

## Beautiful leather 'document bags' made in Nepal



These leather bags are in black or brown leather, with a variety of bright coloured linings. They are 39 x 26 cms in size (15.5 x 10.5 inches), and cost £20 each, including p&p.  
Contact us with your order by phone or email.

### Child sponsorship

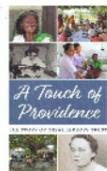
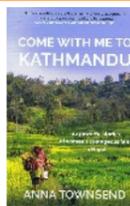
There are many families in Nepal who cannot afford to educate their children, but education remains the best way of lifting people out of poverty. We are so grateful to every sponsor who supports children in this way; and if you would like to start helping a child, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

**Radika** is 10 years old and her mum is part of a Momentum Group near Janakpur. Her father is not well and cannot work so they are extremely poor and live in a tiny house that is full of holes, which NLT is currently rebuilding for them. Radika was treated by Lalgadh for TB of the spine, which had bent her double. Now she can walk again and is a bright girl needing a consistent education.



### Good Books

'Come with me to Kathmandu' is a new book by Anna Townsend about 12 Nepali women from diverse and difficult backgrounds, who all find their way to better things through faith in Jesus Christ. Two of these women are affected by leprosy. Anna founded the Women Without Roofs charity with the support of Eileen Lodge. Available on Amazon at £10.11



'A Touch of Providence' is NLT's history, full of photos and fascinating stories, from the early days with Eileen Lodge in Kathmandu, and the subsequent vision and establishment of Lalgadh Hospital. Amusing accounts of different people's experiences add colour to this wonderful story. Only £10 including UK postage. Discounts available for multiple copies.

### Speaking Team!

Enid and/or Mike would love to visit your church, school, club or group to share about the work of NLT and life in Nepal, and show you the NLT handicrafts made at our fairtrade workshops!

If you are someone who prays for NLT, we send out a monthly prayer letter by email. If you do not use email, we can post it to you if you let us know. It will help to keep you updated between our newsletters.

### Twitter

NLT has a Twitter account!   
See the tweets on our website or follow us at:  
[@NepalLeprosyTr](https://twitter.com/NepalLeprosyTr)

If you would be happy to receive this newsletter by email to save NLT some postage, please let us know by emailing us at: [info@nlt.org.uk](mailto:info@nlt.org.uk)

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# Nepal Leprosy Trust

Changing lives

## The Problem of Poverty

NLT's work has always been closely connected to poverty because leprosy is a disease that flourishes in poverty. Around the world, wherever leprosy is still a problem, poverty is also a problem. At Lalgadh, the diagnosis and treatment of leprosy remains a key activity, along with caring for those who are vulnerable and damaged by the disease. Our staff are used to poverty, but sometimes even they can be shocked at its effects.

**Sita** is a young woman of 20, and only indirectly affected by leprosy - her father having been treated at Lalgadh several times because of leprosy. Sita herself has suffered because of caste and poverty, injury and resulting stigma.



Sita (left), and fellow patient Sudama

Sita was brought to Lalgadh Hospital by her father just before Christmas. She was very unwell due to a spinal injury resulting from a fall that had left her with paralysed legs, incontinence, and ulcerated feet due to nerve damage. She needed much help and care, and was distraught. Her father left her at Lalgadh and was not seen again for two months.

The medical team addressed her ulcers and general health, while the physio team started to work with her to get her used to crutches, and to see how much use she could regain in her legs. Meanwhile, the community team and counselling team worked with Sita to understand her story, help her in her distress, and talk with her about her future. It transpired that Sita lost her mother when she was six, and had to take on the family chores and cooking from then on. She did not go to school and could not even get out to play much. In her family's caste girls are considered a burden, and she was forced at 17 to marry an Indian man living over the border. Her father could only manage a small dowry, with the result that she was resented by her new family. They used her as a slave for all the chores for the large extended family, including two sister-in-laws. She was not permitted to visit her father and had no one to talk with, as even her husband was not interested in her. This continued for a year or so until the resentment of her in-laws increased to the point where they took her back to her father's house as a 'reject'. But he did not want her either and sent her back - to her further shame and embarrassment. Things came to a head on the roof of the house, when her husband spotted a gold pendant that she was wearing and wanted to take it from her. Sita resisted, and in the struggle she was pushed off the roof.

Sita was taken to a hospital, badly injured, and received surgery to repair her damaged spinal cord; but it was ineffective and expensive and the family couldn't pay. They brought her home,

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shut her in the house, and left her to struggle, largely alone, with useless legs and incontinence. At one point she stopped eating the food she was given, convinced it was poisoned. She could not complain to anyone as she had no marriage certificate or citizenship, and she expected to die.

Eventually her father came to see her, saw the terrible state she was in, and took her back to his house to try and care for her. However, her misery continued as her brother's wife did not want to care for a girl with paralysed legs, and other problems. The sister-in-law did all she could to drive Sita out, until, finally, her father brought her to Lalgadh just before Christmas, about three years after her marriage, and still only 20.

Mike Houghton (General Manager of NLT UK) met Sita whilst visiting Lalgadh in mid-February with Mike and Sue Wells (Trustee), about two months after her admission. Her ulcers are healing well, and she is quite proficient with crutches on flat ground, but she longs to be able to walk normally again and to go home -

despite the difficulties there. Sita feels that being able to walk will help her to start again and find a better life. She may regain more use of her legs with time and practice, but anaesthesia in her feet (and the associated risk of ulceration) is likely to remain a problem that she will have to live with for the rest of her life.



Sita sharing a hug with Trustee Sue Wells

The team at Lalgadh, including doctors, nurses, a physiotherapist and a counsellor, have been working together to improve Sita's physical and mental well-being. Her future will not be easy, but a sewing training course is a possible way for her to be more independent. Sita's time in the company of other ladies in the inpatient department, and being looked after by caring staff, has helped her through some of her sadness and rejection. But she still has much to work through, plus a difficult home situation to face.

Since our visit, Sita's father came and took her home again, with her agreement. She is going to begin sewing training, and seems happy to have a chance to start life again - even with the challenges she faces. Do please remember this young woman in your prayers. She needs more physical healing, as well as healing of the inner scars resulting from her experiences. For NLT, it has been another opportunity to help someone broken by poverty, stigma and disability, and the unkindness of a culture that still largely measures the worth of people by the caste they were born into.



**PS: Sangeeta**, a lady whose story we shared before, was in a neighbouring bed to Sita and continues to improve. There is still work to do in her village to make it possible for her to go home, including making a better house for her and her family. Her feet still need more healing, but she is more cheerful than before and very much part of the camaraderie amongst the ladies and staff in the wards.

## Warmth for Winter



In the Terai (plains) area, the weather can cool a lot during December, and then in January a thick fog descends for several weeks blocking the sun and making things even colder. This winter was extra cold, so some of the poor people in our work areas were critically cold, with increased asthma, pneumonia and colds. The team at Lalgadh requested urgent funds for warm bedding, which we were able to provide. They bought 100 large quilts and distributed them to those at most risk. Many families sleep with three or four people in a bed, so each of these quilts keeps several people warm.



The team at Lalgadh would like to thank everyone who made it possible to help those in need this winter.

## Christmas at Lalgadh

After two years of subdued Christmas celebrations due to the pandemic, this year was an opportunity to enjoy a lively time again. There was a Christmas party for the staff and patients with lots of singing, laughter and food. There was a Christmas service, and a men's and a women's football match with enthusiastic participation. It was an opportunity to reflect on God's goodness to all and His faithfulness. Everyone had a great time!



## Ruku and Anita

Ruku now lives in Kathmandu with her brother and his wife who are caring for her. Cancer has progressed so that Ruku can no longer work, and she is dependent on her family. To go out, her brother has to carry her down the stairs. NLT staff have raised some funds to help buy a special bed and other needed things, and the Mikes and Sue were



Ruku



Anita

able to visit her and see what else may be needed. She has been very encouraged by gifts that have come to support her continuing treatment and care.

We are delighted to report that Anita, our nursing in-charge, is now back at work at Lalgadh after a period of illness. She is pictured here with Priya, a young nurse whose education and training was sponsored by an NLT supporter - the late Judith Browning.

Thank you for your prayers for Ruku and Anita.

## World Leprosy Day - 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023



In the UK we marked World Leprosy Day with tea, coffee and cakes at an open morning in the office, with NLT handicraft items for sale as well. We raised well over £100 in donations, sold some fair trade items, and had lots of conversation about the work.



At Lalgadh, they decided to mark the day with a big cleanup on the road leading up to the hospital. All the staff got together to pick up rubbish and clear away the leaves and dirt; and they left the area looking tidy and smart. They are pictured here gathered in the hospital entrance with a World Leprosy Day Banner.



## Shakyamadi update



Many of you will remember Shakyamadi, the elderly man at Lalgadh Church who needed a house, and for whom several people contributed funds to make that possible for him.

Shakyamadi suffered a stroke in December 2021 which has been hard for

him, and Mike Houghton visited him with Dambar recently to see how he was doing. Shakyamadi was resting in the sun and was being looked after by his family. His new house is a safe place for him and his granddaughter, and it seems the process of NLT assisting him has drawn his family closer to him and changed the dynamics from semi-estrangement to warm inclusion.



## New X-ray machine

The team at Lalgadh is thrilled to finally take delivery of the new X-ray machine provided by the St Lazarus Charitable Trust. It has taken several months to arrive, with a complicated customs clearance process, but it is here at last. It will greatly improve the diagnostic services, and can easily be moved to any part of the hospital where it is needed.

*Thank you St Lazarus Charitable Trust!*



## NLT Sponsored Walk



Having missed last year's sponsored walk in September, we have set a date of Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June for a 2023 sponsored walk. A venue is still to be decided, but it will probably be west of London. If anyone would like to join us for an 8 to 10 mile walk to raise funds for our leprosy work, please get in touch and we can send details as soon as we know them.