

# BALIPARA FOUNDATION

Assam • India

24<sup>th</sup> February 2014

Ranjit Barthakur

Chairman

## Condolence to Late Mark Shand



I am utterly devastated by this sudden and tragic loss of Late Mark Shand, one of my great and best buddies & brother to Duchess of Cornwall.

There are no words to describe Late Mark Shand. He was a man of extraordinary vitality, a tireless campaigner and conservationist whose incredible work through the Elephant Family and beyond remained his focus right up until his death... He was a true force for conservation. He was both a legend and an inspiration to us and above all our dear friend.

He wrote about travel, conservation and India. His books included *Travels on my Elephant and River Dog*. Shand was the author of *Travels on My Elephant*, *River Dog* and other books. He has also been featured in many documentaries, some related to his writings. Elephants are featured in many of his writings and other pursuits. An unabashed Indophile, the majority of his writings and TV features are Indo-Nostalgic. He also had a deep interest in Hinduism and Indian culture.

As a BBC conservationist and travel writer, he authored a book and the corresponding BBC documentary, *Queen of the Elephants*, based on the life of the first female mahout in recent times — Parbati Barua of Kaziranga. The book went on to win the 1996 Thomas Cook Travel Book Award and the Prix Littéraire d'Amis, providing publicity simultaneously to the profession of mahouts, and to Kaziranga.

[www.baliparafoundation.com](http://www.baliparafoundation.com)

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Shand was actively involved in the conservation of the Asian elephant and co-founded a charity called Elephant Family. He also wrote a book about his adventure with "Tara" (his elephant) in India

Clarence House described Shand as "a man of extraordinary vitality, a tireless campaigner and conservationist whose incredible work through the Elephant Family and beyond remained his focus right up until his death".

Shand was chairman and founder of Elephant Family, a charity which worked to support Asian elephants in India. The charity raised £950,000 on Tuesday night shortly before Shand's injury.

**Shand** was chairman and founder of **Elephant Family**, a charity ... the **Elephant Family website**, **Shand described how he "fell in love" with an elephant called Tara in Madras. He bought Tara and rode her across the north-eastern states of ... that inspired his book Travels with My Elephant and prompted him** to start Elephant Family in 2000.

A renowned conservationist and expert on the Asian elephant, Mr Shand's book Queen of the Elephants about a female mahout, or elephant guide, won the Thomas Cook Travel Book Award and the Prix Litteraire d'Amis and was made into a BBC documentary.

We would truly miss his presence and pray we regain all the strength in overcoming the irreplaceable loss of Mark.

One cannot imagine our anguish and sorrow on his passing on-Profound grief.

In Sorrow...

Ranjit Barthakur