

COUNTRY·LIFE

PUKKA CHUKKA
It may be the most bizarre game ever invented, but no less than nine teams competed at the Fourth World Elephant Polo Championships at the Royal Chitwan National Park, Nepal.

Cartier, putting a little sparkle into the proceedings, sponsored Ringo Starr and wife Barbara Bach, Billy Connolly and Max Boyce, who brought his own tv crew, while British Airways flew out Virginia Holgate and husband Hamish Leng, with Lucinda and David Green.

Other intrepid players included the British Ghurkas, the Pan Am Jumbos, a host of polo players proper and some hardy Nepalese locals. The home team, Tiger Tops Tuskers, were captained by the redoubtable Jim Edwards and went on to win the tournament – again.

Although elephant polo depends more on the skill of the mahout than the expertise of the rider, a head for heights and a modicum of stamina are still required to endure the five scorching days. Certainly a far cry from Smith's Lawn. □



Smiling for posterity in the face of defeat, the Pan Am and British Airways teams sportingly stand by their mallets



Billy Connolly regains his sense of fun – after losing it and his bags at the airport



Happiness is a peaceful pint – even big Starrs need a little genius



Taking some stick . . . but it's all a bit of horseplay to Lucinda Green



Big white chief Jim Edwards explains to Hamish Leng, David Green and Virginia Holgate how to stay on top



Not even the losing Cartier team goes away emptyhanded. Ringo Starr, Barbara Bach, Alain Perrin (President of Cartier), Max Boyce and Billy Connolly with their consolation prizes

PHOTOGRAPHS: STEVE SHIPMAN