

1st & 2nd Recce Expeditions  
to  
SOUTH EAST ASIA  
(Malaya, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia)

An extension to the overland  
expedition to India, Kashmir  
& Nepal starting in Khatmandu.

1st on Tuesday 18th November -  
ending in Singapore on Sunday 18th Jan. '70.

2nd on Tuesday 16th December -  
ending in Singapore on Sunday 15th Feb. '70.

## RECONNAISSANCE EXPEDITION TO SOUTH EAST ASIA

### INTRODUCTION

The first and second expeditions into South East Asia are planned as an extension to the overland expedition to India and forerunner to a series of similar projects. Future projects are being designed not solely to synchronise with the arrival of expeditions in Khatmandu but on their own merit to interest men and women in Europe, Australasia and America.

Whereas in the future the expeditions will be supported by the availability of seats on chartered aircraft to and from Bangkok, members of these first two expeditions will be drawn solely from those on the expeditions to India taking place this Autumn.

It must be clearly understood that although some Encounter Overland personnel have first-hand knowledge of South East Asia - indeed of virtually all this planned route -, the organisation has not till now had vehicles operating in the region.

The vehicles involved - Long-wheel-base Land Rovers - will be part of the expeditions from London. The groups - a maximum of ten - will assemble in Khatmandu from the various groups that will be leaving London in September and October.

### OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE

It is a well known principle of Encounter Overland that each member of the group pays an inclusive price which covers all the main expenses of the expedition. In the case of these expeditions to South East Asia however the principle is deliberately compromised; food is not included.

There are three main reasons for this. First the stocks of food taken from England will be largely exhausted. Second, a Land Rover carrying a group of ten cannot carry proportionate supplies as well. Third (and most significant), South East Asia is famed for delicious food that is not expensive and is prepared at frequent eating places that are relatively clean. This is in remarkable contrast to what has been witnessed (if not actually encountered) in the Middle East and India.

It is anticipated that a small food kitty will be formed to cope with breakfasts and snacks and that other meals will mostly be bought out. Although this is then in theory an individual arrangement, no doubt in most cases the group will be eating together. The vehicle will be carrying a (refilled) gas cylinder and stove and all usual cooking equipment.

Without hesitation it can be stated that an estimate of 10/- per day for all food is adequate. Because we do not wish this adaptation of our inclusive principle to spoil group unity we feel everybody ought to be 'in the same boat' and thus ask that members should expect to be involved in an expense of £25 for all food over the period of seven weeks, (which excludes the week aboard the S.S. Rajula).

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

COST. The cost to each member of the eight week expedition is £128. Because of the experimental nature of the project, it is being operated on safe but not necessarily profit costings.

JOINING. The enclosed booking form needs completing and the usual deposit of £18 is required. The balance is due before leaving England. Each group will consist of our own 'Dragoman' and nine others. It is quite probable that more people will be interested than places are available. Thus if you are seriously interested in this project but have some query, you are strongly recommended to contact us as soon as possible. We cannot accept more than the first nine applicants for each group.

ARRANGEMENTS IN KHATMANDU. Each India group spends five or six days in Khatmandu and this is an ideal place for the South East Asia group to convene. In this way some people will have the usual five or six days in Nepal while others will have slightly longer.

THE VOYAGE MADRAS/PENANG/SINGAPORE. The cost of the voyage Madras/Singapore aboard the British India Steam Navigation ship 'RAJULA' is included in the cost of the expedition. The minimum cost to us for a berth is £42. People will be sharing 2, 4, 6 & 8 berth cabins. The Land Rover (being over 2½ tons) cannot be unloaded at Penang, but must go on to Singapore. However a decision will be taken later as to whether or not it would be a good idea for most of the group to disembark at Penang Island and spend four days there while the Land Rover is unloaded at Singapore and driven up to Penang.

INSURANCE. Each person will be entitled to an extension of 38 days to the cover arranged for the India expedition. Thus in the usual way each policy will be valid for about two weeks beyond the completion of the journey in South East Asia. This cover will be arranged by us as a matter of course simply by altering your existing proposal form. The policy will also contain a Loss of Deposits clause which will assist should something 'untoward' happen to you during the India expedition. Further extensions to the policy can easily be arranged.

PASSPORTS & VISAS. A passport has got to be valid at least until the early Spring of next year and have about ten pages for visas and border stamps. Visas will be required by British and Commonwealth subjects for Thailand, (obtained in Penang), Laos, (obtained in Bangkok), and Cambodia (obtained in either Bangkok or Vientiane). The total cost of visas will not be more than £2.

INJECTIONS. The same injections are required as for the India expedition. There is now a vaccine (called Gamma-Globulin) against infective Hepatitis which is known to break out occasionally in South East Asia. The vaccine will survive in the body for six months and the single shot should be had only shortly before departing from England. G.P.s can give it on the National Health, otherwise it is available at The Vaccination Centre, 53 Cumberland Place, W.1. (01.262.6456) charge 3 guineas. The jab is not compulsory but is recommended.

MAILING ADDRESSES. Mailing addresses and dates will be supplied to members of the group in due course.

MONEY AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE. There are two important points here. First that you are entitled to use as much money as you wish in Malaya and Singapore (Sterling Area), and that the food kitty will be formed either there or in India (also Sterling Area). Second that British subjects are entitled to draw on next year's £50 allowance as from the 31st October this year. (Not that it is expected this will necessarily be needed).

CONNECTING TRAVEL. Singapore is the best port in the region for those continuing further east or to Australasia. There is also a certain amount of shipping westward. Although exact dates cannot be quoted yet, there are charter flights from Bangkok to London at least once a month. The cost of the single journey is £105.

QUERIES. Do make sure that if you have any queries you get in touch with us as soon as possible; if by phone ask to speak to Tony Lindsay Jones, if by post, that letters are addressed to Jones personally.

## ITINERARY

\* The best possible time to visit South East Asia is between November and March.

### TIMINGS

#### GROUP ONE

Leave Khatmandu..... 18th Nov.  
arrive Madras..... 9th Dec.  
arrive Singapore..... 20th Dec.  
arrive Bangkok..... 29th Dec.  
return Singapore..... 18th Jan.

#### GROUP TWO

Leave Khatmandu..... 16th Dec.  
arrive Madras..... 2nd Jan.  
arrive Singapore..... 13th Jan.  
arrive Bangkok..... 23rd Jan.  
return Singapore..... 15th Feb.

### INDIA.

The group will convene in Khatmandu and will return to India. There is no need to go to Calcutta as the route to the south goes direct from Ranchi to Cattack but a detour can be made at group request. There is plenty of time to reach Madras and the leisurely journey will be an excellent opportunity to explore parts of southern India.

The State of Orissa with a fine sandy coast-line and jungly hinterland is very rural with only small towns and splendid temples such as those at Bhubaneswar and the famous old sun-chariot temple at Konarak near Puri.

The last time that we had first-hand experience of the road south was some years ago. Apparently the road has been improved considerably, but at that time there were many rivers crossed only by ferries - and certainly not all will have been replaced by bridges - and in parts the road will still be bad and unsurfaced. The route stays close to the coast and goes from Orissa into the State of Andhra Pradesh. The two largest rivers crossed are the Godavari and the Krishna. Time may allow a detour to Hyderabad. In the region around Madras the famous seven Pagodas of Mahabalipuram will be visited.

### THE VOYAGE.

The vehicle needs to be available for loading 24 hours before the Rajula sails. The journey across the Bay of Bengal to Penang takes six days.

### MALAYA.

If the group remains in Penang while the Land Rover is unloaded in Singapore they will have time to explore one of the loveliest islands in the South Seas. It abounds in lush sub-tropical vegetation and the people - Malay, Chinese and Indian - are friendly and charming. There is a cable railway to the peak behind George Town, the capital, marvellous beaches and some good hostels, such as Y.M.C.A., where the group can stay at our expense until the vehicle returns from Singapore. Ferries to the mainland are frequent and we shall come ashore on mainland Malaya at Butterworth, and from there go north through the jungle and rubber plantations to Alor Star.

## THAILAND.

The journey through Southern Thailand will be quite fast - for the plan is to see more of it on the return to Singapore -. The road north is not good, it is however improving, and it will take 3-4 days to reach Bangkok.

Bangkok (or Krung Thep) lies on the eastern bank of the Chao Phya River from which flow the many canals that have earned for the city the name 'Venice of the Orient'. In one region of the canals is the Floating Market where fresh provisions that have come by sampan from the surrounding countryside are sold daily.

The city is modern in many amenities and, (for better or worse) many attitudes, but it is the continuance of the old ways that are so pleasing, whether it is the simplicity of the Floating Market or the splendour of the many temples and pagodas. There is the Wat Phra Keo (temple of the Emerald Buddha) lying within The Royal Palace, the Wat Po, the temple of the famous reclining Buddha, and the Wat Arun (Temple of the Dawn) that lies on the far bank of the river and whose high tower glints in the sunrise. All should be visited in the early morning before the city has become hot and dusty.

At least two complete days will be spent in Bangkok and the nights spent in a cheap hotel in the poor but really interesting part of the Chinese quarter of town. By the third day visas for Laos will have been obtained and we must leave. There will though be another opportunity to see what has been missed when the group returns from Cambodia.

The excellent road north all the way to the Mekon River and the border with Laos has been built with American help, (for strategic as well as social reasons?) It travels through several towns and across open scrub country to Nong Khai.

## LAOS.

The Mekon River is crossed by the ferry to the Lao Customs on the northern bank. Vientiane the capital of Laos is about 25 miles from the border along a reasonable road. It was the provincial capital when Laos was the most remote of the three provinces of French Indo-China, and probably retains more of the French influence than either Viet Nam or Cambodia. French is spoken widely, there are excellent French cafes - croissant and bagette pain - and there seems to have been left behind a pleasant, slightly archaic flavour that suits the Laos and the weather. Nevertheless there has been little hindrance, if not much actual help either, to the American project of a road link between Vientiane and the Royal Capital of Luang Prabang 150 miles further up the Mekon and in the heart of the Laotian jungles. This road has been open barely a year and we shall use it for the first time.

From this small city that perches above the Mekon nearly a thousand miles from its mouth we will return to Vientiane and follow approximately the course of the river first eastwards and then southwards through Pak Sane, Thakhek, Savannakhet and Pakse. There are long-standing plans to build an all-weather road. They have not materialised yet, but the road is kept open and each stretch maintained with the help of bulldozers.

