

**IMPRESSIONS ON THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL
SOCIETY OF LONDON**

June 8-9-10, 1980

by

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I. THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

The Royal Geographical Society was founded in 1830.

From the article "The Royal Geographical Society Today" which was prominently featured in the 150th Anniversary Programme, excerpts are hereunder quoted:

"When Queen Victoria awarded the Charter to the Society, its objectives were 'the advancement of geographical science' and 'the improvement and diffusion of geographical knowledge.'... When the RGS was founded in 1830, geography was hardly recognized as an academic subject. Now, thanks in part to the efforts of the Society, geography is established as one of the fastest-growing university subjects. It is now the third largest 'O' level subject in British schools. The appeal to the young is obvious, for the study of geography is of fundamental importance to our present and future lives. Such topical issues as energy resources, pollution control, planning and land use, conservation, natural hazards and disasters, environmental and ecological control, population movement, and third world development, all come within the scope of geography. The Royal Geographical Society seeks to be a focal point and headquarters for this large and exciting subject" — unquote.

We, in the Philippine Geographical Society dream to approximate these objectives of the Royal Geographical Society. It is indeed a big dream. However we are still young, being only 30 years compared to the Royal Geographical Society of 150 years.

¹ President, Philippine Geographical Society.

II. 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

1. The Royal Geographical Society celebrated its 150th Anniversary on June 8, 9 & 10, 1980 in London at its headquarters, Kensington Gore, London SW72AR, just across the Hyde Park.

2. Invitation

As early as October 1979, we received the invitation dated September 21, 1979 from the Royal Geographical Society President, Lord Hunt and Director Secretary John Hemming, inviting the President, Philippine Geographical Society to join them in the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the RGS. I could hardly believe that such honor would be given by the world's distinguished geographical Society to the Philippine Geographical Society.

I decided to attend to represent our Society, spending my own money for the plane fare Manila-London and back. Fortunately, there were other organizations in the Philippines like the Philippine Social Science Council and the local office of the British Council which provided financial assistance for six days per diems while in London.

The attendance, however, was considered official by the Office of the President, Malacañang, on condition that no government fund will be spent except indirectly, the continuation of my consultant's fee during my absence from the Ministry of Human Settlements.

3. I arrived at London on June 8, Sunday morning and registered immediately at the Society headquarters.

There were 33 countries represented in this celebration with a total of 69 foreign representatives, as follows:

1. USA	10	9. Austria	2
2. France	7	10. Hungary	2
3. Canada	4	11. Netherlands	2
4. Mexico	4	12. Finland	2
5. Argentina	3	13. Spain	2
6. Nigeria	3	14. S. Africa	2
7. India	3	15. Sweden	2
8. Poland	3		

The countries or organization with one delegate each were:

1. Australia	10. N.A.T.O.
2. Arab Republic of Egypt	11. New Zealand
3. Belgium	12. Fed. Rep. of Germany
4. Israel	13. People's Republic of China
5. Iceland	14. PHILIPPINES
6. Ireland	15. Portugal
7. Greece	16. Turkey
8. Malaysia	17. Uganda
9. Norway	18. Yugoslavia

Indeed, it was very rewarding to experience the so many things geographic on the first day of the celebration. We had the pleasure of meeting geographers from other countries, exchanged pleasantries, visited the Society's library and bought souvenirs — one book I bought costs 10 pounds sterling or an equivalent of P140.00 (Geography Today and Tomorrow).

To me the most exciting time was on the evening of the reception, June 9th. During this reception, the Royal Visitors can meet only a limited number of guests, and the Council had arranged for a number of small groups to attend in selected areas along the routes to be taken by the Queen, Prince Philip and the Duke of Kent. In this regard the Philippine Representative was selected to be in one of the two groups that were ringed with a group leader to be introduced to the Royal Visitors. Our two groups of five foreign delegates each were located on both sides of the threshold where the Queen and the Royal Escort stopped to listen and salute at the tune of the National Anthem.

The first group consisted of:

1. Prof. Francisco V. Maure — Royal Geographical Society of Madrid
2. Mr. & Mrs. Theo Thynne — Royal Geographical Society of Australia
3. Prof. John M. Were — Uganda Geographical Association
4. Prof. Dominador Z. Rosell — Philippine Geographical Society
5. Prof. M. Grallab — Geographic Society of Cairo, United Arab Republic

Second Group

1. Prof. O. Erol — Ankara University, Istanbul
2. Dr. A. Bassola Batalla — National University of Mexico
3. Dr. Keith Fraser — Hon. Sec., Royal Canadian Geog. Society
4. Tan Sri Datu Haji Murad Mond Noor — Pres., National Geographical Association, Malaysia
5. Dr. D. K. Chu — Nanking University, China.

Impact of the Evening Ceremony. — Some of the delegates wore their national costume. I wore a **Barong Tagalog** with the seal of the Philippine Geographical Society. The most impressive impact of the evening that created a concept in my mind was when Her Majesty the Queen, after waving her hand to the general audience, turned around toward the garden to plant a **birthday tree** at the Society's garden.

Yes, why not give yourself and the country a lasting gift by planting a tree on your birthday or somebody's birthday dear to you?

The Philippines has about 47 million people. If we can make them plant a tree on their birthdays, the Philippines will have so many trees a year. Of course, every tree planted will have to be taken care of by the birthday celebrant. In this way the country will have a wholesome arboreal environment.

The National Environmental Protection Council recommends that you may select the tree to plant that will enhance the environment. They have selected some varieties of trees that absorb pollutants. Such trees as mahogany, san francisco, gumamela, manluko, ipil-ipil, narra, acacia, santol and many others will be available to anybody who may wish to help conserve our environment.

As we implement our concept of Plant a Tree on your birthday, we are trying to conserve our environment as a gift to ourselves and to our country and give the future generation a beautiful legacy.

The Philippine Geographical Society will surely cooperate with anybody who will be involved in this concept. Plant a tree on your birthday. Make yourself and the country enjoy a lasting legacy.

If we can do this, my attendance to the 150th Anniversary of the Royal Geography is certainly well spent.



Geography and Social Studies

What is the relationship between geography and the social studies? Before geography teachers attempt to answer this question they should be sure they are up to date on the newer definitions of social studies. Have you read some of the recent ones? The following on the teaching of the social studies in the elementary schools is taken from a book published in 1950: "The social studies, strictly defined, are those portions of history, geography, civics, and other social sciences that are selected for use in teaching. As used by an increasing number of elementary-school workers, however, the term is more inclusive, coming to include within its compass contributions from many and varied subjects — the social sciences, art, literature, music, and even some phases of science." In conformity with this tendency in usage, 'social studies' as used in this volume will connote greater breadth of content than is customary when used in secondary schools and colleges.

"The term 'social studies' 'most emphatically... does not refer to a particular kind of organization' and 'cannot properly be limited to any scheme or type of fusion or integration.' For example, the term may be used to describe the content of history and geography when offered as two separate and distinct subjects, and also when they are combined and merged as in a study of a local community. It will be assumed throughout this volume, however, that most elementary schools will find it more practicable in terms of economy of time, simplicity of curriculum organization, and effectiveness of learning to unify social studies as much as possible."