



Eleanor Nesbitt

It feels as if I knew about Shap all my Warwick life (so at least from 1984) and perhaps well before. That was because Bob Jackson, Owen Cole, Mary Hayward and other friends and colleagues in Religious Education/ Religious Studies talked about Shap so affectionately, and because I valued Shap's publications, not least the calendar. I am reliably informed that I joined the working party in the late 1990s.

My richest memory was the welcome that Shap gave to *Guru Nanak*, the book that Gopinder Kaur and I co-authored (Bayeux Arts: 1999). Writing the book together was a very rewarding experience. Into the framework of questions that I had drawn up – at least that is how I recall the process – Gopinder poured her insights and also her familiarity with a wide range of depictions of Guru Nanak by artists across several centuries. The book benefited too from her years of work in publishing. Partly because of what I learned from co-authoring with Gopinder, I strongly recommend writing partnerships in Religious Education and Religious Studies between an insider and an outsider to a faith tradition. I'm sure that Owen Cole, with whom Gopinder and I co-edited the *Sikh Bulletin* for many years, played a part in our receiving a treasured Shap Award (the third to be awarded). That was in 2000.

After joining the working party, I accepted the invitation to join the calendar group. My main contribution was to find dates for the Hindu and Sikh sections of the Shap calendar and to find suitable wording for the description of each of these festivals. In those days the Sikh dates were all determined by the Vikrami calendar, one of several Hindu (luni-solar) calendars. Nowadays, since the development of the Nanakshahi calendar, many Sikh dates are constant (in theory at least) by the secular/ Gregorian calendar. During my years, there wasn't the same level of information online about Hindu and Sikh festival dates as there is now: establishing accurate dates over a year ahead was a challenge, entailing considerable investigation.

The benefits of David Rose's fine photographs and Peter Woodward's vision and organisational expertise were memorable plus points. Most memorably, for a number of years the calendar group's meetings were at the home of Cherry Gould. Seeing her defiance of MS was inspiring and seeing its ravages was deeply saddening. I miss you, Cherry.

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