I think. Perhaps we shall meet somewhere this winter. Let me know if you are ever coming to Delhi...'

From Major C.S. Jarvis (Chele Orchard, Ringwood, Hants) to Colonel Corbett (Naini Tal) – 02/07/1945

'...I have had the opportunity to read your "Man-Eaters of Kumaon", and was very much impressed by it. I write the Countryman's Notes for 'Country Life' each week and am saying a few words about it in those columns shortly which you may see.

I have not read anything from your pen before and imagine that this is your first book. If so I must tell you how much I enjoyed it – it is not only the question of unusual excellence of material, but also your ability to write extremely well. In my opinion, for what it is worth, your book is quite exceptional, and should be at least as popular as was "The Man-Eaters of Tsavo" published some 20 years ago. I predict that when it is published in England that it will be a very great success, but if you are bringing it out in the UK I think you should ascertain that the publisher will print sufficient copies to meet the demand. These are hopeless times for publishing owing to the paper shortage, and many books are being brought out now and allowed to die after the first edition. I am so struck by your "Man-eaters" I should not think that this will be its fate.

This should be a forerunner to many books, and I am already looking forward to the next which might deal with leopards. I have spent most my life in Egypt – Sinai – and so have had little opportunity for big game shooting except the ibex and our rather rare leopard, and therefore I read your book, not as an expert, but as an amateur...'

From R.E. Hawkins (Oxford University Press, Bombay) to Sir Humpfrey Milford (Oxford University Press, UK) – 07/08/1945

'...In the particular instance of Jim Corbett, we regret we can give very little information. From internal evidence, he was born in Kumaon, where he still lives with his sister. He seems to have lived on his estate, though he has made at least one hunting trip to Africa. He was a member of the Indian Army Reserve Officers and is now Lieutenant Colonel engaged in training troops in jungle warfare. He does not wish his age to be disclosed, and is averse to be publicised in a personal way. I have not met him, but have met many others who know him [Lord Hailey, for instance – ed.] and there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of his stories. He is writing some more stories, which we hope to publish (1947?) under some such title as 'The Man-Eating Leopard

of Rudraprayag'. The Indian correspondent of Times has been trying to collect material for an article on Corbett, but so far as we know has not succeeded...'

From L. Brander (Oxford University Press, Amen House, London) to Lt. Colonel Corbett (Naini Tal) - 20/08/1946

'... I am sorry you have been having all this trouble with that absurd rumour [That Corbett was mauled and killed by some man-eater - ed.]. We got a bit of it here but we were able to stop it pretty quickly. I wrote at the Publisher's suggestion to the New York Branch so that if it had blown across the Atlantic it could be stopped at once. I call that as one of the more irritating penalties of fame.

If the representatives of "Life" who got in touch with you is Miss Bourke-White, you would probably find her an interesting character well worth talking for a walk on a good day in the cold weather. She is an exceptionally good photographer and has travelled a great deal and I understand is a good talker, and generally, as I say, an interesting person. I don't suppose that any other American photographer in India is up to her standard.

I am very sorry to have to confess to you that we did not think of placing an order with a press-cutting agency for you; As soon as I got this letter of yours I talked to the head of our publicity department who wrote [to] Durrants, only to find that they are quite unable to dig back for reviews. They have a big staff but they are only able to live from day to day. As that is so the best I can do is to write to Bombay and ask them whether they can let you see their press-cuttings. I don't know whether they would be able to make typescript copies for you but I shall inquire.

It is one of those important points which we must remember for the next book [Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag, ed.], and we are all glad here to learn that it is getting on so well. I look forward myself with the greatest eagerness to seeing it, and shall certainly write you when I have read it and give you the impressions for what they are worth.

I am sorry to hear that a couple of American reviews stick in your throat. Remember that there is always the kind of reviewer who builds his reputation on damning a good book. His only concern is with his own profit and he certainly is not worth worrying about.

I imagine this is the kind of fellow who has used the word 'gruesome' about your descriptions. No one of real taste or sense would do so. It may amuse you to know that I had a talk the other day with one of our most intellectual people down in Oxford who complained that he was quite unable to finish "Man-Eaters" although he very badly wanted to do so as whenever he got home, one of his large family was engrossed in it...

...I am very glad you ended on a fishing note. I have in my mind's eye a stretch of a little river in Devon where on the right day you will almost certainly get a salmon,

so come along when the air passages are available, and I hope I am free to lead you straight to that river...'

From Lord Linlithgow (Former Viceroy of India, Edinburgh, Scotland) to Lt. Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) – 20/02/1951

'...We are all excited and delighted to hear that Maggie and you are coming to this country this year. I should like to have your dates of arrival and departure when these are fixed. It looks as though we might have a few grouse this season and it would give me very great pleasure if you would come and have a family shoot with us between August 19th and the week of 17th September.

The number of weeks we shoot is naturally dependent on the supply of birds and we might quite well be going on until the end of September. But it is not possible at this stage to forecast the date when we shall stop shooting.

In case it is a help in fixing your plans the moor is at Leadhills in Lanarkshire. I shall send you full particulars when I know the dates which would suit you. We have plenty of ponies around so no question of any difficulty in walking up hill need worry you. There will in fact be no walking of any sort as all our grouse are driven to the butts and all the butts are accessible by pony.

I have been remiss in writing to you but you in your turn have not behaved much better in writing to me. When I last heard from you the third book was nearing completion but I have not yet seen it advertised or reviewed.

There have been two additions to the family since I wrote. John's wife has had a son now six months old, and Bunty presented us with the latest grandson a fortnight ago, which makes six grandchildren in all...'

From 'Jock' Cumberlege (Oxford University Press, London) to Lt. Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) – 05/06/1952

'...I am now able to send you the specially bound copies of your three books for the Queen and one copy of the illustrated edition of MAN-EATERS OF KUMAON for Prince Charles. These are being sent by sea-mail, but I have insured them for £25.

I think they have been very nicely bound at the Oxford bindery [Red leather for the juvenile illustrated edition – ed.] and I hope that you may agree. I believe you are now going to autograph them and you will then perhaps send them direct to Her Majesty's secretary. It is appropriate that I am writing to you on her birthday.

I hope that everything goes well with you. We have not abandoned all hope that you and your sister will be over this year...'

From Eric Berthoud (British Embassy, Copenhagen, Denmark) to Lt. Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) - 26/05/1953

'...I have just read your book "Man-Eaters of Kumaon" with the utmost interest and admiration. Indeed an epic story of human skill and valour! Even your modesty cannot disguise this.

My pleasure was enhanced by the rather touching reference to my uncle Charlie (Berthoud in your text) on the very first page. He died when I was very young. So I have no clear recollection of him. My other Indian Shikari uncle Edward is still alive, living at Bexhill, but far from fit. Is there anything more you can tell me about my uncle? Do you ever lecture about your jungle experience? British lecturers are welcomed here in Copenhagen.

If you are in the vicinity of London in August, it would give me the utmost pleasure if you could spare the time to have lunch at the Oxford and Cambridge Club. Indeed I would deem it an honour...'

From Baroness Sophie Von Redwitz (Giglberg, Post Hutting, Schwaben, Germany) to Lt. Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) - 16/09/1954

'...As I am working at the Consulate of my country [in Bombay] I have just four weeks to spare during one year's time and last fall been in Naini Tal, living with Dickie and Phylis Richardson. Dickie was very ill after a heart attack and was not allowed to walk. Therefore I had to do practically all my walks and rides alone. But could not follow your tracks as I had hoped. I have of course been on all the peaks surrounding the lake. I know something about India and can read and write Hindi and speak just that much that I shall never be lost anywhere. I shall start my next two years in January 55. Will you ever return to India? If you consider doing it, I should be so pleased to be allowed to go with you for a short while and see a bit with your eyes. I love my woods at home and I'm strolling day and night through our estate to my heart's content but jungle is not our woods and the fauna is so different.

In the meantime, however, I have another request. Have you already given away the right of translation for [your] books? I should like much to translate them into German. Our people have lots of interest for India but hardly anybody knows anything real. Those who dream about a fairy country are wrong and those who blame it for economic reasons and lack of European ways are just wrong the same. Could you give me some hint how to proceed, if there is a chance? Please.

In the end please excuse the many mistakes in typing. Except for mistakes in the languages it is a prehistoric Royal Ports of my father's which I know since I live and that is thirty two years. I also enclose a photo which is from this summer.

Will you please give kind regards to your sister Maggie whom I know as well as you from the stories and the Richardsons...'

From 'Jock' Cumberlege (Sussex) to Lt. Colonel Corbett (Nyeri, Kenya) – 06/04/1955

'...I was delighted to hear from you, and interested in your project to write a short book on the present Queen's visit to Nyeri. We must talk about that when you are over.

We are looking forward very much to see you at the end of May, and perhaps before you come you will send me a postcard and allow us to send the car to the airport to meet you both and take you to your destination.

And my wife is as eager as I am that you and your sister should come and spend a little time with us in the country. I think you would enjoy it and you will be in complete peace; the garden ought to be at its best then and given fine weather you will be able to sit out a lot and enjoy air, birds and other amenities...'

From THE STANDARD's correspondent in Nairobi, Kenya Thursday 21/04/1955

'...The world's leading expert on the habits of tigers and author of best selling "Tigers of the Kumaon" Colonel Jim Corbett died in Mount Kenya hospital of Nyeri on Tuesday aged 80.

Colonel Corbett who arrived from India eight years ago, killed his first tiger in 1907. He once told a reporter "I have lived all my life in the jungles". He was a master in the lore and tactics of the jungle and during the second world war helped to train British troops in jungle-craft before they left India for the war in Burma.

In the first world war he helped to recruit 5,000 men from the Kumaon hills and led 500 of them – The 70th Kumaon Labour Corps – in operations in France.

"Only a fool will get lost in the jungle" he told British troops at Budni near Bhopal in Central India early in the last war. They were sceptical at first but within a few weeks he had laid the foundations of a gallant band of soldiers.

He lived quietly in Nyeri and took no active or advisory part in the Emergency. "He kept to his books and the study of wild birds" a friend said today...'

From Dudley Hawkins (Correspondent of 'Sunday Times') – Edition of 01/05/1955

'...His death at Nyeri, Kenya broke another link with the heyday of British rule there. He died at the age of eighty, shortly after his book "The Temple Tiger" was published.

Although he left India years ago to settle in Kenya and within easy reach with Africa's game-rich wilderness, he is not forgotten in India, particularly by the people of Kaladhungi village which he once owned – the land given to his father for his services in the 1857 Indian Mutiny.

Lieut. Colonel Jim Corbett was born in India in 1875 and educated at an English school in Naini Tal, a station in the Kumaon hills...

...His two closest friends in Kenya Sir William and Lady Ibbotson told me that as a boy he started his hunting career with a catapult in the forests about Kaladhungi

where his parents had a winter cottage. He learned to know the jungle animals so well he lost the fear of them.

“His greatest fame” said Sir William “arises from his magnificent work in killing man-eating tigers and leopards in the Kumaon hills. He tells of these exploits in ‘Man-Eaters of Kumaon’, ‘The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag’, ‘The Temple Tiger’ and ‘Jungle Lore.’”

“His courage in hunting these dangerous animals alone and often at night was incredible. He was nervous and sometimes frightened but he never let that interfere with the accomplishment of his purpose. After killing the man-eating leopard of Rudraprayag he was unable to sleep in the open or a veranda for months...”

From Jack A. Bramley (Overseas League, St. James London SW1) to The Editor of ‘The Times’ – 10/05/1955

‘...Sir, the late Jim Corbett was known to my people in India; and one of the things he had at heart was the preservation of wild life in the Indian jungles, especially the tiger, which he feared was doomed to extinction unless measures were taken to protect it. In a letter I had from him a few years ago he says:

“For 20 years I have fought in defence of wild life and my opponents have invariably been people who would have expected to help, and not to oppose. Men, and in some cases women, with a blood lust are always ready with an excuse – a potential man-eater; a possible cattle-killer, and so on – and the excuses we have made are now being made by our successors. Until India realises that wild life is an asset, the killing will go on. Two years ago Wavell asked me the same question about tigers that you have done and I told him that in my opinion there were 2,000 tigers in India. When he asked me how long I thought tigers would survive I said that, except in sanctuaries and one or two Indian states, tigers would be wiped out in 10 years.”

This letter was written in 1948. It would be interesting to know if the situation still remains the same and whether any steps have been taken since then to set apart preserves such as they have in Africa where the big game can enjoy a fair measure of protection? If not I am afraid Colonel Corbett’s prediction will come true and the tiger, along with much more of India’s wild life, will be doomed to extinction...’

[Jack Bramley was a trainee of the Allied troops under the lectureship of Corbett on jungle training in 1944 -ed.]

From Maggie (staying at 16, York House, Church Street, London W8) to ‘Jock’ Cumberlege (Sussex) – 22/07/1955

‘...You will be pleased to learn that Lord Hailey has consented to write the Introduction for Tree Tops. He seems very pleased at the prospect of doing so. He loved Jim and likes thinking and talking about the times he spent so happily with him in the jungles and on the lakes and rivers of India. You will be hearing from him direct...

...as you prophesised the ordeal of meeting the Queen was not very great. She and the Duke were both charming and spoke so nicely about Jim and of the time they spent with him at the Tree Tops. The Queen seems so pleased about the book and Lord Hailey suggested my presenting her with a copy, at which she smiled happily.

I hope you will not have too much trouble about the illustrations Jock...'

From Maggie (The Outspan Hotel, Nyeri) to 'Jock' Cumberlege (Sussex) – 29/12/1956

'...Here is the list as proposed. [List of recipients of complimentary copies of Tree Tops, ed.] I am sorry not to be able to give you the addresses of Sir Claude Auchinleck or General Moore, the latter, I understand, lives somewhere in Ireland...

...You will find in the first list the names of some people mentioned in Jim's books, but not that of Jock Westwood, right at the end. He was an old friend and loved and admired Jim greatly and still writes to me about him. They joined the BNWR, more or less about the same time and Jock rose to the position of agent.

...Sir William Ibbotson died some months ago. [Precisely on 2nd May 1956, ed.] You will find among Jim's letters, a letter and a telegram, to me from Sir William, talking of Jim's achievements at the time...

[Telegram mentions the killing of the leopard of Rudraprayag. The telegram given by Vera Cumberlege to Martin Booth has been donated by the latter to the Corbett museum at Kaladhungi -ed.]

INTERVIEW FOR 'ALL INDIA RADIO' ON JIM CORBETT OF MRS. DOROTHY LINCOLN-GORDON BY MR IYER, FIRST SECRETARY OF INFORMATION AT THE HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA, NAIROBI (Recorded at the V.O.K Studios on June 16th, 1971)

Mr. Iyer: We have with us Mrs. Lincoln-Gordon, a niece of Jim Corbett, the wife of the late Colonel Lincoln-Gordon, who was postmaster general of the United Provinces and later of the Central Provinces of India before he retired and they came to settle in Kenya. Mrs. Lincoln-Gordon will give us the impressions of her uncle, Jim Corbett. Now Mrs. Lincoln-Gordon, when did you first meet Jim Corbett and how long did you know him?

Mrs. Lincoln-Gordon: Being an uncle and a younger brother of my father, I suppose you could say that I had known of him all of my life. He was grown up and probably away at [Mokameh] Ghat when I was born [1891, ed.]. He may have seen me when I was small, but as I left Naini Tal when I was 6 or 7, and didn't go back except for a short holiday when about 18, I didn't see him till then. He was staying for a few days with my grandmother, and I remember seeing some of the skins of the tigers and leopard he had shot airing in the garden. Later he gave up shooting just for sport, and only went after man-eaters...

...I did not meet him again until about 1919 in Rawalpindi [racecourse, in the formerly North West Province, now Pakistan, ed.]. I was sitting with some friends at the top of the stand at the races, and looking down I said to the girl near me: "That man in uniform just going out, looks like my Uncle Jim", and when I wouldn't go down to see, she ran down. Catching [with] him up at the gate she said, "There's a girl up [there] who thinks you are her Uncle Jim." Looking amused, he asked, "What's her name?" and when she said "Tina Corbett," he said, "Of course I'm her uncle. I've got to go now, but tell her I'll come and have tea with her on Tuesday." It was then he told me that he had just returned from a holiday in Kashmir, and if he had only known I was in Pindi he'd have taken me with him, for it wasn't much fun holidaying alone.

I didn't meet him again till 1947, when my husband as P.M.G. [Post Master General, ed.] of the United Provinces was doing a tour of the Circle, and I went with him to Naini Tal. He and my aunt were then busy making plans and packing to come to Kenya. So we didn't see much of them till we ourselves came to Kenya [1949 - ed.].

Mr. Iyer: Is it possible for you to relate any anecdote or incidents heard about him or experienced by you when in his company, which bring out the attributes, character and personality of Jim Corbett?

Mrs. L-G.: I can't vouch for this story, but I have always believed that my uncle was concerned in it. "A postal runner had to go down a jungle path to deliver letters to the villagers beyond. One day as he rounded a bend in the path, jingling his bells on the spear that he carried, to give warning of his approach, there sat a tiger waiting, which killed him. The same thing happened with the man who replaced him, so the authorities sent two men together, and for weeks nothing happened. Coming to the conclusion that the tiger had left the district, the second man was taken off the beat, and the next day the single runner was killed. My uncle, so the story goes, then took the runner's place, and went jingling his bells down the path. As he took the bend there was the tiger waiting for him. He dropped the spear, and shot it with the rifle he also carried. (Mr. Iyer. "That was a good story. I've not heard it before.")

Mr. Iyer: What was he like under stress or disappointment?

Mrs. L-G.: I don't think I ever saw him in such circumstances, but I do know that whenever my husband and I arrived to see him and my aunt - most often unexpectedly - he would be typing one of his books at the table in the corner of their sitting-room at the Outspan, (if there were no visitors), and he never allowed it to appear that we were disturbing him, but would greet us warmly and make us stay to lunch or tea.

Mr. Iyer: What in your opinion pained Corbett most?

Mrs. L-G.: I should think the indiscriminate slaughter of birds and animals.

Mr. Iyer: What in your opinion was his greatest quality?

Mrs. L-G.: I have no personal knowledge, but from his books I'd gather courage, determination, resourcefulness, and perseverance.

Mr. Iyer: Did you know him as a ‘man’ or a ‘hunter’? Have you ever accompanied him on a hunting expedition? If so can you relate any of your experiences on that expedition?

Mrs. L-G.: I suppose you’d say I knew him as a ‘man’ and relative, for I never went hunting with him, but if anyone wants to know what he was really like they have only to read his books, for he wrote his life and himself into them.

Mr. Iyer: Did he ever regret leaving India? Did he ever say so when in a nostalgic mood?

Mrs. L-G.: We often sat on the verandah of their cottage at the Outspan, where the birds he and my aunt had charmed there, would hop on the table and feed from their fingers or from the tin of cake and biscuits crumbs, and naturally we often talked of India, where the four of us had been born and brought up. It would not have been unnatural in any of us to have felt homesick, sometimes, would it? So I’m sure Uncle Jim did. In one of his books he autographed for me, he wrote, “To remind you of the land we love” [book ‘My India’ – ed.].

Mr. Iyer: Can you remember him saying anything about his visit to “Treetops” with Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh?

Mrs. L-G.: Yes I remember him saying how proud he was to have been chosen to accompany them on that visit of theirs, after which he wrote the account of that visit in his book, “Treetops”.

Mr. Iyer: What was the pattern of his life in Nyeri?

Mrs. L-G.: Don’t forget he was [over] 70 when he came to Kenya, and the life of hardship and exposure in all weathers during the last years of his life in India, had undermined his health, so he lived quietly, writing his books and taking an academic interest in the preservation of the wild life in this country and also in India. He was nearing 80 when he died and at that age everything seems an effort, so I don’t think he ever think of returning to India even for a short time. Once when he was asked to return to give a series of lecture and to instill a love of the wild life there and its preservation, it is not surprising he felt he was too old for such an undertaking, and that it was up to the younger generation to do such strenuous things for the good of India and the world. He had done so much, and had given so much of his time and energy – and his health – that he deserved in his old age to be allowed to do the things that he liked, like writing the stories of his adventures, which have given so much pleasure to so many, and which must have given him pleasure too, re-living all those exciting times.

Mr. Iyer: What did he do for a living in Kenya? Elaborate on it if possible.

Mrs. L-G.: He didn’t take any sort of job in Kenya, but as I said, he was interested in the wild life here and joined the Wild Life Society, and he also took some very good photographs and moving pictures of elephants and buffalo not far from Nyeri.

Mr. Iyer: How did he die? Did he suffer much at the end? Did you visit him in hospital?

Mrs. L-G.: He died very peacefully, I think. I'm not quite sure about this, but I believe, that when my aunt didn't hear him moving about on that morning in April [19th April 1955, ed.] she went to see what had happened and found him in a coma. He had a heart attack and died later that day.

Mr. Iyer: Were you present at the funeral? Could you describe it if you were?

Mrs. L-G.: No, we were not at the funeral, for we didn't hear about his death till after he had been buried, and then we ran up to Nyeri to be with my aunt. Later we bought a house there so as to be near her till she died just before her 90th birthday.

End of Interview

[Editor's Note: Dorothy Kathleen Lincoln-Gordon (a.k.a. Tina) born Corbett, on the 6th July 1891 is the daughter of Christopher Edward Corbett (b. 28 December 1864, Naini Tal – d. 1914 Durban, South Africa) and Ellen Marie Corbett (nee Nestor) (b. 1865 Allahabad – d. 1945 Bangalore). Tina is the second child of the Corbett couple, whose marriage was held in Naini Tal on the 8th January, 1887. Their first child, a daughter named Gwendoline Eleanor (a.k.a. Gwen) was born on the 28th June 1889 and the third child, a son named Eugene Christopher (a.k.a. Douglas) was born on 26th August 1894. Tina married Jeffrey William Campbell Lincoln-Gordon (b. 18 November 1894 Kussowlie, Bengal – d. 20 August 1966 Nairobi, Kenya) on the 5th June 1921 in Rawalpindi, NW Province. Jeffrey and Dorothy's first child was stillborn and they had subsequently four children namely John (no information could be gathered about him), Peter (b. 1926 Jalpaiguri, Bengal – d. 2003 Naivasha, Kenya), David (b. 1929 India – d. 2006 Devon, UK) and Rosemary (b. 1931 Gauhati, India – d. 2015 Richmond, UK). For more information on Tina and her family, you can contact us via jimcorbettdiscussions.weebly.com or the Jim Corbett International Research Group FB page.]

EXTRACT OF THE INTERVIEW OF MRS. JOAN DAVIS BY MARY THATCHER, IN LINGFIELD, UK, ON 24TH AUGUST 1981

Mrs. Thatcher: Who were the other landowners in Naini Tal?

Mrs. Davis: ...the only other person I knew was Jim Corbett. I knew him ever since I was a little girl because my mother – long before he was ever famous – was very fond of them, Maggie and Jim and old Miss Corbett.

Mrs. Thatcher: Who was 'old Miss Corbett'?

Mrs Davis: Well, she was his half sister. She had another name, only I've forgotten it [Eugene Mary Doyle, ed.] and they owned a bit of land at a place in the forest called Kaladhungi, where we often camped so we got to know them well

Mrs. Thatcher: What kind of man he was?

Mrs. Davis: Well, he just seemed an awfully nice man, but quite ordinary. But of course we knew he was a wonderful shot and once he's taken me up in a machan with him, you know, those things you put up in trees, and he called up a tiger. He had an earthenware jar and he could make the exact sound of a tigress into it and he called a tiger up, not to shoot it.

Mrs. Thatcher: He did that for you?

Mrs. Davis: Yes, just for fun and it came to the bottom of the machan and all my life people have been shooting tigers and I've never dared say I didn't like it but it was what everybody did but I think it was awful, they looked so beautiful and to see them shot down and this was the first time I'd ever seen one and could just look at it wandering about and nobody wanted to shoot it because then Jim used only to take photos of them...and so did Freddie Champion, Harry's brother. He was the first one to take photographs of jungle life in India.

Mrs. Thatcher: Yes, I believe Lady Champion told me about that, that he was a good naturalist, yes, and that he's written a book.

Mrs. Davis: He's got some awfully good tiger pictures. At night he put a trip wire and it took it's own picture, I'll show it to you afterwards.

[Editor's Note: Joan Davis was the wife of Forest Officer David Davis, a very good friend of Corbett and Maggie]

TRANSCRIPT OF AN AUDIO CASSETTE RECORDING OF AN INTERVIEW WITH LADY DOREEN PRIOR PALMER

(Full name: Lady Doreen Hersey Winifred Prior Palmer, né Hope (b. 1920) – youngest daughter of Lord Linlithgow (Viceroy 1936 – 43) – interviewed at the end of August 1991)

Interview and transcription by Mr H.J. Irvine

The Viceroy's family would visit Jim Corbett, who organised a fortnight's camp, each year for five or six years up until WWII. They were private occasions, something like a holiday for the Viceroy, allowing him to get away from the office, although boxes of paperwork were also taken along.

Lady Palmer described the hunt that Corbett wrote about in *Jungle Lore*. She was sixteen at the time and it was the last day of the camp. The machan was only about 6' from the ground. She and the ADC [Aide-de-Camp, Ed.], Peter Borwick, had been asked by Jim Corbett 'in a very quiet voice,' 'Would you be prepared to go there?' He had intended to put an old man there as a stop but as it was the only tree over the path at this point, he changed his mind at the last minute and offered the place to Lady Palmer and the ADC. They looked at each other, said nothing, accepted the position and sat with their legs straight out rather than hanging down. The machans were made from small logs about the thickness of her arm nailed together to make a platform.

On this hunt their tree was on the bank of a dry river bed about 50 yards wide with jungle opposite. A path came out of the jungle, down the opposite bank, crossed the river bed, led up the near bank and ran under the tree they sat in. The tiger appeared on the path opposite almost immediately the beat began. Lady Palmer says that Jim was mistaken in his book and that the tiger came at a gallop. He had placed a branch on the path and emphasised that she must fire before the tiger reached it. She fired and 'bowled the tiger over' but did not kill it. It got up and made for their tree but was too badly wounded to climb the near bank. However, it was roaring loudly and, having tried to climb the near bank, was swiping at the tree making it shake 'like an aspen leaf' (as, she says, she was herself). The occupants of the tree could not fire again due to the position of the tiger, the shape of the machan and their position on it. Her sister in another tree some way away had been briefed by Jim Corbett to see to their aid if anything went wrong.

She fired and, at the impact of the bullet, the tiger fell back into the river bed where Lady Palmer was able to fire again and kill the tiger. This was the only time she had been really frightened, knowing she was in real danger.

One day Corbett gave the Viceroy's family "an amazing exhibition of his understanding of tigers...because...nobody was shooting that day but there was a very magnificent tiger he wanted us to see and he produced it, all together, that day, six times in different places which proved that he knew exactly what was in the tiger's mind and where it would be going and why and where it would appear next, you know, and he was right every time which was extraordinary."

('...' represents short pauses in Lady Palmer speaking)

Shikar with Corbett would include non-shooting days when they would wander in the forests sometimes on elephant and sometimes on foot. If the latter, the Viceroy's family would move 'like a herd of elephants' while Corbett moved silently, somehow placing his feet in a different way to the family members.

End of interview

DIARIES OF RESEARCH TRIPS TO KUMAON

Corbett Trip Diary, April, 2016 – Bringing Corbett’s rifle home

BY MANFRED WATTL, GERMANY

I should have known better... Three years after this memorable trip to India in company of Corbett's .275 Rigby rifle, I was asked to write a Diary of it for our new book. While travelling I had only made a few notes and we had not talked explicitly, who would make the diary. I thought, maybe some native English speaking person would do a better job for it. I should have known better.... Obviously everyone unspoken thought it to be the natural choice that I would do it again. Today I have agreed to do so, just hoping that the most important things will come to my mind again after three years. If not, my friends would have to help. Serves them just right! But no complaints, I should have written my notes thoughtfully on location and not just going through the day comfortably, making photos and enjoying Corbett Country. Yes, I have made a lot of photos and this “photographic diary” should help to remember. It was indeed a trip worth to remember: Bringing Corbett’s rifle back home to India. So let’s get started. I should have known better... and now I do!

Tuesday, 29th March– Once more Delhi

The Emirates Flight touched down on Delhi Airport at 3pm just in time. Pre-paid taxis are now common here and this is really a blessing for the foreign visitor. After passing through the custom, I hired one of the small cabs and one hour later we stopped at the office of Wildrift Adventures in the Freedom Fighter Enclave of Ignou Road in the Saket District, which also serves as a temporary residence for some of the employees. It was a friendly welcome from the employees and after a short walk around the block; I had dinner with them and then went to the room for a good sleep, supported by two cold beers, which I had asked them to buy for me from a nearby liquor shop or bar.

Wednesday, 30th March – Ridges, Gardens and History

This day I was still on my own. I intended to avoid the usual places of interest and look for some more hidden and not so crowded and polluted places of nature and history. I decided for a walk along the Northern Ridge what is a part of the Delhi Ridge, the northern extension of the ancient Aravalli range, an eroded stub of ancient mountains extending from Gujarat crossing Rajasthan and ending here in Delhi. This

is also the last part of the “Sariska-Delhi leopard wildlife corridor” which runs for 200 kilometres from the Sariska Tiger Reserve to Delhi. It is easy to get to the Northern Ridge. You take the subway to Vidhan Sabha Station and after 500 meters of walking, you find yourself in a nice forest interspersed with historic buildings and ruins. Don't expect to be on your own, there are walkers, joggers and young couples seeking quiet places, but in comparison with most parts of Delhi it's a really peaceful location with many birds, trees, and flowers. Benches call for a rest, if not occupied by gangs of Rhesus monkeys which is often the case. Near the entrance is the Flagstaff tower that had played an important role during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. It was here that many Europeans and their families sheltered on 11 May 1857. After a two kilometre walk in the direction of the city centre the Mutiny Memorial marks more or less marking the end of the Northern Ridge. It is a tower built in Gothic style and dedicated to the memory of all those who then had fought in the Delhi Field Force, British and Indian. From here I took a taxi to the old fort of Purana Qila, built in the location where once was one of the seven successive old cities of Delhi (what now is called “Old Delhi” being the eighth one). Now it is part of a wild garden encircled by a partially crumbling wall – obviously a favourite place for couples seeking secret hideouts. In the late afternoon on my way back to Wildrifi's office, I did another walk through Lodi Gardens, a quite cultivated city park and, with its tombs and monuments from the 15th and 16th century, always a pleasure to spend one or two hours.

Thursday, 31th March - An old Fort and a happy meeting

In the afternoon Kotecha and his daughters would arrive at Wildrifi. So I still had half a day and I used it for a visit of the old fort of Tughlakabad. This Fort and its surroundings present what is left of the fourth oldest town of Delhi, built in the 14th century by Tughluq Shah I, the founder of the Tughluq dynasty. From the Saket district it is quite easy to reach with a motor rickshaw, a taxi or even a local bus along the Mehrauli-Badarpur Road, which stretches in a straight line from Mehrauli and the Saket metro station to Tughlakabad. Only for parts restored, this is an impressive assemblage of big city walls and gates, tombs, a citadel with a tower and a lot of ruins almost inaccessible among thorny bushes. Because of its slightly elevated position you always have the skyline of modern Delhi in the background, a symbol for the passing of time.

Back at Wildrifi's office, I waited for Kotecha, Reyna and Rushika to arrive. They did and it was a happy meeting for us after two years. After a quick trip to North Delhi where there was an urgent work to attend, we did not lose time, as we still had to undertake the five hour drive to Choti Haldwani, Corbett's village at the border of Kaladhungi. But as it was customary in the heavy traffic, we spent at least two hours just to leave Delhi and engage on the Delhi-Moradabad trunk road. From there, it then took us five more hours to reach Kaladhungi. We had booked two rooms there in Moti

Singh's village in a nice bungalow with thatched roof next to the Illusa Restaurant on the village main street. Here we would stay for the next two nights. We arrived very late in the evening; too late for dinner but only two cold beers to substantiate us and went to sleep after a long day.

Friday, 1st April 2016–On the trail of the Mohan Man eater

(Many details of this day I owe to the memory and the notes of Preetum Gheerawo a.k.a. Kotecha)

Corbett's story of the Mohan man-eater had always been a great attraction for me. It was in 2007 on my first trip to Corbett related places, that I was able to visit this place for the first time. With Sid Anand from Camp Corbett I had been in Champawat, Thak, Chowgarh and Mukteshwar. Then I had changed to Camp Fork Tail for it is very close to Mohan and the Corbett National Park. The owners, Meenakshi and Ritish, did organise a day for me on the trail of the Mohan Man-Eater. I was sad to learn that this camp has been closed some years later as it was a very fine and well managed place with lovely and caring owners. Hope, Ritish and Meenakshi are doing fine and will reopen some day.

To reach Kartkanoula, the small village on top of the Mohan ridge, where the main events took place, you either have to drive with a car in a circle of around 25 kilometres on small and winding roads, or just walk some 8 kilometres directly from the camp straight up the ridge. Ritish recommended the walk, because Corbett also did so, and organised me an experienced guide named Bacci (perhaps spelt as 'Bakshi'). Though the absolute distance of the walk did not sound much, the steep gradient made it a strenuous three hours hike. But the beauty of the landscape was a rich reward for the effort.

I have to tell you, that for me the most impressive part of the story always was the one with the overhanging rock, where Corbett suddenly felt, he was in danger. The road Corbett went is not the paved one of today, but a broad and well maintained footpath, similar to the forest "road" in Chowgarh. It follows for most of its parts the Mohan ridge to the west, from Kartkanoula in the direction of Chaknakl. This road, as Corbett writes, "*...after running through cultivated land for half a mile, turned sharply to the left, went across a steep rocky hill until it regained the ridge and then turned to the right and followed the ridge down to Chaknakl.*" Two hundred yards after the turn to the left, it "*for a third of its width, runs under an overhanging rock. This rock was ten feet high and at the top of it there was a flat piece of ground two or three yards wide...*" One day at sunset, when Corbett was on the way back to Kartkanoula and approached this place, he suddenly felt he was in danger, and that the danger was on the rock in front of him. Walking slowly in a crab-fashion style with the rifle on his shoulder on the extreme outer edge of the road, Corbett safely passed this rock only hearing a "*low muttered growl*" above him.

From Kartkanoula I had followed this road according to Corbett's description and was once again fascinated, how close the landmarks even today fell in place with it. After half a mile through cultivated land there indeed was the sharp turn to the left and two hundred yards later to the left was the overhanging rock... sorry, not really, just what might have been left of it. From the ridge above, two big and some smaller boulders had fallen onto the road. Of course I cannot tell it for sure, but my imagination was that I was standing here in front of the last remnants of the overhanging rock. Maybe it had fallen part by part over time with the last parts shortly before my arrival. If you compare the 2007 photo with the one taken nine years later, you can see, that the road has been improved and cleared of loose boulders and since Corbett's time it might also have been widened. It was Kotecha who in 2016 made me aware of the fact that widening the road was only possible on the side of the ridge because the other side fell steeply down to the valley. If this was the case, such work must have destroyed almost anything that might have been left from the overhanging rock.

Another part of the story came to my mind: I have always asked myself why Corbett was so sure that the danger did come only from the side of the rock, so he could fully ignore the other side and turn his back to it. Standing here, the answer was obvious. The other side where the valley is, was simply too steep for a quick attack. A tiger might well have managed to climb up here, but he could definitely not do it with speed and not without making noise. So Corbett indeed was quite safe on his backside while walking "in his crab-like fashion".

Now in 2016, we left Choti Haldwani in the morning with Prakash Sati (which we didn't know was Kamal's assistant and had therefore been pleasantly surprised when he told us) and after passing Ramnagar, followed the road in the direction of Mohan. Our first stop was the Garija Devi temple, an old Hindu temple on the right side of the road, spectacular situated on top of a small hill in the middle of the crystal clear waters of the Kosi river, some 9 kms from Ramnagar. A footbridge connected it with the parking lot from where there were views not only of the temple but also of the many people bathing in the river – be it for religious reasons or just for refreshment on a hot day. Mohan village was not much more than a few shops and tea stalls at the crossing where the road divides in two branches. With the right branch leading to Ranikhet, we followed the left one in the direction of Marchula. Halfway between Mohan and Marchula, a small but paved road branches off to the right leading steeply uphill and after many bends reaches "Kartkanoula", as Corbett had written the name of the village. Today you can also find the spelling "KATH KI NOW" as we saw on a shop, or "Katkinaav", as I found it written in a newspaper. The road enters the village in its lower part and here we stopped and went out of the car.

The very first objective in the village was to meet an elderly gentleman nicknamed "Master Sahib", named so because he was a schoolmaster of the village for many decades, and whom we heard had some first-hand knowledge about the Mohan

Man-eater. Assisted by a guide by the name of Shanti Prasad, coming from the village of Mohan, we conducted an interview with Master Sahib.

Bala Dutt Sundaryal, being the real name of Master Sahib, is now retired and lived his whole life in the village of Katkinaav. He was 73 years old at the time of the interview and in rather frail condition. His father had told him about Corbett and how he came to the village and stayed at the 'Chowki' bungalow (which Corbett called Forester's hut) on a mission to rid the village of a man-eater tiger. When asked if he knew about any relative or descendant of the tiger's victims, he mentioned the name of his former neighbour Nandhan Singh whom he says still lives now in Dhanioula village, and whose mother was taken by the man-eater tiger in 1930. He also mentions the name of Kishan Ram, a Katkinaav villager who is 96 years old and who is said to still remember Corbett's visit in the village. Unfortunately, Master Sahib could not tell us more as his condition did not permit, and village Dhanioula was on the other side of the ridge and it would be too late for a visit. When we enquired about Kishan Ram, his relatives said he had been taken for treatment to the Ramnagar hospital on that day.

We then left the car on the side of the road and climbed in about 15 minutes to the top of the ridge. There we looked for the Forester's hut, where Corbett stayed during his visit. This hut, according to Corbett, should be "*on a little knoll some twenty yards on the left of the road*" (not the paved road where we had left the car, but the ridge road which Corbett went for the man-eater) and should be visible from Mohan, which is on the base of the opposite side of the ridge.

Upon the ridge we found a hut the location of which fitting perfectly to Corbett's description and another one of which the size and the style fitted as perfectly. So once more there were two candidates, with not more than 50 metres between them. We preferred the lower and smaller one, as its measurements with a main room of ten square feet and two narrow slips of rooms on the sides were identical with Corbett's description. True, it could not be seen from the Mohan side, but this could be different in Corbett's time, when the trees might have been lower. And the hut in the admittedly better location was not just a little bit bigger, but around four times the size that Corbett describes. It is not plausible to think Corbett had made such a big mistake as this.

About a year later, there was an interesting discussion in Jerry Jaleel's Facebook forum, where Ali Akhtar – who was on this place some months after us - had first published his very detailed work about Corbett's story of the Mohan man-eater. Ali had opted for the big bungalow on top of the knoll and as I remember, most members of Jerry's group did the same. Ali (who became a full member of our research group – "Jim Corbett International Research Group - in April 2018) has written a chapter about this in this book and I can warmly recommend it to you, even if at this time we had different opinions about the hut. Maybe the solution is as easy as it was – at least as we think now—with the Chowgarh bungalow. They had built (in the 1950's) a new one at the exact site of the old one. So in Mohan the best probability in my opinion

is, that Ali's location is the correct one, but it is no more the same building but a new (though in the meantime as old looking) and much bigger one, built on the same site.

After examining the bungalows, we followed the ridge road the direction of Chaknaki and found it as perfect fitting to Corbett's description as I found it nine years ago. Some 800m after leaving the forester's hut and going towards the direction of the Kosi river valley, we encounter a bend on the road. After the bend to the left we walked some 200-225 m and we looked for the place, where the overhanging rock should have been. Since my first visit, the road was much improved and now even sturdy motorcars or agricultural machines would be able to use it. But the route had not changed. Behind the – no more existing – overhanging rock, the road continued for another 200m or so across the "steep rocky hill" and having regained the ridge, until it turned in a big quarter circle to the right. Inside of this bend and somewhat lower was the "green and very stagnant pool of water" close to which Corbett had tied one of his buffaloes. This buffalo was later killed by the tiger and had carried it down the hill facing Mohan. Corbett later had followed and finally had succeeded in shooting the tiger. Shanti Prasad, our guide from Mohan tells us that nowadays this 'stagnant pool of water' is called Sundar Taal (beautiful pool) and formerly it was called Suhar Taal (pig's pool), admittedly a very drastic change of name! However be, Shanti tells us that nowadays this pool is dry for most of the year, as it was on this beautiful sunny April day, and that only during the monsoon months that it is sometimes filled with water and sometimes just swampy.

We now stood behind the bend at the place where the tiger went down and where Corbett had followed. But we didn't know the exact place. Shanti Prasad who had accompanied us to guide us was not of much help. The only thing he did was pointing out with his arm in the downhill direction. Corbett, from here, had followed the drag marks. Going down was a hard task for Corbett as well as for the tiger as the slope was steep and not easy to manage. We went down a few metres and then resigned pursuing the trail to find the rock where the tiger was killed. Unlike in places like Thak, Chowgarh or Champawat, Corbett had not given any clear landmarks here and so we had not much hope to find the place, if the local people did not reveal this to us. A steep clay bank, a patch of ringals (bamboo), a big rock, these could be everywhere –at least we thought so. And besides, the steep slope was not at all tempting...

Maybe we should have tried better? However, some months later Ali Akhtar did more than we had attempted. Again I have to mention the extraordinary work he made in measuring and reconstructing Corbett's movements. He even thinks he has found the place where Corbett shot the Mohan man-eater. I will not retell it here or give any comments. I just repeat my recommendation to read his account. For us the place below the bend where Corbett and the tiger went down, was the nearest we came to where Corbett had shot the man-eater. But if Ali is right, even from here we would have been able to get a glimpse of it. But we did not know it then.

After a short rest, we continued our walk. Around half a mile later, the ridge on its way down to Chaknaki road crosses the paved road, and we went up with our car. So we called it a day and signalled the driver to come and pick us up.

On the way back we stopped at the road crossing in Mohan. There we met a tea-shop owner named Amar Singh, 42 years old, who told us an interesting story about two tiger attacks in 2005 at the junction of the roads at Mohan where his trade is situated. It appears that on the 14th October 2005 a tiger had come to the small village at night and broke into his father Indur Singh's tea-stall where he was sleeping. At that time, the tea-stall was not yet a shop in the proper sense of the term as there was a permanent opening at the front from which customers could be served. Amar Singh was also sleeping in the tea-stall that night. A tiger came and caught his father but did not kill him. However, he was heavily injured. It was upon the intervention of Amar Singh that the tiger broke his hold and bounded away in the nearby forest area. All that Amar Singh could do after the attack was to seal his father's wounds on the shoulder and chest with his torn shirt and then put him on his bicycle and trolleyed him to the Ramnagar hospital about 10kms away. His father was saved and the wounds were treated but this left him incapacitated and could not attend to his work at the tea stall. Amar Singh then took over the trade and converted it into a tea-shop, where more sundry articles are displayed, then fitted it with openings that can be closed and secured at night. Indur Singh later died, perhaps as a consequence of this attack, in 2008.

News travels very fast in this part of Kumaon also. Not more than fifteen minutes after we had been interviewing Amar Singh, another man who presented himself as a policeman, who was not on duty that day, came by, greeted by Amar Singh, who made the presentations to us as being named Puran Singh. Amar Singh tells us that a tiger also mauled Puran Singh on the very next day of his father's attack. Admittedly it was probable that it was the same tiger, who thinking perhaps that it had made a kill, came the next day, in broad daylight to claim it. Puran Singh was on duty that day as he operated the traffic-control barrier at the junction. He said he had his back to the forests when suddenly something heavy came upon him from behind and all he remembered was that he was laying flat on the road and people who were nearby were shouting 'baagh, baagh' (tiger) and later coming to help him to his feet. He said he only knew his head was injured when someone untied his 'pugree' (head turban) and bandaged his scalp. By great fortune he said his wounds were only superficial, though when we were about to leave him, he parted the hair on his head and he showed us the few scars, the tooth (or the claw?) of the tiger had imprinted on his scalp.

From Mohan we went back to Choti Haldwani, not before checking at the gate of the Gargia Forest Bungalow, where Corbett said that he had not had the time to ask the permission to occupy it and therefore slept in the open compound. It was dark

and the bungalow attendant was already in his slumbers, if not off duty and already home. Therefore, we did not insist at the closed gate and went off.

We had not found the exact site for the Mohan Man-Eater, and therefore were not fully satisfied. But we had come as close as we could expect in a one-day visit. So as a whole, we were quite happy with it in the evening. We enjoyed a fine dinner and a few cold beers to catch up those that we missed the previous day, in the cosy restaurant in Corbett's village Choti Haldwani where we also watched a documentary on Corbett (by the Bedi brothers) and then went to sleep.

Saturday, 2th April – Camp KyariSyat and a growing group

It was a beautiful morning in the clear air of the foothills. After breakfast Kotecha, the girls and I enjoyed a walk through the friendly and peaceful village of Choti Haldwani. It is not a village as you might have in mind. There are not a lot of houses standing side by side. It is more like an agricultural village with houses dispersed on a greater area with agrarian land in between, a really nice place for walking and to have a look at the everyday work of the inhabitants. We went looking for the house of Moti Singh, which Corbett wrote in *My India*, he had built for him. Here we met someone by the name of Bhuwan Singh who said he is the grandson of Moti Singh and who greeted us with his own grand daughter in his arms. Bhuwan Singh said he is 49 years old.

Kotecha initially had some doubts and thought that Bhuwan Singh is more liable to be the grandson of Punwa (whose true name was Paan Singh), the son of Moti Singh, rather than his son. But later when Kotecha went through his notes, he found that according to an account of an elderly villager by the name of Mathura Dutt Pande in 2012, Paan Singh died in 1974 at the age of 56. So, it is very possible that Bhuwan Singh, born in 1965 could indeed be the son of Paan Singh, and therefore the grandson of Moti Singh. The doubts were at least cleared.

Then we proceeded to the Jim Corbett Heritage village community, where we gifted a copy of our book for the library. After that we walked to the souvenir shop at the Jim Corbett museum where we donated five more copies and made a photo of us, with the books and the charming young lady in charge. Just to mention, the books had all been sold 24 hours later when we had come again the next day for the event with the Rigby team.

It was already noon when we left Choti Haldwani for Camp Kyari Syat. This is a camp managed by Wildrift Adventures, located in the bhabar jungle near Kota Bagh, roughly halfway between Kaladhungi and the border of the Corbett National Park, at Amdanda. It is equipped with good comforts though in a vintage camp setting and surrounded by an extended forest. Camp Kyari has fixed tents on a concrete basement with a solid roof. They are separated from each other with bushes in between, so everyone has his privacy. There is also a big common ground with a roof made of

dry grass and benches under big trees. Here our whole party was scheduled to meet so we could spend the next days together. In the afternoon Priyvrat with his family did arrive and a bit later also the party of Marc Newton. Fernando and Joseph were expected for the next day!

Never heard of Marc? The contribution from him and his company was really crucial for this trip. Marc Newton is the managing director of John Rigby and Company, and is a world famous British Gunmaker with a tradition of over 200 years. Some of their rifles models operate with the German Mauser action and – hence the connection to Jim Corbett – Corbett was given by Sir J.P. Hewett, Governor of the United Provinces in India, in gratitude for killing the man-eating tigress of Champawat with a .275 Rigby rifle. You will read more about this connection between Rigby and Corbett in our first book *Behind Jim Corbett Stories* of 2016 (BJCS) and even more about Corbett's rifle pilgrimage to India in the chapter 'Rudraprayag' in this volume.

Sunday, 3th April – A presentation at the Museum and a visit at Gurney House

The small event at the Corbett Museum was to start around noon, so Kotecha and Priyvrat (both with family) and I, thought we still had time for a short meeting with Dr. Johnsingh, book author, conservationist and researcher at the Wildlife Institute of India, and former field director of Bandipur NP in South India. At the moment he was staying in a hotel resort managed by the Jim Corbett Foundation (of India, not to be confused with the Jim Corbett Foundation of Canada) on the banks of the Kosi river immediately adjacent to Jim Corbett NP. Dr Johnsingh was residing there as a support to the Foundation, who had undertaken to collaborate with WWF-India on a conservation project for the Green Mahseer (*Tor putitora*) through semi-captive breeding.

The drive to the hotel turned out to be longer than the expected hour or so, and Dr. Johnsingh, as a very hospitable person, did not let us go without treating us with an extensive breakfast. He gifted each one of us, a copy of his last published book "*Walking through the Western Ghats*". This book contains a very well written account of his experience throughout his career in the unique ecosystem encompassing the vast territory of the Nilgiris, bordered by the two mountain ranges of south east and south west of India. This inspired us, two years later, to follow his trails in some of the places described in his book, and this we accomplished, in his pleasant company.

After the breakfast, Dr Johnsingh had one more little surprise for us. Have you ever hand-fed mahseers? He asked Kotecha's girls. He invited them to collect unused bread slices on our breakfast table and we all headed towards the bank of the Kosi river, on a jetty where we stood and admired the magnificent green and bronze colours of the mahseers when they swerved atop the water to collect the pieces of bread. After feeding the mahseers, we headed back to our respective cars to drive to the Corbett's museum in Kaladhungi where the Rigby party along with Kamal were organising the public presentation of Corbett's .275 rifle.

We arrived at Corbett museum nearly in time, thanks to delays the other party also had suffered. We brought Dr. Johnsingh with us so he also could join the event and he really enjoyed it. The Rigby team had installed audio and video technics and when everything worked, they did interviews, presented the gun and talked with the one or the other visitor. Also Mrs. Sumi Anand, the mother of Sid, came around to say Hello. The whole event lasted not more than an hour, as we still had an appointment at the Gurney House in Naini Tal, Corbett's summer residence.

In Gurney House there was no event planned. It was just to admire Corbett's house with old furniture, the hunting books and trophies – most of them being those which Corbett owned. The Rigby party was impressed and took a lot of photos and films. I always enjoy the nice terrace and the garden with lots of trees. Late afternoon when coming back, there was the plan to have a short look at the place where Corbett had shot the “Bachelor of Powalgarh”, not a man-eater, but one of the biggest tigers in its time. But it was too late to reach the place and so it ended with a short walk on the forest road until we had to turn back at the beginning dawn. The Rigby team did not seem to be too happy with it.

When we came back to our Camp, Joseph and Fernando had arrived. Joseph had Corbett's rifle with him. Marc had entrusted it to him, knowing how much it meant to Joseph. There was a big Hallo among us and everyone wanted to hold Corbett's rifle in his arm, posing for photos as the great hunter. It was indeed a beautiful weapon, comparatively lightweight, almost graceful and elegant with an attractive tiger-stripe like texture in the wooden gunstock, carrying the single barrel with a Mauser action. It was no heavy caliber, but a high velocity weapon made for precise shots even at long distances. Corbett usually chose this weapon when he had to walk for long distances. We handed this gun to each other and enjoyed its company very much in our camp.

Almost forgot – our trip diary will not be complete if I do not mention that Joseph and Fernando were in Kumaon a few days earlier than most of us. They arrived to Delhi on March 29th morning. Kamal's driver met them at the airport and took them directly to Tanakpur. Kamal joined them on the way and in Tanakpur they had a meeting with the oldest living person from Thak, 95 years old Basanti Tewari (born in 1921). Basanti, who was about 17 when Corbett came after Chuka and the Thak man-eaters, is one of the last person that met Corbett in India. She gave plenty of interesting information about the victims of Chuka and Thak tigers, including quite a sensational account of the tiger attack near Chuka in 1946, when a friend of Basanti was allegedly attacked while they were sitting and working together. Although this information was not easy to believe, later it received a confirmation from Corbett himself. Corbett's 1946 letter to the OUP publisher (see chapter on ‘Unedited Corbett Writings’ in this book) mentions that a new man-eater appeared in Ladhya Valley and Corbett was going to pay another visit there to help the people of the villages.

According to Basanti, the tiger never made another kill, and possibly that was the reason that Corbett never went to Ladhya Valley in 1946.

March 30 was spent in trekking from Thuli Gadh to Chuka (the last time we used this long walk to reach Chuka and Thak).

On March 31st Joseph and Fernando visited the place where before the 1960s there was a house of the former headman of Sem. His mother was the second victim of the Thak man-eater. After this visit, they had a long 12 km walk up the Ladhya river, in search for the ravine behind the Sem where Corbett saw the future Thak man-eater with cubs for the first time. After the long walk in the hot weather they relaxed in the water of the Ladhya river, where an Indian guy (with interest in Corbett) came and talked to them. Later they were told that the guy that talked to them was a friend and co-researcher of Quinton Ottley. Apparently they were both in Chuka, but did not make contact with Joseph and Fernando.

On April 1st they climbed to Thak, and on their way up there, they saw a new obelisk that Quinton and his associate put there (it was apparently finished the day before our visit!). After the inevitable discussion of the merits and failures of the new rock (you can read the special chapter on this topic in this volume, written by Joseph) they continued up and established a camp for a night. Joseph went to investigate the “upper path” that was active in 2011 during his visit, and see if there was a place there where Corbett could hear the call of the tigress that triggered the final sequence of events.

April 2nd – after the early 5.30am start, Joseph and Fernando went to Kot-Kindri, breaking at the historic rock where the Thak tigress avoided Corbett, Ibbotson and Tewari on October 27th 1938, after her third kill. When they reached Kot-Kindri, near the village spring, they found the remnants of the house of Beena Pondev, the first victim of the Thak tigress. After taking photos they had a meal, and they camped at Kot-Kindri, hearing kakar’s leopard alarm calls. Fernando claimed next day that there was a leopard sound heard at night and he heard Kamal advising his men not to sleep in the open tent as they usually were doing during camping.

They started April 3rd early, so they successfully made another long trek via Purnagiri road to the civilized world. Here they were collected by a car and were brought to Camp Kyari where Manfred, Kotecha, Priyvrat and the Rigby party were. The night from April 3rd to April 4th they spent on machans, and Joseph was entrusted to be on a machan with Corbett’s .275 rifle.

Monday, April 4th – “We welcome the historical rifle of Jim Corbett”

That was the day of the big presentation. “We welcome the historical rifle of Jim Corbett”, as was written on a big poster behind three big and representative black two-seater couches. To the right was the speaker’s desk and to the left on a small table covered with a white blanket a framed photo of Jim Corbett, decorated with yellow wreaths of flowers. This “public event with local media interaction” as it was

called in our schedule, took place in the auditorium of something like a congress centre in Ramnagar. It had space for some 400 people and was nearly half occupied. The "Welcome" on the poster was from the "Corbett Tiger Reserve" and also from the "Uttarkhand Shramjeevi Patrakar Union", what, if I understood it right, must be some kind of a local Journalist Union. The middle one of the three black two-seaters was the place of Mark Newton and Samir Sinha, the Director of the Tiger Reserve, a big man with an as big brown cowboy hat. The right one was occupied by an Indian guy, probably one of the journalists. On the left, two members of the Rigby party were seated, namely Bill Jones and Simon Barr. We, the so-called "Corbett experts" which Marc jokingly called us, had our places in the first row of the audience. After the speeches, many people went in front to ask questions, get hold of the rifle and – what was a very moving gesture – came to touch the picture of the great Jim Corbett with the tip of their fingers. When the presentation had come to an end, we went outside, where the Rigby team donated a big TATA SUV as an Anti-Poaching Vehicle to the Corbett Tiger Reserve, represented by an apparently proud Samir.

Then we changed the location. Around 10 kilometres out of Ramnagar in the western direction and shortly before entering the Dhela zone of the Corbett National Park is the luxurious Ahana Resort Hotel. We were invited for lunch there and near the entrance I saw for the first time a man, they called Mini Jim Corbett. Two years ago, I had bought his small book in the gift shop at the Corbett museum. I bought it just for collection as I could not read a single word because the book was published only in Hindi language. I was curious about him because they told me he was kind of a local hero for hunting man-eaters (mostly leopards) in the surrounding of Kota Bagh, where he lived. Mini Jim Corbett looked a bit lost and out of place here among such an assembly of seemingly "very important" people. We invited him on our own table – which was a bit on the side anyway – and Kamal invited him for an evening in Camp KyariSyat, just a few kilometres from where he lived. (See the full account of this meeting in the chapter "*The old meets the new*" in this book.)

In the afternoon we had a safari in the National Park. The Rigby team was on their own – I think with Samir – and we got two safari cars from the Hotel and entered the Dhela zone through the nearby gate. Priyvrat, Kotecha and their families, occupied one vehicle. The other was filled with Joseph, Fernando, a boy and young lady, son and daughter of the hotel owner and me. Both jeeps went different routes so we did see different things. The other car was lucky enough to see a tigress with her cub. But we also had a very memorable experience. In short: We were attacked by a bull elephant! To be honest, it was no serious attack, but a mock charge, nonetheless one to remember. The Elephant came towards us on the road, as we were proceeding in our car. We stopped at a completely safe distance to have time to make photos. During the next two minutes other safari vehicles had assembled close behind us. Meanwhile the elephant came closer and closer and as it was time to draw back, we realised it was

not possible because of the other vehicles behind. We waved with our arms for them to give us space but everyone seemed to be stuck.

Meanwhile the bull was only ten metres away. He flapped its ears and launched a short charge towards us, which suddenly caused every jeep in the row to draw back, and there was a sound of jeeps colliding. The elephant was obviously satisfied by this sign of good will from our side and disappeared in the bushes on the side of the road. Joseph took the whole event on a video. The ranger later said that it was like it always is with “our” elephants: It was only a mock charge just to shy us away. But for us it was not “like it always is”. It was a thrilling experience at least as memorable as a tigress with a cub. So we were not at all envious towards our friends in the other car. In the evening on the log fire in our camp we had a lot to tell to each other.

Tuesday, 5th April – An emerald-green glade

Joseph was offered to be the custodian of the rifle. At midnight Marc called and asked him to collect Corbett’s .275 and take care of it next two days. Joseph went there at 4am and came back with the rifle about 5am. Taking into account that the commemorative replica of the Corbett’s .275 rifle was recently sold on auction for 275.000 USD, we can only guess how much the original rifle might have cost, so all the safety measure were well worth doing.

The Rigby team had stayed in the National Park and was not allowed to take a rifle with them, historic or not. For us this had the advantage that we were able to take it in our hands as often as we liked to. And we made use of it. Beside of this, Joseph took his role as a custodian really serious. He had the rifle with him while eating and while resting; he simply did not take his eyes off it in any case. Fernando, who was in the same tent with Joseph, even took photo of sleeping Joseph with Corbett’s .275 clearly visible next to him in his bed.

After a relaxed morning in the camp and some more photos with the rifle, Kotecha, the girls and Joseph stayed at the camp (Priyvrat had in the meanwhile, left with his family), while Fernando and I went to the Corbett museum. Here we were met by a guy from Delhi, which Kotecha and I had met a few days before at the Illusa restaurant in Choti Haldwani. He was an avid Corbett fan and wanted to show us the glade of Bachelor of Powalgarh. So we followed him and his motorcycle with our car from the Boar river bridge in the direction towards Kota Bagh and then soon went to the left along an unpaved forest road. At a small clearing we stopped and followed a well visible footpath again to the left.

The glade, we were after and which Corbett mentions in the story of the Bachelor of Powalgarh is situated between this village and Kaladhungi. Corbett describes it as *“an open glade some four hundred yards long and half as wide, grassed with emerald-green and surrounded with big trees”* in the heart of the forest, three miles from Kaladhungi. A glade of this size can still be seen in the satellite picture of google maps

northwest of Kaladhungi though the real distance is a bit longer, around four or five miles. On this glade Corbett had seen for the first time the big tiger then known as "The Bachelor of Powalgarh".

From where we had left the car, we followed the footpath for around half a mile, when after crossing a small belt of under-growth to our right, the glade lay open in front of us. The dimensions were just as Corbett had written and the grass was of an as beautiful emerald-green, as he had described it. It was the only open glade we had seen in this extended forest and I wondered why it could be just here. Was it an earlier human cultivation or was the ground for any unknown reason not suited for something bigger than grass? I do not know but it was here and without a single tree or bush. We were amazed about this and also about its beauty and so we took time to make photos. One had told us there were still tigers in the region and on one place we thought we heard a warning call, so I had a bit of an uneasy feeling and tried to keep some distance to the undergrowth bordering the glade. But there was no reason to be afraid. Everything was fine and after nearly half an hour we went back to our car and to Camp Kyari.

Wednesday, 6th April –A concrete pillar for the Kanda man-eater

That day we joined the Rigby team for the drive to Kanda. Joseph, Kotecha and the girls stayed back to camp with the Corbett's .275. Kanda and the place, where the identically named man-eater was shot is part of the Corbett National Park, but does not count as a core area today. Nine years ago, I had already been there with Bakshi, the guide with whom I had been in Mohan. On this 2007 trip we went to Kanda from inside of the National Park. There is a small and steep road that leads from Dhikala, the NP's Headquarters, across the Ramganga and then up a ridge that borders the Corbett NP on its northern side. Here the Kanda Forest Rest House is on top of this ridge in an altitude of more than 1000 meters with beautiful views over the course of the Ramganga and the National Park. After admiring the landscape we continued our drive. After passing some deserted houses from former Kanda village, we first went in the eastern and then in a northwestern direction to a checkpoint (it might have been the Taria gate), where we had to show our permit to use the footpath to the village of Taria in a distance of around one mile. Normally there is a rigid rule of not walking by foot in a Tiger Reserve, but as was not considered a core area and Taria was a populated village, we had got the permit, but were strictly advised not to leave the footpath.

When we reached Taria, I found it a pleasant agricultural village with terraced fields around and friendly people. Bakshi got in contact with an old man who agreed to guide us to the place where Corbett had shot the tiger. To reach this place, we had to return the way we had come for two thirds of the distance. Then we came to a place where to the left (when coming from Taria) was a small shrine and to the right a densely vegetated ravine. The old man pointed to the ravine and told us, that down

here was the place where Corbett had shot the tiger. He added that as a small child he had run with the whole village up to here to see the dead tiger. When he saw the animal he tried to kick it with his foot shouting: “Bad tiger, bad tiger!” His statement seemed to be quite credible as the man being a bit more than 80 years old now (in 2007) he must have been a 6-8 years old boy when the tiger was shot in 1932.

Today in 2016 we did not come to Kanda from Dhikala but from the opposite (northern) side of the ridge. As I remember, we also entered the park through Dhan-gari gate but instead of continuing to Dhikala we turned right near Gairal Rest House and followed the Mandal river along the northern face of the ridge where on its top is Kanda (looking down to the side of the NP) and also Taria (looking down to the opposite, populated side). After a while we turned left and went steeply upon roads even the vehicles had to work hard. When we reached Kanda, we were already awaited by Rangers and Forest Officers. Marc Newton and his team did interviews and made photos and films they wanted to use for a DVD they intended to produce. What I noticed in the outside was, that the views I had so much enjoyed nine years ago were only barely visible. The trees and bushes had grown higher and obstructed the view. And there was also no more access to the watchtower to look over scrubs and trees, as its steps were broken. No one else seemed to take notice of it, but I felt a bit sorry. With a little care and maintenance this could easily be the wonderful place again, that is once was.

When the Rigby people were satisfied, we set off for the place the tiger had been killed. After five kilometres of driving we reached the same point, Bakshi and I were checked nine years ago. We also left the vehicles here and went for around 500 yards in the direction of Taria. Then the big surprise: At the place, where Bakshi and I stood nine years ago looking down into the overgrown ravine, is now a big pillar five feet tall and made of red bricks on a concrete mount. On a black plate on top the words are written: “*Here is the spot where Jim Corbett shot dead the Kanda Man-eater in the summer of 1933. The Kanda Man-eater had till then killed 5 men and wounded 2 persons.*” It is not easy what to think of it. Of course we should appreciate that the management of the tiger reserve tries to make the name and the deeds of Jim Corbett more popular and is tagging important places with signs. But I would have wished this might have happened with a bit more sensibility for the landscape and its aesthetic value. Besides, this is definitely not the place, where Corbett had shot the man-eater. The real place is somewhere down this ravine and the date of 1933 is definitely wrong (see the chapter “*Two Kanda man-eaters*” in BJCS 2016).

The people responsible for this monument surely have to be forgiven, that they did not fix a plate at the exact spot deep down in the overgrown ravine of a Tiger Reserve. If they had done so, there would have invited more victims of more recent “Kanda Man-eaters”. So we should be ok with it. But they could have made it more serious by

changing the inscription to: "This is the ravine where..." or something similar. But anyway, the pillar was good to pose for photos and that's what we finally did.

Back at Camp Kyari in Syat, we had an appointment with Mini Jim Corbett. When he arrived, he had his gun with him. It was a one barrel and single action shotgun. With it he used slugs or buckshot to shoot leopards that had got a menace for livestock or – as man-eaters –even for people. He also did shoot a few man-eating tigers but - according to one of the newspaper cuttings, he had brought with him -in such cases he was lent a rifle from his old army comrades.

That evening Mini Jim Corbett posed with his gun and allowed us to hold it. In return Joseph gave him Corbett's rifle to hold, that he proudly did. I got to know Mini Jim Corbett – or as his real name is: Thakur Dutt Joshi– as an unpretentious and likable character, a truly brave man that had not yet got the attention that I think he has deserves. Before saying Good Bye he invited me to visit his home. I promised it to him for my next visit to India. While preparing for our 2018 trip I had already plans for it. I am sad to say that this wasn't meant to be (see 2018 Diary for this and also the chapter "*The old meets the new*" in this book).

Thursday, 7th April – On the way to Rudraprayag to the end of our 2016 trip

This part of the diary from the 7th April to the 10th of April 2016 is covered in the chapter "*Rudraprayag – Corbett and his rifle 'Come Together'*" in this book".

Corbett Trip Diary, April, 2018

BY MANFRED WALTL, GERMANY

3th April 2018, Chowgarh – once more the “school-slate”

We had started our walk in the morning. The Kala Agar bungalow was one mile behind us, when we approached the point, where *“the road crosses a ridge and goes from the north to west face of the Kala Agar range”*. This bend on the forest road, where the compass needle turns, was the undisputed starting point of our search for the enigmatic “school slate” where Corbett had killed the Chowgarh tigress, a place we hoped to find for so many years. This time we will find out. I was dead sure, though I have to admit, it was not the first time I was convinced to solve the riddle of the big “school-slate”. The first time I stood here was in 2007 with Sid Anand from Camp Corbett. Looking down into the valley on the right side (the “first valley” according to the sketch map in my chapter about memory failures), a ravine was to be seen and everything seemed to fit perfectly to Corbett’s description. I was sure here the “school slate” must be hidden. But as it was late afternoon and we still had to go a long way to Mukteshwar, I was not able to prove this assumption.

Coming back in 2012 – this time with my friend Kotecha - my naïve optimism had soon been evaporated by realising that the ridge, Corbett had talked about, most probably was not the edge of the mountain we had crossed at the bend, but a structure much more deserving the denomination of a “ridge”, some 150 yards after the bend. Behind this “adjacent ridge”, as Kotecha called it, a much bigger valley (the “second valley” in my sketch map) seemed to fit Corbett’ description much better. We descended deep into this valley from the far side of the adjacent ridge and even as we came across a promising rock formation in a deep ravine, it did not satisfy the requirements at a closer look. Our 2014 trip brought us on the advice of a villager to the so called “Girdar’s rock”, also in the second valley and not far from Saryapani. For Kotecha and Joseph this maybe still is a possible candidate, but also leaving something to be desired. Priyvrat and I went on our own into the “first valley”, where we had an intriguing discovery we called: “The perfect open glade”. It fitted in every detail to Corbett’s description of *“the open patch of ground which bordered the oak thicket in which the (Chamoli) lad had been killed”* and where Corbett tied the buffalo on a stump and stood watch about his men. The bad thing, the “first valley” in front of the adjacent ridge was not the location where it should have been, at least if our concept with the “second valley” was right.

Now it was 2018 and the day after my arrival at Delhi. Kotecha and his girls, now beautiful young ladies, had picked me up at the airport. From here, the driver took us directly to Kala Agar. After Kathgodam, we went on a small but very scenic road along the Kala Agar ridge, passed Haira Khan and reached our camp below the Kala

Agar Forest Bungalow by the shine of our torches, as it was nearly dark. After a warm welcome from our friends and by Kamal and his men we gathered around the fire, had a delicious dinner, listened to Kumaoni songs and then went to sleep to be fit for the next day.

Before our meeting in Kala Agar, some of our friends had already spent a few days in Kumaon. Joseph Jordania, Fernando Oliveira and Paata Natsvlishvili, professor at the University in Tbilisi and lifelong Jim Corbett fan from Georgia, started their trip on March 30th. Kamal had organized for them a car transfer from Delhi airport to Naini Tal. Here they had met Stuart Gelzer, an American film teacher, who had started still earlier. As he had spent his college years in India, Missouri, he wished to visit the places he remembered from the 1970s. His trip included meeting Andrew Alter, the well-known author of a book about Jim Corbett, and also author of the preface of the recent publication of Jim Corbett's "*Man-Eaters of Kumaon*", where he mentions our group of Corbett researchers.

The next day, March 31st, they spent in Gurney House, where the owner of the house, Nilanjana Dalmia came from Delhi, especially for them, leaving her busy schedule as the principal of a school there, to help our group of Corbett researchers. She generously opened all the locked bookshelves that belonged to Jim and Maggie, and for several hours they were able to examine and document the things that Jim and Maggie left at their home. There were lots of books, and all of them were busy for several hours taking photos of the books. Quite several of the books were signed by Jim himself. Other books, particularly the musical scores, belonged to Maggie, who, as we know was a proficient musician. There were books given to the Corbett family by their friends. Some books were from the mid-1850s, long before Jim was born. As we know Jim's father was an avid reader, giving his son this passion for life. Maggie's piano as Dalmia told us, was moved to their relatives, and she also promised to ask if anyone had seen Jim's guitar. As we know from Maggie's notes about Jim, he had a nice singing voice, played a flute and guitar. Joseph Jordania, himself a guitar teacher, was particularly keen to find the traces of Jim's guitar. He said during the conversation that Jim's musical talents were important for his unique ability of mimicking animal sounds, as only the singing species of birds are known to mimic other species' sounds. Another impressive item of Corbett family belongings was an old and obviously well-used long sword, most likely a reminder of Corbett family member's participation in Afghan Wars.

After several hours of intense work Dalmia organised a generous lunch, taken on the Gurney House balcony with Jim's spirit felt all around. While discussing the future of Corbett research, Dalmia suggested providing help to genuine Corbett researchers. They also talked about the possibility of organizing a future bigger meeting of Corbett fans and researchers, probably in April or July of 2020. While still at Gurney House, they launched the "Jim Corbett International Research Group" website. It was very

symbolic event for them (and probably also for other Corbett fans) to open a new website dedicated to the research of this great man, from the house where Jim Corbett spent most of his life.

The next day (April 1st) they left Naini Tal for Kala Agar to continue the search for the elusive “school slate.” They camped at the same place as before – very close to the bungalow Corbett stayed. In the evening Kamal organised a big musical dinner with a guitar provided by him. Indian, Anglo-American, and Georgian songs were interspersed with jokes and stories of our previous trips to different parts of the world, particularly from Fernando about his time in African bush, and his general love of the bush...

During the April 2nd, they had (supported by Kamal and a few of his stalwart friends from Wildrift) already visited places seen on previous occasions. Their general conclusion was that the search was not over yet. Spending several hours there, they had come back to the camp and made preparations for the arrival of the so-called “second group”. This was Kotecha, his daughters Reyna and Rushika and I, Manfred from Germany.

As by now also Priyvat and a friend of him – Rohit Bakshi, a pilot from IndiGO airlines - had arrived, our group was complete and consisted of ten persons. After a good sleep and breakfast, we started our research. While waiting behind the Forest Bungalow for others to get ready, we realised that the walls of the bungalow were made of two different types of stone. The stones of the basement were much older than the rest of the building. Now it was evident why we had got different statements, if this bungalow had been the one Corbett had stayed. Some said yes, some said he had stayed in an older building. The right answer obviously was, this was the location of the building Corbett had stayed. But it was no more the same old building. Upon the basement of the original one, eventually in the fifties of the last century a new construction must have been erected.

When everyone was ready to start, we left and followed the forest road. At the end of the village we passed “Peter Byrne’s rock” – now more covered by bushes and scrub than the years before. Fifteen minutes later we passed the deliberate bend, where the forest road goes from the north to the west face of the Kala Agar range. As already said, I was more than optimistic. The reason was not the “open glade”, Priyvat and I had seen four years before. Our friends were sceptical about it and said that it might look well, but is not at the place where it should be! My optimism came from another source. A friend of Kotecha with access to archives of Corbett’s publishers of Oxford University press in London had provided him with a spectacular finding – a sketch map drawn by Jim Corbett himself, obviously made to give him orientation in the surrounding of Kala Agar during the hunt. Corbett on this map had drawn in human kills and tied-out Katras (buffalo calves). Based on this map, with the help of Google Earth and distances given by Corbett in his books and letters, Kotecha and his friend

Noel Mascarenhas had made an impressing and at this time for me absolutely convincing reconstruction of Corbett's way to the giant slate: Corbett had continued from the well-known "bend" further on the "road to Saryapani" (= the forest road) and after crossing the adjacent ridge (where he had met the herdsmen) decided to leave the road and to tie the Kata not at Saryapani but half a mile downhill, where the Chamoli boy had been killed (according a letter to Maggie). The most interesting point and what was also the cause of my great optimism was a small cross in Corbett's map indicating the kill of a human being. This must have been the one of the Chamoli boy and from this point Corbett had given a very clear description of his movements ("*about a hundred yards along the path*"). Now I was sure we had delimited the location of the ravine and the school-slate to an extent of around 100 square yards. We should find it without many difficulties. How wrong I was again.

A few yards behind the "adjacent ridge", a clear visible footpath skewed off to the right in the downhill direction. Though we know, footpaths can change over time and it must not be the same Corbett went, this one was on the perfect location. We continued on the forest road. Our plan was to follow it to "Dharampani" on the crest of the "opposite pine clad slope". Here (according to Corbett's letter to Maggie) a zig zag path coming from the valley was said to join the forest road. From this place we wanted to explore the valley with a drone and then descend on the zig zag path to meet the ravine with the "school slate" from the opposite side. After half a mile we passed "Saryapani", a small water source well marked in Corbett's map, where he used to tie one of his buffaloes. Here the forest road crosses a ravine and changes direction. After a turn of almost 180 degrees it now follows the other side of the valley back in the rough direction of Chamoli.

Immediately after Saryapani a disturbing thought came to my mind and ended my naïve optimism. I realised there could be a fault in our belief that the cross on Corbett's map was the one for the Chamoli boy. Corbett had made the sketch map for his orientation in a terrain new to him. So we should expect he had made it in the first days after his arrival at the end of March 1930. The map most certainly was made before Corbett met the herdsmen and the father of the Chamoli boy, who showed him the killing place on 11th April. So the cross in the map could easily be for another victim. My confidence collapsed like a house of cards and I became aware that it would be no easy game as I had hoped, but a hard task again.

When thinking back, to abandon the idea of the cross marking the Chamoli boy was perhaps premature and as much a fault as it was my over-confidence before. True, in MOK it sounds like Corbett had got to know of this kill not before he talked with the father on 11th April, the day he killed the tigress. But the boy had indeed been taken already a month before Corbett's arrival. So it would not be far-fetched to assume, that Corbett was told earlier about this kill, and that this cross might very well had found its way into the map. While writing this diary, Joseph Jordania drew my

attention to a sentence in MOK that supports this assumption. During his meeting with the herdsmen Corbett writes that he *“had not heard the father’s version of the killing of his son”*, what implies, he was already familiar with another version. And if the cross was the right one, we indeed were much closer to the site of the killing – and therefore the school-slate – as I was aware at this moment. Now I think, we should have pursued this theory with more emphasis. But apart from the cross, there were still chances simply by following Corbett’s descriptions, this time from the opposite side of the valley.

Around 500 yards after Saryapani we reached Dharampani, a small hamlet of only a few houses on the crest of the slope and visible from the other side of the valley. It is the only settlement in the vicinity and a villager we met confirmed us its name. Later we were told of other places also called Dharampani, so we have no absolute certainty about its location. But the place here fitted to Corbett’s description and there was not only one but a network of zig zag paths downhill, so I am quite sure, we were right. An explanation of this confusion might be that Dharampani was said to mean something like “old well.” Who knows, if the “old well” nearly 100 years ago was the same as it is called these days.

The idea to search for the “school-slate” with a drone we thought to have potential and maybe would save us one or the other steep climbs. But because of the technical limitation of the drone and also the often dense foliage of the ground, it was ultimately a flop. So Kotecha and I decided to undertake the steep descend into the valley, while Joseph, Priyvat, Fernando, Steward and Paata preferred to stay on the forest road to find a more comfortable access for a drone. The descent on the network of goat tracks zigzagging down the steep slope was a bit risky and it would have been easy to slip and to hurt oneself. Fortunately the ground was dry and after the first steep part the gradient got more comfortable and we arrived safely on the bottom. After crossing the main ravine we followed a footpath uphill again and after a few minutes crossed a smaller ravine. Not more than 100 yards later we came to something like an “open glade”. Though not as “perfect” as the one Priyvat and I had discovered four years ago, it could go for it. Our curiosity began to grow and we turned around to give the ravine we just had crossed a second look. Its size and the undergrowth on the far side fitted to Corbett’s description. Kotecha climbed into the ravine and I followed with my camera.

It was almost unbelievable how well the famous events connected with this locality: *‘About a hundred yards along the path I came to a ravine.’* Right! *“On the far side of this the path entered very heavy undergrowth.”* Not very heavy, but quite so! *“The ravine was about ten yards wide and four or five feet deep...”* Exactly! Night jars eggs? Sorry, no! (maybe already hatched). *“As I went down the ravine, the banks became higher...”* Yes! *“... sixty yards from where I had entered it...”* Not exactly measured but fitting! *“... I came on a deep drop...”* Yes, drop is there! Smooth as Corbett writes and perfect for gliding down! Before the drop there is a gap on the right side of the ra-

vine in which the tigress would have found a perfect place for her first attempt of an ambush when the men heard her *“deep -throated growl.”* Here another smaller ravine joins from the right side what would have provided the tigress with perfect cover for an unseen approach. *“Where the three of us now stood in a bunch we had the smooth steep rock behind us, to our right a wall of rock slightly leaning over the ravine...”* Yes, absolutely right! Also the wall of rock *“slightly leaning over the ravine”* was there and behind it another gap to the open. The tigress could easily have changed her position from the first ambush point above the glide to her second and final ambush down here! Everything was in its place and if I ever should become the location scout for a Hollywood- (or Bollywood-) movie called *“The blood-curdling tale of Jim Corbett and the Chowgarh tigress”*, I will definitely select this location as a perfect background.

I see you are just preparing a celebration and have the wish to congratulate us for our sensational finding, but please wait for a moment. I am sorry to tell you that in spite of the astonishing similarities, we had great doubts of this location being the authentic one. I would not fully rule it out either, if Corbett’s memory fooled him about sizes and heights, but I don’t really think so. Though as a filmmaker I would stick to this place and a good wide-angle would surely help to improve the shortcomings. And this is the most obvious shortcoming: Sizes are too small, much smaller than Corbett describes them and this affects the “drop” as well as the “wall of rock” and even more so the size of the “sandy bed”. This drop is with 7-8 feet just a bit higher than a grown up person, while Corbett writes of 12-14 feet. Corbett’s wall of rock is 15 feet and the one here is not more than 10 feet. Besides, it is not shaped like a slate but more like a big boulder with one flat and slightly overhanging side. The “sandy bed” is there but it is just a small patch of sand and not nearly as big as Corbett tells. Our friends, who had a look at this place on the next day, shared this impression: Too many inaccuracies! But I swear you, as a film maker with good equipment and selecting good angles I could make you believe....And just to be said, its location is really not far away from the cross in Corbett’s map. No, I still don’t believe, but who knows for sure...

Not fully satisfied but pleased with a nice and surprising finding we followed the footpath further on until it joined the forest path shortly in front of the adjacent ridge. Here we sat down, waited for our friends and then walked back to our camp together. They had done several drone launches, but were disillusioned by the technical limitations of the drone and the low visibility. The location of the slate still remains a mystery... if not... in spite of the measurements..... Please, stop me here....

4th April 2018, on the way to Champawat and the dumb woman of Pali

We (the members of the so-called “second group”) left Chowgarh in the morning. Our friends stayed half a day more, to check our find from the day before, but their conclusion was the same as ours: Nice, but not fitting the measurements given by Corbett. In Champawat, our next destination, we had no reasonable doubts con-

cerning the “amphitheatre” and the killing place, but since our last visit there was a growing discussion concerning the bungalow Corbett had stayed. I admit that at first I considered it quite superfluous. For me the so called Fungar (or Phungar) bungalow - already with a photo in Peter Byrne’s book - was the right one: It was the only one close to the gorge and could easily be brought in accordance with the details of the hunt. Also the last victim of the Champawat man-eater was killed quite near to it, as old villagers had told us on our last visit. I felt, there was no reason to doubt it. Even today I believe in the Fungar bungalow as the right one, but during this visit I had to realize that there were indeed serious arguments for another point of view. Especially Priyvrat had always doubted the Fungar bungalow and though I don’t fully agree with him, his arguments must be considered. It’s sometimes quite annoying: The more we see and the more we gather facts, the more possibilities show up and the more difficult it gets, to sort the arguments and regain a new and more profound certainty. Sometimes this is really frustrating but at other times it is also exciting and challenging.

On the way to Champawat our first stop was Corbett’s Pali, now called Pati town. Here he stood watch for the villagers to bring in the crop and had a horror night while waiting for the tigress on the side of the road. There is a story in MEOK about a woman that had become dumb twelve month before Corbett’s visit by being witness of the tigress killing her younger sister. When Corbett returned after having shot the tigress, he *“spread out the skin with the head upon a stone facing the door.”* The women who had been dumb for twelve month *“was now running backwards and forwards from the hut calling to her husband and the people in the village come quickly and see what the sahib had brought.”*

According to MOK this woman lived with her family in a hut on a hillside just above the road. This must have been on the left side when coming from Devi Dhura, because the woman had to cross the road to run into the village for help and the village is to the right. Up to the middle of the village there is a steep slope to the left of the road, where Corbett had shot the Ghooral. But at the end and in front of an elongated hillside the road bends to the right. On this hillside after the first steep meters is a more or less flat plateau, gently sloping upwards. It must have been somewhere here, where the hut of the poor women stood. But of course there is no trace of it, as today this is kind of a public field and sports ground. We talked with a shop-owner, who knew the story of Corbett, but could not add any additional information. So we entered our cars and continued to Champawat.

5 April, Champawat and a clutch of bungalows

This day was “Bungalow-Day.” As I have said, there was a growing uncertainty in our group, where Corbett had stayed during the hunt, and so we wanted to look for possible alternatives. I first participated just half-hearted in the research, being convinced that the Fungar was perfect anyway. But gradually I had to accept, not

everything was so perfect and Priyvrat's arguments could not be neglected. His most important argument was that Corbett wrote of a "*very extensive fruit orchard and tea garden*" nearby and also of "*the head of a spring which supplied the garden with irrigation water*". Because of the perfect location and the convincing optical appearance of this bungalow I had not paid too much attention to these details, thinking that a spring and some tea plants might well have been here one hundred years ago. But on this day I became aware, what an "extensive"(!) tea garden really meant.

I was also surprised, how many old bungalows could be found around Champawat. The first one was near to the city and was located on top of a small hill with a good view of Champawat and the surrounding. It had an appropriate old appearance, but it was - in relation to the Champa gorge - on the opposite side of the town. The tigress (and Corbett) would have had to circle around the town to reach the amphitheatre, not to speak of the absence of a tea garden and the head of a spring. We continued our research in the direction of Tanakpur, where six kilometres out of Champawat we stopped. On the left side of the road and around one kilometre into the hills, there was a white, two-storied building, we recognized as "Blake's Bungalow", because David Blake had suggested it as the one where Corbett had stayed. No chance, I thought, much too far away from the gorge. Later on this day by foot and together with Priyvrat, I came across this building a second time. Things had happened that reduced my absolute confidence, it could be just the Fungar bungalow and no other.

Somewhat disappointed for not being successful in finding a convincing alternative we went back to Champawat. Then something unusual happened. On the way to the Fungar we took a wrong turn and looking for the right direction we were invited to the office of a tea estate. While drinking tea and talking about our research the owner of the property told us quite a strange story: There was a tradition in his family that Corbett had not shot the tigress in the Champa gorge but in the gorge of a small river running through his tea estate. He added that in Corbett's time the tea estate of his family was the only one around here. The majority of our party did not give credibility to his story and after thanking him for the excellent cup of tea, they went off to see the Fungar bungalow again. Priyvrat and I did not believe either, but we had got curious and decided to follow his invitation for a visit to his tea estate.

To reach the place, we followed a small dirt road through a surprisingly unspoiled forest, until after 3-4 kilometres we came to his house on the border of the estate. His wife served us some light refreshments and showed us old photos of the family. When we left, we were accompanied by a servant to show us the estate and the bungalow, where - in their opinion - Corbett had stayed. Going downhill through the property, I began to realise, what an "extended tea estate" really meant and that it is much more than a few tea plants for domestic use. The estate stretched itself with densely planted tea bushes over at least one kilometre. At the end of the tea garden, we walked into the open and came across a small course of water running out of the forest and trickling

into the meadow below. Priyvrat was convinced, this was Corbett's "head of a spring". On top of a small hill above the spring and with good views of the surroundings, there was an old and tattered bungalow, looking older and more decrepit than any other we had seen in the vicinity of Champawat. The two-storied house we, in the morning, had identified as "David Blake's Bungalow" was some 500 meters south of us upon another hill. In this direction we went. Behind "Blake's Bungalow" there was a fruit orchard and on the side of it and looking down into the valley to the west (in the direction of the main road about one kilometre away where in the morning we had stood with our cars) was another bungalow. People told us, it would be the oldest one in the whole vicinity. We could not believe it as it looked quite new and was obviously occupied, though the inhabitants were absent. But they confirmed it indeed was the oldest, but had been renovated recently.

So now we had three more candidates for the bungalow. The best was the old looking one near the tee estate. The renovated one might also be a possibility, while "Blake's Bungalow" looked more like a storehouse than a bungalow. But the main question was, if the location could be fitting. Corbett's description of following the tigress from the spot where the last victim was killed to the "wilderness of rocks", does not sound like the six to eight kilometres. But so it must have been, if one of these bungalows should be the right one. Besides, would a tiger, even being followed, carry a victim for such a long distance? Maybe not impossible, but hardly likely. On the other hand there was the evidence of an "extensive tea garden" and a "head of a spring".

At the moment of writing this diary the discussion continues and Priyvrat is still critical about Fungar. I have to admit, the old bungalow at the tea estate really shook my absolute certainty about the Fungar bungalow and on this day I was on the verge to share Priyvrat's opinion. But thinking it over at home with Google Earth in front of me, I still do believe, the better arguments are on the side of the Fungar as its location can much easier be brought into line with Corbett's account. A spring can dry out over the course of 100 years and a plantation devoid of water might therefore get out of use, as Joseph Jordania mentioned. And it was also him that during later discussions made me aware of the fact, that according to Corbett's words, the beaters had met at the tree where the girl had been killed. It would be really hard to imagine that their meeting point would be 7-8 kilometres away from the gorge where they were going to participate in a beat. Also the skirt of the girl that was discarded soon after the kill was found on the brow of the hill on the top of the amphitheatre. The Fungar Bungalow as a starting point would be exactly on the right place for all this. But Priyvrat's argument of an existing tea estate and a spring is also not easy to neglect. I hope, he will write an article about these different bungalows and ponder the arguments from his point of view.

And what is the matter with the "family tradition" that the hunt would have happened not in the Champa gorge but in another one closer to the tea estate, as the

6 April – A visit at the regional government office and a welcome shortcut to Chuka

Before leaving, we had an appointment at the District Magistrate's Headquarters, located on a hill overlooking Champawat. We exchanged compliments and underlined the importance of conservation and the vital role, the person and the history of Jim Corbett in this respect was able to play for the people in the Champawat district. They showed us a big and very detailed historic map, dating back to a time even before Jim Corbett. Still more interesting was a glimpse in an old shed, where a chunk of old historic guns had been collected. I don't know if they could date back to colonial time and were to equip the Indian protection force or if they had been confiscated by the police from village people or poachers, but they reminded me of a sentence of Jim Corbett in MEOK when he inspected the beaters: "*The weapons that were produced that day would have stocked a museum*". The same was the case in the shack at the District Magistrate's Headquarters in Champawat.

After a friendly goodbye to the people at the District Magistrate's Headquarters, we left for Chuka and Thak. On our last visits, reaching Chuka from here would have meant a two and a half hour drive to Tanakpur and from there a six hours walk along the Sarda. But now there were good news from Kamal that a new dirt road was in use from Chalti along the Ladhya to its confluence with the Sarda. This was an attractive alternative to the long walk from Tanakpur. Chalti is a small village halfway between Champawat and Tanakpur, where the road crosses the bed of the Ladhya on a bridge. Beyond this bridge two Jeeps already were waiting for us to bring our equipment and us in a three-hour drive to our intended campsite on the bank of the Sarda near Chuka.

The drive along the Ladhya was fun and a really good and entertaining experience. For parts, it was almost Off-Road along the riverbed with very bumpy sections and water crossings, manageable only by cars with high clearance and four-wheel drive. On the way we made a stop and waded through knee-deep water to a sand bank on the other side of the river, where we had our lunch. It was interesting that just fifty yards before we crossed the Sarda we saw remnants of a cow kill by a tiger. One of us made a photo of the cow head, so we have a proof that there are still tigers in the area. In the late afternoon, we reached the Sarda and made our camp. In the evening we had a sing along at the campsite and found out that our guide Kamal is also a talented singer and dancer.

7 April: Thak and two candidates of rock

The night passed without significant events and once again we began the one hour long, but steep and strenuous ascent to Thak. Somewhat in front of the deserted village, at a "*rectangular piece of ground*", Corbett had his encounter with the man-eating tigress in a thrilling scene, only seconds before it had got too dark for a shot. Corbett sat in wait for her behind a four feet high rock, sitting precariously sideways on a

narrow ledge, balanced with one leg fully stretched out to the ground and one hand flat on the top of the rounded rock.

We were sure to have found this rock and the flat bit of ground and had fixed a plate on it, to mark the place and to make it visible for the occasional visitor. To be precise, it was Joseph Jordania, who had located this rock and he had shown it to us on our 2012 trip. Its features (four feet high, rounded top, ledge on the backside, falling place under the ledge, awkward and constrained position, etc.) and also its surroundings looked so close to what you imagine, when reading Corbett's account that it was not hard for him to convince us that this was exactly the place, Corbett had met the tigress.

But now we had a second candidate to look at. It was suggested by Quinton Ottley from Jerry Jaleel's Facebook group. I learned that it was the same rock first presented by Joel Lyall in his book *"Jungle Tales"*, now rediscovered and presented by Mr. Ottley. I have to admit that because of the bad quality of the photo in Lyall's book for me it was hard to decide if it is really the same rock, but it is said this fact was also confirmed by Mr. Ottley. So to avoid confusion with different rocks, I will refer to this one here as "JL's rock" (first discovered by Joel Lyall) in contrast to "JJ-rock" (first discovered by Joseph Jordania). JL-rock was 400 yards further down the ridge than JJ's rock, where we had fixed the plate. Corbett in MEOK refers to the distance of 400 yards (or a quarter of a mile) on two occasions. I originally had thought that he was mentioning the same distance twice and so it seemed obvious for me that the place of JJ's rock – exactly 400 yards from the spring under the mango tree – had to be the right one. But later discussions proved me wrong and I became aware, that both distances added to each other: So it was 400 yards from Thak to the place "*where the path joins the ridge*" and another 400 yards from here "*down the ridge*". This is – measured from the mango tree – exactly the location of the new candidate, JL's rock. My friends – as Dr. Jordania assured me – had always the premise of 800 yards in their minds. They did harmonize this distance with the location off JJ's rock by not counting the distance from the mango tree, but from another point uphill in the middle of the village. From here is another, the so-called "upper path", down to JJ's rock. I think, both possibilities do still exist, but at the moment the starting point at the mango tree seems to be the better and more widely accepted one. Accordingly Joseph Jordania in a detailed comparison came to the conclusion: "If we had JJ's rock at JL's locality there would be no contradictions with Corbett's descriptions". Anyway, there were more than enough reasons to have a close look at JL's rock. The location seemed quite convincing and we were keen to see its features.

400 yards further down the ridge, there is indeed another flat ground, from its size and silhouette also fitting to Corbett's description. Coming from Chuka in an uphill direction, you will not see it before you literally stand in front of JL's rock. But from above the whole flat ground is in front of you, like you are walking down to a kind of

a terrace, after which the path steeply descends in the direction of Chuka. Thinking of the many occasions I had used this path, I shook my head and could not believe that I never had realised this as a possible place on earlier visits. Like in a “tunnel vision” I never did question this - what we might call - “upper flat ground” as the place where the rock had to be. Here was the rock in 1975 was shown from Thak villagers to Peter Byrne, only 38 years after the hunt. Here was the place Sid Anand suggested to me on my first visit and here was also the rock Joseph Jordania has found as the by far best alternative up to now. And, when after a day of research our group descended from here, I obviously tended to change from the “research-” into the “let’s go home-” mood, relaxing and no more expecting anything relevant to the story. But getting angry with myself was of not much use anyway and I just had to accept the many times, I simply passed another promising rock on a flat ground 400 yards further down the ridge at a location as good or even better than the one I always had been convinced of.

At the end of this (“lower”) flat ground before the path steeply descends to Chuka, there is an impressive boulder, kind of a “landmark”, as Paata called it. This is JL’s rock, the one we wanted to investigate. We were curious to see and measure its exact features to see if everything was as it should be. This was followed by a long discussion with different opinions. Some things we could roughly bring in accordance to Corbett’s description but other features were also far from perfect. Size, height, the ledge, only a very slightly rounded top, comfortable two foot standing position behind the rock, all this and more did arouse questions and doubts. This was also the case for its immediate vicinity: No low rock ridge could be identified clearly on the flat ground and another smaller rock in front of the big one would have blocked Corbett’s field of fire. I will not go too much into detail here. Joseph Jordania has made a very in-depth and in my opinion fair comparison of both rocks in a separate article in this book. His conclusion is that for the location the newly suggested rock has a clear advantage, but for the features of the rock, the old one was just perfect.

My personal view is that, if you consider both, location and rock features, the decision is not easy. For the rock alone, I would easily give JJ’s rock a big advantage, if it was not for just one feature of JL’s rock that still makes me pondering what is right and what is wrong. It is a feature that not long ago would have fully deterred me from giving this rock any chance. I would go so far that I would have passed it without taking any notice (what in fact I did more than one time), because it was so different of what I had in my mind’s eye when reading Corbett’s account. The rock, according to Corbett’s words, should be four feet high. This is exactly the case with JJ’s rock. It is towering like shield of exactly this height over the ground in the direction of the approaching tigress. You can literally “see” Corbett behind it with its gun over the rounded top and aiming at the tigress, while the goat and his men trembling from fear crouched behind in complete silence.

JL's rock is very different. From the side of the tigress' approach, it is just a few inches over the ground. Its higher side is its backside (though not four feet as Corbett had said, but five and a half as Joseph had measured), where Corbett was hidden and where shortly behind the hillside falls steeply away. I would have ruled this rock out, simply because of my unquestioned imagination of the scene. But reading Corbett's account once more, I realized, he never had written that the rock was four feet high "on its front". Then the picture in my mind began to change and, for the first time, I thought to understand what Corbett could have meant with a sentence, I never had paid much attention to: "*And just as I was expecting her to walk right on top of me she stopped...*" Walk right on top of me... a rock of this kind would give these words a true sense. But I know, this is just one criterion among many other sometimes-contradicting facts that we have to assess. So which rock is the one, where Corbett stood? I do fully understand that people can come to different conclusions here. I recommend you to read Joseph Jordania's deliberate comparison in this book and make your own personal judgement of the pros and cons. Or still better: Come to Thak by yourself and enjoy the atmosphere and the closeness to the story. Even if after this adventure you – like me – are still not sure, you won't regret it. I will end this discussion here with Joseph Jordania's résumé in his own words "All the supporters of Mr. Ottley's rock must keep in mind that the shape and size of this rock, very comfortable standing position behind the rock on both feet and holding the rifle with both hands, unrestrained firing position, absence of the low rock ridge, and the absence of the falling space all goes against the possibility of this rock to be the correct one."

What else can be said? As some of us gave this new find at least at the time of our visit a serious probability, we asked Kamal to return to "our" rock and remove the tin pattern we had fixed. This does not mean that we would no more think of this rock as a good candidate. But as a group we thought, there should be no such plate on any rock as long as there is no widely accepted consent among the specialists of this topic. And at the moment, this was not the case. So we thought at this stage of discussion there should be no plate on any rock. But we can only speak for our group. We have to leave it to the group around Mr. Ottley – they had built a big information panel on their site – to draw their own conclusions.

8 April – Back to Kaladhungi and going separate ways

After one more night on the banks of the Ladhya, it was time to say Goodbye as different members of the group had to go different ways. Joseph, Steward, Paata and Fernando wanted to stay another night and then set in an adventurous journey to Sanouli and to the Panar valley, where Corbett in 1910 had shot a leopard, not quite as famous as the one of Rudraprayag, but three times more deadly, as it claimed more than 400 victims. Priyvratt and his comrade Rohit had to proceed to their business. Kotecha, his daughters and I, had still a task in the vicinity of Kaladhungi and after

that had an appointment in Bangalore with Dr. Johnsingh and with Joshua Mathew and Naveen from the Kenneth Anderson fan group. So, as the departing group, we squeezed ourselves in the waiting Jeep and went off for Chalti. From there we boarded two conventional vehicles, one for Priyvratt and his comrade to go to Delhi and the other for Kotecha, the young ladies and me for the drive to Kaladhungi. There in Choti Haldwani, two rooms had been booked for us in a small private hotel. After our arrival we shared a cold beer on the nice roof terrace and relaxed from the long drive.

9 April – An almost unknown hunter of man-eaters and a book in Hindi

Have you ever heard of “Mini Jim Corbett”? His real name is Thakur Dutt Joshi and you can find a special chapter about him in this book. He also had written a book. Years ago I had bought it in the small gift shop at the Corbett Museum in Kaladhungi, but as it was just published in Hindi, I did not understand a single word. But I still feel honoured to have known this brave and humble man we met two years ago on the side of the celebration of bringing Corbett’s rifle (the Rigby .275, donated to Corbett for destroying the Champawat man-eater) back to India! It was in a luxurious Hotel in Ramnagar where he stood somewhat lost in a corner and almost no one was taking notice of him. He was called “Mini Jim Corbett”, because he had killed a remarkable number of man-eaters and man-killers – mostly leopards but also tigers – with his old single barrel rifle in the vicinity of Kaladhungi and on the side of Corbett NP. We had invited him for dinner at Kamp Kyari near Kotabagh, where he lived. He came and he proudly held Corbett’s rifle in his hand. In reverse I was allowed to take his gun in my hands. With the help of Kamal, I was able to have a little conversation with him. I could understand only a small part of what he was saying, but I did understand that he invited me to his house, when I should return to India. I promised to come.

Now I was determined to keep my promise and had asked Kamal, the tour operator from Wildrift, to arrange a meeting. I had an idea in my mind that I wanted to discuss with him and his family. The idea was, to let the book be translated from Hindi into the English language to make it accessible to a much wider circle of readers. The benefit could be dedicated to him and his family. I had told my Corbett friends about this and they supported it wholeheartedly. I hoped for a little help for him and his relatives but also wanted to promote his name and his deeds beyond just being a local hero. And of course, I wanted to fulfil my wish, to be able to read his book. This idea might have been a bit naïve as the book was already published in India and there almost certainly were rights on it and maybe complicated legal affairs to clarify. But it did not come to this point anyway. After having written to Kamal my wish to meet him, I got a sad reply: “Dear Manfred, I am very sorry to inform you that Mr. Mini Jim Corbett is no more with us, he passed away last year.” So it was no more possible to meet this remarkable man. I will keep him always in good memory.

But in spite this sad news, I still thought about a meeting with his family to see if I could encourage and support them to let the book be translated and published in the memory of this brave man. So in the morning of the 9th April, we left Choti Haldwani for the short drive to Kotabagh, where his family lived. We were welcomed in the house by his son and later his grandson and the wife of “Mini Jim Corbett” took up courage to join us. We were offered tea and talked about their beloved husband, father and grandfather. To my delight I found that my help and my encouragement was no more needed as they already were in contact with a publishing company. There were preparations to get it translated with the help of his son. So things looked fine at the moment and I hope they will develop this way. After taking photos of the little family we left with best wishes to everyone. It was now time to go back to Delhi where we stayed in in the guest house of Wildrift at Ignou Road in Saket. Next morning at 10am Kotecha, Rushika, Reyna and I were booked on our Air India flight to Bangalore. There we would meet Dr. Johnsingh, Joshua Mathew, who had just published his fine book about Donald Anderson “*The last white Hunter*” and Naveen who would take us on a drive through “Anderson country”. But this is another story....

Corbett Trip Diary, September, 2018

BY ALI AKHTAR, INDIA

Day 1. 22nd September 2018 Meeting with Dr. Joseph Jordania

After visiting Jim Corbett Park and other Corbett sites several times, I had a dream of visiting Corbett places with some of prominent Corbett researchers and this dream came true when I got the opportunity visit Kumaon with Dr. Joseph Jordania in September of 2018. Before beginning and telling you about my experience of this trip I want to tell you that I was very impressed with Dr. Jordania and other members of Jim Corbett International research group for their exemplary work in researching Corbett legacy. They have carried out a diligent research on Jim Corbett trails and discovered many places mentioned by legendary hunter Jim Corbett in his stories.

This trip was arranged by our tour operator Kamal Bisht (A resident of Nainital) who is a very expert and experienced guide. Dr. Joseph was arriving from Australia with a morning flight to Delhi and as I was staying in my hometown Nowgawan Sadat, I decided to meet Dr. Joseph on NH-24 just at the intersection of Joya-Moradabad road 21 km away from my hometown. It was raining heavily that day when I left my hometown around 1:30 pm and after facing some hiccups on the way I reached Joya around 2:15 pm. Meanwhile I was in regular contact with our driver Bablu who was already on the way to Joya after receiving Dr. Joseph from the Airport. After waiting for little more than half an hour there they finally arrived at 3:20 pm. This was my first meeting with Dr. Joseph and after exchanging our well-beings we headed towards Corbett village Choti Haldwani where Kamal Bisht had already arranged our accommodation. On the way we had a short break at a restaurant and had our lunch there around 3:45 pm. Contrary to the fact that weather remains humid in the month of September, it was pretty nice with a cool breeze.

On the way to Corbett village we discussed on various topics such as Corbett man-eater hunts, Cosmology, Evolution and Metaphysics etc. Dr. Joseph is a great scholar and Corbett researcher who has been doing a painstaking research on Jim Corbett trails during the last few years. Apart from Jim Corbett Dr. Jordania also has immense knowledge about Nature and Evolution theory. We discussed about Theory of Evolution and Big-Bang Singularity and how the things came into existence out of big explosion. We continued to discuss on various topics until we reached Corbett village when it was already dark.

We were greeted there by Mr. Mohan Pandey (Head of Corbett Gram Vikas Samiti), Kamal Bisht and his rest of the team. They had arranged our accommodation in village home stay; nicely done up with thatched roof and attached bathrooms with hot water geyser available in each room. After refreshing and taking some rest in the room Dr. Joseph knocked my door and gifted me two books: 1) "*Behind Jim Corbett*

Stories” (2016) and 2) “*New Model of Human Evolution: How Predators Shaped Human Morphology and Behaviour.*” I thanked him for the gift.

He returned to his room with a promise to meet at Ittu-Sa restaurant managed by Corbett Gram Vikaas Samiti. We had our dinner at 8:00pm and discussed for tomorrow’s plan with our guide and his team. We decided to go to Village Kartkanoula (Now Kath Ki Naav) early in the morning so that we can finish our research as early as possible. Since I had visited the area two times before, I anticipated that it would not take long time to investigate the things and doing our research there. It was raining and cool breeze of the night was adding more charm to surroundings which in-fact was a great experience. Thinking about Corbett memoirs in his own village my imagination took a flight in good old days when Corbett used to roam on very same roads and paths. I could feel his presence around me and thinking about his extraordinary man-eater expeditions we went to our bed for a sound sleep.

Day 2. 23rd Visit to the village Kartkanoula (Now Kath Ki Naav), Mohan

We woke up early morning 6:00 am and after taking shower we headed towards the restaurant for breakfast. It rained all the night and it had cleared all the haze and hues in the sky and every leaf of the plants and blade of grass was glittering in newly risen sun. Sun was still playing hide & seek with clouds whether to put appearance or not. We anticipated that it might be raining again at any time of the day. Our guide and his team were already there at the restaurant and had taken their breakfast. During the breakfast we discussed our plan for the day.

We left Chhoti Haldwani around 7:15 am. Since I had already visited the village 2 times we anticipated that we would finish our research within very short time. Enjoying some spectacular views of Kosi valley to our right we reached Mohan Chowk (29°32’51.4”N 79°06’25.9”E) with one road going to Ranikhet to our right front and one road going to Marchulla to our left front. We took Marchulla road and started driving through one of the most scenic mountain roads I had ever come across. The road to Village Kartkanoula is so serene with some breath-taking views of heavily wooded Ramganaga valley to our left side. Enjoying the beautiful scenery and sound of jungle we reached a place called Chaknakl (Now Chimtakhil - 29°35’04.8”N 79°05’01.0”E) which Corbett mentioned several times in the story of Mohan Man-eater.

Corbett writes; *“The road along which the tiger came every night, I was informed, ran eastward to Baital Ghat with a branch down to Mohan, and westward to Chaknakl on the Ramganga river. The road going west, after running through the upper part of the village and through cultivated land for half a mile, turned south along the face of the hill, and on rejoining the ridge on which the hut was, followed the ridge right down to Chaknakl. This portion of the road between Kartkanoula and Chaknakl, some six miles long, was considered to be very dangerous, and had not been used since the advent of the*

man-eater; I subsequently found that after leaving the cultivated land the road entered dense tree and scrub jungle, which extended right down to the river.”

The Forest bungalow and its surroundings would have witnessed the reign of terror imposed by the man-eater. From here we resumed our journey and enjoying the breath-taking views of Ramganga Valley to our left throughout the way we reached village Kartkanoula. We parked our vehicle close to a footpath leading up to upper part of the village and Kartkanoula ridge.

Nestled in the beautiful Himalayan foothills village Kartkanoula is also the best place for bird watching. The views of Ramganga valley to the North and Kosi Valley to South from the upper part of the village are simply breath-taking. The spectacular views of the valleys, the riverine and snow-capped peaks of Himalayas will definitely enthral you throughout the way up to Kartkanoula village. The inimitable adventure of travelling and walking in pristine, sal, oak, pine and deodar forests make you feel like you are in the middle of heaven. Away from the madness of city life and polluted corners of plains this place is heaven for peace seeking people. The tranquillity of place, the sound of jungle creatures, Verdant terraced fields, canopy of sal, Pine, oak and deodar forests with monkeys climbing on the treetops was a perfect delight.

This village is the best example of a beautiful Kumaoni village where nature is still preserved in its pristine form. As soon as you enter the village through those winding roads, you notice the sudden drop of temperature. The forest erupts alive with a symphony of noises all around, various jungle creatures and insects hidden from our view whooping and wheezing, birds chirping myriad melodies revitalize your soul and restore your connection with nature.

As I have already told you that the sky was cloudy since we left from Choti Haldwani and now heavy cloud had rolled up in the sky and it appeared that it might be raining heavily soon and exactly when we were just about to start our walk uphill the rain had started. Hence, we took our umbrellas and walked towards the “Foresters Hut” where Jim Corbett had stayed while hunting Mohan man-eater.

It was my third visit to Village Kartkanoula and I had already surveyed the entire area during my two previous visits and located many significant places mentioned in the story of Mohan man-eater including the place possibly where Corbett killed the man-eater at point blank range while the tiger was asleep.

On the way up, we saw some houses made out of mud & stones with thatched roof. It was raining heavily now with relatively high wind speed which indeed was a pleasant experience when rain showers slowly sprinkling on our faces. I wore a thin T-shirt and felt it to be bitterly cold at an attitude of around 4,000 feet. Seeing me that I am shivering with cold Mr. Kamal Bisht very kindly gave me his jacket and I very thankfully accepted it. It was very comfortable and relaxing. Enjoying the beautiful views of the valley in heavy rains we reached to a place where the road comes out on the ridge close to a smaller old hut and the school building. We continued our

walk up the little knoll where the foresters hut is situated. There is a watchtower and wireless room close to foresters hut. The forest guard in the room was very happy to see us in this remote area and he very kindly invited us to take shelter in his room. I started reading the story of Mohan man-eater and discussed our plan from where to start our walk along the road to Chaknakl. It was getting very cold and as I was still reading the story our men had lit the fire in foresters hut which gave us more comfort in this cold weather.

We discussed whether we should start our trek in this bad weather as the rain was not going to stop or should we abandon. But passion of Corbett prevailed and later we agreed to continue our trek. Holding the umbrella in one hand and Man-eaters of Kumaon in other hand we left the forester's hut and headed eastward towards the road to Tanhau – a remotely located homestay on Kartkanlula ridge overlooking the Kosi valley, Mohan. After we had gone around 550 meters, we came to a water spring about which Jim Corbett mentioned in Mohan Man-eater story where he saw a woman was filling an earthenware pitcher. The spring is still functioning and provides fresh water to the villagers for drinking and all sanitary use. We wanted to recreate the Corbett scene of his arrival to this place when he saw the woman. So, we went further 450 meters till we reached Tanhau. There is a school building few meters away from Tanhau from where a branch of road (a forest track-29°34'24.7"N 79°08'34.1"E) is going down to Mohan and this is probably the same route which Corbett took while on his way climbing up the Kartkanoula ridge. The steep climb from Mohan ends at this place (29°34'24.7"N 79°08'34.1"E). From Tanhau we again turned back in the direction from where we had come. The water spring (29°34'42.0"N 79°08'28.3"E) is exactly at the same place what Corbett described; *"in turning a corner in a ravine where there some dense undergrowth I came on a woman filling an earthenware pitcher flowing down a wooden trough."*

We clicked some photographs and even drank the water from the spring which was very cold. I read the paragraph of the story when Corbett met the woman at this lonely place and enquired from her about the man-eater. Here at this place Corbett was subjected to a close cross-examination by the local woman and she asked so many questions from the Corbett and the reason of his arrival at Kartkanoula Village.

Leaving the spring We resumed our walk in the direction of foresters Hut and after we had gone around 200 meters we came on a footpath (29°34'45.4"N 79°08'22.9"E) running up the hill with main road going further in the direction of Foresters hut and further on Chaknakl. According to Corbett as the woman took this footpath, she said the village from which she had come was just round the shoulder of the hill, and added she was now quite safe. September is a rainy month in northern India and the footpath was not clearly visible at this time of the year due to overgrown dense foliage.

We continued our walk westward towards the road to Chaknakl passed the Foresters hut and after we had gone half a mile we reached the place where the road turned

sharply to the left (29°35'03.8"N 79°07'47.8"E) exactly as described by the Corbett. The rain had badly rendered our plans as we wanted to climb up the triangular Hill where Corbett heard two hind sambur started belling near the crest of triangular hill when he had just got clear of the dangerous overhanging rock over which the tiger was laying. We were completely wet in the rain and fast blowing wind was adding more discomfort to plans and we were literally shivering with cold. Despite all these hiccups we continued our walk and reached the overhanging rock which Corbett marked as being the most dangerous spot in the all the ground he had so far gone over while examining the road to Chaknaki on second day after his arrival in Village Kartkanoula. Corbett fans will be disappointed to know that overhanging rock doesn't exist anymore however its remnants are still there with some portion of the rock still overhanging on road side. We clicked some pictures at this spot and tried to visualize Corbett's Crab-fashioned walk while crossing the rock. I carefully measured the length from the left turn in the road (29°35'03.8"N 79°07'47.8"E) till the overhanging rock (29°35'02.0"N 79°07'40.0"E) which is little more than 200 yards.

Corbett writes in the story of Mohan man-eater; *"I found several scratch marks just round the corner where the road turned to the left after leaving the cultivated ground, the most recent of which was three days old. Two hundred yards from these scratch marks the road, for a third of its width, ran under an overhanging rock. This rock was ten feet high and at the top of it there was a flat piece of ground two or three yards wide, which was only visible from the road when approaching the rock from the village side"*

I explained to Dr. Joseph Jordania why the top portion of overhanging rock was not visible from the side Corbett approached while it was visible from the road when approaching the rock from village side. The road is not level from the bend 30 yards (29°35'01.3"N 79°07'38.5"E) away from the rock till you exit the rock and reach the farthest corner of the road from where one could have easily seen two or three yards wide flat piece of ground on the top of the rock. The road is gradually slopping upward from the bend 30 yards from the Overhanging rock till the highest point of it where there is another bend to the right shortly after which Corbett heard the alarm calls of barking deer and two hind sambars. Therefore, if anybody is approaching from the village side he will be actually at slightly higher elevation as compared to Corbett position (lower elevation) as can be clearly seen in the pictures. The foggy weather with low visibility made it difficult to take some good pictures of the overhanging rock and surrounding areas. The hill as described by the Corbett is very steep overgrown with dense foliage, trees and scrub jungle having the remnants of great rock jutting out of it.

Corbett writes: *"On the fourth evening when I was returning at sunset after visiting the buffalo on the ridge, as I came round a bend in the road thirty yards from the overhanging rock, I suddenly, and for the first time since my arrival at Kartkanoula, felt I was in danger, and that the danger that threatened me was on the rock in front of me. For five minutes I stood perfectly still with my eyes fixed on the upper edge of the rock,*

watching for movement. At that short range the flicker of an eyelid would have caught my eyes, but there was not even this small movement; and after going forward ten paces, I again stood watching for several minutes. The fact that I had seen no movement did not in any way reassure me the man-eater was on the rock, of that I was sure; and the question was, what was I going to do about it? The hill, as I have already told you, was very steep, had great rocks jutting out of it, and was overgrown with long grass and tree and scrub jungle. Bad as the going was, had it been earlier in the day I would have gone back and worked round and above the tiger to try to get a shot at him, but with only half an hour of daylight left, and the best part of a mile still to go, it would have been madness to have left the road. So, slipping up the safety-catch and putting the rifle to my shoulder, I started to pass the rock.

The road here was about eight feet wide, and going to the extreme outer edge I started walking crab-fashion, feeling each step with my feet before putting my weight down to keep from stepping off into space. Progress was slow and difficult, but as I drew level with the overhanging rock and then began to pass it, hope rose high that the tiger would remain where he was until I reached that part of the road from which the flat bit of ground above the rock, on which he was lying, was visible. The tiger, however, having failed to catch me off my guard was taking no chances, and I had just got clear of the rock when I heard a low muttered growl above me, and a little later first a kakar went off barking to the right, and then two hind sambur started belling near the crest of the triangular hill.”

One question still remained unanswered; what happened to overhanging rock? This can be attributed to a continuing civil work in that area since Corbett arrival in 1931. Most likely, the workers demolished part of the overhanging portion of the rock in order to widen the road to get easy clearance for 4x4 vehicles. This would have happened within a period of last 25 years as when Manfred Walt visited the area in 2007. He found some damaged parts of the overhanging rock still lying on the ground. This road was not in use till 2007 for vehicle access until some homestay / hotels came up in upper parts of Kartkanouala village. The road is more or less maintained and cleared from obstructions by the hotel owner for taking up their vehicles & guests to the hotel.

Another explanation can be attributed to the demand of the rocks/stones in that area required by the villagers for building their houses and other masonry work in the vicinity. They have built many small walls made of stone for marking restricted and non-restricted forest area where villagers can collect the fodders for their cattle and cut the trees with the permission form local Gram Panchayat and forest department. In my October 2017 visit I saw several such boundary walls in that area made of stones and the one I found was close to overhanging rock near stagnant pool of water. A villager of Kartkanouala informed me that these boundary walls they have made up with permission from forest department and whenever necessity arose for any of villagers for

building their houses, they can cut the trees and collect the rocks available within the boundary. They are not allowed cut or demolish anything beyond the boundary walls.

After leaving the rock we reached the stagnant pool of water and saw a rock about three feet high on the khud side of the road (29°34'59.8"N 79°07'35.4"E). By standing on it I tried to get the same view what Corbett had while looking over the hump in the road where the buffalo was tied 40 yards away (29°35'00.9"N 79°07'34.7"E). The hump is still seen in the road however some portion of the top side has been cut away to accommodate new motorable road. The hill facing Mohan is very steep and since it was raining heavily it was not advisable to go down the hill to see 20 feet square flat bit of ground where Corbett shot the man-eater. I showed the killing place to Dr. Joseph and our guide from the ridge itself close to 3 feet high rock on khud side of the road.

We further walked down on the road to Chaknaki and reached the first hairpin bend (29°35'10.4"N 79°07'10.8"E) where in the soft earth Corbett found the pug marks of the tiger for the first time after his arrival in village Kartkanoula. Corbett writes;

“On the ridge I found more scratch marks, but I did not find any pug marks until I got to the first hairpin bend. Here, in cutting across the bend, the tiger had left its tracks where it had jumped down onto some soft earth. The tracks, which were a day old, were a little distorted, but even so it was possible to see that they had been made by a big, old, male tiger.”

Enjoying the beautiful weather and breath-taking views of the Kosi Valley to our left (southward direction) we descended the old dirt road and reached the main coal tar road (29°35'13.9"N 79°07'01.7"E) where our Scorpio car was already waiting for us. We drove to Kartkanoula village market and stopped our vehicle at local shop where we ate our packed lunch, which Kamal had already brought from Kaladhungi with him.

Around 3:30 pm we left village Kartkanoula and reached the Chaknaki forest chowki around 4:00 pm. Here during my last visit, I had seen some old buildings (Forest Rest House) dating back to British era built in around 1920's. The buildings are currently abandoned and have been dilapidated and need an urgent repair otherwise it will be too late to restore these heritage structures. The people staying in these bungalows would have witnessed the reign of terror imposed by the Mohan man-eater. We clicked some pictures at this place and discussed about importance of these Bungalows built during colonial era. The new Forest Chowki has been built on a little knoll 200 meters from the old settlements close to the motorable road.

Around 5:20 pm we reached Ramnagar Market and parked our vehicle by the roadside. We wanted to buy new trousers as our old trousers we wore had been wet. After negotiating hardly with shopkeeper, Dr. Jordania and me bought a trouser 800 rupees each and left for Corbett village, Kaladhungi. It was already dark when we reached there. We went to our rooms and agreed to meet again at “ittusa” restaurant after taking a shower.

At 8:00pm we gathered in the restaurant and discussed for tomorrow's plan with our tour operator to visit Haldwani in search of Berthoud's grave who solicited Jim Corbett to shoot the Champawat tigress. After discussing our plan in detail, we decided to leave as early as possible after having breakfast next morning. Kamal called the caretaker of the graveyard who was in Nainital that time and told him about our plan to search the Berthoud grave in Christian Cemetery at Haldwani, he agreed to help us and meet there around 10:30am. Kamal had already visited the Cemetery and told us that there are two Christians cemeteries in Haldwani; one is Old and one is new and in the old cemetery he found some graves dating back to 1890's. Our hopes rose high with a possibility of discovering the Berthoud grave as he died in 1909. So, his grave must be somewhere around in the graveyard. We had a very nice homemade dinner at the restaurant followed by some dessert; a local sweet also known as "balmithai". We bade goodnight to our host Mohan Pandey and our guide Kamal and went to our cottages for a peaceful sleep after a daylong excursion. The weather was very nice, and sky was heavily clouded. I felt so blessed for having stayed in Corbett village and see the village life with a close quarter. The village in front of me was Corbett's dream village and by taking wings of imagination my thoughts went back in good old days when Corbett used to roam on these village walkways. The night was very pleasant, and I slept peacefully thinking about plans for tomorrow.

Day 3. 24th Sep 2019: Visit to Haldwani in search of Berthoud's grave

After breakfast and checkout from our rooms we bade goodbye to Mohan Pandey and left for Haldwani with a hope to find the Berthoud grave who requested Jim Corbett to kill Champawat tigress, forever altering Jim's life. From Corbett village (Choti Haldwani) to Hadwani is a 40 min drive and about 8:40 am we reached our destination, the Christian Cemetery in Haldwani. We had a picture of Berthoud's grave from Peter Byrne book "*Shikari Sahib*" which he took in 1975 but Kamal told us that this gravestone and locality resembles to a graveyard in Nainital. The father of the Christian Church & cemetery Mr. Rajeev Messi had already arrived when we reached there, and he instructed the Gardner cum sexton of the cemetery to clean the bushes which were there in abundance during this time of the year. Our approach to find some old graves through the dense bushes was very difficult and we hardly managed to find some old graves dating back to 1880's. We tried our best to find the Berthoud grave but all efforts had been in vain as the dense vegetation at the end of rainy season didn't allow us a careful investigation we would like to take. So we had to abandon our research till the next trip and asked Kamal to visit the Cemetery again in the month of March or April which is normally a driest season of the year in this region. We didn't find any gravestone coinciding with Peter Byrne picture and it was decided to visit Nainital Cemetery to reconfirm the fact whether this cemetery has the same gravestone resembles with picture published in Peter Byrne's book. We wanted

to commemorate something in the memories of Charles Berthoud and had already told Kamal to bring some flowers which he arranged from nearby shop. We put the flowers on the gate of the graveyard with a handwritten commemoration note; “In the dear memories of Charles H. Berthoud who died in Haldwani on 28.12.1909.

Kamal told that he has been informed by his friend that Jim Corbett used to visit Haldwani more frequently and stay at Mr. Barton house which is two kms away from the graveyard. Therefore, we decided to meet his descendants who are still living there and running a Christian Public School close to their house. Unfortunately, the son of Mr. Barton was not there when we reached there however got the opportunity to meet his wife and daughter who are working in the school as Principal and Teacher respectively. We thought that Mr. Barton will have left behind some kind of memorabilia related to Corbett but both the ladies were unable to give us any information about Jim Corbett and the wife of the son of Mr. Barton told that her husband might tell us something about Jim Corbett and if he has something in his archives. After a having short interview with them we decided to leave for Nainital. The drive through those beautiful winding roads with some breath-taking views of the valleys, deep ravines and towering mountains was awesome and we reached our destination around 11:30 am. This famous hill station where our great hero Jim Corbett was born in 1875, is one of the most beautiful tourist spots in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand. It has got its name from the Naini lake. It was the summer capital of Britishers and was discovered by Lord Barron in around 1840. The mall road in Nainital is unique and there many shops and restaurants. There is century old book store ‘Narains’ from where I had bought some books 10 days previously. Enjoying the beautiful views of the lake and the mall road we reached Nainital Cemetery. It was raining in Nainital and the weather was very cold. Holding our umbrella in our hand and wearing the full sleeve jackets we stepped down our car and headed towards the graveyard situated on Ayapatta Hill, Mallital, Nainital and found to our great surprise that the gravestone in Peter Byrne picture is perfectly coinciding with the gravestone in this Cemetery. Hence it was confirmed that Peter Byrne picture of Berthoud grave is not right one and he wrongly assumed it to be Berthoud grave in Haldwani. Peter himself had doubts about this photo.

If it was not Berthoud, Jim Corbett might have never gone after the Champawat man-eater and become the world’s most famous expert of man-eating cats... he died within two years (28-12-1909) after his important role in killing the most infamous man-eater of all time. Corbett killed the Champawat tigress in 1907, May 12th. Jim Corbett writes in “*Man-eaters of kumaon*”:

“The tigress, for such the animal turned out to be, had arrived in Kumaon as a full-fledged man-eater, from Nepal, from whence she had been driven out by a body of armed Nepalese after she had killed two hundred human beings, and during the four years she had been operating in Kumaon had added two hundred and thirty-four to this number.

This is how matters stood, when shortly after my arrival in Naini Tal I received a visit from Berthoud. Berthoud, who was Deputy Commissioner of Naini Tal at that time, and who after his tragic death now lies buried in an obscure grave in Haldwani, was a man who was loved and respected by all who knew him, and it is not surprising therefore that when he told me of the trouble the man-eater was giving the people of his district, and the anxiety it was causing him, he took my promise with him that I would start for Champawat immediately on receipt of news of the next human kill....”

Readers might be interested to know that from a newly discovered letter to the living relative of Charles Berthoud, Corbett gives an interesting clue for the search of the grave (readers can have a look at the chapter dedicated to Charles Berthoud in this volume).

It was 12:00 noon when we decided to move to other site St. John in the Wilderness Church where Corbett parent are buried. Dr. Joseph had an idea where they are buried as he had already visited the graves in 2016 but as the territory was overgrown at the end of the rainy season, he could not recall where exactly the graves are located. We contacted Mr. Dave Atkinson – a member of Nainital Nostalgia Group who has immense knowledge about the history of Nainital. He gave my mobile number to his friend Mr. Devinder Bhooi from Sherwood College and told us to wait for 5 min for his call. After few min I got a call from Mr. Devinder and he told me about the directions of graves which we strictly followed but to our great disappointment we could not penetrate through dense bushes and thick undergrowth. The graves have been currently disappeared and completely covered under the weeds, shrubs and thick foliage which are completely obstructing the way to reach there. One can hardly notice their graves now. We found a lot of broken wine bottles and garbage scattered here and there in the graveyard completely blocked our way to reach there. Suddenly the rain started and after forcing our way through the dense scrub and bushes we turned back and abandoned our search. The rain had badly rendered all our hopes to find their graves had come to an end. We decided to visit again sometime during spring season in April 2020 when there will be much less vegetation and greenery so that we could easily reach there. The Church is on a little knoll as compared to the elevation of the graveyard where Corbett parent are buried and going down and up through a very dangerous uneven broken path with lots of broken wine bottles scattered on the way and deadly snakes roaming around was not a pleasant and easy task.

We spent around one hour at St. John in The Wilderness Church and as we were very hungry since 7:00 am in the morning when we left Choti Haldwani it was now the time to have some of famous Nainital delicacies to satisfy our taste buds. There are many famous restaurants on mall road where I have been regularly eating since my first visit to Nainital in 2012 but this time Kamal took us to a new restaurant on Bara Bazar Rd, Mallital side where I had not been earlier. The Anupam's restaurant was neat & clean and the food quality was awesome. After eating more than our appetite

we finally decided to head to our next destination – Mukteshwar. Mukteshwar is one and half hour drive from Nainital but since it was raining, we anticipated that it might be too late to reach there.

The drive to Mukteshwar through beautiful roads and green valleys carpeted with varieties of green vegetation, shrubs and tree jungles and thoroughly cleaned in rain was a great delight. En route we had a discussion about Muktesar man-eater. I had brought a sketch with me which I prepared using google maps and had tentatively located in it the famous landmarks mentioned in the story of Muktesar man-eater. Kamal told us that he knows an elderly person in Mukteshwar which can help us in searching the Corbett places and he has called him to visit our Camp tomorrow. Kamal is running a camp accommodation in Mukteshwar named Camp Purple / Wildrift Adventures.

It was already dark when we reached Camp Purple and was still raining heavily. Our bags had been shifted into the tents while we sat in the camp's assembly point. It was very cold in Mukteshwar and I was shivering from like anything. Seeing my condition Dr. Joseph very cordially offered me his spare jacket which I duly accepted. I didn't anticipate that it will be too cold in the month of September and therefore had not brought any woollen clothes/jackets with me which I now was regretting badly for not carrying any. Kamal had lit a roaring bonfire within incredibly very short time which was more relaxing in the cold weather. We discussed a lot about Jim Corbett and how we can begin our research tomorrow. We decided to start Muktesar Man-eater trail from the post office building and from there we can drive on Dhari Road (Bhatelia-Mukteshwar road) by following Corbett's description and possibly to find a place where Corbett spent a night on stunted tree while the man-eater was in the close vicinity and roaring ferociously.

Kamal ordered his staff to prepare vegetable soup for us which was served after few minutes and was very tasty. Sitting along the bonfire, sipping a hot vegetable soup and reading the Jim Corbett story of Muktesar man-eater in the man-eater territory was indeed a great feeling. I was very surprised to know that there was no electricity in Camp Purple and the only mode of illumination was either a chargeable lamp or oil lantern which nevertheless gave a rustic feeling I imagined as we are in the good old days when the only source of illumination was a lantern or a roaring wooden fire. Around 8:30 we had dinner and went to our camp through some scary looking pathways in the dark night, leading down to the tents surrounded with the scrub jungle. Initially I was very scared staying in the camp without electricity but later I decided to give it a try and went inside the tent. The waterproof tent was quite big to accommodate two people inside. I asked Dr. Joseph to shift into my tent as it provides a measure of safety in the jungle and moreover, we can discuss our plans for the morrow.

We were already tired after a daylong travel and soon Dr. Joseph went to sleep while I was still awaking and adjusting myself in tent's environment. I called my wife and told her about my experience for the day.

Day 4. 25th Sep 2019: Muktesar

It rained all the night but when we woke up early next morning the sun was already up with brilliant sunshine and every leaf of the trees and blade of grass were glittering in newly risen sun. After refreshing we gathered at assembly point and were glad to see that elderly person had arrived who knows some old people in Muktesar. After breakfast we headed towards Muktesar post office to start our trail. The date inscribed on the Post office says that it was built in 1905 but it appears that the Post Office building has been renovated with some modern addition to it. Here in the compound of the post office (29°28'23.9"N 79°38'49.5"E) Corbett had displayed the skin of the Muktesar tigress for postmaster to see it. Mukteshwar Post office building is one of the most beautiful post offices building I have ever seen. There are two more very old buildings just in front of the post office behind them there is some flat bit of ground overlooking the Muktesar valley (south-west Mukteshwar ridge) with a commanding view of heavily wooded Ramgarh hills beyond. We read the following paragraph of Muktesar man-eater story when Corbett arrived at Post to send the telegram to his mother early next day after his arrival in Muktesar;

"After a very good breakfast I instructed the Khansama to tell my men when they arrived that I had gone out to try get news of the man-eater, and that I did not know when I would return. Then, picking up my rifle, I went up to the post office to send a telegram to my mother to let her know I had arrived safely."

From the flat ground in front of the post office and the bazaar the southern face of the Muktesar hill falls steeply away and is cut up by ridges and ravines overgrown with dense brushwood, with a few trees scattered here and there. I was standing on the edge of the hill, looking down into the valley and the well-wooded Ramgarh hills beyond, when I was joined by the Postmaster and several shopkeepers. The Postmaster had dealt with the Government telegram of the previous day, and on seeing my signature on the form I had just handed in, he concluded I was the person referred to in the telegram and his friends and he had now come to offer me their help. I was very glad of the offer for they were in the best position to see and converse with everyone coming to Muktesar, and as the man-eater was sure to be the main topic of conversation where two or more were gathered together, they would be able to collect information that would be of great value to me. In rural India, the post office and the bania's shop are to village folk what taverns and clubs are to people of other lands, and if information on any particular subject is sought, the post office and the bania's shop are the best places to seek it.

In a fold of the hill to our left front, and about two miles away and a thousand feet below us, was a patch of cultivation. This I was informed was Badri Sah's apple orchard."

According to Corbett he was standing on the edge of the hill on a flat ground in front of the post office and was looking down into the valley and well-wooded Ramgarh hills beyond, when he was joined by postmaster and several shopkeepers. He was informed about the Badri Sah's apple orchard which was about two miles away and a thousand feet below to their left front.

The well-wooded Ramgarh hills were clearly visible while standing on the edge of the valley and after clicking some photos and speaking to some local people we left to have a look at Mukteshwar-Bhatelia Road (Corbett referred to it as Dhari Road). We drove through this road, crossed Indian Veterinary Research Institute – IVRI (29°28'20.3"N 79°38'53.5"E) on the way and reached at Gangachor where we had a short halt and discussed about a possible meeting place where Corbett saw Putli while returning from Dhari road and he had visited two villages. We know that when Corbett had gone 6 miles (29°25'35.1"N 79°38'05.5"E) on the road to Dhari and retraced 3 miles back when he overtook a small girl having difficulties with a bullock (29°26'37.4"N 79°38'58.7"E). Dr. Joseph and Kamal suggested visiting the Badri Sah's guest first and then to look for the place where Corbett would have met Putli and possibly the place where Corbett spent a night on a stunted tree while the man-eater was roaring in the close vicinity.

We moved towards Mukteshwar and travelled around 2.4 km when we came to Junction (29°26'40.5"N 79°39'02.1"E) from where one branch of road is going down to Badri Sah's guest house and his apple orchard through a very steep hill. We already had marked the distances from post office to the place of Corbett return after going 6 miles on Dhari road using GPS and google maps and to our great surprise three miles from Corbett point of return ends a few meters (Around 140 meters) before this junction. On the road from where a branch of the road runs down a steep hill for about a mile to Badri Sah's Orchard. So possibly somewhere close to this point (GPS Coordinates: 29°26'37.4"N 79°38'58.7"E) and around 140 meters before the junction, the meeting might have happened with Putli and Kalwa. There is a Café close to this junction named "Chandi Mati Café". Here, I read following paragraph of the Corbett story; "*The road to Badri Sah's Orchard takes off close to where the cattle track joins the road, and runs down a steep hill for a mile through dense brushwood*". Hence, according to Corbett, the cattle track must be very close to the junction where the road to Badri Sah's Orchard commences. I started looking if there is any cattle track leading off into the jungle and after I had gone 100 meters farther in the direction of Mukteshwar I came to a well-used track (29°26'40.9"N 79°39'05.8"E) to my right and if somebody is coming from Mukteshwar it will be on the left side. The excitement had reached its zenith as we had discovered yet another place mentioned in the Muktesar man-eater story. I congratulated to Dr. Joseph and rest of the team that it might be the same Cattle track which Corbett described in Muktesar man-eater story. Dr. Joseph completely agreed with me and said that the location of cattle track and the road to Badri

Sah's Orchard is perfectly coinciding with Corbett's description. Now the total distance from the place possibly where Corbett met a small girl named Putli and the cattle track would be around 240 meters and we know from Corbett's description that after having some difficulties with bullock, they started waking in the direction of Mukteshwar and after proceeding for a short distance Corbett started conversation with small girl.

Corbett writes; *"There were no milestones along the road, and after I had covered what I considered was about six miles and visited two villages, I turned back. I had retraced my steps for about three miles when I overtook a small girl having difficulties with a bullock. The girl, who was about eight years old, wanted the bullock to go in the direction of Muktesar, while bullock wanted to go in the opposite direction, and when I arrived on the scene the stage had been reached when neither would do what the other wanted. The bullock was a quiet old beast, and with the girl walking in front holding the rope that was tied round his neck and I walking behind to keep him on the move he gave no further trouble. After we had proceeded a short distance I said:*

'We are not stealing Kalwa, are we?' I heard her addressing the black bullock by that name.

'N - o,' she answered indignantly, turning her big brown eyes full on me.

'To who does he belong?' I next asked.

'To my father.' She said.

'And where are we taking him?'

'To my uncle.'

'And why does uncle want Kalwa?'

'To plough his field.'

'But Kalwa can't plough uncle's field by himself.'

'Of course not,' she said. I was being stupid, but then you could not expect a sahib to know anything about bullocks and ploughing.

'Has uncle only got one bullock?' I next asked.

'Yes,' she said; 'he has only got one bullock now, but he did have two.'

'Where is the other one?' I asked, thinking that it had probably been sold to satisfy a debt.

'The tiger killed it yesterday.' I was told. Here was news indeed, and while was digesting it we walked on in silence, the girl every now and then looking back at me until she plucked up courage to ask:

'Have you come to shoot the tiger?'

'Yes.' I said, 'I have come to try to shoot the tiger.'

'Then why are you going away from the kill?'

From above conversation we can conclude that the meeting might have happened just few hundred meters (tentatively 240 meters) before the cattle track and after proceeding for a short distance the conversation started and during the conversation,

they would have crossed the cattle track where the tiger had killed the bullock about a quarter of a mile away. Here, we must note a very important point that the girl told about the location of the kill. While addressing to Corbett, the girl said; ‘Why are you going away from the kill?’ It means that after proceeding a short distance or may be few hundred meters from the place where the cattle track commences into the jungle on the left, the girl informed Corbett about the locality of the kill.

This discovery was very exciting, and we were very happy with our findings. We decided to go down the cattle track tomorrow early morning as we were running short of time and it was now the time to visit Badri Sah’s Orchard and his guest house where Jim Corbett stayed. Accompanied with our guide and the elderly man we headed towards Badri Sah’s Orchard.

There is now a concrete road to Badri Sah’s Orchard which in-fact runs down a steep hill for a mile till you reach the Dyo Organic Resort (29°26’49.8”N 79°38’33.9”E). There is a narrow old dirt road skirting off right to the knoll on which the building of Dyo-Organic village resort building stood, leading up to the Badri Sah’s guest house and his apple orchard 150 meters away from Resort. The guesthouse was on a little knoll overlooking the Orchard and the valley. The courtyard of the guesthouse was fenced off with a small gate from approach side. We opened the gate and entered in the courtyard. The guest house (29°26’54.1”N 79°38’37.1”E) has been completely dilapidated and in very poor condition. One can still see the remnants of a fireplace, chimney and veranda, completely in sync with the era it belongs to. The roof of the house has been fallen and a lot of weeds and other plants are growing inside which was really an awful sight. The roof of the veranda doesn’t exist anymore however its remnants can still be seen. It was here sitting in this veranda Corbett saw the fight between langur and the dog.

Corbett writes: *“Sitting on the veranda with us was a big Airedale terrier. Presently dog started growling, and looking in the direction in which the dog was facing, we saw a big langur sitting on the ground and holding down the branch of an apple tree, and eating the unripe fruit. Picking ups a shotgun that was leaning against the railing of the veranda, Badri loaded it with No. 4 shot and fired. The range was too great for the pellets, assuming any hit it, to do the langur any harm, but the shot had the effect of making it canter up the hill which the dog in hot pursuit. Frightened that the dog might come to grief, I asked Badri to call it back, but he said it would be all right for the dog was always chasing this particular animal, which he said had done a lot of damage to his young trees. The dog was now gaining on the langur, and when it got within a few yards the langur whipped round, got the dog by ears, and bit a lump off the side of its head. The wound was very severe one, and by the time we had finished attending to it my tea and plate of the hot puris (unleavened bread fried in butter) was ready for me.”*

There is an Apple orchard scattered over the hill and below the knoll though not in a proper continuity. We saw some apple trees growing in the courtyard of the house

on its north side. It was indeed a great find and by looking at the crumbling state of the house we imagined that this house would have witnessed many events in the past and have a lot of stories associated with it. The house is now more than 110 years old building as the Corbett visited there in 1909. So, the building must be very old had existed much before the Corbett visit. The architecture of the house coincides with Colonial era bungalows which they set up across the various parts of the country for government officials. There are many colonial era buildings in various parts of Kumaon standing still with time however some buildings are in very poor state for the time has taken a heavy toll due to long negligence & lack of maintenance to preserve these heritage sites and this site was a perfect example of such carelessness. If immediate actions in restoration of this house will not be taken, this building will soon be a part of our forgotten history and completely vanishes into the past leaving no traces for the future travellers.

It was now 2.30 p.m. when we decided to move to see the killing site. From the Corbett's description we know that the tigress went down into the valley below this Orchard and killing site is close to the junction of two ravines with a water stream flowing nearby. We followed a footpath going down to a small village settlement with 2 or 3 houses scattered over here and there. On the way we met a villager basking in sunlight on his roof top (29°26'55.8"N 79°38'40.3"E). Kamal enquired from him if there is any stream down the valley at the junction between two ravines. He promptly replied that there is indeed a stream flowing at the bottom of the valley the sound of which we could hear from this place. The villager very cordially invited us for cup of tea which we duly accepted. It was indeed a great gesture from our simple & loving hill folks. We requested that guy if he can accompany us on the track down the hill and whether he knows any short cut to reach there. The hill was very steep and the stream at the junction of two ravines was still very far from this place. We anticipated that due to the lack of time we wouldn't be able to find the killing place however decided to give it a try. The rain has softened the earth previous day and our proceedings were very slow on a very steep & slippery hill. Going down into the valley floor appeared to be a very risky task and at one place during our way down my foot got slipped and I lost my balance and fell-down on the ground but thankfully I had a hold of a tree branch which probably saved me from a bigger injury. After regaining my courage up, I again went down the hill following rest of the team members. The old man looked very fit & fine and was not looking tired after a steep descent. Crossing a water stream on the way we reached to an open place from where we could see the two ravines which still looked very far. From here the descent was almost perpendicular, perhaps we had come from a wrong way and now it appeared that we had lost the way and were undecided how to go down the hill from this place. It was now 3:30 when we decided to abandon the research for the killing site and visit to a nearby village settlements where we had been informed by the old man that a 95 years old man is living

there who can help us if he knows anything about Mukteshwar man-eater. We told Kamal to visit this area again and try to find the killing place somewhere close to the junction of two ravines.

After half an hour trekking through the dense forests and well-trodden path we reached the house (29°27'15.4"N 79°38'30.0"E) of the oldest living person in Mukteshwar – 95 years old. Initially his son did not allow us to interview the old man, but later Kamal convinced him that we just want to know about a man-eating tiger that had killed many human beings in Mukteswhar a long ago. The guy looked very nervous once he heard about the purpose of our visit and wrongly assumed that we are government officials either from Forest Department or Police Department. Young man was suffering from viral fever and with a little hesitation he told us that if they will not kill the bagh (man-eater) then the bagh would eat us. Perhaps he was referring other recent incident of Man-Animal conflict in the area and by mistakenly he thought that we have come to investigate who killed the tiger. After much of discussion he was convinced that we are not government officials and want to enquire about an incident which happened more than hundred years ago. A lady from their family cordially accompanied us into the room of the old man. The room was very small and only 3 to 4 persons could sit there. The old person was a very frail being and had almost lost power of hearing. Hardly, he could have heard anything. The elderly person who was with us asked him many questions but he could reply to very few. The following was narrated by his father when he was twelve years old he told us about an incident.

“One day some villagers were ploughing in their fields and women were cutting the grass on a grassy slope round the shoulder of a hill when some villagers saw an object moving about in the bushes close to a place where women were cutting the grass. From the distance it looked like a horse and they did not pay any attention to it but a little later when they heard the roar of a tiger they began to run but thankfully his father’s house was very close to the field and he immediately rushed into the house, came out with his gun and ran in the direction of the bushes where he heard the roar of tiger and while he was still running he fired in the bushes. The bullet had struck somewhere on tigers’ body and now the tiger was roaring ferociously. The villagers were very frightened totally unaware of the next move of the tiger but a little later the tiger disappeared into the thick jungle behind the bushes.”

Unfortunately, the old person didn’t know anything about the Corbett visit to Mukeshwar nor his father told him anything about the Muktesar man-eater. It was now 5:45 p.m and curtain of darkness was slowly descending over the horizon. We bade goodbye to frail old man and headed towards the nearest motorable road where Kamal told us that our vehicle is already waiting there. On the way we discussed with elderly person who accompanied us to this place. He told us that Badri Sah’s full name was Badri Lal Sah. He had two children; Anand Lal Sah and Kishori Lal Sah. Kishori Lal Sah lived in Nainital and had a cement house there in 1947. Anand Lal Sah lived

in this house and was occupied by him until late 1970s. The elderly person clearly remembers about Late Anand Lal Sah's daughter (Uma Sah) marriage ceremony in this house in 1962. On reaching the camp purple we bade goodbye to elderly person and went to our tent for some rest. Needless to say, that following Corbett's generosity as an example, we were giving small reward to our local helpers.

After half an hour we again gathered at the assembly point to discuss our plans for tomorrow. We decided to wake up early morning to have a look at the place where Tiger killed the bullock on the cattle track about a quarter mile from the main road. After having dinner, we went to our tent for sleeping.

Day 5. 26th Sep 2019: Muktesar

We woke up 5:30 am when the sun had already risen in the sky with a glittering sunshine. Dr. Joseph has got up little early before me and was already there at meeting point waiting for me to have breakfast. I told Dr. Joseph that we have to carefully measure a quarter of a mile distance from the main road in order to pin point the area where the cattle had stampeded when tiger had attacked on cattle. After a quick breakfast we headed towards the south from Camp Purple (29°26'50.1"N 79°39'10.4"E) on Mukteshwar-Bhatelia road and after going 350 meters we came to the cattle track on the left (29°26'40.9"N 79°39'05.8"E). Since the rain had cleared the haze in the sky, we thought to have a look at Himalayan peaks which were visible from the place where the road (29°26'40.5"N 79°39'02.1"E) goes down to Badri Sah's orchard. We admired the view of snowy Himalayan ranges and clicked many pictures. Jim Corbett also writes in Muktesar Man-eater story about the snowy ranges viewed from Mukteshwar; *"The laboratory and staff quarters are situated on the northern face of the hill and command one of the best views to be had anywhere of the Himalayan snowy range. This range, and all the hills that lie between it and the plains of India, run east and west, and from a commanding point on any of the hills an uninterrupted view can be obtained not only of the snows to the north but also of the hills and valleys to the east and to the west as far as the eye can see. People who have lived at Muktesar claim that it is the most beautiful spot in Kumaon, and that its climate has no equal."*

After 10-15 min we again returned to Cattle track (29°26'40.9"N 79°39'05.8"E) and began our track. I had opened software in my phone through which we can measure the distances. I used two methods for measuring the distances one with counting my steps and other using a software application. This track is running across a valley exactly as described by the Corbett and after we had gone along it for about 405 meters (a distance equal to about a quarter a mile) we came to a spot apparently where the cattle had stampeded (29°26'48.3"N 79°39'16.2"E). This is the only place relatively wider and has more open area along the cattle track within the distance mentioned by Corbett. The place is ideal for cattle grazing and was evidently still attractive for the herd of goats grazing in the field. We carefully noted the distance and rechecked

with google map which was matching precisely. The path (Cattle track) coming from the main road further continues across the valley.

Corbett writes: *“Leaving the track, I now went through the jungle, parallel to and about fifty yards below the track. I had only gone a short distance when I came on a drag-mark. This drag-mark went straight down into the valley, and after I had followed it for a few hundred yards I found the bullock, from which only a small portion of the hindquarters had been eaten. It was lying at the foot of a bank about twenty feet high, and some forty feet from the head of a deep ravine. Between the ravine and the kill was a stunted tree, smothered over by a wild rose. This was the only tree within a reasonable distance of the kill on which I could sit with any hope of bagging the tiger, for there was no moon, and if the tiger came after dark – as I felt sure it would – the nearer I was to the kill the better would be my chance of killing the tiger.”*

We now left the track and went down into the valley parallel to the cattle track. The descent was not very difficult and after having a little problem in finding the right direction or a more suitable path which can lead us down into the valley, we covered around 190 meters when we came on the head of a deep ravine (29°26'47.1"N 79°39'22.7"E). We don't know how precisely we followed the route as mentioned by Corbett. This route and direction are very surprisingly matching with Corbett's description. The ravine in fact is very deep and from its head it is extending hundreds of meters eastward till you reach the valley floor. Corbett mentioned that he heard a kakar started barking on the side of the ravine two hundred yards below him. It was in this ravine where he might have heard a kakar barking.

The hill from where we had come is overgrown with weeds and short stiff grass with some trees scattered here and there and by examining its topography, we noticed that this hill has been cut up to accommodate terrace farming. Local people informed us that there used to be a lush green forest on this hill in good old days but during sometimes in the past this hill been used for terrace farming and therefore significant changes have been happened in its original topography / terrain since 1909 when Corbett visited the area. Due to these changes the height of 20 feet high bank on which the tiger was roaring after Corbett fired at her, has been reduced as was clearly evident from its uniform cutting to accommodate terraced fields. The terraced farming on this hill has been abandoned currently and a lush green forest is taking back its place. Between the bank and the head of a deep ravine we surprisingly found some wild rose bushes growing (29°26'46.9"N 79°39'22.5"E). I don't proclaim that these wild rose bushes are the descendants of very same old wild rose bushes which obstructed Corbett approach while climbing the stunted tree however the location is coinciding with Corbett's description. The distance between the wild rose bushes was found around 7 meters from the head of a deep ravine and the bank was further 5 meters away from these wild rose bushes. The total distance between the bank (29°26'46.8"N 79°39'22.3"E) and the head of a deep ravine (29°26'47.1"N 79°39'22.7"E) was found

12 meters close to the Corbett approximations (40 feet) and therefore coinciding perfectly with his description. By standing on this point close to wild rose bushes where stunted tree existed (29°26'46.9"N 79°39'22.5"E) we imagined the Corbett position while sitting on the tree. From this point we noticed that the tigress might have approached from Corbett's left side as there is sufficient access from where an animal can come from below over the ravine on the flat bit of ground and approach the kill. We know that Corbett was facing the hill with a deep ravine behind him. Currently there is no way on the right side from where the tigress could have approached the kill as the ravine is very steep from its commencements (its head) and there is almost a perpendicular fall.

Corbett writes: *"I was facing the hill, with the ravine behind me. I was in clear view of any animal coming down from above, but if the tiger came from below, as I expected, it would not see me until it got to the kill. The bullock, which was white, was lying on its right side with its legs towards me, and at a distance of about fifteen feet. I had taken my seat at 4 p.m. and an hour later a kakar started barking on the side of the ravine two hundred yards below me. The tiger was on the move, and having seen it the kakar was standing still and barking. For a long time it barked and then it started to move away; bark growing fainter and fainter until the sound died away round the shoulder of the hill. This indicated that after coming within sight of the kill, the tiger had lain down. I had expected this to happen after having been told by Badri the reasons for the failures to shoot the tiger over a kill. I knew the tiger would now be lying somewhere nearby with his eyes and ears open, to make quite sure there were no human beings near the kill, before he approached it. Minute succeeded long minute; dusk came; objects on the hill in front of me became indistinct and then faded out. I could still see the kill as white blur when a stick snapped at the head of the ravine and stealthy steps came towards me, and then stopped immediately below. For a minute or two there was dead silence, and then the tiger lay down on the dry leaves at the foot at the tree.*

Heavy clouds had rolled up near sunset and there was now a black canopy overhead blotting out the stars. When the tiger eventually got up and went to the kill, the night could best be described as pitch black. Straining my eyes as I would I could see nothing of the white bullock, and still less of the tiger. On reaching the kill the tiger started blowing on it. In the Himalayas, and especially in the summer, kills attract hornets, most of which leave as the light fades but those that are too torpid to fly remain, and a tiger – possibly after bitter experience – blows off the hornets adhering to, the exposed portions of the flesh, before starting to feed. There was no need for me to hurry over my shot for, close though it was, the tiger would not see me unless I attracted its attention by some movement or sound. I can see reasonably well on a dark night by the light of the stars, but there were no stars visible that night nor was there a flicker of lightning in the heavy clouds. The tiger had not moved the kill before starting to eat, so I knew he was lying broadside on to me, on the right-hand side of the kill.

Owing to the attempts that had been made to shoot the tiger I had suspicion that it would not come before dark, and it had been my intention to take what aim I could – by the light of the stars – and then move the muzzle of my rifle sufficiently for my bullet to go a foot or two to the right of the kill. But now that the clouds had rendered my eyes useless, I would have to depend on my ears (my hearing at that time was perfect). Raising the rifle and resting my elbows on my knees, I took careful aim at the sound the tiger was making, and while holding the rifle steady, turned my right ear to the sound, and then back again. My aim was a little too high, so, lowering the muzzle a fraction of an inch, I again turned my head and listened. After I had done this a few times and satisfied myself that I was pointing at the sound, I moved the muzzle a little to the right and pressed the trigger. In two bounds the tiger was up the twenty-foot bank. At the top there was a small bit of flat ground, beyond which the hill went up steeply. I heard the tiger on the dry leaves as far as the flat ground, and then there was silence. This silence could be interpreted to mean either that the tiger had died on reaching the flat ground or that it was unwounded. Keeping the rifle to my shoulder I listened intently for three or four minutes, and as there was no further sound I lowered the rifle. This movement was greeted by a deep growl from the top of the bank. So the tiger was unwounded, and had seen me. My seat on the tree had originally been about ten feet up but, as I had nothing solid to sit on, the rose bush had sagged under my weight and I was now possibly no more than eight feet above ground, with my dangling feet considerably lower. And a little above and some twenty feet from me a tiger that I had every reason to believe was a man-eater was growling deep down in his throat.”

Sometimes while hunting infamous man-eaters Corbett life was in great danger and this situation was more lethal as the man-eater was growling ferociously. It was one of the nights of terror while hunting the man-eaters when Corbett himself was very frightened. The tigress was roaring ferociously on the top of the bank with a close distance of about 20 feet in a pitch-dark night. Sitting up on a very precarious seat, only 8 feet from the ground with his dangling feet considerably lower, was indeed a very frightening moment.

Corbett writes in experience of that night in Muktesar man-eater story; “The near proximity of a tiger in daylight, even when it has not seen you, causes a disturbance in the blood stream. When the tiger is not an ordinary one, however, but a man-eater and the time is ten o'clock on a dark night, and you know the man-eater is watching you, the disturbance in the blood stream becomes a storm. I maintain that a tiger does not kill beyond its requirements, except under provocation. The tiger that was growling at me already, had a kill that would last it for two or three days, and there was no necessity for it to kill me. Even so, I had an uneasy feeling that on this occasion this particular tiger might prove an exception to the rule. Tigers will at times return to a kill after being fired at, but I knew this one would not do so. I also knew that in spite of my uneasy feeling I was perfectly safe and as long as I did not lose my balance – I had nothing to hold on

to – or go to sleep and fall off the tree. There was no longer any reason for me to deny myself a smoke, so I took out my cigarette case and as I lit a match I heard the tiger move away from the edge of the bank. Presently it came back and again growled. I had smoked three cigarettes, and the tiger was still with me, when it came on to rain. A few big drops at first, and then a heavy downpour”

After taking some measurement and carefully investigating the area we returned back to the main road and set out to have a look at road to Mukteshwar to find the location of Putli's uncle's house. From Corbett's description we know that when Corbett and Putli returned after the tying the buffalo at uncle's house and had proceeded for about a mile they came to a well-used cattle track leading off leading into the jungle on the left. Therefore, Putli's uncle's house should be about a mile from the cattle track. Hence, considering the cattle track as a reference point I opened my navigation system and distance measuring software in my mobile and headed towards Mukteshwar and when we had completed about a mile distance, we came to an open field (29°26'40.9"N 79°39'05.8"E) flanked on the far side with some small settlements and a shop. This could be the same place where once Putli's uncle's house (29°27'28.8"N 79°39'13.9"E) was standing. This place is so close to the CITH Campus (Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture, established in 1991. Before CITH was established, this was the regional station of CPRI Central Potato Research Institute where according to Mr. Arvind Upreti (Nainital-Nostalgia group Admin.) his father was posted in 1980's. According to him the place where I have marked in the picture, as Putli's uncle's house, is where they stayed for few years, when his father was posted in CPRI in 80s, and the place belonged to one Pant ji, and that was a solitary house with no other house up to 500mtrs around., either way. Due to the remoteness of the house, there were strict instructions, never ever to open the doors during the night, even if a knock is heard, as it may be a leopard sharpening its claws on the wood of your doors. The house currently standing there is a 90s addition, after demolishing the old cottages where Mr. Upreti and his family used to live.

According to Mr. Upreti, The solitary house (29°27'28.8"N 79°39'13.9"E) was the one on the top edge (where there is a concrete structure now). Earlier, it was a series of two tin roofed houses in continuity, where in one the Mr. Pant stayed and the second one was occupied by Mr. Upreti's family.

Mr. Pant sold that house in early 90s, along with all the land and the family shifted to Almora. So, if we know who stayed there before Mr. Pant Ji, we probably may know more about Putli's relatives, the history of the place and if there was an old house at the same place?

There are some convincing evidences that this might be the same location where Putli's Uncle's house was situated and as confirmed by Mr. Arvind Upreti there was no other house as much as 500mtrs on either way until 1980's. Therefore we can conclude

that this is most likely the place where Corbett and Putli came, tied the Kalwa to the post and went back to the road.

Corbett writes: *“We had now come to a path up which the girl went, the bullock following, and I bringing up the rear. Presently we came to a field on the far side of which was a small house. As we approached the house the girl called out and told her uncle that she had brought Kalwa.*

‘All right’, a man’s voice answered from the house, ‘tie him to the post, Putli, and go home. I am having my food.’ So we tied Kalwa to the post and went back to the road. Without the connecting link of Kalwa between us, Putli (dolly) was now shy, and as she would not walk by my side I walked ahead, suiting my pace to hers. We walked in silence for some time and then I said:

‘I want to shoot the tiger that killed uncle’s bullock, but I don’t know where the kill is. Will you show me?’

‘Oh, yes,’ she said eagerly, ‘I will show you.’

‘Have you seen the kill?’ I asked.

‘No,’ she said, ‘I have not seen it, but I heard uncle telling my father where it was.’

‘Is it close to the road?’

‘I don’t know.’

‘Was the bullock alone when it was killed?’

‘No, it was with the village cattle.’

‘Was it killed in the morning or evenings?’

‘It was killed in the morning when it was going out to graze with the cows.’

While talking to the girl I was keeping a sharp look-out all round, for the road bordered on the left by heavy tree jungle, and on the right by dense scrub. We had proceeded for about a mile when we came to a well-used cattle track leading off into the jungle on the left. Here the girl stopped and said it was on this track that her uncle had told her father the bullock had been killed.”

After spending some time at the Putli’s uncle place we returned to Camp Purple. It was now the time for me to bid goodbye to Dr. Joseph, Kamal and his team. This was my last day in this research expedition while Dr. Joseph had to further continue his research for one more day in Champawat. I had already called one of my friends in Ramnagar to arrange a car for me to pick me from Mukteshwar and drop off to my hometown. The driver arrived around 10:00 am and with a heavy heart I bade goodbye to all my team with a hope to meet them again in April 2020 to continue the search for Corbett’s legacy.

Corbett's Timeline

BY PREETUM GHEERAWO, MAURITIUS

In conjecture of this second volume and the research made after the first volume, we are pleased to offer our readers the latest updated Corbett timeline. All events and date mentioned are thought to be accurate, to the best of our knowledge and interpretation of the latest findings.

1875, July 25 – Birth of Edward James (Jim) Corbett, in their family house below Alma Hill in Naini Tal. He is the 8th child of his parents, Christopher William and Mary Jane Corbett.

1880, September 18th – 5 years old Jim with his family watched in horror the catastrophic landslide that took 151 lives next to their residence in Naini Tal.

1881, April 21 – Christopher William Corbett, Jim's father dies at the age of 58. The cause of death is stated as 'fatty degeneration of the heart'.

1881 (in later months) – Gurney House, the family home is built with materials dismantled from the Alma Hill cottage. It would become the last residence of Corbett in Naini Tal.

1883 – Eight and a half-year-old Corbett is gifted his first firearm, a battered double-barreled muzzle-loader by Stephen Dease, his cousin. Among his first dogs, 'Magog' helped him to stalk birds in the first instance.

1885 – Ten year old Corbett is admitted to Naini Tal Diocesan Boys, a small school with a pupil population of around 70, in Naini Tal. Prior to that Corbett and his sister Maggie had been educated at home by their elder half-sister, Eugene Mary Doyle.

1886 – Eleven year old Corbett shoots his first leopard near Kaladhungi. His last shot would also take place around the same location in 1946.

1887 – Corbett is admitted to Oak Openings, a bigger school than Naini Tal Diocesan Boys, situated in the highest altitudes of Naini Tal, after disliking his first school.

1891, November – Thomas Batholomew, Jim's eldest brother, his childhood hero and mentor, passes away in Aligarh hospital after unsuccessful treatment for pneumonia.

1892, August 4 – Harriet May Nestor (born Corbett), Jim's eldest sister dies in Naini Tal, leaving her two young children Ray (aged 4) and Vivian (aged 1 ½) under the care of their grandmother Mary Jane. They are the latest addition to the Corbett family putting the total number of children cared by Mary Jane until their early

- adulthood at the outstanding number of 20 (4 Deases, 3 Doyles, 2 former Corbetts, 9 Corbetts and 2 Nestors).
- 1894, September – Maurice Corbett, Jim’s 4th brother sickened by typhoid fever leaves his job as a forest officer and passes away in Naini Tal two months later. It is during this period that Jim leaves school for good and start searching for work.
- 1894, in the later months – Corbett joins the Bengal/North Western Railways (BNWR) as a railway fuel inspector at Mankapur. The job is a temporary one and the contract ended, to the satisfaction of the agent, earlier than expected, eighteen months later.
- 1896 – Corbett gets the contract as trans-shipment inspector initially at Samaria Ghat for luggage transfer of the ferry crossing over the banks of the Ganges river after a satisfactory completion of his previous assignment in Mankapur. A little later his quarters are shifted to MokamehGhat and he remains there till 1917.
- 1900, January – Twenty-four-year-old Corbett is refused release from the BNWR after his application to join the Army is granted for the South African Boer War.
- 1901, March – Archibald D’Arcy Corbett (born 18 November 1879), Jim’s younger brother dies in Naini Tal at the age of 21 after contracting Bright’s disease in Calcutta while studying at the Society for Propagation of Gospel.
- 1905 – Corbett’s mother, Mary Jane, visits him for a short stay in Mokameh Ghat and thus apprises herself of the terrible conditions of heat and dust of the plains to which her son is subjected there during his work.
- 1906, December 15 – Corbett acquires the hardware business; and estate and speculation agency of F.E.G. Matthews after the latter’s death in Naini Tal.
- 1907, May 12 – Corbett sends his first man-eater, the Champawatman-eater, to the Happy Hunting Grounds. Much more information is now available on this man-eater, in this volume.
- 1907, July 01 – Corbett’s first term of office as Municipal councilor of Naini Tal.
- 1909, March – Corbett shoots the Muktesar Man-Eater. The date of March 1909 is now fully certain, and highlights a discrepancy in the date mentioned by Corbett in the book “*The Temple Tiger*”.
- 1909, April – Corbett’s first attempt at the Panar man-eating leopard results in a failure to contact the animal.
- 1909, April – Corbett’s unsuccessful hunt for the Dabhidura Temple tiger, who was said to be ‘protected by the God of the temple.
- 1909, July – Corbett resigns as Municipal Councilor of Naini Tal.

- 1909, 25 December – Charles Berthoud, the man who set Corbett on a career of man-eater hunting, dies after a short bout of enteric fever.
- 1910, March 1 – Upon the request of the trans-shipment agent in Gorakhpur, the railway headquarters congratulates Corbett for his day-record of handling of goods at Mokameh Ghat. See the telegram in this book.
- 1910, August 9 – Corbett writes to his mother to inform her, amongst other things, that he is due to be granted leave and will head for the Panar river, at the village situated some thirty miles from Dabhidura to try to contact the Panar man-eating leopard.
- 1910, September – Corbett succeeds in shooting the Panar man-eating leopard with a D.B 12 bore shotgun after the latter attempts a charge at him.
- 1910 – Corbett takes possession of the gift a .275 Rigby-Mausser rifle by Sir J.P. Hewett, Governor of the UP at a 'Durbar' in Naini Tal commemorating the accession of the Prince of Wales, George V, to the throne. The present is given as recognition by the Government for Corbett's successful bringing to account of the Champawat man-eater and had been withheld since 1907 due to Corbett's inability to attend the official ceremony.
- 1915 – Corbett buys land (221 acres) from the Government and sets up the fencing around an abandoned settlement for what will later be called Corbett's village of ChotiHalwani. Later a stone wall is built around the village to prevent wild animals from entering the compound. Choti Haldwani tenants were freed from rent and land tax by Corbett during his lifetime and till his sister Maggie's death.
- 1917, July – Corbett engages as 'Captain' of a troop of Labour Corps (70th Kumaon Labour Corps) and gets commissioned for France during the First Great War ('The Kaiser's War' according to Corbett).
- 1918, June 15 – Corbett's first flight, while he is in France.
- 1919, February – Corbett returns from the First Great War and after his troops are discharged, he returns to Naini Tal on leave.
- 1919, March – Corbett donates Rs 7,300 to the Municipal Council of Naini Tal, his entire war bounty, money which is used to complete the bandstand on the 'flats' on the upper shore of the lake at Mallital and for the construction of a soldiers' reading room.
- 1919, Spring – Corbett, on another leave from the Army, goes for 'Tahr' Shooting with Robert Bellairs and Bala Singh on Mount Trishul. The latter, unfortunately, died a few months after the expedition after being convinced that he had swallowed the demon of Trishul.

- 1919, May – Corbett, who was not demobilised since his engagement in France in 1917, gets another commission as Captain of the 144th Labour Battalion, this time for the North West Border with Afghanistan conflict (Third Afghan War).
- 1919, October – Corbett’s engagement in the Third Afghan War ends after some six months spent at the front.
- 1919, December 22 – Corbett begins 2nd term of office as Municipal Councillor of Naini Tal.
- 1920, April – Corbett, who returned to the railways for a few months prior to April, finally hands over the trans-shipment contract to his trusted Ram Saran, after he is satisfied that work went well during his absence of 4 years. In all, Corbett spent 21 consecutive years at Mokameh Ghat from 1896 to 1917 (excluding his former appointment on a short term as a fuel inspector at Mankapur between 1894 to 1896).
- 1920, June – Corbett donates Rs. 5,000 from his war bonus and allowances for the purpose of building a soldiers’ canteen at Kathgodam. This act of generosity gets the attention of the Viceroy, Lord Clemensford, who personally sends his acknowledgment and word of thanks to Corbett.
- 1921 – Corbett buys a small house in Kaladhungi nearly opposite the bazaar and builds an annex to it. Corbett’s mother and two sisters, Mary Doyle and Maggie, who had previously resided in their Arundel ‘castle’ during the winters, moved in, that very year. Arundel is left unoccupied and falls into ruins as years go by.
- 1921/22 – (Uncertain period) Corbett helps Percy Wyndham and chief of Police Freddie Young to track the ‘Indian Robin Hood’ Sultana.
- 1922 – Corbett and Percy Wyndham (then District Commissioner of Naini Tal) buy land for the Kikafu coffee estate on the slopes of Mount Meru in Tanganyika (modern-day Tanzania). Robert Bellairs is appointed as manager of the estate. Annual visits to this country till 1936 gives Corbett the idea to live in Africa one day if he happens to leave India.
- 1923 – Year marking the first undertones of conservationism of Corbett as he proposes by-laws to prohibit fishing in lake Naini just before sunset till after sunrise – the same year Corbett is appointed chairperson of the Public Works Committee of Naini Tal. In later years Corbett also presided over the Toll and Tax Committee and Finance Committee.
- 1923 to 1926 – By-laws concerning the conservation of Nature are proposed to the Municipal Board of Naini Tal by Corbett. These concerned mainly measures to protect the surrounding forests from pack-goats grazing and prevention of felling of trees around the town and in domestic compounds.

- 1923, July – Corbett shoots a pair of male African lions in Tanganyika. Possibly this was the only instance of big game shooting by Corbett in Africa, other than some ungulate hunts.
- 1924, May 16 – Death of Mary Jane Corbett, Jim mother at the age of 87 years – Both Corbett parents are buried in the Sukha Tal cemetery behind St John in the Wilderness church in Naini Tal.
- 1925, October – Corbett is proposed and accepts to go after the man-eating leopard of Rudraprayag after sixteen former shikaris, employed by the Government of the United Provinces for that purpose, have all failed.
- 1926, May 1 – Corbett shoots the man-eating leopard of Rudraprayag, arguably the most notorious man-eating leopard in recent human history, and perhaps the only instance when an animal has ever imposed an official night curfew on the inhabitants of that part of Garhwal district.
- 1927-1929 – Uncertain period, during which Corbett's rank in the Indian Army Reserve Officers is upgraded from Captain to Major.
- 1928, April/May – Corbett shoots the grown cub of the Chowgarh man-eater. This range of date is now confirmed after recent research.
- 1928, December – Corbett gets his first movie camera, a 16-mm Bell & Howell model as a gift from his friend Lord Strathcona. An idea germinates in Corbett's mind, as inspired by F.W. Champion, a pioneer in wildlife photography, to swap the gun for the camera, or the hunting trophy for the wildlife photo.
- 1929, February – Corbett attends the District conference (Kumaon Division), upon invitation by the Commissioner Percy Wyndham, for the discussion on man-eaters placed on a hit list: 1. The Talla Des man-eater 2. The Chowgarh man-eater; 3. The Mohan man-eater. This list is now confirmed as per latest findings as opposed to the list which Corbett describes in the book *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*.
- 1929, April – Corbett lays to rest the Talla-Des man-eater and her two grown cubs, while himself being incapacitated by an ear injury sustained in Bindhukera two months earlier. The hunt of this man-eater is one of the most epic Corbett hunts, and as himself admits after writing all his books that this was his best story.
- 1930, April 11 – Corbett finally kills the Chowgarh man-eating tigress in very dramatic circumstances after many unsuccessful stalking attempts during a period of two years.
- 1930, February/March – The Bachelor of Powalgarh, a tiger with record proportions is shot by Corbett near Kaladhungi. The shooting of this tiger begins the end of Corbett's career as a trophy-seeker hunter.

- 1931, March – A Kaladhungi villager protecting his crops wounds the Pipal Pani tiger with Corbett's muzzle-loader, mistaking him for a pig. Corbett later shoots the tiger under the misapprehension that it would become a man-eater. Later in August, the story of this tiger would become the published first piece of writing by Corbett (Hoghunters Annual, Vol.4, Aug.1931).
- 1931, May – Corbett kills the Mohan man-eater in his sleep, regretting later for not having given him a sporting chance to defend itself.
- 1932, July 19 – Corbett kills the Kanda man-eating tiger after the wounded tiger attempts a charge on him up a tree. The footage of this tiger with villagers and with the father of one of his victims, a lad who had just enrolled in the Army, has at last been found and a snap photo from the cine-film is proposed to the readers in this book.
- 1932, August 31 – Corbett second published piece appears in the 'Review of the Week' a government publication. The piece entitled "Wildlife in the Village – An Appeal" definitely marks Corbett's stand as a conservationist, sounding the first alarm regarding the decimation of wildlife around villages.
- 1933, April 12 – Corbett's Conservationism principles gather momentum as the Municipal Board approves his resolution for the restriction on bird shooting and for the creation of a bird sanctuary around Naini Tal. This resolution on the restriction on bird shooting is the first of its kind in India.
- 1933, April and May – Extensive moving-photography sessions by Corbett in and around Kaladhungi (NayaGaon and Maldhan) and around the Ramganga basin (Dhikala and Patli Dun) – some of these cine-shoots still survive at the British National Film Archive.
- 1934 – Corbett, Malcolm Hailey and E.A. Smythies' plea for the creation of India's first National Park around the Ramganga river basin leads to the creation of a wildlife sanctuary around the area. The park followed later.
- 1935 – Corbett's self-publishes 100 copies of his first book "*Jungle Stories*". Virtually all the copies were "read to death". Currently two copies have been traced. One is in possession of London based gunmaker John Rigby and Co, and the other in India.
- 1935 – The Sanctuary around the Ranganga basin area (South Patli Dun, Malani, Bijrani and Dhikala) is upgraded as a National Park and initially called Hailey National Park (renamed in 1957 as "Corbett National Park") as per decree of the Legislative Council of the UP, following a proposal by Corbett's good friend, Pandit G.B. Pant, UP's State Minister.
- 1936, August – Second blast by Corbett towards irresponsible and indiscriminate exploitation of Nature entitled: "A Lost Paradise: Forest Fires in the Foothills" is pub-

- lished in the 'Review of the Week'. This essay, first published in *'Jungle Stories'*, a year earlier, is published in this book, rendering it public for the first time since 1936.
- 1936 – Year of death of Robin, Corbett's favourite dog who earned a chapter for himself in *'Man-Eaters of Kumaon'*.
- 1938, April 19 – Corbett kills a man-eating tiger in Ladhya Valley, later named as the "Chuka man-eater" (the giant tree from where Corbett shot the tiger, fell around year 2000).
- 1938, November 30 – Corbett kills his last man-eater – the Thak man-eating tigress after luring her with a tiger mating call.
- 1938, December – Corbett sets his 'jungle studio' in Kaladhungi and shoots his first wild tiger cine-photography, arguably the first to do so.
- 1939, January 10 – Corbett suffers a serious fall from a tree while filming tigers.
- 1939, September – 64-year old Corbett, as Major in the IARO seeks engagement for the Second World War ('Hitler's land collecting tour' according to Corbett) but agrees to become vice-president of the District Soldiers' Board (DSB) to look after the needs of the families of serving men and helping in the recruitment of a pioneer corps.
- 1940, August 27 – Corbett's attends last meeting as Municipal Councilor of Naini Tal, his resignation took effect on October 4th.
- 1942, October – Severe sickness resulting from an attack of tick-typhus assigns Corbett to three-months in hospital bed at Agra. This ends his previous engagement with the DSB.
- 1943, January – Corbett in his hospital bed nearing recovery lays the foundation of his manuscript by writing the chapter 'Robin' for his extended version of *'Jungle Stories'* which would later be called *'Man-Eaters of Kumaon'* as proposed by R.E. Hawkins of OUP (Bombay).
- 1944, February – Corbett is appointed Lieutenant Colonel of the British-Indian Army with special commission as a senior instructor in Jungle Lore for the Cadet Corps engaged in Burma. The training camp at Chindwara (Central Provinces) had to be interrupted after 3 months due to Corbett suffering his perhaps worst attack of malaria, confining him to the care of his sister Maggie for eighteen months.
- 1944, August – Corbett's first official book, *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*, is published by OUP (Bombay) for 1000 copies.
- 1945, September – Back in Kaladhungi, and nearing rehabilitation from the malaria attack, Corbett learns about the success of the first and second print (OUP Madras) of *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*. The itch to write more causes him to ink the first lines of the *'Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag'*.

- 1946, March - *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* is accepted for the American Book-of-the-Month-Club.
- 1946, April 6 - Corbett is asked by Chuka villagers to go after a man-eating tiger in the Ladhya Valley. Till now there is no concrete evidence to believe that Corbett ever went after this tiger.
- 1946, May - '*Man-eaters of Kumaon*' becomes a worldwide best-seller after published by OUP (New York). It edges just above 536,000 copies sold as of May. Translated in 16 more languages as at that date, and many more afterward (OUP states up to 27 languages), this book has remained in print ever after.
- 1946, Late Winter - Corbett reluctantly shoots his last tiger, a cattle-lifter at Kaladhungi at the insistence of a pertinent villager.
- 1947, November 21 - Corbett and Maggie sold Gurney House and left Naini Tal for good on November 30th taking with them only the guns, fishing rods, man-eater skins, portraits, photos and medals.
- 1947, December 09 - Jim and Maggie Corbett boarded on the SS Aronda for their final good-bye to India and their last servant Ram Singh. The previous days, they had a hectic voyage from Kaladhungi to Bareilly by road and then Bareilly to Bombay via Lucknow by train. The ship reached Mombasa on December 15th.
- 1948, March - '*The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag*', Corbett's second published book sees daylight in India while a little later in Kenya, Corbett attends the projection of a poor rendering of '*Man-Eaters of Kumaon*' as a movie produced by Hollywood, "the best actor was the tiger" as commented by him.
- 1948, August - Corbett inks the first lines of the book '*My India*' starting with the chapter "*Sultana, India's Robin-Hood*". The book finally saw light in January 1952 and is the third published book of Corbett.
- 1948, October - Corbett, Ibbotson and two other friends invest in a wildlife tourism company called 'Safariland' with the only object avowed by Corbett as "to discourage shooting and encouraging photography". The company becomes famous since its association with the filming of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's blockbuster "*King Solomon's Mines*" starring Stewart Granger and Deborah Kerr.
- 1951, January - Corbett sets the typewriter for his fourth book "*Jungle Lore*". This book, with some autobiographical material, gets delayed in publication and finally comes out in October 1953.
- 1951, October 10 - Corbett's first public screening of his 'wild tiger' cine-movies, shot in India and of his African wildlife movies at Amen House, headquarters of the OUP in London, UK.

- 1952, February 5th-6th, during their visit to Kenya, Princess Elisabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh, Philip spent a night in Tree Tops Hotel next to Corbett's residence, the Baden-Powell cottage of the Outspan hotel. Corbett was called upon to act as a local guide and to watch over the safety of the Royal couple. It was the night when King George died and the Princess Elisabeth became the Queen Elizabeth II.
- 1953, October – While 'Jungle Lore' is released in India by OUP (Bombay), Corbett is in London, UK for a successful eye operation. Later in Kenya, Corbett releases the manuscript of the second volume of '*Man-Eaters of Kumaon*' later known as "*The Temple Tiger*" to his editor Roy Hawkins in Bombay. Corbett admits having deliberately withheld this manuscript because according to him "*Jungle Lore* has to be read first" to understand the story of the Talla Des man-eater.
- 1954, July and August – The penultimate Corbett's book, '*Temple Tiger and More Man-Eaters of Kumaon*' is published in India and reprinted in the UK within one month only. This book, after *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*, has also remained in print ever after.
- 1955, April 19th, Corbett dies after a massive heart attack in Mount Kenya hospital, Nyeri, Kenya. He is buried the next day at St Peter's Anglican cemetery in Nyeri. His final words were: "Live today as if it was your very last" to a youthful visitor and "Stay brave and try to make the world a better place for others to live in" to his sister Maggie. His final book 'Tree Tops', whose manuscript is completed only a few days before his death, is published posthumously later in the year.
- 1957 – Renaming of the Ramganga NP (Formerly Hailey NP) into Corbett NP. The action was initiated by Corbett's close friend, Pandit G.B. Pant, Prime Minister of the UP.
- 1963, December – Death of Maggie at the age of 89. Her ashes, as she was cremated, were interred in her brother's grave. Brother and sister are united in the Happy Hunting Grounds like they were during their passage on Earth.
- 1968 – A new sub-species of a tiger is identified, known as the Indochinese (formerly 'Annamese') tiger and V. Mazak, the Czech biologist, making the discovery gives the Latin name "Panthera Tigris Corbetti" to it in recognition of the life and dedication of the 'excellent naturalist' Jim Corbett.
- 1972 – Corbett's dearest project as to protect the tiger is initiated by Shrimati Indira Gandhi – A year earlier, a general ban was imposed on tiger shooting and the year 1972 was dedicated to assess the population. That same year, the tiger dislodged the lion (protected since 1958) as the National Indian Animal.
- 1973, April 1st – 'Project Tiger' (a project to save the tiger from extinction) is launched at the Corbett NP, in memory of the person who became their first advocate.

1975 – The Government of the UP buys back the Kaladhungi house from Chiranjilal, to whom it was sold by Corbett, and converts it as the Corbett Museum. Later that year in July, Corbett's Centenary celebration is launched and a stamp (showing a tiger) is issued to commemorate the event.

1985 – Golden Jubilee of Corbett NP. The park celebrates also the first inversion of the declining number of tigers, twelve years after the shooting ban, as per the tiger census. This census held every five years, however controversial it may have been in later years, shows that in 2015 that the number of tigers has nearly doubled their 1985 number.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHORS OF THE BOOK

Priyvat Gadhvi (India) is a Biotechnologist from Gujarat. Priyvat was a co-author on the groundbreaking project that conducted the world's first whole genome sequencing (total DNA mapping) of the Amur Tiger, African Lion and Snow Leopard published in Nature communications in September, 2013. He is a member of the State Board for Wildlife, Gujarat and also heads a plant tissue culture unit in Gujarat.



Joseph Jordania (Australia), PhD, is an award winning ethnomusicologist and evolutionary musicologist from the University of Melbourne. He published over hundred scholarly articles and several books on the origins of human choral singing, intelligence, and morphology. His latest book "A New Model of Human Evolution" (Lambert Academic Publishers, 2017) discusses human evolutionary history through the multifaceted interaction between humans and big cats.



Manfred Waltl (Germany), PhD, biologist and theologian from Munich. He studied biology, chemistry and theology and finished his studies with a PhD on the significance of Sociobiology for Theology and Ethics (published as a book in German). Manfred is a dedicated photographer and took many of the trip photos, as well as provided lively written trip diaries for our books.



Preetum Gheerawo (Mauritius) – known in some places of the book as 'Kotecha', is a theoretical physicist (specialised in Radio-Astronomy and in Cosmology), and works in Mauritius as high school educator in Physics. Preetum is a former scholar in Evolutionary Biology; a self-learned naturalist, lover of big cats and dedicated to their conservation. He has been a keen Corbett fan since nearly four decades.



Fernando Quevedo de Oliveira (Brazil) is a photojournalist from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He has been working from 1988 at the newspaper O Globo. Published articles in O Globo, Geographic Universal Magazine, Manchete Magazine, Terra Magazine, Nature Magazine. Fernando is an avid nature enthusiast and visited the African savannah several times, countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Namibia, South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe. He went to India to watch tigers in Nagarahole Park in Karnataka estate.



Ali Akhtar (India) is a Mechanical Engineer in Dubai. He started his career as Lecturer of Physics and continued to do so till 2008. He is currently working in Energy sector and has been doing independent research on various subjects. Ali is fascinated by the big questions and has written notes and articles about Big Bang Singularity, time travel, origin of the Universe, about the meaning and significance of life, science and religion, and the place



of humans in the grand scheme of the universe. An avid nature lover, Ali read Corbett's book *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* and his other books for the first time in 2012 and since then developed a great desire to visit the Corbett places in Kumaon.

Stuart Gelzer (USA) read Jim Corbett as a child growing up in West Africa. Later he attended Woodstock School in Mussoorie, India, and traveled in Kumaon. As a boy Stuart wanted to be an archaeologist; instead he has been a screenwriter, a film editor, a drama teacher, and a fine art photographer (stuartgelzerphotography.com). He is also a lifelong singer specializing in folk music from the Republic of Georgia, where he first met Dr. Jordania, but decades passed before each realized the other was also a Corbett fan. Currently Stuart teaches film and photography in northern New Mexico, USA, and writes novels and travel memoir: whether about being an American singer in Georgia or about following the Corbett Brothers around Kumaon (where somehow he has slipped from being an observer to being a participant).



Michael Barton (Ireland) started the 'Jim Corbett Books' Facebook page back in 2012 and has since enjoyed sharing any new and interesting finds with the large Jim Corbett fan base. After being brought up on a farm in Sussex, England, Michael completed his education with a degree and then spent 5 years traveling Australia, New Zealand, Canada and some parts of Asia. He settled on the West coast of Ireland, where he has managed an accommodation business for the last 5 years. Always a keen book lover, Michael has collected over a thousand books and his favourite authors include; Graham Greene, Henry Williamson, Gavin Maxwell and of course, Jim Corbett.



Christopher de Coulon Berthoud (UK) lives in Rochester, Kent. He initially trained as a craft-bookbinder, but has subsequently worked for the British Film Institute, been a rare-book dealer, and is currently a Social Anthropologist on an ESRC PhD scholarship, researching modes of historicity in the Medway Towns. He was happy to read in his favourite Corbett's book about his distant relative.



The second volume of “Behind Jim Corbett’s Stories” continues the line of research into the legacy of the legendary conservationist, humanitarian, naturalist, hunter of man-eating tigers and leopards, and author of timeless classic books including “Man-Eaters of Kumaon”, “Jungle Lore”, and “My India.”

The authors of this volume, all members of the Jim Corbett International Research Group, continued their fieldworks in Kumaon, where they diligently followed the footsteps of Jim Corbett, meeting the people directly affected by Jim Corbett’s life and work - people who still live in picturesque villages in close proximity to tigers and leopards. The authors have also searched through and dissected archived material, unearthing new facts to share with the many Corbett fans all around the world.

The interested reader will be delighted to find in this volume new details including the precise dates of the killing of Champawat and Chuka man-eaters, to see the place where the Panar man-eating leopard was killed, read about the mystery behind the Purnagiri lights, and learn the true reasons that put Corbett in a crazy pursuit of the Talla Des man-eating tiger while in an awful physical state. The reader can also have a closer look at Charles Berthoud’s life, a dear friend of Corbett who helped launch his deadly career as a hunter of man-eating big cats. One can also read Corbett’s private letters written during his dramatic hunts and various war deployments - as well as some of his rare and also unpublished writings, including writings by others about Jim as well.

On this photo on the back cover of the book the members of Jim Corbett International Research Group are discussing plans of the day in Kala Agar on April 3, 2018, the place where Corbett was staying while hunting the Chowgarh man-eating tiger some 78 years before. (Photo by S. Gelzer)

