

# QUEENS GURKHA ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER  
Nos. 3 & 4

N.

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# THE GURKHA ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER

No.3

February 1972

## CONTENTS

Editorial.....	2
Regimental Newsletter.....	4
BOs, QGOs & B/WOs & Sgts with the Regiment.....	11
Land Forces Sports Results.....	15
Brigade News.....	16
Minutes of the AGM.....	18
GBA & GEA Functions.....	22
Statuettes.....	23
GORs on Courses in UK.....	24
Letter from Hon Lt Dhojbir Limbu MVO.....	26
Uganda Diary.....	27
Pensioner News.....	31
The Dog.....	32
A Gurkha Officers View of Australia.....	33
The Gurkha Engineers & the Nepal Cup.....	35
Family Gossip.....	39
GEA Address List.....	41

## EDITORIAL

One of the nicest things about editing a Newsletter such as this is getting so many letters from old friends. We sent out the first issue to 136 GEA members; 98 replied that they wanted further issues and your editor got 24 letters with news and helpful suggestions for future improvements. These suggestions were much appreciated because, if the Newsletter is to be really successful, it must provide what members want. In this issue we have included lists of serving BOs, QGOs and B/Sgts which is a much-requested item.

The big event in the next six months is the handing over of the Colonelcy of the Regiment from General John Bowring to General Sir Bill Jackson. As this is a major event for the Regiment and the GEA, a Gurkha Engineers Dinner is being held at Brompton on 26th November 1971. Full details of this appear later on in the Newsletter.

We will all be very sorry that General John's tenure as Colonel is coming to an end. He has had such a close connection with the Regiment since 1955, first as Commandant, then as CE FARELF and E-in-C and finally as Colonel. Those who were lucky enough to be serving with the Regiment when he was Commandant will remember what a lot he did for us. Apart from raising our standards of engineering, both military and civil, he started so many of the things which are nowadays accepted as traditions. He wrote the Mess Rules, standardised the dress regulations and organised the Regimental Roster of officers. It was an invigorating period in the Regiment's history. Colonel John, as he then was, had an eagle eye for spotting mistakes and inefficiencies. Many a troop commander complacently building an airstrip at the end of a muddy track impassable to a Landrover, or even a Rolls, found the Commandant descending from a great height in a Tiger Moth. Colonel Bill Jackson, his successor, was such a splendid Commandant too that any fears or trepidations that the Regiment might have had were swept away. And, no doubt, the handing over of the Colony will be just the same. We all look forward

very much to having such an old friend as General Bill as our next Colonel.

One of the points that strike one on reading Tony Ricket's Regimental Newsletter, is what a fast and furious social life they do lead in Hong Kong. Party after party. Yet the military standards remain as high as ever. We include in this issue what we imagine is a typical course report from RSME on a Gurkha NCO attending a Combat Engineer BI Course. In fact Cpl Kumbahadur is not the first NCO from the Regiment to come first on a BI Course at Chatham. The editor seems to remember that Sgts Ranbahadur Gurung, Narbahadur Gurung and Sunar Gurung did the same thing, or at any rate came very high up. It is sad that 70 sqn is now no more. They will be sorely missed.

Fortunately, coinciding with the Regiment reaching such high standards all round, the future of the Brigade looks more assured. There are to be five battalions - 1/2, 2/2, 6th, 7th and 10th. The two battalions of the 2nd who were preparing to amalgamate, were saved in the nick of time by the Conservatives' election victory. Three battalions are to be stationed in Hong Kong, one in Brunei and one in UK at the Queen Elizabeth Barracks at Crookham. The advance party of the 7th under Ian Tedford is already in UK. The Brigade has also started taking permanent cadre officers from Sandhurst again after a break of two years.

The news that Major (QGO) Dhojbir Limbu MVO and Major (QGO) Aitahang Limbu had both been made Honorary Lieutenants GCO is very welcome. In their different ways, both have contributed so much to the Regiment. WOI Chandrasing Lama was made Honorary Lieutenant (QGO).

Many of you will have seen the Brigade Pipes and Drums. Your editor went to the "Night of 100 Pipers" at the Albert Hall where the contingent was performing with the Pipes and Drums of The Black Watch and The London Scottish. It was a mixed programme - one item was a "Grand Overture for two vacuum Cleaners and a Floor Polisher" played by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra - but the highlight was undoubtedly

the playing and military bearing of the Brigade contingent. It was very nostalgic to see our pipe banners again. Towards the end of the evening, the contingent all came forward to fill the by-then empty arena in front of the rostrum where Petula Clark was to sing. Five rows of Gurkhas sat with impassive faces while Miss Clark implored them not to sleep in the subway. It was a moving moment.

Later on, Jimmy Nobbs organised a party at a pub near Farnham for our members of the Brigade Contingent. There were 11 P & D there, but the demonstration party were performing at the Royal Tournament. They all seemed very cheerful.

One of the problems of the Secretary, the GELC and your editor is to keep track of members. We will publish a full address list in the next issue. Would members please ensure that the Secretary knows their up-to-date address and telephone number. This particularly applies to officers coming back to UK on leave or on posting. You will note that the Secretary and your editor have both moved to new addresses.

It was originally planned to ask members to pay for their GEA Newsletters by bankers order. As each copy only costs 17p it would have been an uneconomic method. We are therefore asking you to pay £1 for the first six issues. A form is enclosed for you to complete and send to John Allen with your subscription.

The main reason why the GEA Newsletter only costs 17p is that all the typing, duplicating and addressing is done by your editor's admirable secretary, Mrs. Ellis. Without her hard and enthusiastic work, it is doubtful if the Newsletter could be produced at an economic price.

Much of the material for this issue was contributed by General John, Gil Roach and John Getley who have been very helpful. The future of this Newsletter depends on it being interesting and varied. Any contribution from members will therefore be eagerly and gratefully received. We have members of the GEA spread all over the world in a great variety of

jobs both military and civilian. Please do put pen to paper and send in an article or even just a few lines or a clipping from a Newspaper. We are very grateful to those who have already done so.

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COPY OF A LETTER SENT BY SPR DILKUMAR LIMBU  
TO THE 67 SQN ORDERLY ROOM STAFF

Orderly Room  
67 Sqn

27 May 71

TEA

I am pleased to perceive your agreement upon the considerable improvement of our tea's aroma in these last few days. However, to maintain its present aromatic quality I am sorry to admit that I shall need your support, which shall be abundant if you kindly contribute 30 ¢ (thirty cents) more and thus raising your monthly bill to HK \$ 2: 30 ¢. Hence I shall be most obliged to you for your benevolent support, (which I hope will not be denied by any of the member).

Thank you.

Signed Spr Dilkumar Limbu  
Tea Manager

## REGIMENTAL NEWSLETTER

END OF JANUARY TO END OF JULY 1971

by Lt.Col. R. A. Rickets, RE.

Sitting here sweltering in Barbecue Gardens on a hot sticky July evening, I am surprised to find that my first diary entry for this period was "freezing cold, paraffin heaters going full blast, wet with it". What a strange climate this is, so cold in winter, hotter and more humid than Singapore in summer, and at this time of year typhoons always just around the corner. We were hit by one a couple of weeks ago, typhoon Freda which came straight over Castle Peak. Quite an experience but not a lot of damage done except for trees and scaffolding down, shrubs flattened and metal roofs blown away. The old hands said it was only mild, of course.

To go back to January, 11 Field Squadron were here for a three month exercise. They took over the Luk Keng Road project and completed several other very useful jobs while they were here, at the same time giving us the chance to relax a little. We saw a lot of them in the Messes and on the sports fields and recalled that 11 Sqn had been under our command for quite some time in Malaya until joining the Commonwealth Brigade in 1958, a fact commemorated by the silver grenade lighter presented by them at the time.

This winter two more British squadrons will be coming out, one in the Autumn, one in the Spring. This enables us to plan a proper retraining programme, to run some exercises of our own and to enjoy such things as the Sapper Bowl Competition while the visiting squadron keeps the essential projects going.

This year RHQ won the Sapper Bowl, mainly the Recruit Party of course. The competition was spread through January and February using every possible Saturday, Sunday and Gurkha holiday. Even so there were too many things going on



and this year we intend starting much earlier, in the Autumn. It was a good competition, lots of josh, some very close results and some very high standards set.

Early in February we dined out John Edwards, dined in Charles Spottiswoode and David Howie, and drank champagne to celebrate the arrival of Phil and Phyl Cook's new daughter Sasha.

Both squadrons were out of their barracks for the Annual FFR inspection ("admin" to those who remember the term), by the MGBG, General Derek Horsford. He visited 67 Sqn exercising with 51 Bde on Lantau and 68 Sqn retraining in Tai Lam and Castle Peak. The recruits took him for a ride on their heavy ferry and he thoroughly enjoyed himself driving a tug. A troop of 68 Sqn were playing vehicle ambushes, with a "dead" Gurkha Sapper on the ground who stirred not an eyelash though firmly prodded by the General's heavy stick. We got a splendid report. That same day L/Cpl Chitrabhadur (DB ko chhoro) was casevaced from Lantau having been run over by the only bus on the island. He proved - bus proof.

The FFR over, John Edwards was allowed to leave and the very next morning he and Wendy were hauled away in the state landrover, bedecked and bemused, the Pipes and Drums leading, Matthew and Becca to the rear and Wendy complaining that having drunk at least two gallons of lemonade in the QGO's Mess she would never make the airport. Someone said that Kai Tak was getting more like Kuala Lumpur station every day.

Alistair Nicholas Cameron Chapman was christened in Sek Kong. You may gather that he does not wish to be mistaken for English. Afterwards we all enjoyed a splendid lunch party in Sarah and Jeremy's flat in Lau Gardens.

Sadly we had to cancel General Bowring's visit to Nepal due to a flare-up of trouble in Bengal shortly beforehand. The decision had to be taken in time to stop everyone coming down from the hills to meet him and luckily word did get through to everyone. It wasn't an easy decision, particularly as the information we had was sketchy, but as things later



turned out our visit as planned would have been impossible.

General Bowring arrived in Hong Kong on 18th March and spent six days with us before going on to 70 Sqn in Singapore. I believe we succeeded in making it an occasion he will never forget, and quite definitely one which those of us who were here will always remember. It was a week of enjoyment, of formality and informality, hectic and yet relaxed, with all the best things of our Regimental way of life seen together in a few short days. There was the Recruit Pass Off on Perowne square, a gorgeous morning, the ladies in their finery, the white tunics, swords and cross belts setting the tone. We presented the General with his Colonel's Baton, matching the Commandant's baton which he himself presented while Commandant. Both carry the names of all previous holders inscribed on silver bands, and will now be carried on parade by our two stick orderlies. Knowing that this would be his last visit as Colonel of the Regiment we also presented him on this parade with the silver statuette of a QGO from all ranks of the Regiment, which some of you will since have seen.

After the parade what better than champagne breakfast, just to prove that we still know how to do such things, and later on the same day a truly delightful party in the QGO's Mess in the style which surely only they can touch.

The General's (later John Getley's) old Rolls Royce was brought along to curry lunch, and looking after him all the while was Sgt Dhanbahadur Limbu, his orderly from Singapore days.

Another splendid evening (well, what other adjectives are there?), in the WO and Sgts' Mess, and a Regimental Nautch in Bowring Camp, and to heighten our spirits even more we heard that 68 Sqn's Force Guard at Victoria Barracks had been noted by MGBG as the best turned-out yet.

General John took his place as President for our Guest Night, attended among others by General Horsford and the officers of HQ Brigade of Gurkhas. MGBG's orderly had

forgotten to pack his cummerband so we allowed him to wear a Corps one for the occasion, provided by Hank Bowen who manfully spent the rest of the night corsetted in another several sizes too small for him.

On the Wednesday, garlanded way above his head, the General left us for Singapore.

70 Sqn were not to be outdone and here I will quote John Getley: "Without doubt our greatest pleasure was General Bowring's visit. We showed him our workshops and the tradesmen and he was complimentary of their skills. We showed him old fashioned dancing and he called for songs so old that only the QGOs could remember them and for dances that he knew himself. To entertain him better the SSM took possession of Sandy Island in Singapore harbour from a Mexe float at seven o'clock one morning and ran up the Squadron flag. Then Captain (QGO) Minbahadur Gurung MBE put all the families ashore from a flotilla of small boats. Lastly we brought the General out in an enormous RCT launch. We swam and bathed all day and the fatigue party on the Mexe float were still finishing up the bhat and beer at eleven o'clock that night".

Back in Hong Kong we had a spate of bomb incidents, 197 in a week, all hoax except the first, a nasty device which cost Norman (Bomber) Hill, the Police Ballistics officer whom some of you will remember from 1967, his right hand.

Hank and Juliet left at the end of March after suitable junketing. Hank's worst moment in a sad farewell was probably when he took the salute of his beloved Pipes and Drums after they had beaten retreat for him on Perowne Square.

Desmond Quirké was now 2ic, Charles Spottiswoode OC 67, and Jim Stuart OC 68.

The QGOs and families held a picnic beside the stream above the Tai Lam Cheung reservoir, starting with a one hour fishing competition, bait and rods provided, and going on to childrens games for adults (when did you last try sticking the tail on the donkey?), all helped along with copious bhat

and liquid refreshment. What bliss to sit on a rock dangling a hook in a cool stream with ice cold beer delivered on a silver tray!

On 7th April the Government announced that they intended to keep topless barmaids under close observation.

We had a Mess barbecue at the boat club. A perfect evening, not a breath of wind; fairy lights, shimmering sea, good music - ugh! Two weeks later I was away in Thailand and missed by all accounts the best Mess party for ages, an LCM trip to picnic on the south side of Lantao with even the ladies powder room transported to the beach.

On 25th May, after 18 months of effort, a decision on our Gurkha divers. We are to keep them.

On 7th June we heard that Dhojbir's Honorary LT (GCO) was approved. Those in camp at the time put down their overheated pens and sprinted through a rain-storm to the QGOs Mess to celebrate.

Work has gone on. 68 took over the Luk Keng road from 67, the intention being to get a troop of 67 onto the border. Unfortunately that particular border job fell through and 67 are not there yet. There is as always far more work than we can cope with, which enables us to pick and choose. 67 are building a high Marston in Shamshuipo and a concrete pier at Hang Hau. 68, apart from the Luk Keng Road job, continue their border tasks, and both squadrons are constantly planning, supervising, or doing a whole range of smaller jobs.

We were heavily involved in the Gurkha Welfare Appeal here. Hank was Appeal Secretary until he left. Adrian Ris was the assistant Secretary for three months. Chris Haworth organised and ran the static displays in the Ocean Terminal and Kai Tak. The Brigade of Gurkhas soccer team which played Macao Army in the Happy Valley Stadium (and won) had no less than eight Gurkha Engineers in it. MGBG, having asked the units of several players was heard to say "Is anyone on the pitch by any chance NOT a Gurkha Engineer?". The Pipes and

Drums, those who didn't go to UK, have played all over Hong Kong, and our work has been quoted again and again, in the newspapers, on radio and television.

One of my worries was that if confined to Hong Kong we would forget much that we had learned over the years in Malaya and Borneo. Well, we are not as confined as I had feared. 2/2 GR took a party with them to Australia on exercise, including by some remarkable fiddle the Adjutant. At the same time we had a party with 10 GR in Fiji and 68 Squadron had an adventure training trip to Malaya. It is now established that we will take part in all future exercises outside the Colony and there are a lot planned, to Australia, Fiji and Brunei. We haven't yet succeeded in getting a troop to Brunei for a project but we are working on it.

70 Squadron is now no more, having closed on 26th June. They had done tremendous work in Singapore and were in great form right to the end. The QM, OC 67, G/Captain 68, RSM and two other QGOs went down with me for the final closing ceremonies.

A special order from General Bowring was read out and the following message was received from MGBG: PLEASE CONVEY TO ALL RANKS HOW SORRY WE ARE TO LOSE YOU. THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR EFFORTS IN THE PAST - GOOD LUCK TO ALL RANKS FOR THE FUTURE.

70 Squadron basketball team had done particularly well having won the RE knockout competition, reached the final of the Singapore Area Minor Units Championship, come second in the Major and Minor Units Combined League and won the minor units part of it.

We shall feel the loss of 70 Squadron sadly and it will not be easy to maintain the very high standards of workshops trades training that they achieved, doing it as we must from now on, within the Regiment.

Early in July Doug and Margaret Humphrey left for UK., Doug to be GSO 3 SD at Chatham.

And what of the QGOs. Well, with the close down of 70 Squadron we now lose Minbahadur and Harkabahadur to Nepal. Aitahang has just left the Army, from Dharan, still to go between now and Christmas are Dhojbir, Bhimbahadur Gurung (G/Capt 68), Barburam and Gangaparsad. Sambhu has gone from 68 Sqn. Kesarbahadur is the next GM, "young Bhim" is to be G/Capt of 68 with Ganesh Chettri as 2nd G/Capt, Embahadur is G/Capt of 67 with Bhim Garti to be his 2nd Capt. John Tenzing has gone to the training Depot.

By Christmas our last redundancy party will have gone and we will be settled again. It seems a long time since those first thoughts and announcements of four years ago. The smoothness of it all, the lack of fuss continues to astonish me and reflects tremendous credit on the Regiment. The sadness will stay for a long time but there is no bitterness. Sometimes I hear from old members of the Regiment how surprised they are that so-and-so had to go - what a splendid chap he was. Of course they all were and many of our best soldiers are now back in the hills, but those who stay on will see to it that smaller though we are we will continue to give a good account of ourselves.

We are thinking now of the future, of next year and beyond. Tooth combs are out and every man who can be spared from headquarters, Messes etc is going back to the field troops. From now on the emphasis in project work is on supervising as much as doing. Other units have the labour, we have the expertise, the management, the backing. When a tradesman is needed we provide him, when he isn't we don't. The message is out and accepted. We are as much in demand as ever, perhaps even more so.

In Hong Kong we have done as well as ever at sports. The Regimental football team beat all other Gurkha units in the Colony and was finally tied 3rd in the League with RAF Kai Tak, behind the Irish Guards and Welch Fusiliers. Against those British teams it was largely the problem of height that defeated us. 68 Sqn won the New Territories minor units league with 67 Sqn a close 3rd, and all three teams were in the top ten of the referees selections for good sportsmanship.

To the annoyance of the 'A' team, the Regimental 'B' team won the Land Forces 6 a-side hockey.

David Howie, our new Education Officer, went quietly off one day with a borrowed canoe and won the Colony "Round the Island" canoe race, one of the major civil events. He also took a 67 Sqn team into the 51 Brigade orienteering competition at very short notice, and they did well to come 4th. We hope that both these sports will develop next year.

Cross-country and khud race we don't talk about. We entered only to show willing and our teams tried hard, but too many other things were going on at the same time.

Next year we hope to do well at basketball and shooting, having the basis now for two very promising teams.

We did well at the Land Forces judo Championship thanks to the expert training of Sgt Fowler, 68 Sqn's pay sergeant. The Engineer team comprising Sgt Fowler, L/Cpl Kasiram Gurung of 67, Spr Kumarsing Rai of 68, and L/Cpl Duncan of the Support Sqn won the team event, and Spr Ranbahadur Gurung of 68 won at lightweight.

Lastly, if you can call it sport, Austin Thorp led a highly successful climbing expedition in New Zealand.

And that is all for this letter. If you have read this far you have done well, and if I have given you some idea of how we spend our time that is as much as I can do. In writing it I have thought once or twice that you might prefer more personal news but to give this we would have to go back to squadron letters. If you have any strong views please let Ian Thomson know. This is after all intended for you.

Once again, from all of us,

"BALYO RAHANU HOS"

BOs, QGOs AND BRITISH WOs AND SGTs SERVING WITH THE REGIMENT

AS AT 31ST JULY 1971

Regimental Headquarters

Commandant	-	Lt Col R.A.S. Rickets, RE
21C	-	Major D.M.A. Quirke RE
Adjutant	-	Capt J. Knowles RE
Paymaster	-	Major P.C.E. Creasy RAPC
Trg Officer	-	Capt W.G.N. Lawrence RE
Edn Officer	-	Lt D. Howie RAEC
Gurkha Major	-	Major (QGO) Dhojbir Limbu MVO
(Designate)	-	Capt (QGO) Kesarbahadur Limbu
Head Clerk	-	-Lt (QGO) Bharatsing Limbu
Tp Offr Cbt Engr	-	Lt (QGO) Pete Limbu
Gurkha QM	-	Lt (QGO) Indrakamal Tamang

67 Gurkha Fd Sqn

OC	-	Major C. Spottiswoode RE
21C	-	Capt J.A. Thorp RE
QM	-	Capt F. Sewell RE
Tp Comd	-	Capt G.S. Lucas RE (ITL)
Tp Comd	-	Capt J.G. Forbes RE
Tp Comd	-	Capt J.A. Ris RE
Gurkha Capt	-	Capt (QGO) Embahadur Gurung
Tp QGO	-	Lt (QGO) Ganesh Chhetri
Tp QGO	-	Lt (QGO) Tikaraj Rai
Tp QGO	-	Lt (QGO) Gangaparsad Thapa
Tp QGO	-	Lt (QGO) Makardhoj Sahi

68 Gurkha Fd Sqn

OC	-	Capt J.N.B. Stuart RE
21C	-	Capt P.W. Cook RE
QM	-	Capt D.C. Revins RE (also acts as QM RHQ)
Tp Comd	-	Capt J.W.A. Chapman RE



## 68 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Cont'd)

Tp Comd	-	Capt D.J.R. Stack RE
Tp Comd	-	Capt R.C.O'B. Haworth RE
Gurkha Capt	-	Capt (QGO) Bhimbahadur Gurung
Tp QGO	-	Capt (QGO) Baburam Thapa
Tp QGO	-	Lt (QGO) Bhimbahadur Gurung
Tp QGO	-	Lt (QGO) Ichhabahadur Rai BEM (Nepal leave)
Tp QGO	-	Lt (QGO) Sunar Gurung BEM

## 70 Trg Sqn

Acting OC	-	Capt W.J. Wiggett RE
Gurkha Capt	-	Capt (QGO) Minbahadur Gurung MBE
Gurkha QM	-	Lt (QGO) Harkabahadur Limbu

## ERE

GM Trg Centre Bde of Gurkhas	-	Maj (QGO) Sherbahadur Limbu MVO
Head Clerk Trg Centre Bde of Gurkhas	-	Capt (QGO) John Tenzing Lepcha

## Regimental Headquarters

RQMS	-	WOII Pilgrim GC, RE
QMSI	-	WOII Clouter KJ, RE
QMSI Sigs	-	WOII McKie JA, RE
Pay Clerk Div II	-	WOII Bethall AG, RAPC

## 67 Gurkha Fd Sqn

SQMS	-	WOII Lane B, RE
MPF	-	SSgt Steer WJ, RE
C of W (C)	-	SSgt Perkins J, RE
VM	-	Sgt Cramp PCE, REME
Pay Clerk Div III	-	Sgt Smith GA, RAPC

68 Gurkha Fd Sqn

SQMS	-	WOII Field BD, RE
MPF	-	SSgt Clifton TD, RE
C of W (C)	-	SSgt Winship D, RE
VM	-	Sgt Adams T, REME
Pay Clerk Div III	-	Sgt Fowler DG, RAPC

Recently departed BORs include:-

WOII Parker to HQ NORTHAG, Sp British Element, BFPO 40.  
Sgt Denholme to 40 Army Sp Regt.  
Cpl Carder } RSME Clerk of Works course.  
Cpl Bringham }  
Cpl Camp to 22 Engr Regt.

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Signal sent by RHQ The Gurkha Engineers on 21st May 1971-----

Quote: FOR LT COL JENKINS AND ALL RANKS 7 GR. VERY  
MUCH REGRET MISSING YOUR REGIMENTAL BIRTHDAY ON 15 MAY.  
YOU HONESTLY DO NOT LOOK A DAY OLDER. Unquote.

Reply received from 7 GR-----

Quote: VERY MANY THANKS YOUR KIND SIGNAL. ITS GOOD  
SUPPORT THAT KEEPS US LOOKING YOUNG. Unquote.

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Extract from 68 Sqn. Ord. inspection:

"Tin beams should be consumed in the near future."

VISIT TO THE REGIMENT BY THE  
COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT

by Maj.Gen. J.H.S. Bowring, CB, OBE, MC.  
Colonel The Gurkha Engineers

I expect many of you already know that the Queen has approved the appointment of Lieut. General Sir William Jackson to be my successor as Colonel of the Gurkha Engineers in November this year. The official announcement will not be made until nearer the time, but MS have said that I can in the meantime tell those concerned. I know that all in the Regiment and in the GEA will be delighted at the appointment of such a distinguished officer, and one moreover who has always taken such a close interest in our affairs, since he ended his time as Commandant in 1960. He has lost no opportunity of visiting the Regiment during his visits to the Far East, in spite of limited time and the intense nature of his assignments. Bill Jackson and Joan can be sure of a warm welcome and I know he is planning to lose as little time as possible before his first visit as Colonel.

My five years in office seems to have gone very quickly, but it is remarkable how quickly one gets out of touch, when one has retired, with all but the most senior in the Regiment and - also important - with the hierarchy of the Army. I now often read of people I have never heard of being promoted to Major-General!

In March, I was lucky enough to be able to visit the Regiment in the Far East - my last visit as Colonel. It had been planned that I would meet Tony Rickets in Calcutta and that we would visit Nepal together. Dhojbir had arranged for a large number of pensioners to be collected at various points to meet us, and we were also going to visit the East-West Highway, on which a number of ex-Gurkha Engineers are employed in supervisory capacities. Unfortunately, I was not in the event allowed to go, because of riots in W. Bengal connected with the elections in March. Dhojbir sent word to

all concerned, but some of the letters did not arrive in time, and I heard that Amarbahadur and Santabir made the journey to Paklihawa in vain. I hope there were not too many others. However, Hank Bowen, who had just come back from a trek, told me news of a number of old friends.

So my visit was confined to Hong Kong and Singapore. I went first to Hong Kong where the Regiment was practically written off as an effective unit for over a week, such was the time and trouble taken by everyone to make my stay interesting and enjoyable.

To start with, I was met at the airport not only by the Commandant and Dhojbir, but also by my ex-orderly, Sergeant Dhanbahadur Limbu, who had been with me as a Corporal in Singapore as orderly, chauffeur, nanny and general factotum. He looked after me throughout my stay with my kind hosts, Tony and Liz Rickets. You can imagine what pleasure it gave me to have Dhanbahadur again.

I will not detail all the functions, visits and entertainments provided for me, but I will mention a few highlights. I took the passing-off parade of the last recruit party, which was of the usual high standard. During the course of the parade I was completely taken by surprise by Dhojbir, who presented me with a beautiful silver statuette of a Gurkha Officer, from all ranks of the Regiment. I was most roused by this and rendered practically speechless. The parade was commanded by Hank Bowen. An innovation was the Colonel's cane similar to the existing Commandant's cane, which was presented to me, and both canes were carried by the Stick Orderlies on the parade.

The Major-General honoured us by coming to the Guest Night, and among the other guests were Lt.Col. Gregory of the 10th and Terry Bowring (no relation), about to command the 2/2. Most of the pipes and drums were away with the combined brigade band, at Singapore on its way to UK, and only five pipers remained. However, their standard of playing was remarkably high, an indication of how much the general standard has improved in late years. I was particularly glad to

be there when we dined out Hank Bowen, who had spent so many years of his service with the Regiment, and done so much for it in a great variety of jobs, including Adjutant when I commanded. His knowledge of the men is enormous, and this and his great energy, will be sadly missed. He has gone to command a battalion of the Ulster Defence Regiment, and we wish him and Juliet all success in this difficult task.

My visit included parties at the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Messes (combined British and Gurkha) and at the QGO's Mess. The WOs and Sergeants have a Mess for both camps at Bowring, and an offshoot at Perowne. The main Mess in a Romney Hut has been quite transformed by their efforts, with panelling on the walls and a magnificent bar. At the QGOs' Mess, Dhojbir really made the five pipers earn their pay, and I think he had to be dissuaded from keeping them up all night! It was a very cheerful and well organised occasion, in which the wives were not, as so often, relegated to one corner, but mixed freely.

There was a curry lunch on Sunday to which Gil Hickey, the Brigade Commander, came, and I was delighted to find Mike Smith and his wife invited, with my Rolls-Royce, now refurbished and very dashing with a boat top and painted yellow and black. I bought this car from Mike in Malaya in 1957, and it served me there and later in Singapore, and their John Getley took it to Brunei and Hong Kong. So it has gone full circle.

Of the visits to the various activities, I will only mention two. The football match between 67 and 68 astonished me by the standard of play, which was far higher than I had seen before. I believe this is general in the Brigade, but none the less our Nepal Cup prospects are very good. Playing for 68, who narrowly won, was Amarbahadur's son, in the current recruit party. He looks very like his father. There are now a number of sons of our QGOs in the Regiment, including Dharamlal's, and two of Deobahadur's, both of whom I met, and bore a strong look of him.

When I visited 68 Sqn, commanded by Jim Stuart, a

picnic lunch had been arranged while we looked at the Luk Kong road project. I envisaged sandwiches and beer, but not a bit of it. On the top of a steep knob, a shamiana had been pitched and there we were regaled with every form of drink, followed by a slap-up sit-down bhat, followed by coffee. A good illustration of our philosophy that "nothing is too much trouble".

On my last night there was a regimental nautch party. An enormous typed programme was produced giving the words of 61 songs, both in Gurkhali and English; the latter quite fascinating, full of gems and quaint language and rather touching e.g.

"Let us make love in the nearby jungle  
She has seen a pair of doves on a branch of a tree  
The sight of which has aroused desire in her to  
search for a mate."

The high spot was a beauty competition between Miss Nepal, Miss Malaya, Miss Singapore and Miss Hong Kong, which brought the house down.

None of the traditional songs and dances appear nowadays - it is all modern rhythm, spread to the hills by transistor radio.

On the last morning, I was given a magnificent, generous and for me very moving farewell, and after calling on the Governor and CBF, left for Singapore, accompanied by John Knowles, the Adjutant, John Tensing the Head Clerk, and Indrakamel Tamang, on his way to UK for a QM course.

John and Patricia Getley looked after me in Singapore, and what a magnificent job they have done with 70 Sqn in its last few months, ably assisted by Bill Wiggett and Sue. A very difficult task, with a running down Squadron consisting of trades instructors shortly due for pension, and young trainees. In such a situation it is not easy to keep up standards and morale, but I found both excellent and this was confirmed by other reports I had. It was good also to see

how well the few attached RE NCOs mixed in. But sad to see the tradesmen working in the broad acres of the EBI, now almost deserted. There was a very good Squadron jamre one night, and on the Saturday, the whole squadron, British and Gurkha, complete with wives and children were taken on a Mexeflote raft and several launches for a picnic on a small island, which was a huge success and very well organised.

The E in C was in Singapore at the time, and the RE Mess held a Ladies Guest Night in his honour, to which they kindly asked me. Our P & D contingent in the combined band were engaged to play, and after dinner played the Black Bear round the table. As there were some 14 of them, the noise was stupendous and made a great impression. As a result, the E in C arranged for the Pipe-Major and three to play at the Corps Guest Night in the HQ Mess at Brompton on 20th May. I was there. Their playing was magnificent and very well received. Deobahadur had played there once before, before the Queen, but it was the first time our pipers had played after dinner at Brompton.

I found Singapore much changed - for the better. Lee Kuan Yew has decreed "no litter" and so it is, miraculously, and trade is booming, the Jurong Estate taking off and no worries about unemployment after the Services leave.

The Regiment, as indeed all units of the Brigade, has gone through a very difficult period, with redundancy, reorganisation and moves. This has been handled from the start with great wisdom and skill by the Brigade of Gurkhas, and I was most heartened to find in the Gurkha Engineers a very high state of morale, great pride, and raised standards in every department. It is especially noticeable how very much better and self-reliant the young NCOs are, and full of go and spirit. Much of the credit for this must go to Gil Roach, who bore the brunt of the redundancy and all the planning which went with it. Now, the Regiment could not be in better hands than those of Tony Rickets, and the fact that he is also CRE Hong Kong eliminates a lot of possible friction, (and of course paper), and ensures that the needs of the Regiment are properly



understood in the higher echolons of command.

Through all this turbulence, Dhojbir has been a tower of strength - and originality - and how delighted we all are that his outstanding service is being rewarded by an Honorary Lieutenancy on retirement.

From all I have heard, and duly laying-off for a desire to please, I am sure tha the Regiment is very highly regarded both in the Brigade and by commanders at all levels. They will have great difficulties for a time with such reduced strength, but I know will overcome them, and we may dare to hope for some amelioration.

I still find it hard to take in how lucky I have been, first to command the Gurkha Engineers, and then to be Colonel. It has been a major factor in my life and in Iona's and has provided us with endless happy memories, and many treasured friendships. I must end by expressing our heartfelt thanks for all their kindness, support and friendship, to all ranks in the Regiment, past and present.

Balyo Rahanu Hos.

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Extract from one of General Perowne's letters to General Bowring (with apologies for extracting it!)

"I remember Ranjit well. When he was in hospital in Malaya he lost heart and the MO said he must die if he didn't show some resistance and determination to live. I went to his bedside one day and gave him an order not to die; from then on he recovered."

## GBA & GEA FUNCTIONS

GEA Mixed Party on Friday 24th September 1971 at the RE Officers Mess, Aldershot which is at Minley Manor, Cove. This will be similar to the party held last year and the year before at the Mess at Southwood Camp, Cove. Time: 7.30 for 8.00 p.m. Dress: Black Tie. Cost: £1.60 per head including drinks. (Mess Bills will be sent out afterwards).

The party is being organised by Malcolm Thomson, who has sent out details to members. If you intend going, please return the proforma which he sent you to him by 20th September at the latest. His address is:-

Major M. H. R. Thomson, RE.,  
28 Training Squadron,  
1 Training Regiment,  
Southwood Camp, Cove,  
Farnborough, Hants.  
Tel: Farnborough 46222 Ext. 57.

Party for GORs in UK. Jimmy Nobbs will fix a date and time for a party in the Autumn for the GORs in UK when he sees members at the GEA Mixed Party on 24th September.

GBA Dinner on Friday 5th November 1971 at United Service & Royal Aero Club. Time: 7.00 for 7.30 p.m. Dress: Black tie and miniatures. Cost: £2.50 (Not including wines).

Application should be made to:-

Lt.Col. D. R. Green, MC,  
BGLO,  
Ministry of Defence (Army),  
Lansdowne House,  
Berkeley Square,  
London, W1X 6AA.

GEA AGM on Friday 26th November at Brompton Mess.  
Time: 5.00 p.m.

RSME Guest Night on Friday 26th November at Brompton Mess.  
For details see separate article on page 24.

## GURKHA ENGINEERS DINNER

Arrangements are now in hand to hold a Gurkha Engineers Dinner in the Royal Engineers Headquarters Mess at Chatham on Friday 26th November 1971. The Annual General Meeting of the Gurkha Engineers Association will precede the dinner.

The main purpose of the dinner is to "dine out" General John Bowring as Colonel of the Regiment and President of the Association and to "dine in" General Sir Bill Jackson as his successor. It is not necessary to remind any member of this association of the debt we owe General John for his outstanding personal contribution to ~~The Gurkha~~ Gurkha Engineers both as Commandant from 1955 to 1958 and as Colonel of the Regiment since 1966.

This is only the second such dinner. The last one was held on 11th November 1966 when our first Colonel of the Regiment was "dined out". It was an enormous success as can be judged from an extract taken from the Secretary's letter of 7th December 1966, which describes the event, and is reprinted below. Let us make this dinner equally successful by turning up in droves. There will be accommodation for all.

### Outline arrangements are:-

AGM in the Brompton Study Centre at 1700 hours. Say 1½ hours.  
Dinner at 1930 for 2000 hours.

Cost of dinner £2.75 to include pre-dinner drinks and table drinks. All other drinks on chits. Menu similar to the previous dinner. Dress for retired officers- tails or dinner jacket. Accommodation is available for all who may require it and with breakfast will cost approximately 60p.

The Corps Band, Aldershot will be in attendance.

Senior members of the Corps and the Brigade of Gurkhas and the Commandant of the RSME will be invited.

You will have found a proforma folded with this Newsletter. Please complete it and return it to Gil Roach, who together with John Edwards is looking after the administra-

tive arrangements. It is most helpful if the proforma is returned even if you are unable to come since it serves as a check on delivery in addition to being a happy reassurance that we have not missed something under "In Memoriam".

EXTRACT FROM THE SECRETARY'S LETTER OF 7TH DECEMBER 1966

"The dinner that took place on 11th November at Chatham was a unique and memorable occasion and I will give a brief account of it for the benefit of those unable to be present.

A list of the 52 members who attended is given below - it was certainly the biggest Gurkha Engineers gathering yet. Our guests were:-

Major General Lance Perowne	Being 'dined out'
Major General John Bowring	Being 'dined in'
Major General Tom Foulkes	Colonel Commandant Royal Engrs.
Major General Peter Hunt	Late Major General Brigade of Gurkhas
Brigadier Ian Lyall-Grant	Commandant RSME
Colonel George Bolton	One-time Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas and an old friend of The Gurkha Engineers.

The Chief Royal Engineer and several senior officers of the Gurkha Brigade, who had also been invited were unfortunately unable to come. The Mess which is surely one of the finest dining rooms in England was looking its best when we went in to dinner. General Jackson presided and opened the proceedings by inviting the newly ordained John Petty to say Grace. We had a first class dinner with all the RE and Gurkha Engineer ceremonial including our own piper who did his stuff nobly. At the end General Jackson rose to welcome the guests and propose the health of our Guest of Honour General Perowne. He pointed out that this was a unique and historic occasion. It was the first time we had dined in the Mess of our parent Corps and been able to entertain guests from the Gurkha Brigade; it was also the time for us to take leave of our first Colonel. General Jackson then paid tribute to General Perowne and outlined some of his particular services to the

Regiment. Lieutenant Colonel Terry White then expressed appreciation of General Perowne on behalf of the Regiment and presented him with a silver statuette of a Gurkha Sapper from past and present officers. General Perowne was loudly cheered when he rose to reply and his excellent speech included a reminder that he was not in fact leaving and that he would continue to take an active interest in Gurkha Sappers. Colonel Hill added a short speech and, in response in requests, the Engineer-in-Chief said how pleased and honoured he was to take over as Colonel.

Photographers were active during the speeches and we hope that these will produce some good pictures of the occasion. Suitable signals were exchanged with Headquarters, The Gurkha Engineers and the Squadrons and a cheerful cable was received from Peter Whitestone in Australia.

The quality of the party may be judged from the fact that no one had started to make a move towards bed before 3 am (this even impressed those hardened old campaigners the Mess Staff) and the departure time of the more serious revellers was luckily not recorded.

The following Members attended the dinner:-

Major General	Jackson.
Colonels	Hill and Thomas
Majors and	Baillie, Bird, Bowen, Brown CB, Bruges,
Captains	Cameron BC, Corsellis, Croft, Cronk, Croxall, Edwards JH, Forbes, Francis, Freeland, Gatfield, Getley, Goddard, Hunter, Jordan, Kiggell, Kitching, Knowles, Moorcroft, Morris, Nobbs, Orange-Bromhead, Parflect, Petty, Phillpott, Roach, Rugg, Slater, Speight, Spottiswoode, Spring-Smythe, Stewart, Thomson IAD, Vialou-Clark, Waymark, Wilson, Wright.
Lieutenants	Chesshyre and Stuart.

## "ROBERTS CUP"

It is now two years since 22nd July 1969, when David Roberts lost his life in a tragic diving accident on duty in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong his sword, presented by his father, hangs suitably mounted in the Queens Gurkha Officers Mess and is worn on important occasions by the Gurkha Captain of 68 Squadron. In addition a brass memorial plate is to be placed in Sek Kong Garrison Church at a suitable commemorative service.

The time has now come to produce a final memorial in the form of a piece of silver to be presented to the Regiment. Gil Roach, the Commandant at the time and John Edwards, David Robert's Squadron Commander, have discussed the matter with David's father, Major H. M. Roberts, RAMC ret'd., who is anxious to be associated with it. After consultation with the Colonel of the Regiment, the Commandant and the Secretary of the GEA, it has been decided that the presentation should be made jointly by David's father and his brother officers. The memorial piece is to be a silver cup, to be known as the "Roberts Cup", which would serve as a champion troop trophy for 68 Squadron in the same way that the "Sapper Bowl" does for the Regiment and the "Rosebowl" does for 67 Squadron.

It is the intention that in addition to Major Robert's contribution, the Cup should be paid for by equal personal contributions from those Officers of the Regiment, who knew David during his service with The Gurkha Engineers and by a token contribution from the GEA. Gil Roach has chosen a suitable Cup at Garrards and has written personally to all Officers concerned. It is realised that others would be very willing to contribute but they are catered for by the GEA contribution.

Gil Roach is particularly anxious for bookkeeping purposes that all officers who received his letter should complete and return the attached proforma, whether or not it is appropriate that they make a contribution.

GURKHA ENGINEER

1971

SERIAL	NAME	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2a	58089 Spr IMANHANG LIMBU	) ATT 12 ) Engr → 2 ) Bde ←					
2b	55506 Spr MANILAL THAPA				Design Asst III		
2c	58135 Spr SURJABDR THAPA						
3a	56063 Lcpl HARIBDR THAPA	) Sig RE → 6 ) BI					
3b	55302 Lcpl PURNABDR GRG						
4	57124 Lcpl DIPAK TAMANG				Elect AIII-AII		→10
5	57043 Lcpl MILANCHANDRA GRG				11 ←	Svy Engr	
6	57078 Spr EMBDR GRG	26 ←		UK Course Beaconsfield		→ 1 ←	Elect
7	55320 Cpl CHANDRABDR GRG			2 ←		Obt Engr BI	
8	55312 Lcpl NARBDR GRG		25	Norway with 7GR Expedition	→ 18	UK Course Beaconsfield	
9	47173 S Sgt NANDALAL LIMBU				18	UK Course Beaconsfield	

PERSONNEL ON UK COURSES

1972

JAN	FEB	MAR	REMARKS
	→ 11		
AII	→ 25		ETA UK is 6 Oct
AIII	→ 10		ETA UK is 22 Jul
	→ 14		ETA is 25 Aug
	→ 20		Cbt Engr BI Course starting 6 Apr
	→ 20		Cbt Engr BI Course starting 6 Apr



COURSE REPORT ON CPL KUMBAHADUR GURUNG

Number: 21152472      Rank: Cpl      Name: KUMBAHADUR GURUNG

Unit: Gurkha Engrs

Course Attended: 50 Combat Engineer Class II to I

Course Dates: 6 Nov 70 - 19 Mar 71

Grading: 'B'

A - Outstanding  
B - Above average  
C - Average  
E - Below average  
F - Failed

Report by SI Fieldworks:

This student was a pleasure to teach. Always cheerful and hardworking, his diligence and application to the instruction ensured that he was top student on the Fieldworks part of the course.

Report by SI Bridging:

An outstanding student in whom I can find no fault. His written work is of the highest standard I have seen over the last year. He proved to be extremely popular with his fellow students. His performance and disposition reflect a great credit to him as an individual and to his unit. It should also be remembered that much of the equipment was new to him.

Report by Chief Instructor:

An excellent performance. Kumbahadur Gurung was consistently good throughout the course. He thoroughly deserved his place at the top of the class.

Sgd xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx(G S HARRIS)  
Lieutenant Colonel RE

Date: 7 April 1971      Chief Instructor

WHY COLONEL TERRY WAS FOUND  
PERCHED IN THE LADIES' LOO

Extract from the Daily Mirror, Thursday, June 3, 1971

"It was a good excuse. And it had to be. For bird-loving Lieutenant-Colonel Terry White had been caught on the hop.

He was perched happily on the seat of a ladies loo in Malaysia listening to a sweet call of nature when a woman burst in - on a call of nature all of her own.

It was a tricky position for Lieutenant-Colonel White. But, quick as a flash he explained from on top of the seat: "I'm just recording the song of a Malaysian house-swift".

That took some swallowing, until the cool Army Colonel went on to explain that the bird he wanted to put on tape so badly had set up home under the eaves of the lavatory roof.

The only way he could capture that precious house-swift warble was to stand on the seat and stick a microphone out of the window on the end of a pole.

Lieutenant-Colonel White, 47, who was serving in Malaya at the time, said yesterday: "I was in rather a compromising situation. But the lady understood after I explained what I was doing. Nevertheless it was embarrassing".

The Colonel, who now lives in Hexham, Northumberland, told the story of how he was flushed out of his listening-post during a radio talk on his bird-song recordings yesterday.

Later he added: "I can't recall ever being in another ladies' lavatory. I'm not that sort of chap".

## NEWS FROM KATHMANDU

Tom Spring Smythe sent us a long and very interesting letter from Kathmandu. The more libellous parts have been removed!

Kathmandu  
25th July 1971

"What with the monsoon on it's rather warm, humid and drear. Aitahang came up and saw us on the eve of retirement and I have been trying to get him a job. No success so far. Trouble is our chaps are priced far too high to be absorbed and they haven't the local pull to get themselves into higher responsible posts which remain the unassailable positions for Bahuns and Newars. How does a hill man, ex-soldier, compete with a valley Newar driver content with Rs 105 per month? While I worked with the Reintegration Scheme I strove from my office in the National Planning Commission in the Secretariat to organise jobs for ex-soldiers with the Manpower Planning division and was beginning to make progress. But I had no support from the British Embassy and ODA London. They were all frightened, particularly at my proposal to start Labour Exchanges. Now we have a demand from the Airfields Development Project who are going to spend \$ US 13 million for 105 truck drivers, 20 dozer drivers, 20 grader ops, 12 Highlift shovel drivers + fitters etc. And there is no bandobast to arrange the recruitment since no one followed up my activity. The government is proposing to set up a training scheme to train locals. Can you beat it, when so many of our own chaps await work. However I have put it to the British Ambassador and something may happen at last. The money comes from the Asian Development Bank and they will pay good wages.

I am now back in UN, this time with the Food & Agriculture Organisation and am administering two projects. One is a 2 million crops and fertilisers project and the other is the Sun Kosi irrigation study of the Terai plain with Japanese consulting engineers. The report is under preparation and we hope that the IBRD will take it on. Their appraisal mission is due in the autumn.

I got a number of Gurkha Engineers to operate plant on the British sector of the East-West Highway and one or two of our GOs as supervisors. They are now irreplaceable.

We are out here till June 72 at the moment. Had lunch with Dudley Spain and Bunny Burnett last Monday. Both in good form. Bunny will be a splendid MGBG."

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### ST. LUKES CHURCH, KLUANG

The new St. Lukes Church in Kluang was dedicated on 15th May 1971 at a Service conducted by The Right Rev Tan Sri Roland Koh, Bishop of West Malaysia. The Gurkha Engineers have had a number of close links with St. Lukes for many years. The old St. Lukes Garrison Church in Kluang was designed by Iris Perowne, General Lance's daughter. When it was planned to build a new Anglican Church below the Golf Club and in between the Indian Club and Temple, the Gurkha Engineers, then under Terry White, levelled the site. On the handing over of our camp to the Malaysian Engineers, Gil Roach offered the Church Committee the old Dasher Hall. This, with new walls, is now the new St. Lukes Church and, judging from a picture of it, it makes a splendid building. Victor Samuel is still Priest in Charge of the District.

The old Dasher Hall was provided by the DCRE Kuala Lumpur, Major Hussey, in early 1955 when it was discovered that the attap Dasher Ghar at Sungei Besi built by the 2/7 GR was not suitable. Originally the Dasher Hall had only a steel frame with a roof. Denys White's troop erected it and later on new extensions were constructed on each side and a brick projector room built. The Dasher Hall came with the Regiment when it moved from Sungei Besi to Kluang.

It is very satisfying that the Gurkha Engineers were able to help so much in the building of the new St. Lukes Anglican Church in Kluang.

## NEWS FROM KLUANG

by John Getley

David Morten. On Sedenak, but leaving Malaya for good in September. Will probably arrive in UK in January 1972 after visiting Australia.

Henry Stonor. On Chenor Oil Palm Estate, Ulu Pahang. Due for UK leave in September then to OPM.

John Galpine. Living in Kluang now but believed to be returning to UK shortly.

Steve Kulesza. Leaving for UK overland for leave in November.

Brian and Judith Belsham. On leave at present. Due to return to Elaeis Estate, Lambak.

Peter and June Smith. Now on Bukit Benut but leaving for New Zealand later in the year.

Striv! On CEP, Rengam until January then due to retire to Sussex.

John and Doreen Dodd. They are now on Kulai Oil Palms, an estate that Syme Darby recently bought from the Commonwealth Development Organisation. Syme Darby have just added another 5,000 acres to the estate.

Jimmy and Merlyn Wibur. Rengam Estate.

Jacques and Jacqueline Dumond. OPM.

David and Marianne Schoular. OPM. Daughter Maureen came out at Christmas on the Trans Siberian Railway.

Mike and Lilian Lockyer. On Sedenak. Due to return to Rengam in early 1972.

Rus Clark. Retires to Adelaide.

Ian and Helen Nicol. Still on OPM.

Bill and Margaret Paterson. Now in Seremban.

Alister and Anne McClauchlan. Left Revertex, now back in Scotland.

Derek and Joyce Brocklehurst. Still with Revertex.

Nicky and Tessa Brooks. Leaving Beradin for good later this year probably for Portugal.

Jap and Ointine Hardon. Still on OPM.

Allan and Kathy Southworth. Still on OPM.

Peter and Kandy Austin. On Sedenak.

I was in Kluang a week or so ago and found very little altered, excepting that the grass in the garrison is unkempt, the old GOR quarters bristle with television aerials and the swimming pool is open to the town, the Garrison Welfare Fund is said to benefit by over #500 some weeks. In the town except for the taxi stand and the cold storages little has changed. The club was deserted on a Saturday at midday and rumour hath it that it cannot pay its debts.

I saw Raschid, Ghulam Hassans' Contractor, the other day. He was leaving for West Pakistan on sick leave the next day. Desmond Quirke hopes to get him up to Hong Kong after a couple of months as PRI Tailor.

Ronnie Ferdinands's son, Ronnie, starts a years course at Bournemouth Technical College this autumn. Papa may possibly come to UK for a visit too.

MAJOR GEORGE BROADFOOT, C.B.

1807 - 1845

by Major General J. H. S. Bowring, CB, OBE, MC.  
Colonel, The Gurkha Engineers.

Very few people have heard of George Broadfoot. Yet in his 38 years of life he proved himself to be an officer of such extraordinary military quality, combined with shrewd political judgment, that he could hardly have failed to become a famous figure had he survived. His particular interest to the Gurkha Engineers is that he commanded the first known Gurkha Sappers with outstanding success in the First Afghan War of 1838 - 1842; and to the Sirmoor Rifles for reasons which will appear.

It is also interesting that George was not himself a Sapper, but an officer of the 34th Madras Native Infantry and that his unit did not belong to John Company; but was raised as part of Shah Shujah's levies when that monarch was restored to the throne of Afghanistan.

Broadfoot was directed in 1840 to raise a regiment of Sappers and having absorbed some Hazaras recruited by his brother William, produced "one of the most extraordinary regiments that was ever arrayed on a battlefield", and Broadfoot wrote of them:-

"My Corps. Sappers, 600 is -  
300 Hindustanis - brave.  
200 Goorkhas - braver.  
100 Afghans & Hazaras - Heroes."

Because of the personality of their Commander they became universally known as "Broadfoot's Sappers". This red-haired bespectacled and (from the quaint picture here illustrated) rather pickwickian looking man, was in fact quite a tiger. He imposed the most severe even ferocious



discipline on his men, at the same time attending like a father to their real wants and in return was accorded "an almost religious devotion". They were instructed in all the duties of entrenching and siege warfare, and were at the same time trained to be superior light infantry. Their success, both in the disastrous retreat from Kabul and in the later advance, was remarkable. They were said by Henry Lawrence to "have literally borne the brunt of every action of importance, being first in every assault and last in the retreat", with "Broadfoot and his little Gurkhas in the thick of the fight". During the retreat, Broadfoot and his Sappers were mainly responsible for the successful defence of Jellalabad, building the fortifications and re-building them after a severe earthquake, to the consternation of the enemy, who had expected a walk-over after this Act of God. It was Broadfoot's forceful character which persuaded the Officers of the Garrison to hold out, when they were ready to capitulate. Always positive, aggressive, scorning weak counsels, it was mainly his formidable leadership which produced the fantastic performance of his Corps. Often deprived of their tools, sometimes forbidden to take their arms, and with little chance of training, they none the less regularly outdid both the Queen's and the Company's Infantry in battle.

This performance was recognised by the Governor General, Lord Ellenborough, when the Jellalabad Garrison crossed the Sutlej to be received with the honours due to them at Ferozepore. He directed that as Major Broadfoot had customarily led the Army in action, he, at the head of his Sappers should head it on its triumphant return, and be the first to cross the river. The picture, from a contemporary sketch by Major Henry Yule, C.B. R.E., shows him riding with Lord Ellenborough to whom he was appointed A.D.C., into Karnal in January 1843. He had been made a Brevet Major and a Companion of the Bath a year earlier, and had twice been wounded in the campaign, once severely.

After the war, Broadfoot's Sappers were disbanded and all except the Gurkhas were absorbed into the Bengal Sappers and Miners as Nos. 7 and 8 Coys. The Gurkhas were posted to the Nasiri, Sirmoor, and Kumaon Battalions, later the 1st,

## 2nd and 3rd Gurkha Rifles.

Broadfoot himself was then appointed Commissioner for Tenasserim and shortly afterwards Agent to the Governor General for the N.W. Frontier, a most important political post, and an eloquent tribute to the exceptional powers of administration and political judgment of a man of 37.

His end, which came in the First Sikh War at the Battle of Firozshah in 1845, was typical of the man. The Governor General, then Sir Henry Hardinge, wrote to George's brother that "he fell by a grape shot, whilst bravely animating the troops to do their duty. The first shot threw him off his horse by my side. I in vain entreated him to retire. His invincible courage induced him to remain, and he was killed as we took the battery in our front". Hardinge also said "that he was as brave as he was able and second to none in all the great qualities of an accomplished officer."

In 1948 the first squadron of the Gurkha Engineers was raised at Kluang in Malaya, with some 300 re-enlisted Gurkha riflemen and with a cadre of Gurkha Officers and N.C.O.s allocated by the 2nd 6th and 10th Gurkha Rifles. The greatest number of both categories were found to come from the 2nd K.E.O. Gurkha Rifles and they did the new Regiment proud.

Thus, the bread cast upon the waters by the posting of Gurkha Sappers to the Sirmoor Battalion in 1843 came back to the Gurkha Engineers from the Sirmoor Rifles just over 100 years later.

It may be thoughtfitting that the memory of this peerless soldier should be commemorated in the Messes of our two Regiments in the form of the pictures which Major General Lance Perowne, himself a Sapper, and a Commander of many brigades, and of the Gurkha Division, has generously presented to us both.

Editors Note: This article was originally written for the 2nd Goorkhas Magazine, hence the references to the presentations of pictures.

## FAMILY GOSSIP

Jumbo and Priscilla Thomas have moved to Scotland where Jumbo is Chief Engineer Scottish Command. They will be there for just under a year until Jumbo retires. Judging by the fact that Jumbo's letter was written at three different times, he is finding either marriage or his move very jostling. Probably the latter.

Harry and Alison Vialon Clark stayed in Ian Thomson's flat over Whitsun while they visited Harry's Mum who lives in Hassocks. They were in very good form. Harry wore the dazed look that proud fathers usually have!

Ian Thomson has bought a flat in Hove and has spent many hours rewiring it and fitting cupboards etc. He continues to enjoy his job and is so far untouched by the chilly winds which are blowing on the Construction Industry Training Board.

John Carver reports that he is the Chairman of the Camberley Gurkha Welfare Appeal. Last year they raised about £1200 and were lying 3rd in the nationwide returns for amounts raised by small localities. Able Dacre (Gurkha Signals) is the Secretary and Guy Hartington (ex 9 GR) is the Treasurer.

John and Maureen Allen have moved house. They had a pleasant day with the P & D contingent at Anthony Head's place and saw Rory McGurk who still looks just the same. Henry Burrows of the 1/10th joined the RCB staff in July. John says that they have more candidates for commissions than there have been for years, and that RCB will probably have to expand to cope. John may have to take a detachment away and run a sub-board. John says that he has to work hard for his living which is very inconvenient in the middle of the fishing season. Michael has joined the QRIF on a type 'S' engagement and is at present in the Potential Officers Wing with the QDG at Catterick. Patrick is a professional sailing instructor employed by Western

Yachting (Scotland) Limited based at Oban taking people on cruising holidays and giving them sailing instruction. Dierdre is PA to a Scottish Landowner developing holiday enterprises.

John and Iona Bowring are very busy with their Arab stud. They had some success showing at Windsor (including a picture in the Daily Telegraph). Pipe Major Deobahadur stayed a night and they had a party in the evening, during which he played on the lawn. General John made a recording of it. It was all nostalgic as General John chose him as a young piper as deserving of encouragement and sent him on a Edinburgh course.

John Worthington is at the Staff College where he has a quarter in Kings Ride. So demanding are his instructors, that he has not been able to ride at all! He will probably be going to the MOD. Veronica and family (Clare, 3, and Michael, 9 months,) flourish under the healthy Surrey pines.

Malcolm Thomson commands a Squadron at the Training Regiment. He commutes to Hythe every weekend where Monica and the family are in the house they bought six months ago. Charles is nearly 9, James nearly 8 and Sarah nearly 7.

Tim Yates has bought a house in Fleet. He has been made manager of the warehouse and distribution department of Lansing Bagnall. There are, apparently, 71 distributors and agents throughout the world, although Tim does not himself have to travel further than to Basingstoke. Barbara blooms; Louise, aged 6+, and Andrew aged 4+, go to Stockton House School in Fleet. Tim has now joined the North Hants Golf Club, and we await to see what effect the enormous greens and the heather will have on his previous handicap of 8.

John Goddard wrote in April to say that Bano was still working for PIA air-trooping Punjabis to W. Bengal - at least she was on the winning side.

Dick Francis has returned from nine months in Uganda. Pam

and the boys remained behind in Farnham. The boys are at Sherborne.

Gil Roach is in ebullient form. He recently met Bill Branford who is shortly to retire and Barney who has already done so.

John and Mavis English are on leave in Milford-on-Sea until the middle of September when John departs for Hong Kong as 21C of the GTR. Mavis, Cathy, Patrick and James will stay behind with Mavis's sister Shirley near Godalming for a few months before joining John in Hong Kong. John and Mavis both found BAOR quite hateful. John managed to break a leg while skiing. Mavis's brother Robert gets married this month.

Mike Gaffney has finished his stint in N. Ireland. He found both the Prots and the Cats quite impossible. He is currently on leave in Churt where Jenny has been staying with her parents. They both go to Germany very shortly.

Richard and Val Marriott were in good form at Mike Gaffney's recent party. Val has taken up the piano again and now accompanies singers in London. Richard reports that the Corsebellises are well and that David is very thrilled that he will be taking over 67 Sqn next year. Also at Mike Gaffney's party were Bruce Jackman and Tom Henderson-Peal. Bruce is an Instructor at Mons and is due to go back to 2/2 GR for a year before going to the RAF Staff College at Bracknell. Tom is with IBM.

Malcolm Campbell has landed a splendid job as PA to the Managing Director of Cubitts and is looking for a house near Swindon to commute from. Andrew is very keen on going to Sandhurst.

Mike Calvert looks just the same as ever. He says that he finds the work at IBM very interesting.

Peter Druitt commutes to Barton Stacey from London on Monday morning and returns to the Smoke on Friday. During the week he is Adjt of the Survey Regiment. He intends to take the Staff College exam this year.

Bill Wiggett is attending the Junior Staff College Course.  
He and Sue go to 7 Fd Sqn in Hohne in BAOR in December.

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## BOOK REVIEW

Land and Social Change in East Nepal: A Study of Hindu-Tribal Relations by Lionel Caplan. Published in London by Routledge and Kegan Paul. Price £2.50.

Condensed from a review in High Asia magazine.

This is a serious piece of anthropology which examines the impact of encroaching Brahmans, hungry for land, on the Limbus in Ilam. One of the most important historical movements in the Himalayas over the last few centuries has been the eastward spread and political dominance of the Nepali-speaking Hindu jats from a base in Western Nepal. Having conquered the Newar Kingdoms of the Nepal Valley in the eighteenth century, they went on to carve out the country of Nepal, and until the 1950s they provided all its rulers and administrators. At grass-roots level, this political dominance by the Shah kings and the Rana family was accompanied by a largely undocumented movement of farmers, mostly Chetris and Brahmans, who in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have reached Sikkim and southern Bhutan. These farmers often impinged on areas settled by other jats, who reacted in various ways.

The story is rather a sad one for the Limbus, although in fact they have kept more of their cultural identity than some other peoples. The book clearly shows that the peculiar system of land tenure enjoyed by the Limbus has enabled them to fight a rearguard action and prevent the Brahmans from swallowing up all their lands.

Dr. Daplan sees the relations between the two groups as entirely dominated by this struggle for Limbu land - a struggle which has created both antagonism and at the same time an interdependence between two peoples who are not prepared to do without each other.

The author emphasises the social aspects rather than the cultural ones. When Limbu and Brahmin first came into contact their cultures must have been totally different, whereas now there is much overlap as a result of the Limbus adoption of the Nepali language and some Brahminical values and customs.



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