

# *The Queen's Gurkha Engineers*



*2011*

# The Queen's Gurkha Engineers

**Affiliated Colonel in Chief:**

Her Majesty The Queen

**Colonel of the Regiment:**

Lieutenant General Sir D R Bill KCB

## **Regimental Headquarters:**

Lt Col S J Hulme MBE  
Maj Prembahadur Ale MVO  
Maj Ekbahadur Gurung  
Capt J W C Walker

Commandant  
Gurkha Major  
Gurkha RCMO  
Adjutant

## **Field Officers:**

Maj I Moore  
Maj A C J Rowson  
Maj Dudhprasad Gurung MVO  
Maj Rajen Gurung

OC 69 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search)  
OC 70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search)  
OC 7 Cadet Training Team  
QM 70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search)

## **Captains:**

Capt Bishmaraj Gurung  
Capt Yogprasad Thapa  
Capt Devkumar Gurung  
Capt Tulbahadur Ale MBE  
Capt Mohan Gurung  
Capt Kamalbahadur Khapung Limbu

Capt E J D Thompson  
Capt S I Ahmed  
Capt R J Windard  
Capt Bishnubahadur Ghale  
Capt Buddhibahadur Bhandari  
Capt Dirgha KC  
Capt Purnasingh Tamang

Capt Yambahadur Pun  
Capt Mohankumar Tamang  
Capt Ashokkumar Gurujg  
Capt Tarabahadur Pun  
Capt Meenjang Gurung  
Capt Bishwabahadur Rai

Lt L S Johnston-Smith

Lt D W Lüttig

Lt H M G Bailey

## **RSM:**

WO1(RSM) G F Banham RE (RSM QGE)



# The Queen's Gurkha Engineers Association

*President* – Lieutenant General Sir D R Bill KCB

*Chairman* – Brigadier (Retd) A D Harking OBE

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# Editorial

Andy Gooch

This year there seems to have been a great deal of important changes for the Regiment, the most significant being the re-rolling to Search. My current job means I am in weekly contact with the C-IED Task Force in Afghanistan and I know from this what an absolutely crucial role the Search teams are playing in the fight against IEDs. Without them the destruction and neutralisation of this threat would simply not be possible.

Sadly, the on-going re-organisation of the Armed Forces as a result of last year's Security and Defence Strategic Review has started to have a real effect on QGE. It was recently announced that due to the current over manning, some QGE soldiers will have to be made redundant in the first tranche on redundancies. Those selected will be told on 1 Sep 11 with more are likely to follow in the subsequent tranches.

All of these things are not new and you only have to read the Regimental History to see that change has been a constant feature of the Regiment since it's inception. The Letters written by the late Tom Spring-Smythe (pg 36) following a visit to the Regiment in 1977 echo just this and are as pertinent today as they were 34 years ago. *"We had to contend with much in the past that made it difficult for soldiers to soldier and our survival in the early days was a precarious matter indeed. Let us hope that our masters in the higher ranks of the Army continue to value the soldier for himself as did the few who from the very beginning had confidence in the Gurkha Engineers to not only survive, to be made to survive and to become the splendid, Queen's Gurkha Engineers of today".*

Another thing I have learnt from reading the Regimental History is that when the Royal Title was granted to the Regiment in 1977 it was in such a form that the word "The" should be written with a capital "T" to signify that "each and every soldier of the Regiment is a Queen's Gurkha Engineer and stems from the tradition instigated by King Edward III that military engineers should be appointed as individuals to the

service of the Crown. Furthermore it was decided that the title "The Queen's Gurkha Engineers" should be abbreviated to just QGE. (Queen's Gurkha Sapper pg 106). Therefore, if some of the text in the magazine appears grammatically incorrect on first reading this is why.



On a personal note, having taken part in Trailwalker last year (and finished in 16hrs - the picture shows me at the CP 9 after ~ 80km) I must say how much admiration I have for all the teams competing and marvel at the physical and mental fitness it takes to run the whole distance. I also should say what a huge and vital contribution the support teams make for without them, it would simply not be possible. My thanks to my wife, Charlie and the other wives for volunteering to do this crucial job.

As ever, can I also thank everyone who has contributed to this year's magazine and helped with its production and distribution. This includes the tremendous support I have received from GM and GRMCO Sahebs in Maidstone and Hukum Saheb and Sgt Nar in Nepal. I would also like to give a special thanks to Henry Day, someone I have had the privilege to climb with on a number of occasions, for sparing the time for the interview about his ascent of Annapurna I.

Finally, as always I stand ready to receive articles for your magazine whenever you can send them; so please keep them coming. The one advantage I will have next year is that I will be able to get the articles from the Regiment on time without the need to chase them as will I be returning to QGE as OC 69 Sqn in August – something I am immensely looking forward to.

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# Message from the Colonel of the Regiment

*Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB*

It's that time of year again to pen a few words of introduction to your magazine. It has certainly been a memorable year in so many ways. Undoubtedly the highlight has been the recent visit to Maidstone by Her Majesty the Queen. Quite a coup by the Commandant, Simon Hulme to secure this royal visit marking inter alia the induction of the 5000<sup>th</sup> recruit into the Regiment and the commissioning of 3 officers. Perhaps we should gloss over who actually was the recruit in question - enough said - it got us Her Majesty and a truly great day was had by all. Peter Wall as Chief Royal, CGS and ex-Training Officer QGE headed up the senior echelon and was in great form as he re-lived a few HK memories. All in all the visit was an outstanding success, immaculately organised, nicely relaxed and reflects tremendous credit on all involved.

Meanwhile the Regiment is in the process of embarking on yet another fundamental change as it re-roles to high risk search. As part of 36 Engr Regt it will take on this critical task and will inevitably see multiple deployments to operations in Afghanistan - so no change there. The change in role brings some advantages in terms of providing better balance within the Regiment, but also brings with it the risk of over-specialisation. We continue to aspire to a third sub-unit but the tide - for the moment is not with us. Indeed some will sadly face the prospect of redundancy over the next year or 2. The numbers will not - hopefully - be that great but, as we know all too well, particularly for our Gurkha soldiers, this will require careful and sensitive management.

Operationally the Regiment remains as busy as ever with 69 Sqn having recently returned from a construction tour in Helmand. Tragically the tour was marred by the death in action of Sapper Ishwor Gurung. He was a young man bursting with potential with so much ahead of him. I should mention that his mother made a most supportive statement from Nepal. I never cease to marvel at the attitude of our dependants - British or Gurkha - most humbling.



Your Association remains in fine fettle and excellent hands under Tony Harking and his team. I very much hope that many of you will be able to gather at our events planned for Minley in the summer and/or the Regimental Birthday at Maidstone in September. Regrettably I shall not be there for the latter as Gay and I are off to Nepal to mark the 28<sup>th</sup> September in Pokhara under Hukum Saheb's gimlet eye!

I suppose it is a measure of the Regiment's maturity that there are, very sadly, an increasing number of deaths to report. A list of those who have died in Nepal in the last year are included elsewhere, representing so many old friends, as is the recent passing of Ken Hazard. But I must mention the very sad news of the untimely death of Terry Mawhinney in Cyprus. I remember him so well as a highly effective and committed 2IC of the support squadron in Sek Kong - but always with a twinkle in his eye. Our thoughts are with Sheila and the family.

Finally, may I end on this somewhat sombre note by wishing you all the very best for the coming year.

Jai QGE!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Bill', written in a cursive style.





# REGIMENTAL NEWS

## THE COMMANDANT'S REPORT

*Lieutenant Colonel S J Hulme MBE RE*

With my time as Commandant QGE drawing to a close, I could not have asked for a more memorable 12 months in which to serve out my tenure. The year since I last



wrote to the magazine has been peppered with moments that will always remain with me.

24 February 2011 will be remembered as an historic day for The Queen's Gurkha Engineers. The Queen graciously agreed to visit us in order to witness the 5000<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Sapper being attested, to Commission 3 QGE Late Entry Officers and also mark the change of 36 Engineer Regiment's role from a General Support Engineer Regiment to a specialist High Risk Search Regiment. We were also honoured to host General Sir Peter Wall KCB CBE ADC Gen, the Chief of the General Staff (QGE Training Officer 1984 – 1986) and Lieutenant General Sir DR Bill KCB, Colonel of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, Colonel BG and a plethora of civil dignitaries from the Maidstone area to the parade. It was a wonderful day for all of those involved in the visit and I understand that it is still the talk of the Palace, although a wedding or two may now be the flavour of the month..

I must also mention the sad loss of Spr Ishwor who was shot whilst serving on Op BAM in Afghanistan this year. Coupled with other losses and serious injuries across 36 Engineer Regiment some of the memories that I take with me will be sad ones.

There has also been a great deal of work to ensure the smooth transition of 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn QGE to 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Search) QGE and 70 Gurkha Fd Sp Sqn QGE into 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Search) QGE. By the time this article has been published, both squadrons will be reorganised as search squadrons and 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Search) will be preparing to deploy to Afghanistan in September 2012. At the same time, and on current plans, 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Search) will provide search teams for the London 2012 Olympic Games. This change of role for the whole of 36 Engr Regt is a boon for QGE in particular. It has enabled RHQ QGE to restructure the sub-units and in particular to re-examine the trade structure of the organisation allowing for a more balanced and progressive career profile for our soldiers.

Looking slightly wider - QGE is still maintains a footprint in 24 (Commando) Engineer Regiment and at the time of writing, the boys are deployed in Afghanistan and due to return when you receive this magazine in September. The Gurkha

Commando Sappers will return to 36 Engineer Regiment on completion of their tour in Afghanistan. The Gurkha Troop in 33 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 26 Engineer Regiment is also making history by conducting mechanised engineer training. The troop will be deploying to Kenya to compete several construction projects and will eventually deploy to Afghanistan in March 2012.

I have also been lucky enough to squeeze in a second MS trip to Nepal. Once again trekking in the east and in the west but this time managing to meet up with buro thoil in Dharan where I met the old and bold saheb and gurujiharu. In the west, a trip to the GM's home was essential, as was a visit to his local school before heading back to Pokhara to visit the late Spr Ishwor's family in Bhurjung Khola and then on to Kathmandu. I had a hugely enjoyable trek in Nepal this year, where I was able to attend social functions organised by our bretheren in Pokhara and Kathmandu and I would like to thank the GM saheb, Buddhi saheb, Sgt Nar and all of the buro sahebharu for making my visit very memorable.

During the year I also got to travel to almost all of the locations in which QGE serve and I must not forget to thank the boys from Brunei, ITC Catterick, Minley and Devon who made my visits so humbling, worthwhile and enjoyable. I am very grateful. I have yet to visit the Mechanised Troop in Tidworth but I have not forgotten them and hope to visit in the very near future.

Once again this year QGE have dominated the Brigade of Gurkhas sporting events, winning the Nepal Cup for the second time in a row and finishing a very close second with only 15 minutes difference over the 100 km race on Ex TRAILWALKER 2010. I look forward to us hopefully winning the Nepal Cup for the third time in a row this year! Dev saheb, ably supported by both RE and QGE soldiers, secured 16 of the 20 trophies at the recent CORPSAAM meeting and capped an already superb performance by winning the inter-corps falling plate competition too. I also wholeheartedly congratulate the QGE boys who have represented the regiment and corps in various sports including badminton, volleyball, taekwondo, running and many, many others.

This may be my last article as Comdt QGE but I shall remain in touch through the Association in the future. Despite being thrown in at deep end of GMAS, new GTACOS and recent re-rolling of the whole of 36 Engineer Regiment, I have thoroughly enjoyed my tour as Commandant QGE. I must say that my wife Louise and two children, William and Isabelle have also enjoyed their time with QGE. We have all been humbled by your generosity, openness and kindness during our time in Maidstone. I wish QGE the very best of fortune for the future, you will always remain strong but I must end with...

"Jai QGE Balyio Rahanuhos"



# THE GURKHA MAJOR'S REPORT

*Maj Prembahadur Ale MVO*

I have thoroughly enjoyed the most prestigious post in The Queen's Gurkha Engineers and I can honestly not believe how fast my time as Gurkha Major has gone by. I took over the responsibility in October 2009 and in July this year I will hand over to Major Ekbahadur Gurung Saheb. In the Regiment's history there has never been two Gurkha Majors in a row from same recruit intake (I am 21166747 and Maj Ek Saheb is 21166748, both from Intake 39). I am delighted to handover my post to such a capable and experienced man and I wish him the very best of luck for his tenure.



Since my last report in the QGEA magazine, there have been numerous activities within the Regiment; the most important being fulfilling our operational commitments. Throughout the year Gurkha Sappers have been committed to Afghanistan in both the search and the normal combat engineering role and you will be pleased to know they have been effective, versatile and broadly employed in the contemporary operating environment. 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn deployed to Afghanistan in May 2010 and successfully completed a construction tour, upgrading and constructing infrastructure. Tragically the Regiment lost a young and very promising soldier to enemy fire, Spr Ishwor Gurung. It was touching and I was very grateful to receive so many letters of condolence from previous Comdts and GM Sahebharu and particularly from members of the Regimental Association in Nepal. Hukumraj Saheb and his team were at the funeral service which was held in Spr Ishwor's village of Bhurjung Khola, near Pokhara. His name will be remembered in our Regimental history forever.

Once the Sqn returned to Maidstone in September 2010, the Regiment took part in a medal parade on 25 September 10 and although we are part of 36 Engineer Regiment it was a purely Gurkha parade, accompanied by the Band of the Brigade Gurkhas. The day also celebrated the Regiment's 62<sup>nd</sup> Birthday.

Although they have not deployed on operations this year, 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Search) have been equally busy on various training exercises under the command of the new OC, Maj Adam Rowson RE on his first tour with the Gurkhas. Most recently 70 Sqn has been concentrating on the change of their role from a Fd Sp Sqn to a Fd Sqn (Search).

The Gurkha Commando Troop from 24 (Commando) Regiment has recently deployed to Afghanistan and is due back in September 2011. Likewise, the boys from 33 Armoured Engineer Squadron in 26 Engineer Regiment are undertaking armoured training and are due to deploy to Afghanistan in 2012. You can see how busy the Regiment

has been.

Besides the busy schedule in the Regiment, we were blessed to welcome Her Majesty The Queen to Invicta Park Barracks on 24 February 2011. The groundwork was started in May 10 by RHQ QGE, particularly Capt James Walker Adjt QGE who submitted the justification for Her Majesty's visit to the Regiment. The Queen visited to view the attestation of her 5000<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Sapper, to commission three Gurkha LE Officers and to view the Regiment on its change of role from a General Support Engineer Regiment into a High Risk Search Regiment. You will be interested to read the separate article about the visit by Maj I Moore RE, OC 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Search). I am absolutely delighted that Her Majesty graciously visited the Regiment and I cannot imagine a nicer way to finish my tenure as Gurkha Major.

There have been no changes to Gurkha Terms and Condition of Service although you will have heard about the possibility of forced redundancies which are designed to try and cut the Army's excess manpower. The Brigade of Gurkhas will be subject to the same rules and we are not exempt from the cuts and currently QGE has an excess of about one hundred and thirty personnel and this excess will be reduced between now and 2015. The Gurkha Captain post has now been stopped and I may be the last Gurkha Major to have taken the traditional route as a Gurkha Captain since Ek Saheb served as Sqn Ops Officer instead.

I am pleased to see that we still have a very good discipline record across all ranks and I expect this to continue as we maintain our Gurkha Ethos. I think today's soldiers are better educated and more conscientious these days and that may be the main reason why we do not face discipline issues within the Regiment. I am proud that our boys are equally good at maintaining our old traditions and KAIDA.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Buro Sahebharu and Gurugeeharu who made me so welcome when I visited Nepal with the Commandant Saheb in November 2010. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting and talking with the Sahebs and Gurugees whom I met previously during my early career in QGE. The Commandant Saheb and I also had the privilege to visit Spr Ishwor's family whilst we were in Nepal.

In summary, I have had a great time with QGE as the Gurkha Major and I have achieved almost everything that I wanted during my tenure. I am not yet sure what the future holds for me, but my family and myself will be living near the Regiment in Maidstone in order that my children can complete their education as they are in local schools. I hope to play an active role as a QGEA member wherever I go.

I will always remember the Paltan who provided me with so many opportunities to fulfil my dreams. I would like to wish everyone the best of luck for the future, particularly the junior soldiers who continue to commit themselves to dangerous jobs in the British Army. Finally, whatever you do, wherever you go please do not forget our KAIDA as this is unique to Brigade of Gurkhas. "JAI QGE BALIO RAHNUHOS"



# RHQ QGE NEWSLETTER

*Maj Ekbahadur Gurung (GRCMO)*

Herewith another change in QGE history as 69 and 70 Sqns are being re-roled to Search units from 2011 onwards. RHQ QGE would like to make a swift summary of the Regimental history which will become a useful note for those who have been away from the Regimental life for a period. Gurkhas were first enlisted into the Royal Engineers in September 1948 when a Gurkha Training Squadron RE was formed. 67 Field Squadron RE was raised in 1949 with 68 Field Squadron RE being raised in 1950. The RHQ of 50 Field Regiment RE followed in 1951. The whole Regiment became part of the Brigade of Gurkhas in 1955 and the title changed on 28 September of that year to "The Gurkha Engineers" and it is this day which is now celebrated every year as our Regimental Birthday. The Royal Title, "The Queen's Gurkha Engineers" was bestowed by Her Majesty The Queen on 21 April 1977.

Since those early days, the Regiment has witnessed and been part of many changes. After so many years in South East Asia as part of the Hong Kong Garrison and on operations in Malaya and Borneo, QGE moved to the UK and settled in Invicta Park and is now fully integrated into life in 36 Engineer Regiment and the town of Maidstone. The close integration with the Corps of Royal Engineers allows QGE to play a full part in all aspects of Army life including deployed operations.

Throughout the last year elements of QGE have deployed worldwide both on exercises and operations. 69 Gurkha Field Squadron deployed to Afghanistan on Op BAM and they returned during the second week in September 2011. Tragically, the Squadron lost Sapper Ishwor Gurung on 13 August 2010 to enemy action. Throughout the year both 69 and 70 Squadrons have also provided a number of High Risk Search Teams for Op HERRICK.

The majority of 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron carried out numerous military exercises and construction projects within the UK whilst its Resources Node deployed on Op HERRICK under the command of 21 Engineer Regiment. Besides these commitments, 70 Squadron also provided a Search Team to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 11. It was whilst working in this team that WO2 (MPF) Dave Markland RE was sadly killed on 8 February 2010 whilst leading one of the Gurkha RESTs (Royal Engineer Search Team).

The Gurkha Commando Troop from 24 (Cdo) Regiment deployed to Norway and Belize on construction projects and various field exercises and the troop is currently deployed on Op HERRICK 15 and will return in September 2011. Having had a successful HERRICK tour itself, the Gurkha Mechanised Troop in 33 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 26 Engineer Regiment completed a construction exercise in Kenya and the Troop will continue normal training and overseas exercises until it next deploys on Op HERRICK 16 in March 2012. In all aspects of military operations QGE is making a full and valuable contribution.

As a result of the GTACOS, we have seen many of our soldiers transferring to the Corps of Royal Engineers on promotion.

As well as being boarded for promotion within QGE, QGE soldiers are now routinely boarded alongside their British counterparts in the RE. If they score highly enough they will be offered promotion but only if they transfer to RE. As well as opportunities for transfer on promotion numerous other have transferred to other Arms and Services within the Army in order to suit their individual aspirations; something which has been good news for our young and enthusiastic Gurkha sappers. With Op ENTIRETY<sup>1</sup> driving significant changes in the Corps Structure, RHQ QGE is undertaking the restructuring of both 69 and 70 Squadrons for their new role as Search Squadrons.

Today, the spirit and energy of QGE remains as strong as ever and it enjoys great and ever growing respect and all members of QGE should take pride in their remarkable achievements. Whilst the Regiment fondly and perpetually remembers its fallen QGE brothers, there is much to look forward to and it is certain that the fighting spirit of the Gurkha soldier and the professionalism of the Gurkha Sapper will remain in high demand.

As far as the Brigade Sporting events are concerned, QGE succeeded in winning the Nepal Cup for the second time in a row and came second in Trailwalker 2010. RHQ QGE has every confidence that the boys will continue the reputation in the near future.

The Regiment has continued to enjoy much success over the year on all fronts. The following lists personal achievements and awards for year 2010/2011:

## Honours and Awards

### **Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath**

Lieutenant General DR Bill CB

### **Commander Joint Operations's Commendation for Op HERRICK 12**

566364 Capt Tarabahadur Pun

### **Commander Task Force Helmand's Commendation for Op HERRICK 12**

563523 Capt Devkumar Gurung

### **Bowring Trophy 2010**

21170508 LCpl Ramkumar Rai - Winner

21170326 LCpl Jamansher Rai - Runner Up

### **Top Mason Award – Masons Livery Company**

21170527 LCpl Kanaialal Thapa - Winner 2009

21170652 LCpl Jayandra Garbuja - Winner 2010

## Promotions

### **Selected for Promotion to Major**

558455 Capt Yogprasad Thapa

### **Selected for conversion to Intermediate Regular Commissioning (Late Entry)**

563523 Capt Devkumar Gurung

563817 Capt Bishnubahadur Ghale

566365 Capt Tulbahadur Ale MBE

<sup>1</sup> Op ENTIRETY is the name given to the British Army's re-balancing in order to meet Defence's priority, Operations in Afghanistan.





**Selected for Commissioning**

21168531 WO2 Bishwabahadur Rai  
21168762 WO2 Purnasingh Tamang

**Selected for promotion to WO2**

21168984 SSgt Manjitsingh Gurung  
21168989 SSgt Jangabahadur Singjali

**Selected for promotion to SSgt**

21169278 SSgt Buddhilal Gaha  
21169292 SSgt Dilkumar Rai  
21169299 SSgt Bikash Rai

**Promotion to Sgt**

21169485 Sgt Khelendrabahadur Gurung  
21169588 Sgt Birendrakumar Kambang  
21169617 Sgt Topbahadur Thapa Magar  
21169677 Sgt Ashokkumar Gurung

**Promotion to Cpl**

21169529 Cpl Buddha Gurung  
21169847 Cpl Jaybahadur Pun  
21169969 Cpl Tanka Ambohang  
21170045 Cpl Jasbahadur Thapa  
21170082 Cpl Devbahadur Pun  
21170192 Cpl Chandraprakash Limbu  
21170256 Cpl Kiranpratap Rai  
21170260 Cpl Rojan Rai  
21170282 Cpl Bishnuprasad Gurung  
21170376 Cpl Premkumar Jabegu Limbu  
21170526 Cpl Yakthunghang Angbuhang  
21170630 Cpl Ekabahadur Rai  
21170758 Cpl Ganesh Rana Magar

**Promotion to LCpl**

21170801 LCpl Angtshering Sherpa  
21170884 LCpl Binodkumar Rai  
21170915 LCpl Indisen Rai  
21170920 LCpl Nissan Lama  
21170924 LCpl Dattahang Limbu  
21170973 LCpl Maniram Thapa Magar  
21171061 LCpl Rajkumar Thapa  
21171087 LCpl Dhiraj Thapa  
21171096 LCpl Santosh Gurung  
21171155 LCpl Bhimkumar Parangden  
21171158 LCpl Sandesh Rai  
21171177 LCpl Niranjan Gurung  
21171242 LCpl Bhupendraprasad Gurung  
21171267 LCpl Suraj Pun  
21171298 LCpl Amit Gurung  
21171371 LCpl Ashish Malla  
21171447 LCpl Sunilkumar Rana  
21171582 LCpl Jasbahadur Rai  
21171750 LCpl Seesan Gurung  
21171776 LCpl Bishalsingh Rai  
21171806 LCpl Santosh Goley

**Best Students**

**ME Bricklayer and Concretor Class 1** - LCpl Kanaiyalal Thapa and LCpl Jayandra Garbuja

**ME Construction Material Technician Class 1** - Cpl Bikash Shrestha

**ME Electrician Class 1** - LCpl Prakash Rana and LCpl Deepak Rai

**ME Heating & Plumbing Class 1** - Spr Bhim Limbu

**ME Fitter Machinist Class 1** - LCpl Deepak Rai

**ME Welder Class 1** - LCpl Bishnukumar Tamang, LCpl Suman Ghale and Spr Dilip Gurung

**ME Building and Structural Finisher Class 2** - Spr Subin Lawati

**ME Electrician Class 2** - Spr Amit Pun

**ME Plant Operator Mechanic Class 2** - Spr Topjang Rai

**RE Search Team (Advance)** - Cpl Bikash Shrestha

**RE Search Team (Advance) Top 2IC** - LCpl Bhijan Rai

**Gurkha Coy Train the Trainer** - Cpl Ekabahadur Rai

**All Arms Skill At Arms** - LCpl Suresh Sherma

**Plant Sergeant** - Sgt Sushil Gurung

**ME Combat Class 3** - Spr Adip Lungeli

**Best Recruit** - Spr Bal Budha Magar

**Transferees****RE as Clerks of Work**

21169055 Cpl Rukdraprakash Gurung  
21169134 Cpl Gehendraraj Thamsuhang  
21169287 Cpl Ananda Gurung  
21169426 Cpl Kriti Rai  
21169824 LCpl Birendra Rai  
21169964 LCpl Kishan Rai  
21169965 Cpl Bhabendrakumar Muktan  
21169969 Cpl Tanka Ambohang

**RE**

21169656 LCpl Dipen Subba  
21169784 LCpl Karmaraj Rai  
21169981 LCpl Temba Tamang  
21170102 LCpl Chandraman Gurung  
21170242 LCpl Tularam Thaklung Limbu  
21170254 LCpl Deobhakta Rai  
21170265 LCpl Begbahadur Tamang  
21170326 LCpl Jamansher Rai  
21170508 LCpl Ramkumar Rai  
21170553 LCpl Ramesh Pun  
21170558 LCpl Deepak Tamang  
21170801 LCpl Angtshiring Sherpa

**AGC**

21169275 Cpl Arunkumar Purja Pun - AGC (SPS)





RHQ QGE comprises of Comdt QGE, Deputy Comdt, GM, Adj, GRCMO, RSM, GSA, Mov/Courses Clk and QGE Piper, (missing at the time of the photo) Pandit Premprasad Gaire is an integral part of the team and his efforts have been second to none in providing spiritual guidance and guidance on religious practices. QGE is fortunate to have such a high calibre and proficient religious teacher who is highly regarded both in the Regiment and the wider Brigade.

## THE ADJUTANT'S PERSPECTIVE

Capt JWC Walker RE, Adjutant QGE



*Captain James Walker has been serving as Adjutant of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers since November 2009. Prior to taking up appointment, he was the Operations Officer of 20 Field Squadron during which time he deployed to Kenya as BGE for 1 SCOTS and planned a Squadron JFEE to Scotland, including a troop deployment to the Isle of Skye. As a Troop Commander, Capt Walker served with 37 Armoured Engineer Squadron in Paderborn, deploying on Op TELIC 8. Initially*

*in the construction role he was responsible for identifying and executing Quick Impact Projects and mentoring the Iraqi Engineers before he then took command of the Recce Troop.*

As a brand new troop commander, it was always my first choice to serve with QGE although I was posted to 35 Engr Regt in Germany in order to deploy on Op TELIC 8. I had a fantastic time on tour and in Germany but when the opportunity arose to be posted to Maidstone as an Ops Offr 20 Sqn, I was delighted that I would be able to be part of the Regiment with the Gurkhas! During my 15 months in 20 Sqn I made some great friends in the Gurkha LE officer community and was invited to several Gurkha events which confirmed my previous aspiration to serve directly with QGE. They say in the Army that to get the jobs you want you have to be in the right place at the right time and have a bit of luck and fortunately, I was and I did.





My first experience of QGE hospitality was just before I took over the job at a drinks party in the gym. I remember walking in, having a beer thrust into my hand and then eating enough tipan tapan to kill a civilian. I immediately felt welcomed into the QGE family and was hosted brilliantly by all the boys. That was the start of the most enjoyable 18 months of my career so far as I have subsequently experienced 2 Dashains, 2 Tihars and (my particular favourite) Nepali New Year 2067 in the Cpls' club. I didn't understand a word of what was being sung, although, apparently I was the subject of some of the arguing amongst the Dohori singers! New Year was also my first experience of Nepali dancing and I don't think my legs have recovered yet.



Being Adjutant of 36 Engineer Regiment and QGE at the same time makes life very interesting. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday I wear the Royal Engineer cap badge, stable belt and rank slide and on Tuesday and Thursday, QGE kit. I thought it was unfair having one fewer day in QGE uniform so for a while, I wore my QGE beret on Sunday as well. During the first few months of my tenure, I spent a lot of money being fined in bottles of port for wearing the wrong cap badge on the wrong day so I soon learnt. I now have two coat hooks – one for each set of uniform marked with big 'day of the week' labels. It seems to work as I haven't had a port fine for a while!



I have been consistently amazed by the amazing achievements of QGE. It was almost day one of my tenure that we won the Nepal Cup in 2009 and we did the same in 2010 and I'm

sure will do it again in 2011. We have had the top students on all trade courses at the RSME (I was going to name them but there are literally too many to mention) and top LCpls and Sappers on both the 33 Squadron and 24 (Cdo Regt) Order of Merit Boards. I was extremely fortunate to be able to run half of Trailwalker 2010 with the team that came second overall in a time of 10hrs 53 mins. I hadn't prepared to run 30 miles that day but I managed to keep up and had an amazing time seeing how much team work and organisation there was to feed and water the team on the move. I must make special mention of LCpl Bhimal who seemed to be there almost every step of the way with a banana or energy drink in his hand for the boys despite him being about 60 years old!



During my time as Adjutant I have also faced some difficult challenges. Gurkha surplus manpower and redundancy issues have been the subject of much discussion and work and I do hope that the right decisions are made to ensure the continued success and survival of QGE. The Army has and will continue to face significant manning challenges and this will be felt as much, if not more strongly in QGE. I wish you good luck.

The tour has been punctuated with very sad times too. Sapper Mellors and Sapper Smith of 20 Field Squadron were killed in action in Helmand on 15 Feb 10 and 26 Jul 10 respectively but particularly hard for The QGE were the losses of WO2 (MPF) Dave Markland of 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron on 8 Feb 10 and Sapper Ishwor Gurung of 69 Gurkha Field Squadron on 13 Aug 10. It is testament to their sacrifice that the Regiment received so many letters of condolence from all over the world after their loss and my thoughts remain with the families to this day. We Will Remember Them.

There have been many other highlights during my time as Adjutant but it was a privilege to be able to round off my tour with a visit from Her Majesty The Queen when she came to view the attestation of her 5000<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Engineer (Sapper Bal Budha Magar). Her Majesty also commissioned three QGE LE Officers (Capt Ashokkumar Gurung, Capt Dirgha KC and Capt Kamal Khapung Limbu). The parade was accompanied by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and QGE looked in fine form as they marched past The Queen to the sound of a Gurkha drum beating at 140 beats per minute.

I have enjoyed over 400 portions of Gurkha Curry, but the best by far was the "bhat by hat" at 3 o'clock in the morning at the messing hut with the victorious Nepal Cup team. They let me help with the preparation of the curry, chopping all the meat and vegetables with kukris and cooking over an open fire in a frying pan the size of a small family car. The curry was completely delicious despite my help!

I am ending my time as Adjutant with a duty trek to Nepal in April. I have been trying to get on a trek since I started the job as I strongly believe that it is key to this appointment to have a good understanding of the Kaida and traditions that the Adjutant is expected to attend. I am delighted to be undertaking the trek as I hope, one day, to be able to return to QGE in any capacity. I must end by adding my most sincere thanks to all those in QGE who have made my time so rewarding and enjoyable in particular the Gurkha Major and the Gurkha RCMO. Prem Saheb has been a good friend and a perfect source of advice, not only on Gurkha matters, but also on golf and I have learned a huge amount from him –



although my handicap is still 28. The GRCMO, Maj EkSaheb is due to take over from Prem in the summer and I know he will be a first class Gurkha Major. I have seen him smile on three occasions during my 18 months and he has been a great babysitter of my Jack Russel 'Stumpy'. To all the boys for staying out of trouble – thank you. You make my life easy and finally to all the Memsahabs – you look beautiful in your Sarees and give the Regiment its wonderful colour!



QGE remain hugely respected throughout the Corps and I have had literally hundreds of conversations with people who have served with Gurkha Sappers all over the world and have nothing but good things to say. I am proud and honoured to be able to join those people in adding my universal praise for Gurkhas. Jai QGE!

## MEET THE NEW COMMANDANT – LT COL E G ROBINSON RE



I will take command of 36 Engineer Regiment and become Commandant The Queen's Gurkha Engineers towards the end of 2011. I consider myself enormously privileged to be given this opportunity and am thrilled at the prospect.

I will be accompanied by my better half, Abigail, and our three children: 'Duracell bunny' Isadora (6), 'busy' Poppy (2) and 'laid back' Frederick (1). It would be remiss of me to not mention our pets: a youthful black Labrador, Barney, and by far the wiser, our cat Diva. Abigail is on a career break following the birth of our third child, but hopes to return to work as a History and Politics teacher whilst in Kent. Between the Army and a young family there is little spare time, although I avidly follow current affairs and love travel. I enjoy skiing and keep fit by being my own mode of transport, running or cycling, to and from work each day; a round trip of 8 miles.

Following sponsorship through school and the University of Durham, I attended Sandhurst in 1993. I have enjoyed a varied career which was the primary reason I joined the Corps of Royal Engineers and it continues to fulfil my expectations. My Corps' service has included commando forces, mainstream close support, two stints at the RSME, command of 21 Field Squadron (EOD) and most recently as the EOD and Search Capability Development lead, focused on Operation HERRICK, at Headquarters Engineer-in-Chief (Army). Beyond the Corps, I have completed the Advanced Command and Staff Course (2004-05) which opened the door to the Ministry of Defence. There, I was fortunate to serve

in two very rewarding appointments straddling squadron command: Army Resources and Plans (2005-07) and Military Strategic Plans (2009-10).

Conscious that I've not previously served with The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, as Adjutant of 26 Engineer Regiment Group on Operation AGRICOLA 4 I had the opportunity to enjoy the company of 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron. I recall that I lived off bhat for much of the tour and enjoyed the humour of Captain (now Lieutenant Colonel) Sam Roberts (then 70's Quartermaster). Prior to arriving at Maidstone, I hope to attend the Survival Nepali Language Course between September-November 2011 to ease my arrival!

I am acutely aware of 36 Engineer Regiment's evolving role from Force Support, a golden thread that needs to be that needs to be maintained, to Advanced Search. In this capacity, the Regiment will permanently maintain a Squadron deployed on Operation HERRICK. This will present unique challenges, such as not deploying complete as a Regiment and having a Squadron mal-located at Ripon, and robust welfare support will be vital. In all of this, I am certain The Queen's Gurkha Engineers will continue to excel and play their full part.

It is clear that the future will continue to present many challenges. We live in uncertain times and the role of the Corps, in particular those of us at the forefront of the Counter-IED fight, will be steadfast, front and centre. The Queen's Gurkha Engineers are a vital component and, in the Advanced Search role, will be at the heart of this future. I am both honoured and delighted to be given the opportunity to become Commandant The Queen's Gurkha Engineers and relish the chance to serve with you.

Jai QGE!





## 69 GURKHA FIELD SQUADRON (SEARCH)

*Capt Ed Thompson, Sqn 2IC*

69 Gurkha Field Squadron's year has been dominated by a deployment to Afghanistan; Operation BAM 4. We were warned off for this in June 2009 but as it was classified as an infrastructure development surge and required parliamentary approval, we did not deploy until May 2010. Our deployed force was capped at 100 personnel, so officers were detached to other headquarters and 12 soldiers joined the Counter IED Task Force as Royal Engineer Search Teams. By June 2010, the majority of the Squadron was in Helmand Province and the Squadron spent the initial period in theatre getting up to speed with the situation and acclimatising to the desert heat. The Troops then dispersed to their work locations and came under the tactical command of 21 Engineer Regiment. G Troop moved north to assist 73 Armoured Engineer Squadron, H Troop went south to 1 Armoured Engineer Squadron and I Troop moved east to 4 Armoured Engineer Squadron. Naturally the boys were happy with this as it meant that they would soon be hard at work. The OC and SSM were not so happy as it meant that they had effectively said goodbye to the Squadron for 4 months.



*Sgt Ashok leads a search patrol*

Once on site, the Troops got to work quickly. They focused on building hardened accommodation, laying vast areas of aggregate for helicopter landing sites, assembling umpteen field hygiene units and repairing the ageing but desperately needed air conditioning units. Most tasks seemed to grow arms and legs as they progressed, as many Forward Operating Bases (FOB) and Patrol Bases (PB) had doubled in capacity from what they were designed for. They also helped the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police in numerous locations but as they typically feigned ignorance when asked for help, this was a real challenge.



*Filling HESCO cells on a FOB wall*

Not all tasks went smoothly. Several cuplock sangars were so isolated that they had to be built entirely by hand (quite a feat when you think each took 6 days to complete and needed over 1500 hand filled sandbags) and many came under accurate insurgent fire. G Troop also got embroiled in breaking down the FOBs and PBs in the Sangin Area as the Americans took over from Task Force Helmand during this time; a huge task when you consider how much equipment had been brought into the area in the last 9 years!



*The cuplock sangars from Hell.  
Built entirely by hand*

Unfortunately we also suffered a loss, as Sapper Ishwor Gurung was shot and killed in action on 13 August 2010 whilst constructing a sangar on the perimeter of PB SHAZAD in Nad-E-Ali. This rocked the Squadron to its core yet his relatives, friends and numberies stoically carried on. In particular Capt Yambahadur Pun and his JNCO's showed great strength to rally their men at PB SHAZAD and finish the task in Sapper Ishwor's honour, despite the persistent and accurate threat

By the end of the tour the Squadron had completed tasks in just about every FOB and PB. In fact it is hard to believe that any other unit was spread so thinly. We completed a broader spectrum of tasks than we ever imagined and as such learnt a lot from our Op BAM experience. We enjoyed living and working amongst 21 Engineer Regiment and can safely say that we felt much more than just an attachment.



*Dismantling a fire support tower in Sangin*

It was not all hard work and the lads dominated the Op HERRICK sporting calendar. They were unbeaten in volleyball in Camp Bastion, took on all comers and won the Nar-E-Shraj (South) ping pong competition and even held their own against the Commandos in cricket! The OC and SSM managed to visit all but a few locations and ensured parcels from home got through and that the 'chicken fund'



(a small 'kitty' donated by the Royal Gurkha Rifles to buy chickens and goats for messing) got distributed! Our route back to the UK also included a short stop in Cyprus, where



*Reinforcing a roof with sandbags*

we relaxed on Tunnel Beach (an exclusive strip of sandy bliss, with an array of excellent facilities for enjoying the sun and water), enjoyed one of the best BBQ's we have ever tasted and were entertained by comedians and a band (who were rather surprised how involved the soldiers got!).

Whilst we were away, 'normal' life carried on in the UK. Career courses continued to churn, the Nepal Cup was played and won, personnel were posted in and out and the Rear Party won the Commanding Officer's Summer Physical Challenge. Of note, Capt Dharmesh 'Kes' Kesur the Echelon Commander left the Squadron to take post as SO2 Training in the RSME and Capt Yogprasad Thapa the Gurkha Captain moved to Chilwell to take post as 2IC 523 Specialist Team Royal Engineers. He will be the last Gurkha Captain, as the post has been re-designated under the Regimental re-balancing. Whilst this is sad, it is fitting that Capt Yog was the last Gurkha Captain, as his father was the first Gurkha Captain in 69 Sqn in 1965. Capt Nick Anderson and Lt Rob Gallagher also left the Squadron and take post as SO2 Training HQ London District and Operations Officer 12 (Nova Scotia) HQ Squadron RE (Air Assault) respectively.



*H Troop receive their briefing for the stretcher race*

Conversely we welcome back Capt Tulbahadur Ale as the Echelon Commander who is the first Gurkha to hold this post. Capt Kamalbahadur Khapung Limbu, who takes post as Support Troop Commander and Capt Ed Thompson, who takes post as Second in Command. Similarly we welcome Lt's Luke Johnston-Smith and Dale Luttig for their first tour with The Queen's Gurkha Engineers and hope that they enjoy their time with the Regiment.



*Mini digger assisting with sanger construction*

There have also been some notable promotions and appointments during this period. Capt's Nick Anderson, Kes Kesur and Yog Thapa have all been selected for promotion to Major, WO2 (SSM) Bishwabahadur Rai has been selected for commissioning whilst WO2 (QMSI) Ganeshkumar Gurung has been selected for appointment as SSM 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Search). SSgt Jangabahdur Sinjali has been selected for promotion to WO2 (QMSI) and as well 1 Sgt has been promoted to SSgt, 2 Cpls to Sgt, 7 LCpls to Cpl and 8 Sprs have been promoted to LCpl. Some of these have been selected on the UK promotion boards, proving the quality of our junior soldiers and how they compete with their British counterparts.

Since returning from operations, the Squadron has completed and won the Commanding Officer's Winter Physical Challenge (an arduous march across the South Downs), carried out normalisation training and mandated military training tasks (MATTs) and deployed on a Regimental Field Training Exercise and Section Competition in Otterburn. We are now focused on Ex NORTHERN QUEST 11, (April – July 2011) a Joint Forces Enabling Exercise which will see the Squadron build Phase 1 of the British Army Training Unit Kenya's Forward Mounting Base. It is an ambitious project which will offer an unrivalled opportunity to practice combat engineering and artisan trade skills in an austere environment, whilst allowing the Sqn to step through all other phases of an operational deployment. It will undoubtedly be a challenge but should be extremely rewarding and fun. Following hot on the heels of this the next challenge will be the re-role of the Squadron to become an Advanced Search Squadron in preparation for our next Op HERRICK tour in Autumn 2012. So as always, life in Maidstone is busy!

Jai 69 Gurkha Field Squadron, Jai QGE!





## 70 GURKHA FIELD SQUADRON (SEARCH)

*Capt S I Ahmed, Sqn 2IC*

No doubt the first thing that many of you noticed about this year's edition of the QGE Magazine is the significant change in focus of the Regiment as a whole to the Advanced Search role. The eagle eyed among you will have also spied the change in the Squadron title from Field Support Squadron to Field Squadron (Search) signifying our important part in the Regiment's future. 70 Sqn is no stranger to change and since its establishment in April 1960 the Squadron has been re-titled 5 times and reformed 3 times. The most recent was on 1 April 2000 as 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron, a title it held until 1 February 2011 when our change of role was heralded by a visit from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This change, however important, bears no more impact on our future than our past and here I would like to appraise you of the last 12 months.

Whilst the Squadron has not had an opportunity to deploy on operations as a whole since the first Op TELIC (Iraq) we have had a regular and enduring presence on Op HERRICK and 2010 was no different. During early 2010 we saw the recovery of our Op HERRICK 11 search team and despite the sad loss of WO2 Dave Markland, his team returned to Maidstone in good shape if in sombre spirit. Their performance was recognised with the award of a Task Force Helmand Commander's Commendation to the REST Commander LCpl (now Cpl) Buddha Gurung. As they re-acclimatised to being home 3 more 70 Sqn soldiers were out doing the same job on HERRICK 12. Despite having spent 6 months in theatre, upon their return from Post Operational Tour Leave, LCpl Buddha and his team deployed to Jordan where they provided advice and expertise to the Op TALISMAN<sup>2</sup> troops under going training. It must have been an intensely surreal experience going from finding IEDs in Helmand to emplacing them as the Opposing Force in Jordan.

Op HERRICK 12 also saw the last ever deployment of a QGE Resources Node under the able command of Capt Tara Pun. Responsible for the resourcing of all engineer stores within Helmand Province, the Task Force Helmand Resources Node is an extremely busy place. During this tour it was even busier as the order came for the Node to relocate from Kandahar Airfield to its new home in Camp Bastion. It was a difficult job that saw a large volume of physical stores, as well as the offices that marshal and control them, move over 100 miles west to their new home. The task was completed quickly and efficiently and Capt Tara Pun was awarded the Chief of Joint Operations (CJO) Commendation for his work.

Back in camp there was no let up to the usual busy Squadron life with the refurbishment project of the Squadron Conference Room and the freedom of Maidstone parade in April and May respectively. In June the Squadron deployed to Wyke Regis Training Area, near Weymouth, to conduct combat engineering training and hold our Super Sapper Competition. June is a lovely month to be down at Wyke and we were

blessed with lovely weather for the whole period, except for the 2 days that we devoted to adventurous training during which it rained! The fortnight concluded with the running of the Squadron Super Sapper competition and the presentation of the WO2 Dave Markland Memorial Trophy to our strongest soldier. The competition was a blend of physical challenges such as press ups, sit ups and cross country running as well as mental challenges such as combat engineering knowledge and application. The winner this year was Spr (now LCpl) Seesan Gurung.

In July the Squadron deployed on perhaps its most audacious exercise to date, an Operational Learning Exercise (OLE) to Sterling, Scotland. In a coup of G4 planning the Echelon Commander, Capt Colin Willows snapped up 2 weeks of accommodation in Sterling TA centre, a mere stone's throw from Sterling Castle. This allowed the Squadron to conduct battlefield tours across the Lowlands and compete at the local highland games.

Alva Highland Games is the last surviving sports and games to be run in Clackmannanshire and 2010, the 155<sup>th</sup> renewal of the games saw a delighted 70 Squadron invited to enter a team to run the signature Torry Hill Run. A gruelling 2.6 km run with 385m of near vertical ascent and descent, something that our competitors had not trained for, but were ready and raring to try. The team put in a fantastic effort and having seen the number of blood injuries sustained across the field of competitors I can assure you that every single one of them did extremely well not to injure themselves, let alone get to the top and back! The first Gurkha in was Spr Sanjay Gurung with an astonishing 26 min 35s in 21<sup>st</sup> place followed closely by LCpl Deepak Rai at 27 min 27s. The rest of our team was across the finishing line in under 35 minutes and with the winning time being only 20 min 1 second, I think you will agree that the men represented QGE well!

The Squadron contribution was not just limited to the hill race and throughout the day LCpl Rajbahadur Gurung and his Tae Kwondo team gave a crowd pleasing and highly impressive display as well as a cultural dance and the always welcome kukhri dance. We were well received and managed to raise over £1000 for the Gurkha Welfare Trust. My personal highlight was meeting a 90 year old WW2 veteran who served in Burma with the Gurkhas and of course, seeing Maj Rajen Gurung wearing a kilt.

The rest of the OLE was taken up with the battlefield tour and Adventure Training. The battlefield tour saw us moving around the key points of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Jacobite Rebellion; Sheriff Muir, Falkirk Muir and Killiecrankie under the careful guidance of two local historians. It was astonishing how much relevance these battles, fought over 200 years ago, have to the continuing operations in Afghanistan. It was a curious moment at the end of the tour when the men were asked whether they would side with the Jacobite rebels or the 'evil' Government forces. Most were quick to side with the rebels until the comparison was drawn between them and the Taliban.

<sup>2</sup> Op TALISMAN is the name given to the Route Proving and Clearance capability the RE is now fielding in Afghanistan





All in all it was an inspired exercise and an enormous amount of fun. My long lasting memory will be of a group of Gurkhas at the site of the battle of Killikrankie replicating the Jacobite charge dressed in kilts and armed with claymore swords, a truly terrifying sight!

With 69 Squadron deployed on Op BAM the responsibility for manning The QGE Trailwalker and Nepal Cup teams fell largely to 70 Squadron and I am pleased to report that we won the Nepal Cup for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year running with a fantastic effort from the whole team and Spr Nirajan Budathoki in particular. Our Trailwalker team came in a close 2<sup>nd</sup> to the Queen's Gurkha Signals – it was a fantastic effort all the same. Concurrent to this we also supported The Soldiers Charity (The Army Benevolent Fund) with fundraising at Tescos in Ashford where we raised over £4000, with £1000 of it going to the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

October saw the successful execution of a Military Aid to the Civil Community task at Leeds Castle in Kent. WO2 Dave Bridle and his team deployed to Leeds Castle to restore a bridge that had been out of bounds to the public for over 40 years. The bridge, which provides public access across the Cascade Garden Pond now provides visitors with an alternative route to the Castle. Bill Lash, operations director at the Castle, said it was an honour to work with 70 Squadron.

*"This is the first time that the military have helped us with a regeneration project for a public area and we are honoured that the Gurkhas agreed to restore the bridge. It means that our visitors can now gain access to both sides of the water of this delightful Cascade Garden Pond and appreciate the beauty of the original pleasure gardens on either side which are also being restored by the castle's ground staff."*

Despite the usual trials of construction where the physical parts on the ground seldom fit together in the way that the plan says they should, the site commander, Cpl Krishnaraj Gurung ensured that the project was completed on time for it to be handed over to Leeds Castle.

It has been a very busy year for the Squadron and 2011/12 is already shaping up to be just as full. We are on the cusp of the disbandment of the 70 Squadron Resources Node and the handing over of our workshops to the Regimental Construction Supervision Cell (CSC). At the same time we are also preparing to take on an important new role within the British Army. The new search role will see 70 Sqn committed to Op HERRICK like never before as our troops are called upon to conduct the dangerous task of searching for IEDs across Helmand Province. I have no doubt that despite the role change and the new Squadron title 2011/12 will once again see our boys going beyond the call of duty to hold up high the Sqn name.

Jai 70 Sqn!

## MECHANISED GURKHAS - 8 TROOP 33 MECHANISED ENGINEER SQUADRON

*Capt Meenjang Gurung*

Once again 8 Mechanised Gurkha Troop, 33 Armoured Engineer Squadron has had a very challenging and successful year. After well earned post operational tour leave from an outstanding tour of Op HERRICK 10, the Troop had a fresh start with low level build up training to prepare for forthcoming operations.



*Members of 8 Tp involved in organising the "Hearts and Minds" stand during Ex SCARAB YOMP 3*

Ex SCARAB YOMP 3, a Regimental<sup>3</sup> Exercise was organised in early Spring when the Regiment deployed in to the field with the minimum amount kit required to survive for 3 days. The exercise was intended to focus on low level training followed by a speed march of approximately 8 miles on the final day. 8 Troop performed exceptionally well throughout and Cpl Chandra Pun's section managed to

secure 1st place and Cpl (now Sgt) Khelendra Gurung's section finished 3rd in the final march.

Five members of the Troop, led by myself represented the Regiment in the Corps Operational Shooting Competition where the team performed exceptionally well securing third position overall. Individually, Cpl Jay Pun narrowly missed on becoming the Corps Rifle Champion of the year.



*Regimental Section Competition winner – Cpl Chandra Pun and his section with CO and RSM 26 Engineer Regiment*

<sup>3</sup> 33 Sqn are part of 26 Engineer Regiment based in Tidworth



In late spring, the Squadron deployed to Kenya on Ex NORTHERN QUEST<sup>4</sup> where it undertook a major construction task to construct a Range Control Complex (RCC). It is an annual Joint Force Enabling Exercise (JFEE) which takes place at the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK). BATUK provides live firing training to Battle Groups in order to prepare them for operations. The RCC is used for managing both Kenyan and UK Military training on the Archers Post Training Area as well as controlling and monitoring the movement and progress of exercising units. The project was multifaceted and operationally relevant. It incorporated utilities, reinforced concreting, roofing, plumbing, plant work and structural timberwork in an austere, hot and dusty environment.

We were also involved in the construction of an office building that consisted of 4 rooms; an operation room, a planning room, a general office and an office for Comd BATUK. Other tasks included constructing a generator house, a fuel bund and the installation of approximately 250m of services. The whole exercise proved to be a fantastic training opportunity for the troop management to plan and execute construction tasks and for the troop to practice their trade skills.



*8 Mechanised Gurkha Troop in front of Office Building*

The Autumn proved to be one of the best seasons for the Troop. Two sections took part in Ex SCARAB FURRY, an arduous Regimental section competition conducted on the Dartmoor Training Area where once again Cpl Chandra Pun's section managed to secure 1<sup>st</sup> place and Cpl Sanman Thapa Magar's section 3<sup>rd</sup> place out of 19 sections.

8 members of the Troop lead by Sgt Khelendra Gurung stepped up to challenge and took part in the CAMBRIAN PATROL, an exercise which is arduous, physically and mentally demanding and viewed internationally as one of the toughest patrolling tests the modern soldier can face. Despite only a couple of weeks of preparation, the team performed exceptionally well and secured a Bronze Medal - an outstanding performance.

The task to dismantle a 15m climbing wall and move the components from Penhale Training Camp in Cornwall to the

<sup>4</sup> Ex NORTHERN QUEST used to be held in Norway but has been moved to Kenya as part of a re-vamping of the Joint Force Engineer Exercises.



*Climbing Tower at Penhale Training Camp in Cornwall*

Wyke Regies Training Area was led by SSgt Dilkumar Rai. Penhale Camp was built in 1939 and initially it was used for anti-aircraft training. Until recently it was used by small groups of Regular and Territorial soldiers as well as Cadets

where they undertook various training activities, including leadership training and adventure training. This camp has now been sold and the new owner is planning for the redevelopment of the site and hence the need to demolishing the 15m climbing tower.

This task came as a trawl since the construction force pulled out at the last minute leaving the

project in jeopardy. Even though there was precious little time to plan and resource the task the team completed it with enthusiasm and willingness. By taking this task on it saved the Corps £100k since had it not been completed the wall would have gone to a scrap yard and a new build would have been required at Wyke Regis.



*Ex CAMBRIAN PATROL – Sgt Khelendra Gurung and his team after completing the Exercise*







*8 Mechanised Gurkha Troop after completing Exercise SHAMROCK MASAI*

Up until recently, even though the Troop was named as a mechanised troop it never trained on or took possession of armoured vehicles. However, recently the dream of commanding and driving armoured vehicles has come alive since all troop management and section commanders have now been trained as CVRT or AFV 430 (BULLDOG) preparation for Op HERRICK 14 (Mar –Sep 11). Squadron personnel were sent away on HERRICK specific courses

commanders and three other ranks have qualified as drivers. Following the training we subsequently took part in Ex SHAMROCK MASAI, a Squadron exercise which was our first exercise in armoured vehicles. Now we are fully trained and capable of taking on the responsibilities of a mechanised troop, the first ever mechanised troop in the history of the Brigade of Gurkhas.

## **LIFE OF QGE COMMANDOS WITHIN 3 COMMANDO BRIGADE**

*Sgt Sanjay Thapa*

The cadre of QGE commando trained sappers in 3 Commando Brigade is still in good shape and continues to impress all with its achievements in 24 Commando Engineer Regiment.

The New Year began at a frantic pace when 24 Cdo Engr Regt launched into its arctic warfare training starting with Exercise LUPUS in Norway. The exercise was designed to train those newly posted to 3 Cdo Bde in the art of arctic warfare whilst maintaining the skills of the older members of the Bde. The Cdo Sappers played a vital role in close support to the Royal Marine Commandos and despite extreme wind chill, temperatures of -35 degree centigrade and swimming through frozen lakes, QGE commando trained personnel negotiated all the challenges admirably along with their British counterparts.

Whilst the winter was busy there is no doubt summer in the South West of England was even more so. Just before summer leave 54 Cdo HQ and Sp Sqn and a troop from 59 Cdo Sqn returned from Exercise SAILFISH in Belize, an artisan orientated exercise. Whilst part of the Regt was in the Central America another troop from 59 Cdo Sqn deployed to the South West Coast of America of on Exercise AURIGA. This focused on information exchange and integration between Royal Marine Commandos and the US Marine Corps. Both exercises were a great opportunity for QGE boys to explore the different countries and enhance both their artisan trade skills and combat engineer knowledge.

Following summer leave the pace stepped up once

more, in and training and QGE boys were involved in all aspects of this be it individual or collective training. A few QGE sappers also had the opportunity to deploy Jordan as part of continuation training for a new piece of equipment known as ANATOMISE. This is to be introduced as another tool for dealing with IEDs and is designed to be used in extreme circumstances by any combat engineer and not just specialist EOD teams.

A number of military exercises were conducted just prior to deployment in order to confirm that 24 Cdo Engr Regt was ready to deploy to Afghanistan – no one was found wanting. Despite the very hectic past year every single moment of it has been phenomenal for the QGE commandos. They have lived up to every expectation placed on them and the best is still to come as they execute their role to the highest standard in Afghanistan. We look forward to seeing everyone on our return from Afghanistan in the Autumn. Jai QGE !



*Gurkha Commandos ready to deploy on Op HERRICK 14*



# GURKHA COMPANY ITC CATTERICK

*Capt Ashokkumar Gurung*



It is my privilege to write this newsletter as a QGE Platoon Commander in Gurkha Company, Infantry Training Centre (ITC), Catterick, North Yorkshire. Gurkha Company was previously known as Training Depot Brigade of Gurkhas (TDBG) whilst it was in Hong Kong but in 1995

TDBG moved to the United Kingdom where it was initially based in Queen's Elizabeth Barracks, Church Crookham and became known as Gurkha Training Wing (GTW). Later, in 1999 GTW moved to ITC, Catterick and was renamed yet again, to become Gurkha Company. The Company is part of the 2 Infantry Training Battalion and is accommodated in Bhanubhakta VC Block.

## Recruiting Process

Gurkha Company also plays a pivotal role in supporting the Recruiting Process which is outlined below. The current selection process in Nepal starts with potential recruits being called forward for registration by District. The eligibility criteria is listed below and after Registration the applicants are called forward for Regional Selection in either Dharan or Pokhara to ensure the criteria is met.

- **Education** - School Leaving Certificate 3<sup>rd</sup> Div or above (same as GCSE level), or other recognised equivalent.
- **Medical:**
  - **Blood Pressure:** 140/90.
  - **Teeth:** No more than 2 fillings or 1 false tooth or 1 gap.
  - **Eye sight:** 6/6 & 6/6 with no contact lenses or colour blindness.
  - **Tattoos.** None.
- **Physical:**
  - **Chest:** Minimum 79cm (31").
  - **Chest Expansion:** Minimum 5cm (2").
  - **Weight:** Minimum 50kg (110lbs).
  - **Height:** Minimum 1.60m (5'3").
  - **Age:** Minimum 17.5yrs and maximum 21yrs as at 1 January of that year.
- **Fitness:**
  - **800m run:** 2 Mins 45 Secs or less.
  - **Heaves:** Minimum of 12 with no time limit.
  - **Sit ups:** Minimum of 70 in 2 min.
  - **1.5mile run:** 9 mins 40 sec or less.
  - **Stamina Assessment Test (DOKO Run):** 5km in 48 min carrying 25kg. There is a 400m vertical climb over the route.

During recruit selection year 2010 a total of 12,423 applicants registered for Regional Selection and of those 582 candidates

(291 East & 291 West) were subsequently called forward to Central Selection in British Gurkhas Pokhara to complete for 176 vacancies. In order to assist the Central Selection process every year 1 x RCO (Training Officer), all Platoon Sergeants and JNCO Instructors from Gurkha Coy travel to Nepal.



*After CO's PT during Comdt & GM Sahebs visit to ITC (C)*

## Gurkha Company's Role Within ITC

Gurkha Recruit Training is conducted alongside the British Infantry Recruit Training and Gurkha Company's main role is to mould a Nepalese youth into a Gurkha Soldier trained to the standards of the British Army yet still ensuring he retains his Nepalese identity and lives up the traditions of the Brigade of Gurkhas.

## QGE Training Team

Gurkha Company consists of a Coy HQ, 6 x Platoons and a G7 Training Cell. The current OC is Major Hugo Stanford-Tuck RGR and the current QGE contributions to the training team are: 1 x Platoon Commander (myself), 1 x Training WO (WO2 Bhesbahadur Thapa), 1 x Education Sgt in Gurkha Language Wing (GLW) (Sgt Kamal Gurung), 3 x Cpl Instructors (Cpl Sherbahadur Chongbang, Cpl Ekabahadur Rai and Cpl Jayendra Garbuja), 1 x PTI (Cpl Subin Rai) and 1 x G4 rep (LCpl Tapkumar Rai). QGE training staff are dispersed and employed in different platoons within the company.

## Recruit Training

Each year Gurkha Company trains 176 trainee Riflemen who complete the 37 week progressive Combat Infantryman's Course (CIC)(G) in austere and challenging training environments. This includes a 6 weeks English language package run by GLW. The current training regime produces a Riflemen able to deploy on demanding operations and operate in complex multi-national environments. This is achieved by following what is known as the Common Military Syllabus Recruit which is the way by which the Field Army articulates what it requires of its soldiers.

The Course provides opportunities for trainees to take







*Farewell to outgoing members of the QGE Training Team*

ownership of their own performance goals. Quality assurance is delivered by the G7 Cell who collate and analyse data from every stage of the training including both internal validation and external validation from the Ofsted Inspection team. In addition, all training staff must have a Criminal Records Bureau check and have attended the Army Recruiting and Training Division (ARTD) Staff Leadership School prior to assuming the post. On successful completion of the CIC(G) training, all trainee Riflemen will achieve NVQ Level 3 in Literacy and Numeracy as well as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

### 3 RSME

#### MINLEY DETACHMENT

*Capt Mohan Tamang*

Since my last news update from the Minley Detachment of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers (Curragh Troop) it has been an extremely busy and exhausting period. The tempo of day-to-day life has been hectic with plenty of ups and downs along the way. The challenges we are currently facing in the ARTD include meeting the current operational requirements for the Field Army, adjusting to a new Course Training Programme and the juggling of JNCO instructors within the Tp. However, the Troop has managed to deliver 4x ME Cbt 0-3 courses, a ME Cbt 2-1 course, an Infantry Assault Pioneer Basic Course, the QGE ME Cbt 0-3 Course, a TA CI 1 and a Mine Awareness Advisors' Course.



*QGE Instructors at Minley*

Away from instructional commitments Curragh Troop has maintained its unique tradition and cultural characteristics and this year we have managed to raise more than £13,000 for the Army Benevolent Fund (the Soldiers Charity) and Oxfam. This includes £9772.00 from a bag packing charity event whilst the Big Curry raised £2146.00 and Trailwalker a further £1492.00. The most notable event run by Curragh Troop was the immensely successful Station event known as Party in the Park which attracted some 600 guests who enjoyed activities and entertainment in the picturesque surrounds of the Minley Manor. In addition, we have provided assistance with the EinC(A) Garden Party, the Officers' Mess Summer Ball, the QGEA lunch, the REA weekend, the UOTC Survival Stand and several Sqn functions!! At the same time, the Troop permanent staff have also maintained their robust physical fitness by winning the inter-troop competition once more and securing 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the 4<sup>th</sup> Div volleyball competition.

Another excellent achievement for Curragh Troop this year was when 64 Training Party swore their Attestation Oath in front of Her Majesty the Queen viewed by many VVIPs including the CGS on 24 Feb 11. This event marked the 5000<sup>th</sup> Sapper to be recruited in to QGE and will remain a remarkable memory for the Training Party staff.

The detachment has also seen many new faces and changes of personalities including WO2 (QMSI) Nabin Gurung taking up post as QMSI Top Training Ground. In Nov 10, SSgt Prakash Rai and Cpl Ram Rai left Curragh Troop on posting back to 69 Sqn whilst SSgt Deepak Shrestha left Command Support Branch (CSB)<sup>5</sup> for 26 Engr Regt in Tidworth. Curragh Troop has welcomed SSgt Bikash Rai, and Cpl Bishnu Gurung whilst Sgt Ashok Gurung now sits in CSB. In the next 6 months we will see more personality changes including myself and two other section commanders.

#### 64 TRAINING PARTY QGE

*Spr Adip Lungeli*

After 9 months training in Catterick, we moved to Maidstone where The QGE is based. In comparison to the previous year the number of new QGE Sappers was reduced by half to 18. We spent 3 weeks in Maidstone in order to complete our trade selection process before starting our real Sapper story at Gibraltar Barracks on 8 November 2010.



*64 Training Party QGE and Instructors*

<sup>5</sup> CSB is the re-named Comms Training Wing (CTW). It is now part of the new RE Warfare Wing which is an amalgamation of BEW, Command Wing and CTW.





From the time of our departure from Maidstone through Minley, to now there are many events which have become unforgettable. During our first week in Minley we went to Dover Castle, Stonehenge and Folkestone Camp in order to be familiarised with the culture and traditions of the UK and it was a good opportunity to get to know the history of these famous places. It also allowed us to visit BFBS radio and meet with the BFBS staff. During the third and fourth weeks, we took part in a charity event for the Army Benevolent Fund (the Soldiers' Charity) in the form of Bag Packing in various supermarkets.

Finally this Course ended with a 4 night final exercise where we had to apply our knowledge and initiative on the ground in order to prove ourselves worthy of wearing the Corps Stable Belt. The exercise ended with an 8 mile extraction march including insurgent attacks, casualty evacuation and equipment recovery. On completion we were presented with our stable belt by CO 3 RSME, Lt Col M Quare RE in front of the Curragh Troop office. He also presented the Overall Champion prize to 30120258 Spr Bal Kumar Buddha Magar and the Top Combat Engineer prize to myself.

The hard work of 64 Training Party proved successful in all modules of the Course and I would like to thank all of Curragh Troop on behalf of 64 Training Party for making us capable of passing the Course. Special thanks goes to the gurujees who gave up their time to help us with our studies during the Course. We now must continue in the game of maintaining the name and fame of the Gurkhas and may God give us strength to be the most loyal, honest and brave Queen's Gurkha Sappers.

Finally, 64 Training Party was one of the luckiest intakes in QGE history; the whole intake was so proud and honoured to take the Attestation Parade in front of Her Majesty The Queen on 24 Feb 11. The parade rehearsals were a little harder than we were expecting but regardless of this the day itself was an enormously rewarding and memorable event. The Attestation Parade would not have been possible to complete to such a high standard without the hard work and dedication of two people in particular. Therefore, 64 Training Party would like to thank Capt Mohan Tamang (Tp Comd) and SSgt Bikash Rai (Tp SSgt).

Jai QGE and Curragh Troop.

## 1 RSME

*Sgt Purnasingh Thakuri - Gurkha Liaison Officer*

There are always some 35 to 50 QGE soldiers on trade training at the Royal School of Military Engineering (RSME) in Chatham and currently the number sits at 39 including 14 Clerk of Work students. The performance of QGE students is outstanding and in the past 9 months there has been a 100% pass rate and 28% of the students finished top of their course. Last year alone 3 Military Plant Foreman and 4 Clerk of Works students successfully completed their courses. A testimony to the discipline, hard work and dedication of QGE soldiers.

Apart from courses, Gurkha soldiers have also taken part in various sporting activities ranging from Boxing, Football, Cross Country, Tae Kwon Do, Volleyball, Basketball and Badminton as well as supporting various Regimental activities.

To deliver training the RSME is now part of a Public Private Partnership (PPP) and all the trade training is delivered by the Holdfast Instructors (civilians). Since last year Holdfast has developed an Enhanced Learning Environment (ELE) which is an on-line school accessible by all those undergoing training. It is currently only available on a few of the courses but the aspiration is for it to soon be available for all of them. It allows the students to study by distance learning wherever they are and this has made life easier for the Gurkha students as they have the option to study whenever they want to. As a direct result of this students have managed to achieve better results and complete their courses in a far quicker time. Unlike the old days, soldiers now gain recognised civilian qualifications ranging from NVQs for some artisan trades to a Master of Science for professional engineering training and these vocational qualifications greatly enhance their career opportunities both in the Army and in the civilian world.



*Cpl Milan Rai fixing rafters during his C&J Class 2-1 course*

Now a days, the training is geared towards preparing the soldier for the operational roles they will carry out in Afghanistan. The basic military skills training is delivered in the context of various operational scenarios and all trade courses are focused on the operational requirements of the Royal Engineers, wider Army and Defence. This ensures the training has the flexibility to change in order to meet the Sappers' emerging needs.



## BOAT SECTION BRUNEI GARRISON

*SSgt Man Bahadur Ale*

Boat Section Brunei comprises of 5 QGE Sappers and a Locally Engaged Civilian (LEC) and works under the administration of Training Team Brunei (TTB). The Boat Section was formed in June 2003 which means it is now approaching its 8<sup>th</sup> year. Over the last 8 years, it has gone through a series of ups and downs due to insufficient boat operators and changes of administration but with the professionalism and tireless efforts of the Section members it has upheld its fine reputation within British Forces Brunei. The Boat Section Brunei is arguably one of the largest fleet holders in the British Army and currently it holds 12 x Hard Hulled Riverine Crafts (HHRC), 4 x MK 6 Boats, 3 x Medium Inflatable Boats (MIB), 33 x Outboard Motors (OBM).. The Boat Section is responsible for the inspection, servicing and maintenance of all riverine equipment including Sea Survival Equipment (SSE). Simultaneously, it is also responsible for the provision of riverine support and training to the Resident Infantry Battalion (RIB), TTB and others.



*WSO(B) Course*

riverine support to the TTB, RIB and Special Forces selection courses.

Over the past year the Boat Section has also had the opportunity to host a handful of military personalities including Commander G4 Infrastructure Overseas and Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas and would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the visitors for sharing their precious time and in passing on information of life outside of Brunei. The Section has continued to follow Regimental tradition and celebrated the 62<sup>nd</sup> QGE Birthday in September 2010.

Regardless of the busy year round schedule the Section continues to maintain the tradition and culture of the Brigade of Gurkhas in every way it can. Despite being away from Maidstone the Boat Section celebrated all the festivals and have enjoyed all aspects of the Brunei social life with our families and other members of the RIB and TTB. To date the Boat Section has had a very successful year and is looking forward to an equally challenging but more rewarding future ahead.

Jai Boat Sect Brunei,  
Jai QGE!



*Basic Boat Operator Course*

It is the only organisation that holds the HHRCs in the British Army and also has a responsibility for running HHRC Operator Courses and Watermanship Safety Officer Basic (WSO B) Courses under the approval of Assistant Instructor Boats, RSME. The members currently serving in Boat Section Brunei are:

SSgt Man Bahadur Ale - IC Boat/WSO A  
Cpl Minbahadur Gurung - OBM Maintainer/AWBO  
Cpl Narbahadur Gurung - Boat Maintainer/AWBO  
Cpl Mekhabahadur Gurung - SSE Maintainer/AWBO  
Cpl Jas Bahadur Thapa - Boat Maintainer/AWBO/Docs NCO

Over the past 8 months, we have successfully conducted various boat courses and these have qualified 6 x HHRC operators for the Royal Marines and 11 x WSO (B) and Basic Boat Operators for the Jungle Warfare Instructors Course. Besides this, the Boat Section is equally busy facilitating



*QGE 62<sup>nd</sup> Birthday*





## BRITISH GURKHAS POKHARA

*Capt Buddhibahadur Bhandari QM*

Even before I comprehended the complexity of BGP business the recruiting cycle started and never stopped....



Never in my wildest dreams did I think that one day I would be serving in Pokhara as the QM of British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP). Recruiting activities here remind me of those nervous moments I had in this place when I went through my selection in 1990. During quiet periods I think back and feel very proud and privileged to be here again.

Straight after completing Ex TRAILWALKER 10, I was on the plane with my family to Nepal. I arrived there on 23 July and after the shortest HOTO ever with Tul Sahib I was firmly sitting in the chair utterly clueless and waiting for something to happen. The very next week I was on a rafting expedition with the Ex HIMALAYAN TIGER Team from QGE, what a fantastic start to a new job - I was quite content to continue along these lines. Ever since my posting was confirmed, I was constantly mentored by old boys (ex BGP QMs) on various matters, roles and responsibilities and other associated tasks that come with the post. Every single bit of advice proved to be very helpful. I thank you all!



Even before I comprehended the complexity of BGP business the recruiting cycle started and hasn't stopped since! Despite all the challenges and logistic issues

in Nepal, BGN witnessed a very successful recruit selection once again. After processing more than 11,623 Potential Recruits, 176 successful trainee Riflemen were handed over to Gurkha Coy, ITC Catterick by BGP on 18 Dec 10. Following their induction training and attestation parade in BGP all departed for the UK in the first week of Jan 11. The trainee Riflemen were attested by Maj Gen Kirkland CBE, GOC 4 Div and the parade was witnessed by more than 1400 proud friends and family. Additionally BGP hosted hundreds of high profile visitors throughout the year and there are many more on the horizon. I felt extremely proud and fortunate to host Lt Col S J Hulme MBE RE, Maj Prembahadur Ale MVO

and WO1 M Penna RE - RSM QGE. The A-Team and the family of the late Spr Ishwor's family were delighted to share some moments together with RHQ QGE. Maj Gen Kirkland Sahib and his family also paid a visit to Spr Ishwor's family at Bhurjung Khola.



Except for a few strikes from various organisations I have not witnessed any major disruption that has affected our capability here in Nepal. The political situation, as you are aware is deteriorating with no signs of any agreement between the multiple party leaders. DII(F)<sup>6</sup> installation is in the pipeline and hopefully communication will be a great deal easier....or at least it will be possible once it is up and running. Despite BGP being

remotely located the 4 Div inspection teams still manage to come and carry out their dutiful checks. The supply chain has had its fair share of complications but we have managed to deliver all the demanded items on time as planned and consequently 176 British Army and 80 Gurkha Contingent Singapore Police Force recruits were kitted out as required by 18 Dec 10.



Despite the extremely busy schedule, I have had the opportunity to visit some stunning sites in Nepal. Together with BGP families, Narbada is enjoying her stay in Pokhara. Bipasna is enjoying her new school (The British School) in



<sup>6</sup> DII(F) is the Restricted Computer system that is used within the MoD



Kathmandu and Bishesh keeps complaining about his school but settling in well. Thanks to GM Sahib for allowing me to have a fantastic trekking opportunity to his village (which was almost a BCFT less the rifle) with Comdt QGE and the RSM. I am very much looking forward to hunewalla GM Sahib's visit later on this year. I have also managed to qualify myself as a Novice Club Pilot (Paragliding)...as you do as a QM! A challenging but exciting experience with some memorable and testing moments! Needless to say *-it was awesome!* Following this course, the first ever British Gurkhas Paragliding Club is about to be introduced to Nepal. Therefore, if you are unable to get hold of me in my office I will be somewhere in the skies...no DII there yet! The next step will be the Advance Pilot qualification but accumulating 25 hours flying time is almost impossible in the current climate. However, I am optimistic!



As I write we are extremely busy preparing for a contingency exercise, (the impending earthquake is always at the back of our mind), recruiting of Intake 12, GWS conferences/trainings, inspections and numerous other events not forgetting the VVIPs visits. Along with these commitments the boys and girls from BGN are eagerly waiting to be deployed on Ex Humla Tiger; a high altitude trekking expedition in the Humla District to keep us out the office! Time has moved on so fast without realising that I have been working in Nepal for the last 8 months and already looking forward to Easter leave..... or some more paragliding! I Hope all QGE members coming to Nepal will have the opportunity to visit Pokhara and share some of these moments. Looking forward to meeting you all.

Jai BGP, Jai QGE

## QGE FAMILY NEWS

*Mrs Shanta Gurung - Gurkha Support Worker*

The QGE families have seen another fantastic, enjoyable and remarkable year. Mrs Ganga Gurung and Mrs Shanta Gurung have been selected for job the of Gurkha Support Worker (GSW). The Gurkha ladies now hold a coffee meeting once every two months and there are currently 252 Gurkha families. During the past year QGE families have successfully managed to hold or attend a host of functions and activities including the following:

**Race for Life.** This charity event raises money for Cancer Research UK and was held on 16 May 2010 and this year 24 QGE ladies took part in the event at Mote Park followed by a BBQ with their families. Mrs Palmu Tamang (W/O Capt



*All the ladies smiling and showing off their well-deserved medals after the 5 KM Race for Life run*

Purna Singh Tamang) came in first amongst all the Gurkha ladies.

**Op HERRICK Deployment, May –Sep.** The majority of the both Squadrons deployed to Afghanistan in the middle of May 2010 and returned in September 2010 and during this time many events were organised for the families of those deployed. These included; Sunday lunches, BBQs and trips to Chessington World of Adventures and Howlets Animal Park.



*Ladies and kids having fun during a trip to Chessington*

**Exercise Bad Girls Army – 12/13 Jun.** River action, driving army vehicles and jungle exercises were just a few of the activities that helped the ladies walk away with the resources needed to ease themselves through tough times as well as a great opportunity to make new friends.

**Family Fun Day – 29 Jul.** The Regiment provided a fairground, a wide range of children's entertainment and catering stands. A new, mixed culture food stall provided by British and Foreign and Commonwealth Soldiers and their families dressed in traditional costumes provided to be very popular. The Family Fun Day provided an opportunity to talk to people from a whole range of groups, and get ideas about the local and national services and activities that are available.





**QGE 62<sup>nd</sup> Birthday Celebration 25 Sep.** Once again there was a chutney and a cake competition which this year was won by Mrs Yesodha (w/o Bhim Pun) whilst the Ladies Volleyball team winners were Bhima, Sonita, Sobha, Bidhya, Nirmala, Keshmaya and Miss Salina.



*The Winners of the Ladies Volleyball Competition  
(during QGE Birthday Celebration)*

**Southall Visit 02 Oct.** 40 Gurkha ladies visited Vishwa Hindu Mandir in Southall on 2 October 10. The temple, one of two in Southall is highly decorated with many statues and pictures of Gods and Goddesses (Devis and Devatas) and they are often adorned with garlands. It has no set service and worshippers can come at any time to pray and make an offering. Following the Mandir visit everyone made their way to Southall's famous Broadway where you find everything from bustling street bazaars to the exclusive designer boutiques. All the ladies had a fantastic day and look forward to similar educational programs in future. We would like to thank the Gurkha Major and GRMCO for their generous contribution towards the day.



*Ladies in front of the Vishwa Hindu Mandir on 02 Oct 10*

**Teej – 10 Sep.** About 120 ladies attended the night, starting with delicious food at the main kitchen followed by dancing to Bollywood and Nepali songs till late into the night.

**Badminton Tournament on Christmas Day..** The first Badminton Tournament was held 5 years ago on Christmas Day and every year since the numbers participating have been on a steady rise and we hope this trend continues. This year 17 children and 21 ladies participated. SSgt



*Ladies dancing during the TEEJ function on 10 Sep 10*

Govinda Rana organized the competition and the first half was dominated by the children's event. Around midday the match was adjourned for light refreshments courtesy of Cpl Chandra Lawati - a much earned break for the young players who had been in the gym since early that morning.

The Defending Champion Mrs Nirmala Gurung successfully retained the "Pearl Island Cup" for the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year. The Cup was presented by Mrs Sunita Chand (W/O ex GM Dhan Bahadur Chand) whilst other presentations were handed out by GM didi and GRCMO didi. The other winners were: **Under 9yrs (Singles)** Mstr Anup Ale (S/O GM Maj Prem Bahadur Ale MVO), **Winner over 10yrs (Singles)** Mstr Sudeep Ale (S/O GM Maj Prem Bahadur Ale MVO) and **Doubles** Sherish Gurung (D/O Capt Dev Kumar Gurung) and Mstr Sudeep Ale (S/O GM Maj Prem Bahadur Ale MVO)

#### **Queen's Visit – 24<sup>TH</sup> February 2011**

The whole Regiment was on parade and the families waited for a glimpse of The Queen, balancing precariously to get a better view when she arrived. She stepped from her car, paused an almost imperceptible moment, and smiled. She walked slowly down the line of waiting officials, greeting each of them and then stood with the CO as the band played the National Anthem.

She congratulated Spr Bal Buddha Magar on being the 5,000<sup>th</sup> Queen's Gurkha Engineer soldier and commissioned 3 late entry Gurkha Officers. Afterwards the Queen spoke to some selected families in a marquee near the Officers' Mess. She passed slowly through a long column of families, stopping frequently to have people presented to her. She especially liked the colourful saris worn by the ladies and was delighted to be adorned with garlands by 3 Nepalese girls.

Her visit ended with lunch at the Officers' Mess and for her departure everyone lined the route. Clapping and flag waving ensued followed by 3 cheers as she departed. Everyone was overwhelmed by The Queen's visit, and we will all treasure the memory of it forever.





## QGE 62<sup>ND</sup> BIRTHDAY AND OP HERRICK MEDAL PARADE – 25 SEP 10

A birthday is a symbol of creation and also an important milestone to mark the length of the journey achieved over the past years. It is a time of celebration and commemoration which gets more significant as the years pass. Hence, it was a huge privilege to organize two events on the same day; the Operation HERRICK Medal Parade and The Queen's Gurkha Engineers 62nd Birthday Celebration.



*Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB presenting Op HERRICK Campaign Medals to members of 69 Sqn*

The Gurkha tradition extends back to the Indian Army Sappers and Miners, most notably Captain Broadfoot's ad hoc sapper force. This force contained 200 Gurkhas who fought in the Afghan campaign in 1840s. However, it wasn't until India's independence in 1947 and the subsequent re-enlistment of Gurkha Riflemen into the British Army in 1948, that engineering training in the Far East at Kulang, Johore Baru was officially possible.

On the 25 Sep 10, all members of QGE, QGE Association members and their respective families, were joined by high profile dignitaries including the Col of the Regt, Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB and gathered by the ABLE Hanger in Invicta Park to honor this special occasion. Former members of the Regiment, both British and Gurkha who live and work in the United Kingdom were also invited to celebrate the day and so were brought together all those who have given service to The Queen's Gurkha Engineers and done their part in keeping it alive and thriving to the present day.

Over the past years, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers have been deployed on all major conflicts and served with pride and distinction. The regular deployments on Op HERRICK give testimony to the bravery and professionalism of QGE sappers. 115 members of QGE from 69 and 70 Gurkha Field Squadrons marched past in front of 500 current and former members of QGE. This was a fantastic opportunity to welcome the brave heroes home and celebrate the 62<sup>nd</sup> QGE birthday. Operational medals were presented by Col of the

Regt, the Association Chairman - Brigadier AD Harking OBE and Col Brigade of Gurkhas - Col D Hayes CBE to all the personnel who deployed. After the medal presentation the Col of the Regt gave an inspiring speech highlighting the professionalism, values and success of Gurkha Sappers on recent operations. He also mentioned with sadness our two fallen comrades, WO2 (MPF) D Markland (70 Sqn) and Sapper Ishwor Gurung (69 Sqn), who sadly could not be there to share the happiness.



*Col D Hayes CBE presenting LCpl Bhim with his Op HERRICK Medal*

The proceedings continued with the presentation of the Bowring Trophy. This is given to the best LCpl of the year and is a most coveted trophy. This year the worthy winner was LCpl Ramkumar Rai of 69 Sqn and the much deserved runner was LCpl Jamansher Rai of 70 Sqn. After the presentation, Capt J Walker Adjutant QGE read the Commandant's Special Routine Order which was followed by the customary cake cutting ceremony. The Col of the Regt, Commandant and Gurkha Major cut the immaculately decorated cake together. Due to the number of years it was celebrating and the number of people eating it the cake was enormous!. Special thanks must go to Sgt Harka and Sgt Rajendra who prepared the cake and to the Royal Engineers band who played beautiful celebratory music which gained huge rounds of applause.

On completion of the parade, the party moved into the superbly decorated marquee for a Gurkha curry and entertainment. Commandant QGE, Lt Col SJ Hulme MBE and the Gurkha Major formally welcomed all guests and thanked the dignitaries for their presence, particularly mentioning Capt Bishnu Ghale for his work in organising of event.



*LCpl Ramkumar Rai, winner of the Bowring Trophy*

The day culminated in a variety of cultural shows including Nepali children and young sappers along with popular Nepali songs by the QGE Pardeshi Band. The mouthwatering





Gurkha curry laid on by SSgt Buddhi Gaha and his team was delicious and well received. All the guests were also invited on to the stage for the cocktail dance led by the Gurkha Major himself – a typical of Gurkha tradition. However, all the Gora Sahibharu struggled to catch the move of the **UTHA BASHA** dance with the Gurkha Major.

The 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday celebration came to a close at 1600hrs, leaving everyone with a very positive understanding about the achievements and accomplishment of QGE soldiers on their various operations and deployments. It was a very successful day, thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended and provided a wonderful opportunity to meet and be reunited with current and former QGE comrades and Gaf-Saf. It was also a timely reminder of the standard set by our predecessors, which we will of course continue for the next 60 years and beyond. Jai QGE



*Comdt, Col of the Regt and GM cut the 62<sup>nd</sup> Birthday Cake*



*The Colonel of the Regiment takes the salute as 69 Sqn march off the Parade*





## HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN VISITS 36 ENGINEER REGIMENT (SEARCH) AND THE QUEEN'S GURKHA ENGINEERS

Her Majesty The Queen visited 36 Engineer Regiment (Search) and The Queen's Gurkha Engineers on Thursday 24 February 11. Her visit marked the attestation of the 5000<sup>th</sup> QGE recruit and the Regiment's transition to the Advanced Search role<sup>7</sup>.

Her Majesty started her visit by reviewing a short parade during which she inspected the Attestation Party and was introduced to Spr Bal Budha Magar, the 5000<sup>th</sup> QGE recruit and champion trainee for his Training Party. He said afterwards; *"The Queen asked me where I came from and if I had enjoyed my training so far. She also congratulated me on being awarded the Champion Recruit Prize. It was a real honour to meet her"*

Her Majesty also commissioned three Queen's Gurkha Engineer Late Entry Officers; Captain Ashokkumar Gurung, Captain Dirgha KC and Captain Kamalbahadur Khapung Limbu. They are the first officers of the Regiment to be physically commissioned by the Queen, the importance of which was not lost on them. Captain Kamal said afterwards, *"I am really proud and honoured to be one of the only officers commissioned by the Queen. I doubt that we will ever see it again."*

Once the parade was complete Her Majesty was introduced to The Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Allan Willet CMG KStJ; The Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Peter Wall KCB CBE ADC Gen who had attended in his capacity as Chief Royal

Engineer; Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB who had attended in his capacity as Colonel of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers; the Mayor of Maidstone; the Member of Parliament for Maidstone and the Weald and the Chief Constable of Kent Police. She was then escorted through a short capability display and met officers and soldiers of the Regiment. In particular she met Lt Luke Johnston-Smith who described 69 Gurkha Field Squadron's achievements on Op BAM; Cpls Kaniyalal Thapa, Joseph Subba and Dalbahadur Rinjali who described artisan trade training and its application on deployed operations; and Sgt Krishnabhadur Pun and Cpl Bikash Shresta who spoke of their experiences in Royal Engineer Search Teams on Op HERRICK. She then sat for a Regimental photograph, the first in the Regiment's history.

Prior to taking lunch in the Officers' Mess, the Queen met Regimental families where she spoke with the wives and children of those who have recently returned from operations and was particularly interested to hear how our Nepalese families found life in Maidstone. She also received a Regimental brooch and a mala from Miss Dilasha Rai, the daughter of Cpl Bhimal Rai. Her Majesty then took lunch with the Officers of 36 Engr Regt and invited guests. Unfortunately bhat was not served!

After lunch Her Majesty left through a route lined by families and soldiers. All agreed that they had had a wonderful day and that they felt honoured to have been visited by the Queen.



<sup>7</sup> The last time her Majesty inspected QGE soldiers was in Chatham as part of RE 200 in 1987. Note the Association Chairman sporting a fine moustache in the photo on the next page.









# Culmination of the Gurkha Captain Post in QGE – My Perspective!

*Capt Yogprasad Thapa*

In 1948, the formation of 67 Gurkha Training Squadron Royal Engineers in Malaya saw the creation of the first Gurkha Captain post in The Queen's Gurkha Engineers. The post was created primarily to bridge the culture and tradition gap between British Officers and Gurkha Sappers and also to maintain Gurkha kaida and ethos in those who were to serve together every day from dawn to dusk. Since its inception, the post of Gurkha Captain was widely acknowledged to be an integral part of the Gurkha Squadron. That was until the announcement of the changes to the of Terms and Conditions for Gurkhas and a cut in the Defence budget that led to the culmination of the Gurkha Captain post in The Queen's Gurkha Engineers.

Having served more than three years as Gurkha Captain 69 Gurkha Field Squadron QGE, in sometimes gruelling and unpredictable situations and undertaking a wide variety of jobs, I do not think that the traditional duties of a Gurkha Captain would have helped sustain the Gurkha Captain post in the current era. There is no argument that Gurkha Captains have shown many skills in many different roles and in many demanding situations, always balancing the needs of Gurkhas, time constraints and most importantly the commander's intent. In the early days the Gurkha Captain played a vital and instrumental role; being the most senior and experienced figure in the Squadron, he was responsible for maintaining kaida and ethos, the traditions and culture which he had learnt and earned over the period of time serving in the Regiment. He was the main point of contact in the Squadron for any Gurkha matters, implementing the best practice as directed to him by the Gurkha Major and addressing any issues of tradition, kaida and the ethos within the Squadron.

Gurkhas come from Nepal but their cultural diversity and the background in which they have been brought up in before joining the Army varies considerably from caste to caste and is dependent on the areas from where they come from. It is not only hard but extremely difficult for a raw Gurkha to adjust to a strange environment alongside unfamiliar peers, never mind learning a new language and new skills - a huge challenge in a very different environment and away from their loved ones for a significant length of time. Being the most senior Gurkha in the Squadron there have been many occasions where the Gurkha Captains have had to play not only the senior role but also provide welfare support for those younger soldiers in need. The majority of the Gurkha Captain's roles were tangible – not only to outsiders but also to serving personnel with little knowledge about kaida and tradition.

Outsiders may see these roles and perhaps view them differently but they will never be able to feel the real amount of responsibility that the Gurkha Captain had to deal with! As the saying goes "you don't need a doctor unless you're ill," in this case "you don't feel the need for a Gurkha Captain unless you understand Gurkhas!" Even though the job description for a Gurkha Captain outlined certain roles and responsibilities most of his time was spent maintaining morale and counselling individuals on their career choices

and managing their expectations.

One of the other prime roles of the Gurkha Captain was to provide advice to Officers Commanding and British Officers on Gurkha manning and career management in order to maintain cohesive Gurkha kaida over the long term. Arguably those people with little knowledge about Gurkhas always viewed differently the wisdom and advice of the Gurkha Captain as some of the traditional advice may not be viewed favourably (i.e. out-dated). However, it is an essential factor in maintaining the Gurkha traditions, kaida and ethos and the identity of the Brigade of Gurkhas since without there wouldn't be any difference between Gurkhas and British soldiers!

The Regiment was blessed with having Lt Col Wardlaw Saheb as the Commandant QGE when the terms and conditions for Gurkhas were under scrutiny and other vital factors such as manning was under review. I must salute the wisdom and foresight of Commandant Wardlaw Saheb for his tireless work and true vision for the future of QGE that has secured a constructive and an inspirational path for QGE members in the wider Army and has also helped to secure the precarious position of employment of LE Gurkha Captains within in the wider Corps. I am confident that his tremendous work for QGE will pay off in the years to come.

Pondering on the earlier days this is a great opportunity to experience and witness the culmination of the formidable position of the Gurkha Captain in the history of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers. Individuals have their own perceptions, and views. My humble opinion is that it is the right move at the right time for The Queen's Gurkha Engineers. I believe, in order to preserve the fine tradition, kaida and ethos, the post must be justifiable and must be able to withstand the current climate. Gurkha Sappers need to be seen to be not only comparable to British counterparts but also need to be seen to be adding value if they are to remain in the British Army during an era of such scrutiny! Unlike other soldiers in the British Army, every member of the Regiment is facing real challenges and the real demands of the modern Army. In my personal view; the traditional post of Gurkha Captain was well overdue a review.

Now we need to aspire to recreate the same formidable position to provide better support if we wish to preserve the same expertise and ethos. Personally I believe the role of Squadron 2IC would be the most appropriate post for the senior Gurkha Captain that would traditionally have taken up the post of Gurkha Captain. This will allow the Gurkha tradition, kaida and ethos to be maintained at its best.

It was very sad to see the culmination of the Gurkha Captain post, however it has opened up huge opportunities for officers and all ranks of QGE in the wider Army. My personal "THULO DHANYABAD" to all retired and serving members of the Regiment for their tremendous support throughout for upholding the fine tradition of the Regiment and flying the QGE flag high! "JAI QGE – BALIYO RAHANU HOS".



# QGEA Chairman's Letter

Tony Harking



The highlight for the Association last year was the reunion on the occasion of the Regimental Birthday celebrations followed by a very successful dinner at the RE HQ Mess at Chatham. This occasion provided not only an opportunity to renew old friendships but also to learn more about the tremendous work of the Regiment on operations

and elsewhere and to pay respect to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan. It is fitting that Her Majesty chose to visit Invicta Park and I know Association Members are delighted that such an enormous privilege was afforded to QGE and to 36 Engineer Regiment.

I continue to be very grateful to the Commandant, Gurkha Major and all ranks of QGE for their support to the Association and for their enormous hospitality on Regimental occasions. Together, we wish to widen the appeal of the Association so that it is not seen as solely the preserve of serving and retired British Officers but as a grouping of all those who have had or continue to have the privilege of serving with the Regiment.

To that end, the summer lunches will be located and arranged to encourage participation by all ranks and we will propose amendments to membership rules to encourage all rank participation – more of this at the next AGM in September. In the interests of reducing the administrative overheads, we are also now pursuing the amalgamation of the Association with the Regimental Trust and the Perowne Trust. Work on this with the Charity Commission is taking place and I hope we will be able to implement the change in September after the AGM.

The format of basing Association activities around a summer lunch and the Regimental Birthday in September seems to provide the level of activity that most members support and we intend to continue on that basis. There will be opportunities for other activities and dinners to mark specific events on an ad hoc basis and ideas and thoughts on these are always gratefully received.

I am very grateful to the members of the Committee for the time they devote to all the Association activities and I hope that members will continue to make that effort worthwhile through their participation and active support for the Association.

Jai QGE

## NEPAL UPDATES

### THE QUEEN'S GURKHA REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION NEPAL (RAN)

President: 31847 Maj Bhimbahadur Gurung MVO MBE

#### Kathmandu Branch

Chairman: 58135 Maj Surjabahadur Thapa MVO  
Vice Chair: 50515 Capt Giriraj Thapa  
Secretary: 61547 Lt Ravindra Sahi  
Treasurer: 59033 WO2 Jogeshkumar Pradhan  
Member: 55506 Capt Manilal Thapa  
Member: 55326 WO2 Kirtabahadur Gurung  
Member: 59652 WO2 Keshav Thapa  
Member: 55310 Cpl Prembahadur Gurung  
Member: 57707 Cpl Amarjang Gurung

#### Pokhara Branch

Chairman: 56718 Maj Hukumraj Thapa  
Secretary: 61836 Capt Gangabahadur Gurung  
Treasurer: 51539 Lt Motiram Gurung  
Member: 48075 Hon Lt Thakur Rana  
Member: 58719 Sgt Bhubarsing Gurung  
Advisor: 39243 Capt Kusalsing Gurung

#### Dharan Branch

Acting Chairman: 50308 Capt Kharkabahadur Limbu  
Vice Chair: 58670 WO2 Hitbahadur Magar  
Secretary: 66485 Cpl Jayakumar Kerung  
Treasurer: 62120 Cpl Prembahadur Limbu  
Member: 59603 Hon Lt Lalitbahadur Limbu  
Member: 59029 Hon Lt Bhimraj Limbu  
Member: 69894 Cpl Sherbahadur Limbu

#### Darjeeling Branch

Chairman: 60584 Lt Arunkumar Zimba  
Secretary: 60314 WO2 Ganesh Lama  
Treasurer: 56004 SSgt Keshnarayan Chettri  
Member: 61458 Hon Lt Yakub Limbu  
Member: 52962 SSgt Dipak Rai  
Member: 59071 WO2 Narbahadur Thapa





## KATHMANDU UPDATE

### Regimental Birthday Celebration

The Kathmandu based members of QGERAN celebrated the 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of QGE with a great joy and pride on Saturday 25 September 2010 at the Crystal Party Palace in Man Bhawan, Lalitpur. A total of 125 members, ladies and their children attended the function. The party began at 1100 hours with the registration followed by some cold beer and soft drinks. The function's guest of honour was Colonel A M Mills QGE. At around 1200 hours the snacks were served in a buffet style which was well praised by all attendees and at 1230 hours a welcome speech was delivered by the President and the Secretary read out the QGE Special Order of the Day issued by the Commandant. This was followed by the cutting of the Birthday Cake, carried out by the Commander BGN, President QGERAN and Sgt Narprasad Gurung QGE.



*Cake cutting in Action. Col A Mills, Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Gurung MVO MBE and Sgt Narprasad Gurung QGE*

The atmosphere was lively and everyone was very relaxed, chatting and sharing their old stories. Then it was the time for traditional Nepali "dal bhat" and the guests and ladies were asked to start first. The QGE Day celebration was a huge success and all members and their families thoroughly enjoyed the day. The members gradually dispersed already looking forward to attending the 2011 QGE Day celebration.

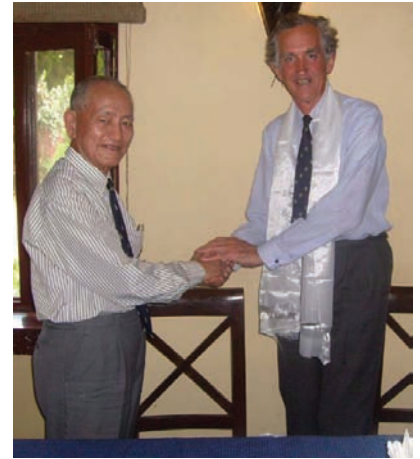
The Association would like to thank the Commander for attending as Chief Guest and Sgt Narprasad Gurung QGE for arranging the birthday cake. Also, all members would like to thank the Chairman, Hon Maj Surjabahadur Thapa MVO and the committee members for their hard work without which this would not have been so successful. Finally, the President, Chairman, Committee members and all members would like to thank the QGEA (UK) for their financial support.

Jai QGE!

(After Note: We look forward to meeting the Colonel of the Regiment next year).

### Welcome Party in Honour of Major and Mrs Slack by Kathmandu Branch Members

After 7 years, the Stack family were in back in Nepal for a trek. Both Stack sahib and memsahib arrived in Kathmandu on 03 Oct 10 and went to Langtang area for a trek on 04 Oct returning to Kathmandu on 19 Oct. They stayed in Thamel at their favourite hotel, the famous Kathmandu Guest House.



In honour of them, a welcome party was organised at the Chapter 9 Restaurant located at Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur on 20 Oct 10. All the members gathered at the party place at 1130 hours and at about 1230 hours, the senior member present, Hon Maj Bharatsing Limbu welcomed both Stack sahib and memsahib by garlanding khadas.

All the members complained to Major Stack that there was a big gap and everybody requested to make the gap shorter than before when they next visit Nepal. In reply, Stack sahib said that "it was a special day for both of us and I will cherish the memories of it for months to come. I will try to return sooner next time". After the photo session, Major Stack sahib thanked the members for their attendance and they left Chapter Nine for Thamel at 1500 hours.

Both Major and Mrs Stack left Kathmandu for their homeland on 22 Oct 10. We all wish them and their family all the very best for the future and we are certain their love for Nepal, Nepali people and ex QGE members will bring them back in the near future. Baliyo Rahanuhos!



*A Group Photo with Maj and Mrs Slack*





## British Gurkhas Nepal Honour War Dead

The Chief of Staff BGN, the Gurkha Major, Brigade and Unit Welfare Officer and Major (Retd) Balkrishna Rana all laid wreaths in the British Camp to honour Britain's war dead as part of its annual Remembrance Parade. They represented the Brigade of Gurkhas, British Gurkhas Nepal, Locally Employed Civilians in Nepal and all the Regimental Associations in Nepal respectively.

The occasion held on Thursday 11 November 2010 was marked with two minutes silence. All serving members of British Gurkhas Nepal, civilians working in the British Camp and a dozen members from each of the Regimental Associations were present at the parade.



*A Small QGE Contingent at the Remembrance Parade*

## The Commandant and Gurkha Major Visit Nepal

The Commandant and the Gurkha Major QGE paid a visit to the QGERAN Kathmandu branch on completion of their trek to Nepal. They were welcomed at the Crystal Party Palace, Man Bhawan, Lalitpur on 29 Nov 10. The QGERAN President, Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Gurung MVO MBE welcomed and presented khadas to both officers of the Regiment.



*QGE RAN members posing for photographs with the Comdt and GM QGE*



*Former Gurkha Majors (all MVO holders) with the present Gurkha Major, Major Prembabadur Ale MVO*

The Commandant updated the members with the Regimental News, specifically the new role as a Search Regiment and its operational commitments. Similarly, the Gurkha Major sahib informed the members about the new GTACOS and the GMAS. The GM sahib also updated everyone on married life in Maidstone which is totally different to the Hong Kong days. He said that almost all wives work either full or part time except those who have small children or who are about to be mothers.

## DHARAN UPDATE

*Hon Lt Bhimraj Limbu*

### Happy 62<sup>nd</sup> Birthday

Hi... Hello...,Namaste and Sewaro." Happy QGE Day " This was heard from every one coming to Sainik Bhawan on 28 September for the Regimental Day and the 62<sup>nd</sup> Birthday of QGE. Time passes so quickly without knowing it but let's just say it is a special day not just for serving Sappers but also for retired Sappers.

Almost all the retired Sappers living around the Eastern Regions were present to celebrate the Birthday. There was 51 Members including the ladies. Upon arrival the Chief Guest, Hon Capt Jamansing Rai, was met and welcomed by Hon Capt Kharkabahadur Limbu (Ex-President of the QGE Association).

The Secretary, Jay Kerung then welcomed all to the celebration of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Birthday. He informed all members about our QGE Association (QGEA) and also mentioned the Ambulance which was donated 9 years ago by the Indian Pension Paying Office, Phusre for Indian and British ex-servicemen. This Ambulance is under QGEA administration and he asked whether or not the QGEA could have own Ambulance and a separate office rather than to share with others? He further said that it would be a very useful form of support and it would definitely benefit our Association.







*Short speech by the Chief Guest*

A highlight of the day was the short and sweet speech given by Hon Lt (QGO) Lalit Bahadur Limbu which ended with a salute to The QGE. The Secretary then sadly mentioned those who had passed away over the previous year, some 30 members including ex QGEA President (Hon Lt QGO) Birkha Bahadur Limbu. A one minute silence was observed for all of them.

After that Hon Capt Kharkabahadur Limbu read out the Special Routine Order of the Day and the Chief Guest was then requested to cut the Birthday-Cake. Once cut everyone stood up with a piece of cake and a drink in their hands. The hall echoed with "Long Live QGE" and everyone drank a toast to QGE and ate the cake. Tit-bits and hot aludam were served with drinks afterwards.



*Birthday Cake Cutting by Hon Capt Jamansing Rai*

About an hour later the Secretary made an announcement that the "Delicious Buffet" was ready and was laid out on the tables ready to be served hot. The Chief Guest was led to the buffet by Hon Capt K B Limbu followed by everyone present. That the food was delicious was evident as everyone went round for seconds.

The Chief Guest left us a little early after enjoying the Buffet but he left with a smile saying, "Thank you all Sappers, have a good day". After finishing our drinks we also decided to leave. So the day was over then.

Although it was a short day everyone enjoyed it thoroughly. It reminded us that togetherness unites all wherever they live on this globe, "UBIQUE THE QGE"! As ever we would also like to thank the 'QGEA UK' for their generous contributions. We will see you all again at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Birthday but until then good-bye and thank you all.

**"Jai QGE and long live QGE".**

## POKHARA UPDATE

*Maj (Ret'd) Hukumraj Thapa*

### 62<sup>nd</sup> QGE Day 2011

The RAN QGE in Pokhara celebrated the 62<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the Regiment. The day was well organised and included a first class tipan-tapan and curry lunch. It was followed by a few rounds of tombola and a raffle draw with a large goat as first prize along with several other attractive prizes. This year we had also invited Chairpersons of other RAN. Everyone enjoyed the day very much and it was pleasing to see that members are now making the effort to attend this annual event despite the numbers gradually disappearing to the UK.



*Cutting of The Cake*



*Members of 20 Training Party*







*Buffet Curry Lunch*

## Ex HIMALAYAN TIGER.

A team of sappers led by Sgts Sushil Gurung and Subash Gurung undertook a trek in the Upper Mustang District, one of the most remote districts of Nepal. The team was welcomed by QGERAN in Pokhara before they ventured off to the mountains. Upon their return they made a small cash donations towards the Dharan and Pokhara QGE Day Celebrations. Our heartfelt thanks go to the Himalayan Tigers.



*Member of Ex Himalayan Tigers being welcomed*

## The A-Team Activities

The A-Team QGE still manage to meet regularly and have had some remarkable outings in and around Pokhara this year. The A-Team bade farewell to 6063 Maj Haribahadur Thapa who retired to Kathmandu after 13 years as Coordinator in KAAA and a notable 33 years service in the Brigade of Gurkhas. 7607 Capt Tul Ale was replaced by 8498 Capt Budhi Bhandari as QM British Gurkhas Pokhara. Lt Col Hulme and Maj Prem Ale visited whilst on their Nepal Trek and were entertained on 27 Nov 2010 in the Meera Hotel. Finally, 4060 Tej Rai ex-QGE was welcomed by the A-Team at one of their outings. It is worth mentioning that after his retirement from QGE, Tej has established himself as a very successful businessman in Hong Kong, China and Australia. He invested in hydroelectricity projects in Nepal and in the tourism sector in the Rara Lake Region so anyone wishing to visit the Rara Lake should contact Tej.



*Farewell to 7607 QM Capt Tul Ale*



*Welcome to 8498 QM Capt Budhi Bhandari*



*Farewell to 6063 Maj Haribahadur Thapa*



*Welcome to 4060 Mr Tej Rai ex QGE*





## THE KULBIR THAPA VC RESIDENTIAL HOME KASKI

As part of the 2005 Strategy Review the Gurkha Welfare Trust identified an increasing number of welfare pensioners who had been abandoned in their villages. Many had outlived their spouses and the effects of economic migration and insurgency were clear to all. Unable to fend for themselves and marooned in remote hill villages the Trustees were determined that something simply had to be done.



A Residential Home (RH) for the destitute and most vulnerable Gurkhas was envisioned and as a result construction of the RH Kaski began inside the Area Welfare Center (AWC) perimeter in November 2008. It was completed in June 2010 and the construction was made possible by the significant contribution of the The Michael Uren Foundation. The building was designed by Michaelis Boyd Associates as a gift to the Gurkha Welfare Trust.



*Dinner with the extended family members*

It was formally inaugurated on 17 November 2010 by the Chairman of the RH Working Group, Lieutenant General Sir Philip Trousdell KBE CB and has been named after the first Gurkha recipient of the Victoria Cross, Rifleman Kulbir Thapa.

RH Kaski is capable of accommodating 26 residents and is run by 12 staff consisting of Nurses and care assistants who are on duty 24 hours a day. These elderly and frail Welfare Pensioners now feel safe and at home in their new surroundings. They are delighted and grateful to the members from the UK whose vision and dedication has made such positive changes to their lives.



*Residents indulging in communal activities*



*Personnel Care for the Residents*



*En-suite accommodation for all residents*





## A FAREWELL TO ARMS, THE FUNERAL OF HONORARY LIEUTENANT (QGO) TULBAHADUR PUN VC



I received the phone call at 8 o'clock in the morning. "I'm sorry to inform you that Tulbahadur VC died at his village last night."

I was in Kathmandu. The village was a long way away in the mountains of West Nepal.

"When's the funeral?"

"Tomorrow morning."

The next morning our convoy of Land Rovers bumped up the narrow dirt road that runs alongside the Kali Gandaki river. Sheer cliffs studded with stunted pines rose a thousand feet on either side of us, with the occasional house perched precariously amongst them. Whenever the road straightened we caught brief glimpses of Nilgiri Himal, 7000 metres high and covered in snow.

Several hundred mourners were waiting patiently outside the house when we arrived. His son came out to greet us: "You've arrived ... at last."

Tulbahadur's body was carried out and laid on a bamboo stretcher on the porch. It was a small stretcher for such a brave man.

We laid wreaths of poppies and marigolds beside a framed photograph of Tulbahadur in a pin stripe suit wearing a long row of medals, eleven in all.



Commander British Gurkhas Nepal read a message of condolence from the Chief of Defence Staff and a tribute from the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association.

Then it was my turn. I wanted to say how proud I was to have been in his Regiment, 6<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Rifles, of how proud we were of him

winning the VC at the battle of Mogaung in Burma in 1944. Instead, I read messages from retired brigadiers and colonels from his regiment, from friends and brothers in arms.

The Gurkha Major read out Tulbahadur's VC citation. The crowd lent forward intently to listen; many had probably never heard how Tulbahadur won his medal.

His eldest son spoke last. He described how his father had always wanted to die at home and had returned to Nepal from

Chiswick to take part in a special ceremony to honour his ancestors. He ended by saying how Tulbahadur, who had not had a chance to go to school, had always championed education and how proud he was of the new school being built in his village.

It was not far to the cremation ground. Tulbahadur's sons and relatives carried his body down to the river on their shoulders. A line of women holding a long strip of white cotton on bamboo poles led the way. The villagers, each carrying bundles of firewood, followed.



Women sang *bhajans* whilst the pyre was built. The villagers gossiped. I was told that Tulbahadur had attempted selection six times before he had finally been enlisted.

A Brigade piper in tartans played "Flowers of the Forest". We stood at attention listening to the river. The family walked round the pyre a ritual three times. Ghee was poured over the firewood. The crowd turned to leave as the flames took hold.

With us were the family, friends, regiment and villagers he had grown up with. Just as Tulbahadur VC always wanted.



## 62<sup>ND</sup> QGE DAY IN HONG KONG

Maj (Ret'd) Hukumraj Thapa

In Hong Kong the 62<sup>nd</sup> QGE Day was organised by 1181 Lt (Ret'd) Gopal Gurung in the Yak and Yeti Restaurant at Jordan. There are just over fifty QGE members in Hong Kong on their second career and most of them have their families there. I visited Hong Kong with my wife and it all looked very neat and tidy, but it is overcrowded. The network of roads are so much improved that driving around the whole of New Territories was very comfortable. I particularly wanted to see So Kwun Wat Village next to Perowne Barracks to look at our





BFT course and my fishing spot at the Tai Lam Reservoir. During the football seasons each member of Nepal Cup squad had to run the 3½ mile circuit round the catchments road twice a day; in the morning and after works, as a 'warm up' to the main training sessions!



Capt (Ret'd) Chandrabahadur Gurung and WO2 Ret'd Jagat Gurung



The Catchments Road behind Perowne Bks



Front gate of Perowne Barracks

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR - JP CROSS BOOK UPDATE

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Pray excuse the solecism of my mentioning my own book, *The Crown of Renown*, set between 1819 and 1857/8, the third in my proposed historical novel quintet, chiefly about Gurkhas. It should have been published in 2007, to 'celebrate' (hardly the correct word, I know) the Indian Mutiny 150 years before. The publisher was dilatory in the extreme, a year late, in sticking to his side of the contract: I arranged for a solicitor in England to chase him but, by the time he answered, he had sold the company. The new owner eventually did publish the book, on 4 December 2009, but because of its stupidly high price and the financial climate, sales have been almost zero. I believe that is because of the seeming lack of marketing rather than the story not being a good one. Amazon was the point of contact, useless for people of my age group who probably know nothing about it.

I have contacted the publisher and managed to arrange for a one-third reduction in price to £14.95, to include packing and posting. It is now 'off' Amazon and on its own website (still a difficulty for many), [www.jpcross.co.uk](http://www.jpcross.co.uk). I don't operate the www so have not read what it is all about. I feel that were I to, it would make me cringe. Postage for foreign buyers can be negotiated.

However, the publisher also suggested my telling friends that they might like to help 'advertise' the book by means of Face Book and two other similar modern technical wonders, telling *their* friends about this new arrangement. It is just possible that someone you know might be interested in buying a copy as a Christmas or birthday present because he/she can think of nothing else. If this is new to you, I can send you copy of the review that Peter Quantrill wrote.

Volume 2, *The Restless Quest*, was published by Blenheim Press Ltd on 30 June 2010 and Volume 4, *The Fame of the Name*, is due to be published by the same people on 30 June 2011.

Yours, under the Protection, in Senescence and with Fingers Crossed,

John.



# MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES

## THE REGIMENT REVISITED

Tom Spring-Smythe

**Ed.** The following article comes from extracts of letters written by the late Tom Spring Smyth (obituary in 2010 magazine) and were kindly sent to Dick Francis by Tom's widow, Jennifer. They were written in 1977 following a visit to the Regiment in Hong Kong after Tom had retired from the Army and was working for Halecrows in Singapore. They give a great insight into life in the Regiment in the late 1970's.

### Dasera 1977

It has been my luck and privilege to visit the Regiment four times since retirement and as a shareholder measured in terms of affection, effort and sweat it is no bad thing to see for oneself that the creation of many dedicated men measures up to their hopes and aspirations.

We had to contend with much in the past that made it difficult for soldiers to soldier and our survival in the early days was a precarious matter indeed. Let us hope that our masters in the higher ranks of the Army continue to value the soldier for himself as did the few who from the very beginning had confidence in the Gurkha Engineers to not only survive, to be made to survive and to become the splendid, Queen's Gurkha Engineers of today.

This having been said and having broken my rule to never write anything which can be read outside a personal letter, and no doubt avoiding lawsuits in the process, I can now get to the important point.

In June 77, as John Speight so kindly mentions in Newsletter No. 14, Jennifer and I had a chance of a quick visit to Hong Kong and, in spite of no warning, John put the machine in top gear and a truly marvellous welcome ensued. This gave Gurkha Major Bhimbahadur Gurung the chance to extract a firm promise that we would report for Dashera and Jennifer, although unable to come herself, made sure I duly obeyed. 'Anyway,' she said you have been talking about a Regimental Dashera ever since we were in Kathmandu in 1969 so now you will go.

Going was not going to be easy. A long and hectic tour of Sabah and a meeting with the Chief Minister had to be organised and completed first. A Malaysian Airlines system go-slow by pilots with a risk of being stuck in Labuan or Sandakan had to be faced and alternative routes via Manila and Taipei had to be considered. However, all went well and I got to Singapore on the evening of 19 Oct in time for the early morning flight to Hong Kong on 20 Oct. Kalratri was that night.

Sister-in-law Priscilla, married to Tim Whitehead of 6GR, picked me up at the Peninsula Hotel where the main lounge area is as yet basically unchanged from the early '50s when it served nobly, as social tac HQ. In no time I was safely delivered to Andrew and Claire Tuggey who received me with

enormous warmth and hospitality and even convinced me I was not being a nuisance in spite of an important arrival barely a month before and who, lucky chap, was about to go through his first Dashera albeit from the safety of his carry-cot.

Briefing revealed that DJ and penguin order is now out and attendance in suits is the form except for 2GR who still wear uniform. Who remembers the hasty return to quarters to change into less precious attire after midnight in preparation for the rigours ahead? With lively anticipation we drove to Perowne Barracks. Arrival is a moment of emotion, curiosity and excitement. There is much to see, hear, take in, to register and to differentiate between the old and the new. The first impression was the neatness, ordliness of a well kept permanent barracks, mature trees and tarmac. Then the most impressive approach to the even most impressive Dasain Ghar I have yet seen. An engineer contrivance of genius with a span of such width that only the Gurkha Major could have achieved. Chartered engineers please note.

Delicious rum punch and a comprehensive and immensely long programme individually marked with one's seat number were thrust into hand as one passed down the approach channel and found the named seat with ease. The whole centre section of the ghar from front to some 30 or 40 yards in the rear was given over to serried rows of seats. If many were guests I shudder at the cost. A far cry from the two or three rows of Tam Mi days. Children and wives were to the right of the stage, and stage it was with a splendid painted backdrop which changed during the programme. A big change was a low screen which hid the seated Madales<sup>1</sup>, harmonium player and chorus. I was not to see the old familiar line of Madales doing the occasional dances where personalities such as the incorrigible King Kong<sup>2</sup> made their mark.

After lots of happy greetings with survivors from my days, the Gurkha Major, Cpts Embahadur Gurung of football and later shooting fame, Ganesh Chhetri, Balkrishna Pradhan, and Capt Ichhabahadur Rai who I had first spotted as Champion Boys Company Boxer in the Trg Depot in 1955, and a great welcome from John and Rosie Speight, the show began in the traditional way. We were then in the grip of an excellently rehearsed and executed programme. Scene followed scene and the night hours disappeared, friends sat and chatted, the music and the rum punch flowed along with cold beer as well. The Jocker party indulged their whims drawing many roars of laughter (I was glad to see the old spelling preserved).

The soldiers sitting all along the right-hand side looked remarkably well dressed and trim, many drinking coca-cola! I suddenly realised what was missing. The red fire buckets brimming with neat rum. I recalled my estimates as President of the Dashera Committee when we budgetted at one gallon of rum per head for the Dashera period. Likewise, as far as

<sup>1</sup> A Madale is the name given to a drummer playing a madal.

<sup>2</sup> King Kong was an outrageous licensed joker.





I could see, there was no pick-helve toting squad of non-drinkers ready to pounce when needed, and I also presume there is no call for the once fastest moving item off the Naafi shelf - Alking-Salking.

The style of individual dancers had much improved in to highly professional performances. A Newar and a Rai did a number of Bhotia dances dressed in appropriate costume but this did bring to mind performances for tourists in Kathmandu. The standard of dress of the performers was very high and the Marunis' wigs were distinctly modern. Fringes were in front though the plaits still lay behind. Eye make-up was another sophistication. Thankfully the dark glasses cult has disappeared, along with joget<sup>3</sup> modern and other manifestations of the Emergency days. Possibly the most interesting change was the disappearance of the long drilled line of Marunis led by a line of drummers in Nepalese black jacket and white suvals. This was always in my view attractive and still provides my strongest memory of bygone Dasheras.

Having averaged five hours sleep per night in Sabah, which I now realise was subconscious training, I had doubts about my ability to survive the course and had declared my intention to sneak off reasonably early or soon after midnight. I need not have worried. At about 0500 there was a surprise attack by a swarm of Marunis and the survivors were all up on the stage dancing like mad before you could say "kukri". A very lively revel or rout followed which was, judging by the tremendous smiles and laughter, much enjoyed by participants and spectators alike. At nearly 0600 I did think it was time to drive back for a little shut-eye and shave to be in good shape for Mar and Andrew kindly took me back to Castle Peak. Feeling much refreshed I was up at 0715 and we returned for Mar.

This was very different. The Mandir is on its own with little surrounding space. Consequently only a handful of soldiers could attend. We sat in the sun while four goats were attended to in the customary way and despatched. A symbolic rango<sup>4</sup> is sacrificed in Dharan for the whole Brigade. Gurkha Major Bhim and some 32 of his officers, immaculate in Nepali dress, another welcome change from the past, presided and the new Bhawan performed with great dignity and competence. A highly polished choir of four sang throughout and an immaculate firing party delivered volleys as each goat met its destiny, their blood being sprayed on the Maula and a small representative collection of weapons, no longer the serried piles of the past. These rites being performed, we adjined to the Dasain Ghar where a vast jug on legs delivered a most welcome and refreshing potion of cold beer and much needed it was. I say that the jug was on legs. It was so large I never saw the face or body of the pourer but my thanks no less.

Suitably revitalised we returned to the Mandir for Tika. In the 50s the Bhawan quickly dealt with the officers in the privacy of the Mess. This has been replaced with a far more

elaborate ceremony. Shoes were off and the Second-in-Command, Nick Tomlinson graciously allowed me to follow John Speight in the observance. One advanced on the Maula and, after pressing saffron-coloured rice at eye-level on the bloodstained Maula, one pressed one's forehead on to the rice and thus tikared oneself, as it were. This was followed by the Bhawan administering Tika to us in turn which he did extremely well speaking softly but with great clarity. I think at that moment I felt that one's feeling of belonging to the Regiment was very definitely renewed and strengthened. A few more life-saving libations from The Jug and enjoyable exchanges of reminiscences followed and at about 1100 it was time to return with Andrew for breakfast which went on to about 1300. Thoughts of nipping down to Kowloon were overcome by the need for a short rest; after all there was a party to look forward to that evening thanks to James and Rosie Cameron who should, be firmly blacklisted by weight watchers. So ended Dashera '77. My most grateful thanks to kind and generous hosts.

## Tammi Camp Revisited

On Sunday morning after Dashera, Andrew Tuggey drove me on a nostalgic tour of Tam Mi Camp. It was hard to recognise the junction of the camp road with the main road from the Au Tan crossroads of manning exercise memories. There has been a great deal of building either side of the main road and either side of the camp road; only the last few yards to the barrier had not changed.

On entering the camp the old football field and parade ground on the right had not changed although it was a bit unkempt. Empty plinths denoted the Guard Room Nissen, RHQ Romney and other such latter-day horrors. Likewise the MI room, the erstwhile seat of a succession of amiable doctors was a plinth; who was that MO who emerged from the Tropic Island Hotel a paler shade of green after checking the inmates!

As we drove on it was hard to immediately recognise various landmarks. Tammi is now a married families camp and there have been many additions and alterations. However, one soon spotted 67 Sqn's MT area, the site of many a Dasain Ghar, now very overgrown. 68 Sqn's store Romney was still standing. It was here a LCpl Keseurbahadur Limbu was probably too busy to think too hard about the future but his major's crowns should be an inspiration to any generation of storeman.

Was this the Sqn parade ground where my Adjutant's eye saw Derek Moorcroft doing a dreadful Sandhurst-like stamp? It was certainly the road where a well-aimed red ants nest lent wings to an officer not too ardent about his duties.

We circled the camp and arrived at the Officers' Mess area. The trees along the way are now tall and well-formed and it is astonishing how many have survived. Planted in the dry weather, dozens of soldiers watered them every evening in an endless fatigue. The two Flame of the Forest trees planted by Murray Dunne, if memory serves, in front of the Mess still stand, large but slightly battered. The Mess? you are right, another plinth but just a blush remains of that polished red

<sup>3</sup> A form of Malyan Dance often copied and parodied by Battalions in Malaya.

<sup>4</sup> A Rango is carefully selected young water buffalo brought up for sacrifice. It must be in perfect physical condition free from any defect.



floor. A broken white glaze fragment embedded in concrete near the front door shows where a cloakroom had been built. Lines of broken brick showed where the walls had been and this must have reduced the size of the ante-cum-dining room considerably. In less formal days there was always the grass. Murray's massive pergola of 4ft welded iron pipe still stands and looks like doing so for a long time to come. The creeper still conceals much of it but has spread wildly in all directions. The plinth of the old bathroom Nissen is barely visible.

I had forgotten the short but steep little path to the long bungalow shared by Murray, myself, Tony Cronk and Douglas Miller. I am sure Jimmy Radford too was there much of the time. Who can forget Tony's record player playing La Vie en Rose 40 times in succession? Murray liked it. I believe this number became known in the Mess as The Red Meat. The building is much altered internally. It is now a married quarter for some four or five riflemen. The superb view from the verandah is now totally obscured by a dense forest of trees growing within a few feet of the verandah edge. No longer a place to down cold beer and contemplate Nameless<sup>5</sup>. It was a commanding position and not much could go on without our being aware of it.

Andrew and I pottered around while he good naturedly listened to tales of the past. However, our wits were sharp enough to avoid a deadly ambush from two converging Riflemen who suggested we drop in for a little whisky and this seemed a good cue for our departure.

## NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE - EX-QGE SERGEANT GAM BECOMES COUNCILLOR

21161231 Sergeant Gam Gurung has come a long way in life from a humble start and he hasn't finished yet and is aiming higher as he explains here.



My name is Gam Gurung and I was born on the 14 August 1959 in the foothills of Mount Annapurna in a small village called Bhichok, in Lumle, VDC. My father suffered from polio and was unable to contribute like most fathers to the family income, or help with everyday chores around the home. However, we were a big hearted family and pulled together to make ends meet. My childhood was a happy time in my life and my upbringing taught me the values I live by today; where I believe determination and attitude is just as important as ability to succeed.

My education started at home with my father up to the age of six, after which I attended the Shree Himalayan Primary School in the village with three of my brothers. I was unable to carry on my education after finishing primary school at the age of eleven, as the family circumstances had changed and I was required to work as a shepherd to help out. After two

years I was able to return to a middle school in Dhampus Village whilst staying with one of my 4 sisters, Ratan Devi Gurung. After middle school, I went on to Shree Machha Puchhre High School at Naudanda where despite the education being quite poor I achieved a GCSE equivalent.

In January 1978 at the age of 18 I travelled to the British Army recruitment centre in Paklihawa, and after passing selection I joined the Army and travelled to Hong Kong to start basic training. The training was physically and mentally demanding but I learnt the skills, techniques and discipline which lead to the foundations of being a good soldier and on completion of basic training I joined The Queens Gurkha Engineers.

I married my wife, Kabita in 1983 and was granted Family Permission to bring her to Hong Kong for 3 years and during this time we had 2 girls, Susan and Pratistha. During my 17 years service I travelled through many countries and learnt to communicate in five languages including British sign language for the deaf. I reached the rank of Sergeant and retired from the British Army in 1994. I returned to Nepal where I settled down with my family in Dam Side, Pokhara where I became a hotelier and ran my own hotel, the Twin Peaks. During the eight years of running the hotel we were blessed with 2 more children, Akanshya and Prayaas (our son). Although the hospitality business was all new to me I was up to the challenge and determined to make it work. We lived a relatively luxurious life style and became relatively wealthy compared to most but I was conscious that my village was the contributing factor to my wealth and decided to donate profits from the hotel to the regeneration of its school and domestic amenities. Something which we continue to do to this day.

My wife and I wanted to give our children a better education than was possible in Nepal and so we decided moved to England. I moved first in January 2003 and after a short while achieved a work experience visa to work as a rope technician for ACS Industries. It wasn't long before my family joined me, and we settled in the outskirts of South London in the London Borough of Sutton. After first living in a small 2 bedroom flat we successfully applied for a Haig Home (a housing Trust for ex-servicemen) and have now moved a few miles up the road and currently live in on their Morden Estate.



<sup>5</sup> The name of a hill on the south side of Tam Mi.





Since moving to England I have had a number of jobs, moving from being a rope technician to a security officer for the Corps of Commissionaires and a caretaker at Oak Lodge Secondary School in Balham where I learnt British sign language in order to communicate with the pupils. This inspired me to apply for a job at the Kensington and Chelsea College as a bricklayer tutor, something that I was very familiar with since it was my trade in the Engineers. From here I moved Carshalton College since it is nearer to our home in Morden and it is where I remain to this day teaching bricklaying. Over the last two years I have achieved an Undergraduate Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) at Canterbury Christ Church University - one of my hardest achievements to date.

We were the first Gurkha family to move into a Haig Homes and subsequently I became involved with setting up the "South London Nepalese and Gurkha Association" and was elected Chairman. In this capacity I was able to assist retiring Gurkhas to apply for Haig Homes and there are now more than 35 families living on our estate. I remained Chairman until last year when I resigned.

I have now been elected as a local councillor for the Labour Party in the London Borough of Merton and much of my time is spent helping the local community. I joined the Labour Party in 2004 right after the announcement made by the Rt Hon Prime Minister, Tony Blair that retired Gurkhas had been given a right to live in this country. I felt very indebted with this decision, one which Gurkhas had been waiting 200 years for and because there had been lots of Gurkha families who were living illegally in the UK.

I became close to other party members and learnt some of the party principles and my colleagues asked me to stand in the councillor selection process for the general election in May 2010. I stood for the Figge's Marsh Ward but was unsuccessful so I then tried for the Pollards Hill Ward and again came out unsuccessful. However, my friends encouraged me to stand in another ward - Graveney and again, the final news was that I narrowly missed out. I was disappointed but I felt I should try one last ward - Colliers Wood. Finally I was successful and selected to represent the Labour Party. I was over the moon and my future goal is that I can one day be Mayor of Merton. Now, I agree with the saying: Nothing is impossible.

However, I have still not forgotten where my roots lie and I continue to assist with fundraising and being the Chairman of the Bhichok Sangh, UK. My social life is also very busy, integrating into the local community by making new friends and meeting with influential people campaigning for Gurkha rights. I am prepared to help and give advice to all Nepalese and ex-Gurkhas. Above all this, last year my second daughter got married of which I am immensely proud.

And now, while I am



finishing off this short biography, I look back at my life and think to myself that there are so many people to thank for helping me take the right path. But I would especially like to thank my wife, my children and other family members, for if it was not for them all these achievements would not have been possible and mean nothing to me. I fully agreed with the motto that behind every successful man there is a good woman.

## 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST BRITISH ASCENT OF ANNAPURNA 1

*Ed. The following is a series of questions I recently asked Col (ret'd) Henry Day (late RE) who on 20 May 1970 became the 1<sup>st</sup> Briton and 3<sup>rd</sup> ever person to summit Annapurna, the 10<sup>th</sup> highest mountain in the world.*

*Ed. How long did you serve in the Royal Engineers for?*  
*HD. 37 years. My batch from Sandhurst was commissioned 50 years ago next year!*

*Ed. During your time in the Army did you ever serve with Gurkha Engineers or any other Gurkha unit and if so what is your abiding memory?*

*HD. Sadly not, though I put my name down for them on the YO course. Lt Col Charles Wylie, 10 (PMO) GR was Chairman of the Army Mountaineering Association during 1969-70 and had hatched up the expedition to Annapurna with his Gurkha contacts at the British Embassy in Kathmandu. I knew Jimmy Roberts as well though he had nailed his colours to Chris Bonington's Annapurna South Face expedition which was on the mountain at the same time as ours.*

*Ed. Was your 1970 Army Expedition to Annapurna your first trip to Nepal?*

*HD. Yes. I had been on expeditions to Pakistan and India before that so we were most excited to be going to Nepal at last.*

*Ed. I would imagine that the transport links that are in place today did not exist at this time. (As I understand it you travelled overland from India.) How then did you finally arrive in Pokhara and what were your thoughts on arriving there?*



*Arriving at Pokhara Airstrip in one of HM King of Nepal's Dakota DC-3s*



HD. We were flown to Kathmandu by the RAF on training flights and from there on to Pokhara. Our AMA team arrived in Pokhara on the Kings Flight. It sounds grand but the aircraft was a WW2 vintage DC3 Dakota and was one of only two of the King of Nepal's planes and we had chartered it. A hooter was sounded when a plane was due and a small boy dashed out to shoo away the cattle grazing the grass airstrip. There was no motorable road to Pokhara in 1970 so everything had to be transported by porters or mules or by aircraft. We arrived in Pokhara to find we were sharing the Gurkha compound with Chris Bonnington's Annapurna South Face expedition.

*Ed. I understand there were some Gurkhas involved in the expedition, who were they and did this make things easier for you?*

HD. Major Bruce Niven (10GR) was our expedition commander who brought with him two LCpls from the Gurkha Independent Parachute Coy: Purnabahadur Mall 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> (KEO) GR and Budhibahadur Gurung 6<sup>th</sup> (QEO) GR who actually came from Gorapani which we passed through on the trek in. Their special task was to keep the rear link open to Kathmandu.

*Ed. Your expedition tackled the mountain from the North side via the same route that Maurice Herzog took in 1950. What route did you take to base camp?*

HD. We trekked NW from Pokhara via Ghorapani to the Kali Gandaki River. Its tributary, the Miristi Khola, flowed directly from the North Annapurna glacier but was too precipitous to follow. The approach was from Choya over the Thulo Bugin Pass.

It was early in the season and still snow bound so our porters had great difficulty getting all the loads there. A few weeks later a mail runner sped into our Base Camp at the head of the Miristi Khola on the far side of the mountain. He was not even puffed and had a big smile on his broad Gurkha face. What Purna Bahadur handed me I treasure to this day; a handwritten postcard from Maurice Herzog<sup>6</sup> himself. I had written to let him know we were planning to try another ascent from the north (though not necessarily by the French line) and had studied his account with great care. What he wrote underlined one of a number of lessons we had drawn from his book: "Buvez de l'eau. Encore et toujours plus".

<sup>6</sup> The French climber Maurice Herzog along with Louis Lachenal were the first to climb the mountain and summited on 3 June 1953. Lachenal died in falling into a crevasse in the Valley Blanche in 1955 whilst Herzog still lives.

*Ed. There is a strong tradition of service with the British Army in this area of Nepal. Whilst you trekked in to the mountain did you come across any Gurkhas veterans and if so what was their reaction to you?*

HD. Yes, they were delighted to see us - particularly Bruce who spent a lot of time greeting them and exchanging news. The rest of us were equally delighted to meet them in their home villages.

*Ed. Were you alone on the mountain or were there other expeditions?*

HD. As I said, we arrived in Pokhara to find we were sharing the Gurkha compound with the Annapurna South Face expedition. Nick Estcourt and I had overlapped in the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club and I had even tied onto his rope for a few routes, including Kipling's Groove<sup>7</sup> in a snowstorm during one memorable December climbing meet. We both lived in Cheshire at the time as did Chris Bonington to whom I had been introduced. Having met up again in Pokhara they took us over to meet some of the other climbing glitterati including Don Whillans, Dougal Haston and Martin Boysen.



*The route taken by Henry is on the right whilst the original route taken by Herzog is the dashed line on the left.*

*Ed. You summited the mountain on 20 May 1970 along with Maj Gerry Owens becoming the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> ever people to do so and also the first ever British climbers. What were the hardest aspects of the climb?*

HD. Our build-up of camps on the North side of the mountain went quite well. We rapidly reached the foot of the Sickle, a huge curved band of seracs that covered most of the North Face of Annapurna I.

Richard Summerton and Gerry had an early taste of what it threatened when they were engulfed in the tail end of a fall one morning as they were fixing on crampons in preparation for moving out. About 10 days later we got back onto the rib where there was still unconsolidated snow perched on bumps on the ice and one of these patches slid off, carrying Richard with it. He had momentarily unclipped from the fixed rope to do some filming and jack-knifed over the sharp cornered camera case and broke some ribs. He was unable to take part in any more climbing which was a great sadness to us all. He had reached the top of Tirich Mir<sup>8</sup> with us only 8 months before. Tragically both he and Gerry were to lose their lives on Nuptse a few years later.

<sup>7</sup> A climb in the Lake District on Gimmer Crag, Langdale, Lake District

<sup>8</sup> At 7708mm it is the highest mountain in the Hindu Kush





Our sherpas had now caught up as they were no longer needed to supervise our porters over the difficult route from Choya, each section of which had had to be traversed 5 times by the 32 men we had been able to recruit. They had also heard of the loss of some friends on Everest and viewed climbing the Sickle with misgiving. Bruce Niven, who was now running things from Base camp, together with Sonam Girmi our Sirdar, with great diplomacy were able to persuade them to carry on to our great relief. They took part in the key carry up to Camp IV at 7100m on 18 May. That night Sonam and Pertemba, together with Douggie Keelan, Andy Anderson, Gerry and I, spent the night there and the next day we laboured up another 400m leaving Gerry and me dug into the open slope with every thing we needed.

We were not sure how progress was going with Bonnington's Expedition on the South Face at this stage. Through our Gurkha signallers, part of Bruce's team, we were able to relay messages to and from their base in Modi Khola and by that means were able to offer the possibility of a traverse of the mountain for their summiteers should they wish to give a try. I had sent a message to them, which read:

*"18 May 70. Camp 4 at 7100m. For Bonington from Day. We hope to establish Camp at 7700m tomorrow and send pairs of climbers to the summit on 20, 21 and 22 May. The route will be marked with yellow flags and Camps 4 and 5 will be left in place. Camps consist of (sufficient for 2 men for one night). Nil oxygen. Let me know asp if you are still interested because we will pull out quickly if successful".*

Breathing supplementary oxygen led to a great night's sleep, at least for me. Next day, Gerry demonstrated his disdain for the apparatus by ignoring the controls. The clumsy masks obscured our vision and until I hauled Gerry to a stop and found he was on four times greater flow rate than me I struggled to keep up with him. It took us around an hour and

a half to cover a kilometre of ascending traverse which led to the foot of a broad rock band, split by a snow filled gully. Eventually we made it onto a final steeper ice slope and then up to two mushrooms of a cornice on the ridge which proved to be the summit.

I took a complete round of photographs as well as a few of Gerry, perched as high as he dared, on the cornice which he cut part way through on our side. Peering over the south face, we could see Modiste staring back at us as well as Machapuchare floating below on a sea of puffy white cumulus cloud which obscured any possible view of the other expedition. I slipped a Union Jack onto my ice axe and passed it up to Gerry but it was only much later that we spotted it was upside down, a distress signal!



*Henry Day (left) and Jerry Owens following their successful summit attempt*

It did not take long to get back to Camp 5 which we reached after about a 5 hour round trip. It had taken us only 3 hours to reach the top, compared to Herzog and Lachenal's 8 which gave some indication of the benefits to us of supplementary oxygen.

*Ed. Have you been back to Nepal since the 1970 trip?*



*Surviving Members of both Henry's Expedition and Sir Chris Bonnington's (far right) expedition at the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lecture in Feb 2011. The two members of from Henry's expedition are Henry, 2<sup>nd</sup> left and Douggie Keelan, 3<sup>rd</sup> left.*



HD. In 1976 the Army Mountaineering Association mounted a successful expedition to Everest, when Brummie Stokes and Bronco Lane reached the summit in atrocious weather. Capt Mike Kefford (7GR) was on that trip too and Cpl Basantakumar Rai and Cpl Narbu Sherpa as well as 9 other Gurkha soldiers were in the support party, including Sapper Gamarsingh Gurung who acted as a mail runner. I have only been back a few times since, passing through to Tibet to climb Xixabangma and Everest from the North.

*Ed. What are your abiding memories of Nepal and the Nepalese people.*

HD. What tough, hardworking and admirable folk they are! I am not sure that all the exposure they have had to westerners has always been to their benefit and we should ponder on that.



*All the team back at Base Camp following the successful summit bid.*

**Postscript:** Statistics compiled by Elizabeth Hawley and given in Messner's book make sober reading. Annapurna I has been the least ascended of the fourteen peaks that are over 8000m. Fatalities exceeded the number of successful expeditions for many years (38 ascents up to 2000 and 57 deaths) and this grim ratio is the worst of all the eight-thousanders. Five Britons have reached the top so far of whom Gerry Owens and Dougal Haston were killed in the mountains and Don Whillans died of a heart attack. Alan Hinkes and I are still alive.

## QGE NEWSLETTER No 1.

*Ed. The following are extracts from the first QGE newsletter which appeared 40 years ago in 1971. They have been provided courtesy of John Petty. (The Very Reverend Dean Emeritus of Coventry Cathedral)*

**GEA Party.** On Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September 1971 at Minley Manor. Because of the move of the RE Trg Bde Mess from Southwood Camp to Minley Manor it will not be possible to have the party before September.

**GOR Party.** Jimmy Nobbs has not been able to make firm arrangements yet. He is in favour of holding it at Chatham again as the last one there in February was so successful.

**Family Gossip.** Including news from David and Jane Corsellis, Mike Calvert, John and Maureen Allen, John and Mavis English, General Bill Jackson. Also Jumbo and Pricilla Thomas who:

"Left Beachley House on 13<sup>th</sup> March just in time to see Wales beat England at the Arms Park. They are living temporarily in a very nice quarter in Cardiff where they plan to stay for three or four months whilst they condense their joint belongings so that they will fit into a normal house. Jumbo leaves the Army in June 1971 or June 1972 depending on the outcome of his Golden Bowler. He is looking for a quiet job NOT in the South-East nor the North."

## Malaya 1961

### The General says 'Goodbye' to some of the Officers



*Left to right;*

<i>Captain John Petty</i>	<i>Captain Aminudin, Malayan Officer attached to us</i>	<i>Captain David Owens</i>	<i>General Perowne garlanded by the Q.G.O's</i>	<i>Colonel Jumbo Thomas</i>
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## MEMORIES OF JUMBO THOMAS

*Ed. John also provided the picture above, taken 50 years ago which also featured in Newsletter No1 and he has subsequently added a few notes on his memories of Jumbo Thomas (this is in response to my misidentifying Jumbo Thomas on page 44 of the last edition of the magazine - my apologies).*

Jumbo Thomas was Commandant when I was in British North Borneo and Malaya. I was his IO for a while and enjoyed his company. He hailed from Cardiff, where my father was a doctor, except whilst serving in the RAMC throughout World War 2, including D-Day. Jumbo played rugger as did my father, for Bath and Cornwall. Jumbo even had a very eligible bride lined up for me, though that was a command I didn't obey!

He was always supportive of his young officers. At one point I was asked to captain the British Army Hockey side against the Malayan side, who had one or two players with whom





I played at Sandhurst. The British side had never won this annual match, so I asked Jumbo if I could have a fortnight's leave to muster a British side for the next match. He agreed, so I was able to arrange coaching and 3 matches against Malayan State sides as a preparation. Jumbo's fruit bore good fruit; we won!

## FAMOUS SONS – CAPT KHARKHABAHADUR LIMBU

*Ed. Whilst the Famous Son's section has sought to focus on different generations of QGE service, this year we have decided to highlight the service of Capt (QGO) (Retd) Kharkabahadur Limbu. His Father was killed in action in WW2 and he was raised by his Uncle who served with 7GR. His span of employment both in the Brigade and since his retirement has been exceptional - active service with the Brigade, Gurkha Welfare Service and then recruiting provides a history that needs to be told.*

Born in the remote village of Ikhabu, Taplejung District on 24 November 1943 he spent his childhood as a gothalo looking after goats and cows since there was no school in the village. At the age of 15 he enlisted as a boy recruit in the British Army on 18 November 1958 and subsequently completed 4 years boys service and recruit training at the Boys Company, Sungei Patani. After completion of recruit training he was selected to wear the cap badge of the Gurkha Engineer and left the Boys Company in November 1962 where he went on to Kluang as part of 13 Training Party, Combat Engineer III Course.



Immediately on completion of this course he attended the RE Fitter III Course and on finishing his trade training he finally went on his first Nepal leave in mid-1964. After returning from leave in early 1965 he was posted to 3 Tp 68 Fd Sqn where his first Sqn Comd was Major DH Bowen and the Gurkha Capt was Capt (QGO) Deobahadur Thapa. His Tp Comd was Lt Vialou Clark and Lt (QGO) Chitra Bahadur Rana. Was the Tp QGO.

He meet the troop in Sarawak and only had three months with them before being selected to attend the Class II Combat Engineer Course and also the JLC at Kluang. Whilst on the last phase of the JLC he was then selected to attend the Long Weapon Training Course at Sungei Patani before being posted straight back to Training Depot Brigade of Gurkhas as a Recruit Sect Comd in October 1965. It was here the he was first promoted to local LCpl.

After working as a Sect Comd for 2 years he returned to Nepal on his second leave and returned once more to a training role as a sect comd for 19 Trg Party Combat Engineer III Course and there after as a JLC instructor. Only after these instructor

duties had finished did he finally return to his parent Sqn and 3 Tp but not before completing the Class 1 Combat Engineer course in Kluang first.

In 1975 Major Vialou Clark returned to the Sqn as OC and during this time he formed a Regtl Shooting team of which Kharkabahadur was a member. The team was lucky enough to complete at Bisely for a number of years. In 1976 David Walker joined 68 Sqn in Bowring Camp as 3 Tp Comd where Lt Kusalsing Gurung was the QGO and Kharka was it's SSgt. He remembers his first impression was that Kharka;

*"was a very quiet, almost shy man. He was an old-school Gurkha engineer - tough, disciplined and uncomplaining. When I was put in charge of the shooting team's training I also soon found out that he was a crack shot with both rifle and Bren gun. My main memories of Kharka at that time were of him getting on quietly and efficiently with the job while being very partial to taking a regular wad of koine."*

In 1981 he was commissioned as a Lt (QGO) and appointed as the Tp QGO for 3 Tp. An ERE posting to the British Camp in Dharan followed in 1983 as the Security Platoon Comd /Gurkha Adj. He returned to the Regt for the last time in January 1986 as the Gurkha Capt for 68 Sqn where Major D Walker had also returned and was OC. He remembers that;

*"by the time of my return to 68 Sqn Kharka's leadership qualities, his patience, tact, strong sense of duty and devotion to the Regiment had been recognised and I found he was the Sqn Gurkha Capt. This was a time of some unease in the Brigade with many soldiers wanting to exercise the freedoms of the British soldiers and follow the ways of Western society with which they were more often coming into contact. Kharka-sahib guided the Sqn superbly well in this difficult period. He maintained discipline while at the same time caring for and championing the welfare of his men. He was highly respected and I could not have asked for a better Gurkha Capt. Even more than most OCs, I was able to have total confidence that the Squadron was running smoothly under his expert touch. As I remember it, 68 Sqn swept all before it and won most of the competitions going. In 1987 the Sqn went to Malaysia on exercise and Kharka had the opportunity to visit Kluang where he had undertaken his basic engineer training, one of the very few left in the Regt who had done that."*

He left the Army on pension in June 1988 and the following November was selected to be an Area Welfare Office for the Gurkha Welfare Scheme and ran the Rumjatar Welfare Centre. In March 1994 he moved across to recruiting as the Area Recruiting Officer (ARO) - (East) before being made Senior ARO (East) in March 1997. Finally retiring (again) from the British Army in February 1998 after more than 40 years' service he counts himself very lucky to have served the British Army all the way from boy soldier to SARO and now enjoys his retired life happily reminiscing about the old days with friends from the Regiment. David Walker's final



memories of Kharka Sahib are:

*"he was always a very considerate and courteous officer but with a wry sense of humour when you got to know him. He was also a generous host and good companion at Gurkha functions. When I left 68 Sqn I knew that the squadron would continue to be safe in his hands with its efficiency and the kaida being admirably maintained. I hope he continues to enjoy a long and honourable retirement."*

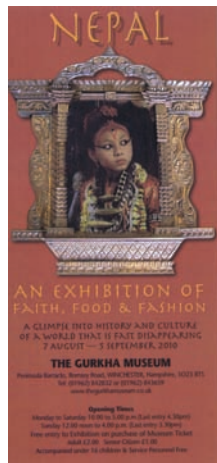
## GYAN THE MACE BEARER

The photo shows Gyan the Mace Bearer along with the Mayor of Reading (Centre) and Peter Beard, the immediate past Mayor of Reading and the Chair of the Charity, 'the Forgotten British Gurkha', registered in England no: 1128754.



## CURATOR'S REPORT TO THE GBA ON THE GURKHA MUSEUM – 11 NOVEMBER 2010

The past twelve months at the Museum has provided a roller coaster experience of reduced trading for the Shop, due to the current state of the national economy and a decrease in overall monthly visitor numbers. However, attendance at the Summer Temporary Exhibition proved to be our best exhibition attendance to date and overall attendance for our lecture programme has been steadily increasing. We have to face the fact that times ahead will be hard, however, public interest in Gurkhas remains high and opportunities to sell ourselves must not be missed. Again, I must add my thanks to the numerous Volunteers and Gurkha Staff who have manned the Museum Shop and Mobile Shops over the reporting period. A great deal of hard work has been achieved in projecting the Museum's message to the public.

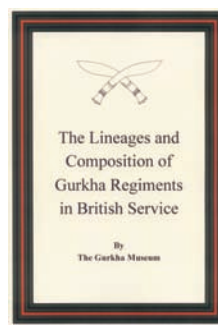


This year we sadly bade farewell to our Chief Clerk Sergeant Dalbir Gurung on retirement and the post also now no longer will be filled by a serving Brigade of Gurkhas appointment. For the future it is hoped that the Museum might be able to provide suitable job opportunities to injured Gurkha personnel under treatment. It is important for the public to meet Gurkhas when they visit the Museum, as perceptions and attitudes are easily made or broken in the media – meeting and talking to our soldiers increases the level of awareness and enhances good will towards our servicemen.

The McDonald Gallery continues to provide the venue for our many major Regimental Association functions, the temporary summer exhibition and a number of highly successful lectures. The summer temporary exhibition was staged from 7 August - 5 September 2010, (being favourably reported in the Times), and was titled **"Faith, Food and Fashion in Nepal"**. The exhibition was opened by the Nepalese Ambassador, Dr Suresh Chandra Chalise and attracted a wide range of public interest – a new record visitor attendance for a temporary exhibition. The commercial use of the Gallery has ensured a healthy return of income for 2010 and enables members of the public to see our collection of paintings, medals and accoutrements on display in the Medal room as well as the Gallery.

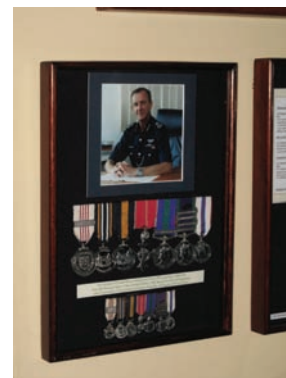
In January the Museum was honoured to be selected by the BBC to participate in the "History of the World Project". The item selected was the Fisher Kukri which was carried by Lieutenant Fisher (later Major General), The Sirmoor Battalion at the Siege of Delhi, 1857. Our participation in the project allowed schools in Hampshire to visit and see the object both at the Museum and online.

The Brigade of Gurkhas Visitor Centre, Shorncliffe continues to attract visitors from the South East and local schools to view their exhibits. The Visitor Centre staged a temporary exhibition on the **"170 Years of Conflict in Afghanistan"** from November 2009 – February 2010. The temporary exhibition **"Faith Food and Fashion in Nepal"** is currently being staged in the Visitor Centre until the end of February 2011. The Gurkha Staff at the Visitor Centre have been actively promoting school visits as well as tours by Ex Service Associations in the region.



This year, the Friends have been most generous with their funding to enable Field Marshal Sir John Chapple to produce his latest Museum publication titled **"The Lineages and Composition of Gurkha Regiments in British Service"**. It is a world class, authoritative composition, covering all Gurkha Units in British Service. A magnificent donation has been made by Colonel Bruce Mackenzie Niven

MBE (Late 10GR) of his medal group, including his medals and award for service with the Gurkha Contingent Singapore Police, 10 x Douglas paintings, silverware and his complete Nepalese slide collection. Another presentation was by Mrs Jennifer Spring-Smythe of the Late Major Tom Spring-Smythe's extensive Nepalese collection of papers and memorabilia.



Looking ahead, I would like to remind our readers of some dates for your 2011/12 diary's:





**The Friends Lecture** and Curry Lunch on “*Pakistan’s Army fighting Terrorism Today*” by Carey Schofield on Friday 10 June 2011.

The Summer Exhibition for 2011 will be titled “**The Scottish Connection - Pipes, Tartans, Kukris and Courage**” and will run from 6 August – 4 September 2011”.

The **Annual Theme Lecture** and Curry Lunch by Colonel Ian Rigden and Jules Stewart titled “*Training Local Lashkars (Milits) in the North West Frontier Province and Afghanistan in the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> Centuries and Today – What can be achieved?*” will be staged on **Friday 7th October 2011**. Seating capacity for lectures is limited, so early booking is recommended. Meet at 10.30am for coffee. Lecture in Library at 11.00am followed by drinks at 12.15pm. A buffet curry at 1.00pm. Friends concessionary ticket £25.00. Normal ticket £30.00.

**Gurkha Recruiting into the British Army Today** by Major Gerald Davies on 16 February 2012 at 12.30pm. The cost is £6 followed by sandwiches and a cash bar.

Last November *Britain’s Gurkhas* by Brigadier Christopher Bullock was launched at the Museum. Over 2,000 hard back and 500 soft back books have now been sold. The success of these sales has been matched on 10 November 2010 by the award of The Best Military Book in the Hampshire Libraries Special Collections Award for the best book (Military) published in 2009. The author deserves special acknowledgement from the Brigade past and present. Another notable achievement has been the creation of a new oil painting of our officers and soldiers in dress of the Contemporary Brigade of Gurkhas. The artist Robert Jones, provided his services and copyright, free of charge in order that copies of the painting can be sold to help our Gurkha Charities.



The new project being undertaken at the Museum includes the updating of the display of the contemporary Brigade of Gurkhas on the first floor. This will cover recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Bosnia, Sierra Leone and East Timor. Work is also underway to produce an interactive and comprehensive display in the Gallery of British gallantry awards, British and Nepalese decorations and Gurkha Regimental Badges and Accoutrements and the Art Collection. The latter project will take two years to complete.

Finally, the Chairman of Trustees will be writing to Colonels of Regiments of the Brigade and Commanding Officers/

Commandants to invite them to attend a presentation and discussion during 2011 on what their Museum can offer respective regiments and to hear what the Museum hopes to gain from units of the Brigade of Gurkhas. Collectively, the Museum wishes to increase its Friends Membership base amongst serving Brigade of Gurkhas personnel, both British and Gurkha officers.

We look forward to meeting our readers during the next twelve months and hope that you will be able to come and view the Museum’s newly completed projects and visit the temporary exhibition during 2011.

Finally, for those who would like to become Friends of the Gurkha Museum (at £15.00p.a.), you can join by visiting the Museum website [www.thegurkhamuseum.co.uk](http://www.thegurkhamuseum.co.uk) or phone the Museum Office for an application form on 01962 842832.

## WELFARE FOR RETIRED GURKHAS IN THE UK – A SHORT UPDATE

Capt (Ret’d) Gary Ghale



**Purpose.** This note attempts to summarize the present position (as at March 2011) regarding the provision of benevolence and welfare support for retired Gurkhas in the United Kingdom. It is a revised version of earlier updates, the most recent being October 2010. It deals in particular with the Gurkha Settlement Project (GSP), the major effort, led by the Land Forces Secretariat in the Ministry of Defence, to assist pre-1997 Gurkhas settling in the UK following the change of immigration rules in May 2009. The joint Gurkha Welfare Centre was established by the Gurkha Welfare Trust and Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas on the foundations of the old Gurkha Welfare Support Office (GSWO), and the continuing work of the service charities.

**Overview.** The last 18 months have seen a substantial surge of retired Gurkhas coming to the UK under the new immigration rules - with all the concomitant welfare problems which had been expected. A great effort has been made by government departments, local authorities, service charities, other agencies and the Gurkha communities themselves to anticipate and address these problems, but they have come under considerable strain – notably in the Aldershot and Farnborough (Rushmoor Borough) area, mainly through sheer pressure of numbers. The Gurkha Welfare Centre is working closely with all the organizations concerned to help in providing the support required. The total number of cases handled by the Centre has risen from 270 in May 2009 to some 1300 in February 2011. (The GWC’s Aldershot office moved to new premises in the Aldershot Community Centre in November 2010 – contact details are at the end of the article).

**Background.** With the introduction of the new HM Forces Immigration Rule in October 2004, applying to those retiring on or after 1 July 1997, significant numbers of retired Gurkhas became entitled to live and work in the UK. This created the need for a welfare structure for those who might fall on hard times. The Army Benevolent Fund (now ABF The Soldiers’



Charity), The Royal British Legion, SSAFA-Forces Help and other service charities all pledged to assist Gurkhas in the same way as they support British ex-servicemen, The Brigade Secretariat in HQ Brigade of Gurkhas took on a coordinating role and in April 2007, opened the Gurkha Welfare Support Office in Aldershot as a forward operating base.

On 21 May 2009 the Home Office announced that Gurkhas who served between 1948 and 1997 would also be allowed to settle in the UK. The Ministry of Defence has been coordinating inter-departmental action to assist those who wish to come here and has established the Gurkha Settlement Office in Kathmandu to provide advice. Meanwhile, the Gurkha Welfare Trust, which since 2006 has been making annual grants to the ABF, has become more directly involved in coordinating welfare work in Britain, although its priority remains the alleviation of hardship and distress for Gurkha veterans and widows in Nepal. The Trust, the leading Gurkha charity, has combined with HQ Brigade of Gurkhas to establish the Gurkha Welfare Centre at Salisbury, with a reinforced office in Aldershot. The joint centre aims to assist in the coordination of welfare for retired Gurkhas in the UK, working closely with government departments, service charities and other agencies, in order to support those in need – whether they are already settled in Britain or newly-arrived.

#### Progress -Gurkha Settlement Project–Inter-Departmental

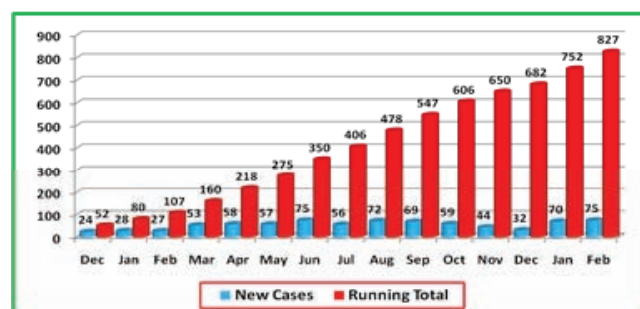
**Action.** The MOD Land Forces Secretariat (Foreign & Commonwealth) continues to coordinate very effective work by the government departments involved – particularly the UK Border Agency (UKBA) for visa applications, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for fast-track arrangements for National Insurance numbers and Pension Credit and the Department for Communities and Local Government for housing and liaison with local authorities. Two extremely useful pamphlets – ‘Life in the UK’ and ‘Cost of Living in the UK’ – have been produced.

**Applications for Settlement.** Statistics on visa applications are the province of UKBA, but, in broad terms (as at end January 2011), some **8,000** visas have been issued or approved for retired Gurkhas and their dependants since May 2009 (about 3,000 being for Gurkhas themselves). There has been a decline in the monthly number of applications, but this has yet to be reflected in the welfare caseload.

**Gurkha Settlement Office, Nepal.** The Gurkha Settlement Office (GSO) is doing vital work, briefing retired Gurkhas on the practicalities of life in UK and assisting with visa applications. Based in Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal in Kathmandu, but deploying staff to Pokhara and Dharan periodically and liaising closely with the Gurkha Welfare Scheme and the Area Welfare Centres, it has handled some **16,000** visits from Gurkhas and their dependants (including repeat visitors). This work has been reinforced by briefings for Regimental Associations and ex-servicemen’s organizations carried out by teams from UK, including the Assistant Head Land Forces Secretariat, Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas and UKBA staff.

**Joint GWT/HQBG Gurkha Welfare Centre.** The Gurkha Welfare Centre (GWC) became operational in January 2010,

after a period of induction training for the three new GWT staff. ‘GWC Main’ is co-located with the GWT offices in Salisbury, while the ‘Forward Operating Base’ (the former HQBG Gurkha Welfare Support Office) is in Aldershot (Rushmoor Borough Council provided new accommodation for this office in November 2010, when it had to leave New Normandy Barracks as the Queen’s Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment moved out). The flow of GSP-related welfare cases began in October 2009 and by the end of February 2011 the total had reached **827** out of an overall running total of welfare cases handled by GWSO/GWC since 2005 which stands at **1,296** – a massive increase from **274** in May 2009 (see GSP statistical breakdown in graph below). The most serious GSP cases involve Gurkhas who have not passed through the GSO but instead have paid money to unofficial organizations and have been given completely false expectations. They



are elderly (and some infirm), speak no English, have no close relatives in this country to help them and are utterly bewildered by even the simplest aspects of day-to-day life in Britain. The GWC is working intimately with DWP, service charities, other agencies and Gurkha community groups to assist them. (GWC Aldershot has handled some **5,000** visits and interviews since October 2009.)

**Service Charities and other Agencies.** The devotion of the charities helping retired Gurkhas in the UK has been beyond praise from the outset. ABF – The Soldiers’ Charity, SSAFA-Forces Help and The Royal British Legion (RBL) continue to be deeply involved, and Haig Homes and Veterans Aid, among others have provided vital assistance. The Veterans Agency, the Career Transition Partnership/Regular Forces Employment Association and the Citizens Advice Bureau are doing invaluable work. Gurkha communities are also playing their part around the country, providing important mutual support. The current influx has imposed a heavy load, particularly on SSAFA and RBL caseworkers in the main areas of Gurkha settlement.

**Funding.** In recognition of the growing need for funds for Gurkha cases in this country, the Gurkha Welfare Trust makes grants to the ABF – £50,000 in 2006/07 and 2007/08, £60,000 in 2008/09 and £65,000 in 2009/10 and 2010/11. The Trust reviews the grant annually in the light of demand. It is indicative that while the ABF made only 7 grants totalling £8,800 to Gurkhas in 2005/06, they made 35 grants totalling £45,800 in 2006/07, 55 grants totalling £54,854 in 2007/08, 58 grants totalling £57,637 in 2008/09 and 138 grants totalling £92,980 in 2009/10. The figures for 2010/11 up to the end of February – **498** grants and **£301,149** – reveal fairly starkly the extent to which the ABF are providing emergency grants for Gurkhas who have brought insufficient funds with them to





cover the period before their state benefits come through.

**Regimental Associations.** The Gurkha Brigade Association and individual Regimental Associations continue to have an important role in providing 'informal support' and comradeship for retired Gurkhas in this country – not least through the Brigade All Ranks Reunion, and numerous well-attended Regimental Reunions. The 'Cadre of Volunteers' – the members of Regimental Associations and Gurkha community groups who have offered their services as interpreters and advisers to SSAFA and RBL caseworkers – is taking shape and expanding, but more members are urgently needed.

**Conclusion.** The next six months or so should provide a clearer impression of whether the very considerable government and charitable effort to deal with the new influx of retired Gurkhas has been sufficient. Serious pressure continues, as elderly Gurkhas struggle to get a footing here, but the staff on all sides in all the organizations concerned have responded with great dedication – and, viewed as a whole, Gurkha settlement in UK remains a success story, with much evidence of self-help and mutual support.

**Gurkha Welfare Centre**  
**Aldershot Community Centre**  
**High Street**  
**Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 1BZ**  
**Tel: 01252 315884/01252 329460**  
**Email: gurkhawelfare@gwt.org.uk**

**Gurkha Welfare Centre**  
**Cross Keys House**  
**22 Queen Street**  
**Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 1EY**  
**Tel: 01722 343111/0845 6046849**  
**Email: gurkhawelfare@gwt.org.uk**

## FISHING AND RAFTING IN FAR WESTERN RIVERS OF NEPAL

*Maj (Ret'd) Hukumraj Thapa*



This year I decided to take a 12 day fishing trip (1 -12 April) to the Seti and Karnali Rivers in the Far West of Nepal; something Col Bill Smart does every year in style. This year his season had started very early in March and he was due to end his trip in the 1st week of April at Chisapani by the Karnali Bridge. He had hired 5 rafts from a local Rafting Agency in Pokhara

and I arranged with the same agency to take 2 of them over along with 2 helmsmen at Chisapani and timed our RV accordingly. I had 4 young gentlemen in the team; a book shop owner, a restaurant owner and 2 bank staff. All of them novices to fishing.

Day 1 & 2: We started the 16 hour journey from Pokhara by public bus, destined for Mahendranagar some 670km to the West and we arrived at Chisapani early in the morning. We spent the night in a lodge in the Bardia National Park and tried in vain to spot tigers there during the day.



*An overheated and broken down minibus*

Day 3: Col Smart and his two dozen staff landed at Chisapani in 5 rafts. They looked well, fit and jubilant after a very successful month long fishing expedition - their largest catches were 25kg and 30 kgs Mahsheers. Our team of 7 loaded the rafts, food and shelter needed to last the next 10 days in to a micro bus and began another 230km (7 hours) journey to Dipayal. Unfortunately we got stuck because our bus over heated while climbing the Dadeldhura hilly region at an altitude of 2000m. We poured bucket after bucket of water in the radiator but our efforts were useless. At last, after 2 hours we breathed a sigh of relief when one minibus coming down from the opposite direction agreed to swap their load and take us to Dipayal. He only had a few passengers who could be taken downhill by our over heated bus. The was problem solved but we still had a long way to go. We arrived at the start point on the Seti River at Dipayal at 2230 hours. We unloaded the stores, set up camp and had a good nights sleep on the banks of the river.



*What could be better – eating fish caught by oneself on the banks of the River*

Days 4 - 8: We spent these on the Seti River which is the main, high catch stretch for Mahsheer (Sahar Machha) fishing and we caught about half a dozen weighing between 2 to 4 kg. I have done some river fishing around Pokhara but I realized that we were not well equipped for fishing in fast



flowing rivers. Fishes managed to escape by snapping the lines/hooks and no doubt these were the big ones! The lures we used throughout were "spoons". Our normal routine was to have a morning meal, pack up and move down river for about 4 hours and camp around 1500hrs on the sandy banks of the river. We fished until dark and restarted after our meal until early in the morning as the evening seemed to be the best time to fish. It should be pointed out that most of the banks along the river are also the 'burial grounds!'



*Approaching the Chisapani Bridge on the Karnali River*

Day 9 & 10: On the 9<sup>th</sup> day the Seti joined with the mighty Karnali and it looked like a big sea. We thought it would be a waste of energy to cast our lines into it so we drifted down river for 6 to 7 hours to arrive at Chisapani early on the 11<sup>th</sup> day. Since our stock of fish was nil we managed to get live chickens from the locals on the banks of the Karnali. Chickens were quite cheap compared to Pokhara but goats were expensive. Local wine was also available but I very much doubted its quality and sure enough, one night one of the helmsmen got knocked off very badly!

Days 11 & 12: The 11<sup>th</sup> day was the end of 155 km of Seti/Karnali trip and we loaded our stores on to the Pokhara bound bus at 1730hrs and arrived home 16 hours later the next morning.

Along the way we encountered lots of fast flowing rapids on both the Seti and Karnali Rivers and one had to be very careful to avoid any mishaps and we would normally get drenched while maneuvering through them.

Our helmsmen were all expert guys and we used one raft as a catamaran for heavy stores which was maneuvered by one helmsman with 2 huge oars. The other raft accommodated the 6 of us and we paddled along from time to time under the command of the helmsman. Both the helmsmen were also very good cooks - perhaps the fish was tasty itself.

The stretch of the Seti River we rafted flows between Doti and Achham districts whilst the Karnali flowed between the Kailali and Surkhet Districts. We saw very few people in Seti region and of those we did meet, their tribal language sounded nice although we could hardly pick up any sentences. Conversely the people of the Karnali regions speak a language that is somewhat similar to normal Nepalese. The days were hot with strong winds but disturbingly the nights were cool.

We were somewhat early in the season for fishing as the Monsoon is the best time but can be equally risky due to flash floods in the fast flowing rivers. April/May would be the best time to spin as this is when the fish swim upstream to spawn and are dead hungry. I found the trip very interesting, my first experience of rafting and fishing through strong rapids and I have learnt a lot for the next time. Anyone interested in a similar trip next year do let me know.



*The Team*

## History of British Association With Gurkhas

*David Owens*

Gurkhas have over the years moved out of Nepal in order to survive, as apart from growing beans, dahl, ginger and other crops, the ability of Nepal to sustain a large population has always driven the surplus to seek work elsewhere. Consequently Gurkhas have also entered the armies of the Sikhs and Maharattas on an individual basis.

### 1750-1800

Itinerant work seeking Gurkhas were employed by the Honourable East India Company (HEIC), alongside other itinerant Indians who roamed the land, planting and harvesting crops as well carrying out building work and maintenance for rich landowners. This work built rural feeder roads and depots for gathering and delivering crops of opium, silk, tea and indigo to Calcutta for world trade. Land owners and even Rajahs who received regular payments for the growing and preparing of this produce saw the traders become increasingly rich and some grew jealous. They would ambush convoys bringing produce to the Great Trunk Road<sup>9</sup> linking Calcutta to Kabul and then subsequently ransom the produce back to HEIC.

### 1800-1814

It was noticed that where there were Gurkha gangs road-building these convoys suffered less predatory attacks and this led the HEIC to use more gangs of Gurkhas and they started to arm them. Pioneer units were formed in the HEIC and Gurkhas started to be recruited into them. They were a success and it is likely that the first Gurkhas sent to do basic infantry training went to Sabathu, a small camp on the

<sup>9</sup> The Great Trunk Road was built by the Great Moguls, giving them superb access right across Northern India.





Viceroy's route to the cool of the Simla Hill Station in 1805. Their military prowess quite astonished the Rifle Regiment guarding the Viceroy's route to Simla and the Gurkhas, having been trained were returned to the pioneer companies.

During the Nepal Wars the Gurkhas gained much respect from the HEIC and the Gurkhas/Nepalese also learned to respect the HEIC. The HEIC had captured many Nepalese Army soldiers and as the British did wherever they went, enrolled most of their prisoners of war into their armies. (the same happened to the Settlers in North America who formed the American Rifles which later became the 60<sup>th</sup> Rifles (KRRC)) At the conclusion of hostilities, the treaty of Segauli was signed in 1814 in which the HEIC was allowed to recruit Gurkhas for their Army directly from the villages in Nepal. This started in 1815, with the enrolment of three regiments, many of whom were also ex-prisoners

### **1815-1857**

The HEIC of the Eastern Presidency, started to turn north-west and encroached on the Rajahs and Nawabs of North India, and through the Punjab towards the North West Frontier. On the way they ran into the Sikhs with whom they fought two wars. The HEIC Army was manned across the religions and tribes of India and most regiments had companies of different religions and tribes. There were many disputes and minor mutinies during this time but the Gurkha Regiments continued to gain respect and notoriety.

In order to increase security and stop disputes the wives of the Moguls were often the sisters of the Rajahs. However, it was a Hindu wife who plotted the downfall of the British. She put it about that the cartridges of powder for rifles were coated in the fat of the pig and the cow, being offensive to Muslims and sacrilegious to Hindus.

### **1857**

In 1857 the Great Indian Mutiny started and it came as a great surprise to many British. Before the arrival of large numbers of white women, the men had local wives and were closer to their soldiers but on arrival the white women successively demanded more attention of their men. British men were sucked into a world based on the social club and only connected with their soldiers through the senior Indians, losing the direct connection with soldiers that is needed for any armed force. Also young, unmarried British management now frequented the British Clubs and no longer sought comfort in the ladies of the bazaar, where all good gossip was exchanged. The lack of connection allowed the Great Indian Mutiny to happen, which was a catastrophe because it set so many people against each other in the framework of religious fervour which in itself allowed unspeakable acts to be perpetrated. Some Moslems were for the British, most Sikhs were for the British. Tribal squabbles also broke out and the most unequivocal supporters of the British were the Nepalese Army who marched into India to help (which they did again in 1914 and 1940).

The final act out of so many acts of extreme toil, hardship and bravery was the recapture of the Red Fort of Delhi where three VCs were won by the Indian Sappers and Miners blowing the Kashmir Gate. The Fort was stormed by the Second Gurkhas and the 60<sup>th</sup> Rifles. Following this the first of another seven

regiments of the Bengal Army were converted to Gurkhas

### **1858-1912**

Gurkhas were now trained by the Rifle Regiments of the British Army and excelled in musketry. Because of their robustness, fitness, military skill and loyalty they earned the right to be rated as equivalent to the British soldier in everything except pay and pensions since they were on the Indian Pay code. Over this period Gurkhas were involved in many campaigns and wars; in one incident at Lang Thobar a party of one JNCO with 33 Gurkhas were all awarded the equivalent decoration to the VC, the Indian Order of Merit. Their company commander, Lt Grant was awarded the VC and Jemadhar Nagakothi the Order of British India.

### **1914-1918**

During WW I Gurkha Regiments and the Indian Army went to Flanders and France in the first wave and were there while the British Nation trained for war. The 1<sup>st</sup>/1<sup>st</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> each lost 500 men and one battalion, the 1<sup>st</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> were left with 380 all ranks from 1000 officers and men.

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Gurkhas went on to Gallipoli, and suffered as did other regiments. The 1<sup>st</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> actually broke through the Turkish defences and would have won the battle had the high command put in reserves to follow up. Many went on to Iraq at the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

### **1940-1945**

Gurkhas were in every theatre of war from North Africa to Java. They were part of the Indian Division of British Army in North Africa that, with South African soldiers were left behind to in order to allow contact to be broken between Rommel's force and the retreating British. One Gurkha battalion left to hold up Rommel, was captured at Tobruk and later their Subedar Major escaped from captivity in Italy and joined the replacement battalion during the landings in Sicily. He remained with the battalion till the war's end and went on to become an advisor to the King of Nepal just after the overthrow of the Ranas.

During the retreat from Rangoon to Imphal, the Gurkhas were almost wholly responsible for stemming the rush of the Japanese forces toward Imphal. This was achieved by two Gurkha parachute battalions, whose volunteers were required to be marksmen. The retreat from Rangoon to Imphal was an epic, which has few equivalents. Its significance can be judged by the striking of a special medal in a similar vein to that of the Arctic Convoys. In the subsequent defence of Imphal, Gurkhas did particularly well but at a high cost; 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> had to be reinforced by 80% in 6 months and it was here Lachiman Gurung won his VC.

### **17 Nov 1947**

As a result of Indian Independence a Tripartite Agreement (TPA) between Nepal, India and Britain was made allowing Britain to continue to recruit and employ Gurkhas as an integral part of the British Army, separate from the Gurkha Brigade of the Indian Army. The TPA sought to give both sets of Gurkhas equivalent rewards and it was decided this rewards system be the Indian Army Pay/Pensions Code. The TPA was designed so that Gurkhas in Indian and British Armies were accepted as indigenous soldiers i.e. as citizens.



They were made an integral part of the British Army and not mercenaries and two battalions of each of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Gurkha Regiments were transferred to the British Army and moved to Malaya, 1948.

### 1967

After the Borneo Confrontation Gurkhas were threatened with disbandment. They survived but were cut, losing half their strength and then subsequently moved to Hong Kong and Brunei. Of those who were made redundant most were given immediate pensions but some did not, despite the stipulation in the TPA that except for ill-discipline all would get one. As this was happening the British Army were moving towards pension-less discharge to be replaced by deferred pensions after a minimum of two years of service. It could be argued that Gurkhas who were made redundant and did not get an immediate pension should have been included in the preserved Pension Scheme.

At this point Gurkhas also lost their right to be treated as Citizens and became similar to Colonial Forces. The British Gurkhas, were no longer politically welcome as permanently resident in Malaysia and Singapore and so moved to Hong Kong. This generated a new GTACOS and all the benefits of being British Government Servants Working Abroad were reversed and they were not allowed to have their families in UK. Neither did they pay National Insurance or Tax and so were treated as Colonial Troops. The anomaly of only getting Family Permission after 12 years service continued despite the British Army losing that restriction in 1948.

Gurkhas were now deliberately prevented from returning to, or being able without private income of surviving in the UK. Furthermore, the MoD instructed the Home Office that no Gurkha could reside in UK after his service nor would they have grounds to seek asylum. They were removed by the deportation whilst non ex-servicemen if seeking asylum were allowed to stay, at times for trivial reasons. Nepal cared little about the retired Gurkhas provided they left their pension, and family in Nepal.

Gurkhas from Indian and British service had since 1790 returned to their villages on a pension that brought cash to the family group but was insufficient for them to keep their families. By 1960 the restrictions on entry of foreigners to Nepal having been lifted, the currency's value was destroyed. The pension brought in by the ex-servicemen was inadequate for the larger family to take the pensioner back in to the home. Consequently, the Indian Government gave their ex-servicemen various perks, (they were reluctant to raise the actual pension) whilst the British did not raise the pension nor give its Gurkhas equivalent perks so ex-British Gurkhas had to find work abroad, which they did from Japan to San Francisco. The British did set up and pay for a Job agency to operate in Kathmandu for British Gurkhas to get work elsewhere as a second career, but NOT in the UK.

### 1962-2010

Gurkhas served and trained worldwide, wherever their British counterparts did and they took part in operations in Papua New Guinea, the Falklands, Bosnia, Kosovo, Croatia, Iraq (both times) and Afghanistan for the 4<sup>th</sup> time. It was in the Falklands that 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>, whilst moving into the form-up-position

to assault Mt William, they blundered into a minefield at the base of the last unconquered position of the Argentineans. The Argentinians promptly put up a white flag and fled.

### 2006

The Gurkha Pension was increased by 130% as a result of work carried out by General Cowan in 2002, and in 2006 the pensions for British Gurkhas were lifted to equivalent to the British pension in 1947. A new set of Terms and Conditions of Service for British Gurkhas was also introduced to ensure Gurkhas were on the same footing as the British Servicemen whilst still complying to the spirit of the TPA.

### 2008 - 2009

This was a watershed year. Gurkhas had for years fought for parity on wages pensions, and the right to work in UK and enjoy the benefits of the society they had served for 250 years. A company that had handled immigration wanted publicity (Howe & Co) and offered a pro-bono court case against HMG to the Gurkha Army Ex Servicemen's Organisation (GAESO). GAESO were incapable of supplying data for the case and so Howe & Co turned to another legal firm (NC Brothers) that had worked on individual Gurkha immigration cases. Evidence was collected from records and from witness statements of former officers with service, association and connections to the Gurkhas. The High Court found that Gurkhas had been illegally treated and asked HMG to make more reasonable rules. However, the British High Court has a serious defect: HMG can do a deal with the people concerned with the original ruling without the deal being audited in the High Court to ascertain if the Government had corrected and reversed the original failing that caused the ruling to be made. However, new Gurkha Terms and Conditions of Service were introduced which gave the serving Gurkha the same rights as their British counterparts but did not address the grievances of their forefathers

In May 2009 after much activity, the rights to settle for all of the Brigade of Gurkhas was given, albeit for those with 4 or more years of service. Sadly the Rights of Citizenship, to take by reward of Service was still denied.

### 2010

On 13 Jan 2010 the children of serving Gurkhas were given the right to obtain British Citizenship restored after it had been taken away from all Government servants by the Wilson era Government. Sadly though there are still hundreds of British offspring who have been denied Citizenship, many who had the rule been in operation would have been allowed into the country and recognised. Many Gurkhas born in Hong Kong have now legally come to the UK and Gurkha children may opt for automatic citizenship when born during their parents' Gurkha service.

### 2011

So far no new rules have been made for Gurkhas in regards of their status. But it is my opinion the Gurkha should now have the rights to automatic citizenship restored for service in Armed Forces. If we give automatic Rights of Citizenship to Gurkhas when they enter service, then should they leave the service before completing four years service, they should lose their Rights as of Citizens.





## Perowne Barracks

Graham Price

Many readers will remember that I recently made an appeal for any photographs taken in Perowne Barracks. We are moving ahead, albeit slowly, with our project to bring recognition of the Brigade of Gurkhas, and in particular QGE and their time in Perowne Barracks.

The original Squadron lines and Gurkha Married Quarters are now occupied by Crossroads, a charity which collects and packages used goods for re-distribution to welfare projects all over the world. It is a massive exercise in logistics, and it means that the desks a Corporation discards in Hong Kong today, may end up being used in a school in a developing country next month.

The Government's education policy in Hong Kong requires students to be given an awareness of the wider world. For the privileged in International Schools this often means scuba diving in the Philippines or trekking in Nepal, but for that section of the population without such funding, Crossroads is now providing activities such as the "Refugee Experience" where youngsters can take part in a simulation and feel exactly what it is like to be come a refugee, without status, possessions or property and often without hope. This simulation takes place inside what was the Gurkha Accommodation block and outside in the open areas.

It is intended that there should be much greater public access to the site, and it is intended to restore the Kesabhabadur Hall to its former glory as a cinema – which will be used for presentations, "Theatre of Global Needs" Any anecdotal tales about construction of the Kesabhabadur hall or what went on in there would be gratefully received.

Crossroads intend to label each building on site with its original use, and would like to build up a library of "as was" photographs, and perhaps even "audio recollections". For this project we do need people who lived in the Barracks and are able to visit and walk round with a tape or digital recorder.

The following is taken from an interview with David Begbie, the Spokesman for the Charity:

*"Initially, people just walked in - former Gurkha soldiers, or their children - returning to the place where they served, or grew up. We were, of course, delighted simply to let them 'walk down memory lane'. We realised, however, that their stories, and the story of the Gurkhas as a whole in Hong Kong, is one that more people should hear about, so we began*



*Artist's impression of the new Harrow School in Perowne Barracks*

*exploring ways to celebrate their presence and contribution to the territory. Crossroads Foundation is currently exploring the possibility of setting up a small centre to celebrate the role of the Gurkhas in Hong Kong, and is looking for any material, paraphernalia, photos and accompanying stories that relate either to the former Perowne Barracks, or Gurkhas in Hong Kong".*

*For more information, please visit [www.crossroads.org.hk](http://www.crossroads.org.hk)"*

All this is in the original Perowne site, at 17 milestone Castle Peak Road. For those who remember, as I did, moving into the new Squadron Block above the Tuen Mun Highway – keep those memories. It is now a construction site for Harrow School, Hong Kong. It will look like this!

I do hope that we can meaningfully commemorate our Regiment's service in Perowne Barracks. If any readers are coming to Hong Kong please do let me know, and any others who have photographs of the barracks in use please send them in!

Graham Price  
Box 8395, GPO Hong Kong  
[Gprice@netvigator.com](mailto:Gprice@netvigator.com)



*A snapshot taken from the Crossroads Website showing their vision for the future. The full size, uncropped map can be found at the following link:*

[http://www.crossroadsglobalvillage.org/map/image\\_view\\_fullscreen](http://www.crossroadsglobalvillage.org/map/image_view_fullscreen)





# Archive

The following photo montage shows a glimpse of life in the Regiment during the Dashins of 1953 and 1962 as well as life on operations in Brunei. They have all been provided by Pete Johnson unless otherwise credited.



Pipes & Drums head the march past



With the Malayan Minister of Transport



Sapper Chitram  
Sqn tailor







The Sergeant Major was in charge



Cpl Bhaktabakadur, Cpl Balbahadur, Spr Ramprasad

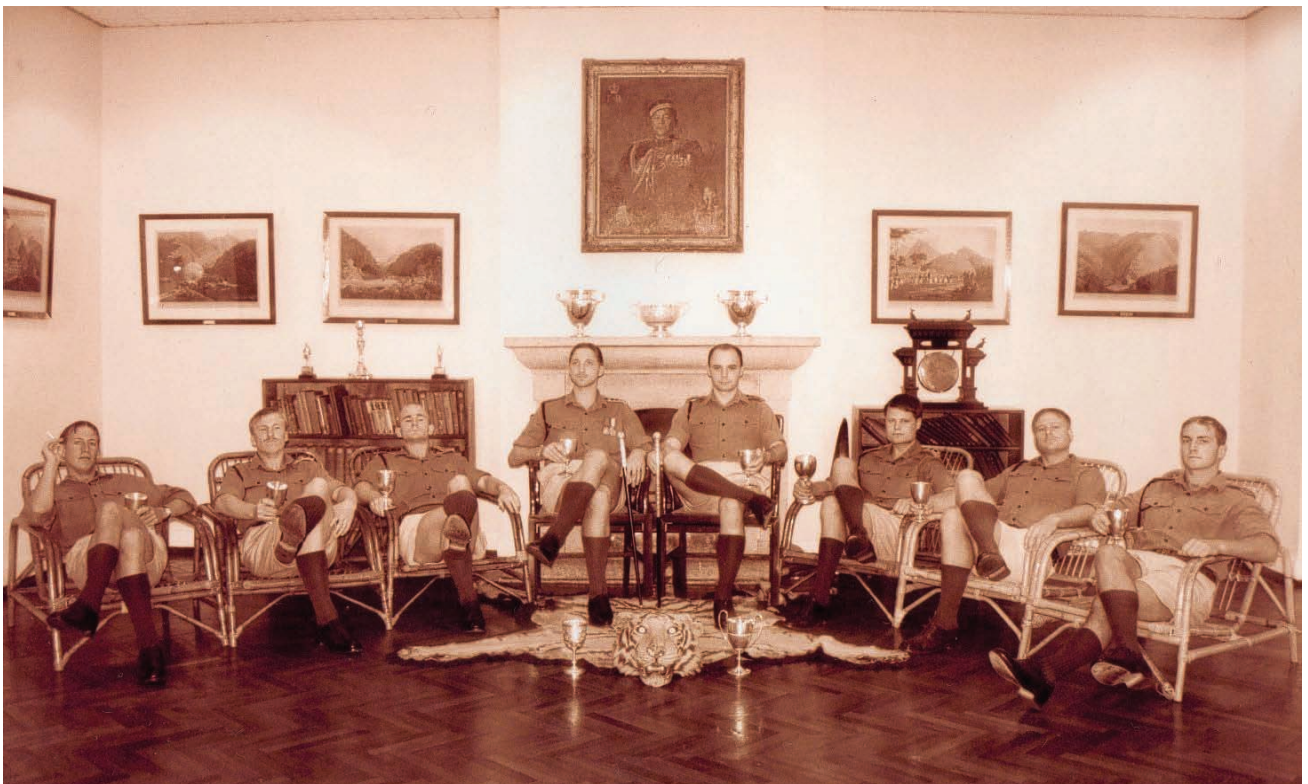




Anonymous photo. Hong Kong circa 1993.



Or was it circa 1893?





# Ex QGE Deaths 2010-11 as at 7 Mar 11

Number	Rank	Name	Date of Death
	MAJ	KEN HAZARD	24 Sep 10
	MAJ	TERRY MAWHINNEY	20 Feb 11
425487	LT(QGO)	RANJIT GURUNG	5 Nov 10
469615	CAPT(QGO)	RATE LIMBU	5 Sep 10
484673	CAPT(QGO)	HARKABDR LIMBU	13 Jun 10
21131951	SGT	GAGANBDR MALL	27 Dec 10
21132612	SPR	LALBDR PUN	1 Dec 10
21132626	LCPL	KAMI GURUNG	23 Nov 10
21132640	LCPL	RANBDR RANA	28 Apr 10
21132774	SSGT	TEKBDR GURUNG	14 Apr 10
21132802	LCPL	HIMLAL THAPA	24 Dec 10
21132868	SGT	PURNASING GURUNG	20 Nov 10
21133186	LCPL	FAUDASING GURUNG	9 Nov 10
21136012	WO1	UJARBDR GURUNG	17 Feb 10
21137295	WO1	PREMBDR GURUNG	19 Apr 10
21140341	SPR	BHAGISOR RAI	4 Aug 10
21140897	LCPL/CLK	DR HARKABAHADUR BURA	28 Jan 11
21145941	SPR	DHANBDR PUN	9 Jul 10
21148908	SPR	AITASING GURUNG	22 Oct 10
21150055	LCPL	MINBDR GURUNG	3 Feb 10
21150075	SPR	SAKHARMAN RAI	1 Dec 10
21150108	LCPL	MANBDR TAMANG	15 Jan 11
21150124	CPL	HARKABDR LIMBU	20 Apr 10
21150274	SPR	PREMLAL GURUNG	27 Jul 10
21151188	LCPL	HASTABDR LIMBU	12 Mar 10
21151245	SPR	BIRBDR LIMBU	29 Apr 10
21151247	CPL	SIRIPRASAD LIMBU	12 Mar 10
21152487	SPR	DHANBDR THAPA	21 Nov 10
21152513	CPL	MOHANBDR PUN	8 Aug 10
21152962	SSGT	DIPAK RAI	22 Apr 10
21154851	SPR	DHANPRASAD RAI	9 Mar 10
21155312	SSGT	NARBDR GURUNG	29 Jan 11
21155320	WO 1	CHANDRABAHDUR GURUNG	18 Feb 11
21156736	LCPL	TIKABDR THAPA	14 Dec 10
21158017	CPL	HARKABDR RAI	25 Apr 10
21159913	SGT	SURYAPRAKASH LIMBU	14 Sep 10
21164476	LCPL	SANTABDR THAPA	5 Nov 10

## Obituaries

### Major K J Hazard (1939 – 2010)

*John Baker*

The Corps has always generated Quartermasters of extraordinary calibre and strength of character and Ken Hazard was just such a man. That he was highly professional goes without saying but it will be for his larger than life personality, strength of character, most definite sense of what was acceptable and what was not and his ceaseless efforts to help others for which he will be remembered with much admiration and affection.

I first met Ken when he was at the Sailing Training Centre at Kiel and I was in 7 Armoured Brigade in Soltau; Kiel was one of our garrison units. By one of those strange quirks

of history, I was licensed to conduct civil weddings and Ken was a witness for one of his staff for whom I conducted the ceremony. We offered our house for all to get changed in beforehand and little did I know that our paths would cross again in Hong Kong some years later when I was Commandant and Ken was the Regimental Quartermaster.



Ken was already in post when I arrived in Hong Kong in 1987 and it was immediately clear that he was a rock on whom I could totally rely. He was held in great regard by his mixed British, Gurkha and Chinese staff as well as in some awe with his booming voice and strong physical presence but all came to realise that his bark was never used with malice and the twinkle in his eye was never far away. Extracting his RSM's teeth from his back pocket was often threatened but rarely carried out. Ken's influence spread well beyond the QM's empire and he was a great believer in supporting all regimental activities. He cared greatly for all his staff and was the sort of person who would always be there to offer support and encouragement whatever the need. Just occasionally there were some things that tested his patience; the way the pigs were slaughtered was too much for him to accept and more humane methods had to be adopted. Attempts too to catch feral dogs in traps baited with cookhouse sandwiches, from which the wrapping had not been removed, were not good for his blood pressure, neither was the rather relaxed approach to clearing up Perowne after a freak wind from the north. These are now very much the stuff of regimental memories but do serve to reflect his strong belief that there was a proper way of doing things. Ken and Christine made a truly significant contribution to all aspects of regimental life and it was with great sadness that they left Hong Kong in 1989.

Ken went from Hong Kong to 22 Engineer Regiment at Tidworth and then on to Wyke Regis. He and Christine settled in Weymouth and Ken again devoted so much time and effort to anyone who needed his help but especially to supporting the Army Benevolent Fund - The Soldiers Charity, the Rotary, the Royal Engineers Association and the Nothe Fort. His family was central to his life and the strength of that bond was always clear for all to see. There was a packed church for his funeral in October last year and the many tributes showed just how much he meant to so many people and the enormous respect with which he was regarded. It was humbling to be there.

I feel privileged to have served with him and our thoughts are with Christine and the family as they come to terms with their sad loss.

## **Warrant Officer Class 1 Chandrabahadur Gurung**

*Harry Vialou Clark*

I was sad to read of the death of my former orderly, Chandrabahadur Gurung. He was a remarkable Gurkha soldier in a number of ways. He was put up as a possible recruit by a British *burro sahib*, a retired Colonel as I recall, living in Dera Doon, in northern India. There was some family connection, I believe. 'Tirpan Bis' was much older than all his numeries on his recruit training course and it immediately became obvious that he was the leader of the pack. Even in those early days his strength of character and leadership qualities were obvious. He passed out top of the course to nobody's surprise. That was in 1964 and he was 25 years old, some 5 years older than most recruits passing into the Gurkha

Engineers. He had been warned that he was unlikely to gain QGO rank no matter how good he was and he accepted this, even if some British officers found it a harsh reality.

It struck me as a strange decision to appoint him as my orderly so I asked my OC, Hank Bowen, why. Apparently it was important that high flyers should get to know the workings of complex BO minds as soon as possible to prepare them for exalted rank! Goodness knows what he learnt from me but I learnt some Gurkhali from him and he became a friend.

In 1974 I returned to the Regiment as OC 67 Sqn to find 'Tirpan Bis' was no longer called Chudaprasad but Chandrabahadur. I never got to the bottom of this change but it was certainly the same man. He was then a SSgt and still had more ranks to come. As I recall he became WO1 towards the end of my three year tour.

From the start of our friendship Chandrabahadur was my age and remained so until he died. It is sad that those with great talent from Third World countries generally do not live long enough to put even more into their country of origin. I treasure his memory.

## **Sapper Ishwor Gurung (1988 – 2010)**



Sapper Ishwor Gurung was killed on the 13 August 2010 in Patrol Base SHAZAD whilst working to improve the force protection for Burma Coy, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Lancaster's Battle Group in Combined Force Nad-e-Ali.

As a member of 69 Gurkha Field Squadron, part of the 21 Engineer Regiment Group, Sapper Ishwor was being employed as a Combat Engineer on the construction of a protected guard tower. It was during this task that he was engaged by accurate enemy Small Arms Fire. Despite the best efforts of his Section, Sapper Ishwor died at the scene.

Sapper Ishwor was born in Pokhara Nepal on 15 October 1988. Having passed selection for the Brigade of Gurkhas in Pokhara on 14 December 2007, he went on to complete initial infantry training in Catterick, North Yorkshire and Combat Engineer training at the Royal School of Military Engineering in Minley, Surrey. He was then posted to 69 Gurkha Field Squadron and trained as a Bricklayer and Concreter. He passed each of these courses with distinction and quickly established himself as an exceptionally bright and dependable young man.

Sapper Ishwor spent 2009 preparing for Op HERRICK 12, his first operational tour. This included a large scale construction exercise in Devon and mission specific training in Ripon, North Yorkshire. He excelled throughout these activities, proving not only his burgeoning professional knowledge but his keen desire to deploy on operations in Afghanistan. His strong





team ethics and desire to learn brought praise and plaudit from his commanders and gurus and his willingness to take on any task or challenge far outstripped his inexperience. Furthermore he thrived in the austere conditions and revelled in the long hard days. With the energy, drive and enthusiasm he imparted, you would have thought he was a veteran of many tours.

Spr Ishwor had an exceptionally amiable character, a beaming smile and was always ready to share a joke. His selflessness and loyalty to his numberies and QGE was unquestionable and he was always the first to offer assistance to those around him. He was the archetypal Gurkha; always well turned out; unbelievably polite and modest to the core. That said he was never afraid to ask questions and readily engaged his superiors when he felt the need. He was exceptionally fit, an outstanding cross country runner and despite his small size, one of the most courageous and tenacious boxers the Squadron has known for a while.

Sapper Ishwor had a bright future ahead of him. He would have undoubtedly promoted within his trade stream and gone on to be an excellent non commissioned officer.

Spr Ishwor leaves behind his mother Sunkumari and brother Ramprasad in Nepal. Whilst they are far away in Nepal, they are close in our thoughts.

Ramro sutnu hos Ishwor bhai. Hami na birsane chaun.

## Warrant Office Class 2 Dave Markland

WO2 David (Dave) Markland deployed on Operation HERRICK 11 as a Royal Engineer Search Advisor with the Joint Force EOD Group as part of the Counter-IED Task Force. David was born in Euxton, Lancashire in 1973 and was 36 years old when he was tragically killed in an IED blast whilst on a task in support of Battle Group (Centre South).



WO2 Markland enlisted in the Army in June 1989, joining the Corps of Royal Engineers as a Plant Operator Mechanic (POM). As a 'Sapper' he proved himself a highly capable and adaptable soldier who was keen to expand his engineering knowledge. He rose through the ranks to become a Military Plant Foreman (MPF) in 2005. An excellent instructor, he had numerous trade qualifications and his passion for instruction was evident in the zest and enthusiasm he brought to every training opportunity. This was WO2 Markland's eighth operational tour of duty during his distinguished 20 year service, having completed five tours in Bosnia between 1995 and 1998, one in Iraq in 2003 and this, his second tour of Afghanistan.

He was posted to 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron, 36 Engineer Regiment RE, Maidstone, Kent in October 2007. Having completed the Royal Engineer Search Advisor course in Spring 2009, he carried out training with the Joint Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Group prior to deploying on Operation HERRICK 11 in October 2009. As part of the Counter-IED Task Force, WO2 Markland led a team of Royal Engineer Advanced Search specialists responsible for conducting route clearances in support of the Battle Groups. WO2 Markland was an outstanding Royal Engineer Search Advisor. He was a bear of a man, big and bold, but caring and compassionate. WO2 Markland was adored by his team; they would have followed him to the ends of the earth, such was the respect and trust he inspired. Afghanistan is the most taxing of threat environments and in his 5 months he had met some incredible challenges head on and never once faltered.

WO2 Markland strove to constantly better himself and having completed a Higher National Diploma in Civil Engineering he was studying to complete his full degree. A robust and fit individual who had a passion for camping, mountaineering and trekking, WO2 Markland loved to organise adventurous training for soldiers worldwide as well as enjoying both rugby and basketball. Such was the quality of the man that he had been selected for a Field Squadron Sergeant Major's post which is a rare occurrence in the plant specialist trade.

Dedicated, capable and truly professional, WO2 Dave Markland cleared every hurdle set him in his 20 year career. Trained in almost every aspect of engineering that the Corps could offer, he set his own exacting standards and surpassed them every time. A consummate professional in all that he did and an exemplar to those around him, he will be sadly missed. The Regiment and the Corps of Royal Engineers are a quieter and much diminished place without him. A devoted family man, WO2 Markland leaves behind his wife Coralie and their two sons Keelen, aged 10 and Logan, aged 7.

### QGEA WEBSITE

After being offline for a number of months The QGEA Website will go live again in late 2011. The address is:

[www.qgea.org.uk](http://www.qgea.org.uk)

The Committee is looking for a volunteer to keep the website running and up to date with news and information. In the age of the internet this is a crucial means of communication and one which the Committee are very keen to exploit.

Anyone interested is to contact the Secretary.



# Family News

## Richard Beazley

I'm currently a Project Control Manager in Chengdu, China (panda country) for a big oil & gas project and have been here since November 2010. I was laid off by Foster Wheeler in August due to the recession, after 5 very happy years there and was subsequently offered work in Algeria, Abu Dhabi and Kuwait before settling on China. It's a whole bunch more difficult to get a job at 63 as soon; as employers see your birth date your CV goes in the round file on the floor!

Work is needed in order to get some money together to put my 21 year old daughter, Geraldine through university in Australia - she's well worth the £100,000. When my daughter graduates I will be settling in the Philippines with my wife Elizabeth and James, now 7 where we'll be growing rice for a living. We're 4 hours North of Manila, very rural but a great lifestyle. We plan to reduce our carbon footprint by living off our land, except for the San Miguel.



The photo is of Elizabeth, James and myself in front of the stunning Lincoln Cathedral not long ago.

Best wishes to all and if anyone has an old RE sword for sale please get in

touch [rikbea05@yahoo.com](mailto:rikbea05@yahoo.com)

## Philip and Phyl Cook (66-71, 77-79, 85-87)

Having covered 12,000 km in our boat over the last three years going down the Danube to the Black Sea, returning via the Mediterranean and going up to Holland via the French waterways, this year our boating plans are somewhat more modest – we plan to visit Berlin and some of the many lakes in that area. Hopefully, next year it is the Baltic and Swedish inland waterways.

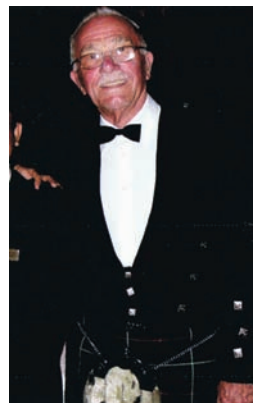
When on dry land we tend to split our time between our flat in London and our house in France where we converted an old coach house in the grounds of son Stewart & Michelle's lovely home. The arrangement seems to work well as, whilst we are there, the three 'French' grandchildren spend much time with us while Stewart and Michelle continue their very busy working lives.

During the winter we probably spend more of our time in London to take advantage of the wide range of interesting things going on there. It also gives the opportunity to see more of our daughter Sasha and son Simon and their respective families – they are both married and have two girls apiece. We also love seeing old friends as they pass through.

Philip continues to be involved in business, but fortunately only as a non-executive director of a couple of companies – at least it keeps the grey cells ticking over. Both of us still greatly enjoy skiing, particularly now that all the grandchildren love it and are capable of red runs. This year Philip's morale took a battering as he struggled to keep up with his sons and, more particularly, his grandson – c'est la vie.

All in all, we have much to be grateful for.

## Roy Jury



It is sometime since I featured in the Family News so I thought as I was coming up to my 84<sup>th</sup> year I had better tell all my friends I was still alive and kicking albeit it aged a little and bones aching a little more. I am still active but my pace is slower.

Despite seeing the World when serving I am still trying to see more of it. My holiday plans these days are cruising some of the parts I missed and re-visiting other parts. In the past 3 years I have managed to visit Mexico, the Caribbean (twice), America, Australia, New Zealand, the Adriatic, the Mediterranean (3 times) with 2 more trips booked for this year. I do not know what 2012 will bring, maybe the Far East or Hong Kong to see what changes there are since I was last there.

I still manage circuit training at the gym once a week and of course my bowls gets me about and about and helps with making sure my heart pumps away. Daughter and Granddaughter are all successful and doing well however, I hear very little from them but Anna keeps me up to date with what is happening.

I missed most of the snow this winter but caught the aftermath since as I was arriving home from Barbados, my plane was diverted from Glasgow to Manchester followed by a coach trip back to Glasgow. I tried to get a taxi back to Moodiesburn but no taxi would risk driving there and so I was stranded in a very expensive hotel for two days, (in summer clothes).



I hope I will still be around to give another update in a few years time. In the meantime where is that cruise ship.....





## Hamish and Lizzie MacLeod (79-81, 83-86, 90-02)



Clan MacLeod rumbles on. Hamish left PA Consulting Group to join Lloyd's Banking Group's Insurance Division in Edinburgh as Head of Integration, following the acquisition of HBOS. He is still piping with the Glasgow Highland Club.

Lizzie continues to teach at Killearn Primary School, and play golf at Buchanan Castle. Ali (23) is a large animal Vet in Castle Douglas. Kirsty (23) is an Army Medical Cadet and is finishing her MB ChB at Aberdeen, having taken a year out at UCL for a B Med Sc in Orthopaedics. Amanda (18) is taking a Gap Year, singing with the National Youth Choir (NYCOS), RSNO Chorus, and the Scottish Opera Connect programme. She is auditioning for Conservatoire to train as an Opera Singer.

## Tim Mitchell



I am one of those rare people - an RAF doctor who had the privilege of serving with QGE in Hong Kong. This was back in the 1980's when I also managed to work at BMH Dharan and see the Dashera celebrations - beheaded bullocks and all! When I left the Regiment, I was delighted to be given Life Membership of QGEA and for several years received copies of the yearbook. Sadly after a few moves I must have forgotten to

update my address and lost contact. I was, however, in touch with Tom Langridge as I became involved in helping the Pahar Trust so, after attending his funeral, I made contact and am back on the mailing list. Tom's links with QGE have been very important for the Trust with serving and former members taking a great interest in the work he started along with Chandra Gurung some 20 years ago. I am very pleased to announce that I have been appointed as a trustee within the last few months so re-establishing in a small way a presence on the committee of someone who served with the Gurkhas. Since Tom's death, funds have been raised to build a school in his honour out in Nepal and I add my thanks to those of our Chairman, Howard Green, to all of you who have helped so far and may continue to help. The Trust will pass a major milestone this year. 51 schools, 3 Health posts and



a number of other projects such as boarding hostels, kitchens, playgrounds and water projects have all been completed for less than £1million. Our 13 projects on the go at present will soon take us past that mark. I can't think of any other charity that has provided such great value - Tom and Chandra's vision has helped so many hill children make the most of their lives. It is real for me to feel a part of the QGE family once again.



Tom and Ranbir

## Rob, Sharon and Joshua Orr with baby Bubs on the way (94-96, 02-04)

Well, 2010 turned out to be an eventful year for the Orr family down under and 2011 is set to continue this trend.



Rob spent the whole of 2010 helping to develop a mechanical Route Proving and Clearance (RP&C) concept for the Australian Defence Force (ADF), as well as a myriad of other pieces of work. It looks as if 2011 will see that RP&C work come to fruition, which can only be a good thing for the ADF. He was lucky enough to get 2 x international trips in 2010, both of which included time in the UK. It rained for much of that time, and threw many colleagues who were intrigued to see him in Australian uniform with a slouch hat!

Rob changed job at the end of 2010 (ADF posting cycle), still in the Canberra area but a very different field that involves a lot more technical work. He is happy and very much enjoying this new area, which should see him through to the end of 2013.

Sharon changed job in late 2010, and now works as the head programme manager for a company who make fire control systems for the ADF and other countries, as well as lasers used in the space industry. The job spec could have been written for her, and she is enjoying the challenges of the technical and management work that she is responsible for. She has managed to get a business trip to Singapore for a week, which she thoroughly enjoyed. Sharon also teaches swimming most weeks, usually beginners; providing an enjoyable change from the day job.

Joshua, now aged 3, can't get enough of Australian life, and thrives on it. He started pre-school this year which he loves; he has been known to ask to go to day care and pre-school if Rob or Sharon are, in his mind, too slow in getting ready



to get out of the house. His swimming is coming along, and we've managed to spend weekends at the beach, which usually involve sandcastles being built and then destroyed (a budding deconstruction engineer?!), as well as kite flying,



swimming and now fishing. We've also introduced him to skiing and snowmen; he loved skiing down the slopes, and in particular enjoyed the chair lifts back up again. Ski lessons were boring because he couldn't go fast!!

Late in 2010, Sharon became pregnant with our second boy, ironically due on Joshua's 4<sup>th</sup>

birthday in late May 2011. All is well with the pregnancy to date, and I am sure that there'll be more to follow in next year's magazine. Jai QGE!

### **Dermot and Mary Stack (69-74, 79-81, 85-86)**



The Stax are still in Edinburgh but not for much longer. I retired from being SO2 G3 UK Ops for 2<sup>nd</sup> Division in Jan 10. I took a year's sabbatical not getting involved in any regular commitment. Needless to say I didn't achieve as much as I had hoped as I was endlessly distracted with delights such as hill walking [100+ 'Munros' to my name], shooting on two Army shoots, fishing for both trout and salmon, and playing

a bit of tennis. Now that the holiday is over I am doing both paid and voluntary horticultural and handyman work around Edinburgh. I am also training as a caseworker for SSAFA.

Mary continues her counseling practice. She has enjoyed developing her dormant art skills at the excellent Leith School of Art over the past three years. She plays tennis too. We are in close touch with our three offspring, Finola, Camilla and Ed, and have two granddaughters, Emilia and Tess.

Finola is married to John Colvin who is an architect and from South Africa. They live in London with baby Tess [3 months]. Finola is an illustrator and fits in commissions as best she can around the demands of a new baby.

Camilla continues to work as an administrator in the Oxford University Said Business School as her day job, and is studying to be a Doctor of Psychology with a view to counseling or psychotherapy. She is unattached and has a very active social and cultural life.

Ed works as an IT expert for the Scottish NHS Blood Transfusion Service as his day job and is an events manager, player and composer in the Edinburgh rock music scene. He has set up an internet company for sharing tracks of *local bands* called Tenttracks [www.tenttracks.co.uk]. He has a long

term partner called Lianna, a nurse in Glasgow and he has a 6 year old daughter by a previous partner who is living in Hagen in Germany (close to Iserlohn).

Mary and I went on trek to the Langtang Valley and Laurebina La with Mountain Kingdoms last October. This was amazing but tested our fitness despite training on 'Munros' in Scotland.

The highlight of the trip was a reunion with Gurkha old and bold. We arranged a party through QGERAN with Surjabahadur Saheb helped by Manilal and Ravi Sahebs. We were very pleased to see Sunar Saheb who was GM when I was 2IC. It was an overwhelming experience to see so many familiar faces from the past but frustrating because there wasn't enough time to get round everyone.

Mary and I are moving south this year so we should be nearer the hub of QGEA activities.

### **Mike Wright (50-53, 60-63)**

Margret Wright died about 3 years ago after almost 60 years of marriage. In the very early days of the Regiment she played a major part in setting up the arrangements for the care of the families of our soldiers.

She flew to Hong Kong in early 1951 to join Mike, who was serving with 68 Sqn. At that time both Sqns were an infantry based role on the border about 35 miles from Kowloon. There were about 150 wives and 200 children of our soldiers living in Kowloon in what pre-war days had been the family lines of the 16<sup>th</sup> Punjab Regiment. The family men used to leave the lines in a convoy of 3 tonnes trucks in the early hours of Monday morning and return on the Friday evening. Through out the week the families were alone and with no WVRs, SSAFA Sister or Ghurkali speaking MO it was not all satisfactory. The CO, Lt Col Hill asked Margret if she would take on the task (unpaid) of looking after the families in Kowloon and she was delighted to do this. Mike was allocated a "sub-standard" MQ on the edge of the family lines and he joined all the other family men early each Monday morning in the trek to the New Territories.

Margret loved the work and very soon spoke good Gurkhali and did the job for two years until Mike returned to UK. Hank Bowen was kind enough to give her an "hon mention" for her work when he wrote his book on the Regiment. When Mike returned for 3 years in 1960, there was a proper system for the care of families and there was a full time WRVS lady, Margaret Baird and Margaret's services were not needed.

When Mike retired from the Army 40 years ago they brought a large 1820's house right in the middle of the University area in Oxford. When Margret died Mike considered "downsizing" and moving but he found that his children and grandchildren love coming to Oxford and the house is always full. Any of his old comrades from the Regiment who find themselves in the Oxford area would be most welcome to call for a drink or three...







d. There is a need to drive the costs down, in particular the disproportionate cost of posting to those abroad. I will propose to the AGM a number of different options for sending the magazine abroad which are as follows:

- (1) Continue as we are and accept the costs.
- (2) Ask those members abroad to pay the difference between UK and abroad.
- (3) Offer those abroad to have the option of receiving a disc with the magazine on it.
- (4) Investigate further the use of the QGEA Website as a means of publishing the magazine.

After some discussion, the concept of sending a CD to overseas Members was agreed as the way ahead and the Secretary will notify Members in his next Newsletter.

8. The Editor then briefed the Meeting on the request he had received from Honorary Major Judbahadur Gurung for articles on behalf of the Gurkha Museum in Pokhara. A transcript of this request is as follows:

#### APPEAL FOR QGE BOOKS AND ITEMS FOR THE GURKHA MUSEUM IN NEPAL

*The foundation stone for the Gurkha Museum in Nepal was laid on the 4 October 2004 and the final grand opening was done on the 24 February 2009 by General Sir David Richards KCB, CBE, DSO, Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas. QGEA(UK)'s contribution on the 60th Re-Union here in Pokhara is much appreciated. The museum now needs items/photos for display as well as books for historical records. Your generous contributions to this end will be most welcome. I am sure that when the attics are revisited or cleaned out we will no doubt come across items that you may never be able to adorn in your house. We may however be able to help and hence this appeal. We are short of the two QGE Books by Maj Gen L.E.C.M. Perowne CB, CBE, K.ST.J. and Brig D.H. Bowen OBE and this too will be most welcome. We hope that your contribution will enhance the QGE Display Area. The contact is the Manager on Email [gmtmuseum@fewamail.com.np](mailto:gmtmuseum@fewamail.com.np) or myself at [judgurung@hotmail.com](mailto:judgurung@hotmail.com)*

#### ITEM 5 - UPDATE ON NEPAL

- The Secretary informed the Meeting that he had been unable to make contact with Colonel Andrew Mills the Association's Nepal Member and that this was probably due to the problems that can be experienced with e-mail contact between UK and Nepal, where Colonel Mills is Comd BGN.
- The start of May 2010 (2 - 7 May) saw Puspa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) and UCPN-(Maoist) party call a general strike and mobilised 200,000 people into Kathmandu, due to the lack of political progress in Nepal. The concern was that it would bring Kathmandu to an indefinite standstill, however the strike capitulated after 5 days due to a number of reasons.
- On 28 May 10, the Constituent Assembly was extended for another year although on 30 Jun 10, Prime Minister KV Nepal resigned from his post, so that consensus government discussions could take place and cited that he was doing this so that political progress could be made. A deadline of 12 Jul 10 was given, which passed without any progress. The following day President Yadav declared, in accordance with the Business Advisory Committee, that a majority government should be formed with the Prime Ministerial election to occur on 21 Jul 10. Unfortunately, Prime Ministerial elections are now at the 13th round run off, which is scheduled for 27 Oct 10.
- On 7 Sep 10, the United Nations Security Council convened to discuss the extension of the United Nations Mission in Nepal. Despite a number of hurdles and false starts, UNSC decided that UNMIN be extended for the seventh and last time. The mandate was extended until 15 Jan 11, with the major Nepalese parties signing a four point deal that the peace process would be completed by 14 Jan 11. Whilst the intentions of the government are admirable, it is widely accepted that this is unlikely to be the case, although the International Community is expecting a degree of progress.
- On 26 Sep 10, UCPN-(Maoist) candidate Puspa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) withdrew from the election race, during the 9th round run off election (CPN-(UML) candidate Jhala Nath Khanal withdrew from the race during the first round), citing that in order to form a consensus government all three candidates should withdraw from the race. Prior to Dahal withdrawing from the race UCPN-(Maoist) drew up a three-point agreement with CPN-(UML) and has now formed a loose alliance. The only Prime Ministerial candidate left is NC's Ram Chandra Poudel, who unfortunately, is receiving less votes as each election takes place. It is very unlikely that Poudel will receive the required amount of votes to form a majority government due to the decreasing amounts of lawmakers that turn up to vote in the Constituent Assembly.
- It appears that in the short to medium term the political impasse will remain. All of the 'big three' parties have or are about to hold conventions and Extended (Central Committee) Meetings from September through to the end of November, and as such each party has had to contend with intra-party business as opposed to the Prime Ministerial elections.
- As the political impasse has remained extant, the caretaker government has been unable to deliver the annual budget; a caretaker government can only deliver up to one third. The passing of the budget is preventing the government from addressing a number of issues regarding the economy and as both the economy and political environs remain stagnant, there is some concern that criminal gangs are being allowed to exploit and capitalise on the situation.

#### ITEM 6 – FUTURE TRUST STRUCTURAL CHANGES

10. The Chairman briefed the Meeting as follows:





- a. The objectives for a single trust had been submitted to the Charity Commission, who has agreed them in principle whilst questioning the role of the Regimental Council and requiring some small amendments to the Association's rules.
- b. There are two options available: full amalgamation; a Uniting Order that places the three separate charities under one umbrella and offers no real change to the present situation.

The agreed decision was to achieve full amalgamation that would hopefully be completed by next year's AGM.

## ITEM 7 – MEMBERSHIP

### 11. The Secretary briefed the Meeting:

- a. The paper on Membership charges that will be presented to the Regimental Council in January and aims to make Membership fees more equitable.
- b. There are some Gurkha Members of the Association who are not paying their subscriptions. This is in the process of being resolved and is mainly due to errors in the banking arrangements.
- c. Following the circulation of this year's Magazine and Address List it has been brought to the Secretary's attention that:
  - (1) Lieutenant Colonel J B (Brian) Olley passed away prior to 2005.
  - (2) Mr H Turnham has passed away – no other details provided.
  - (3) Mrs S J Carver, widow of the late Lieutenant Colonel J Carver passed away in early 2010.
  - (4) Mrs M Spring-Smyth, widow of the late Major T Spring-Smyth has resigned her Honorary Membership.
  - (5) Ms J Barker, ex WRVS 69 Sqn (1962 – 1964) has resigned her Honorary Membership.
  - (6) Mrs L Philpott, widow of David Philpott, has resigned her Honorary Membership.

### 12. There was then a general discussion led by the President on ways of attracting serving and retired GORs to the Association. Points for consideration are:

- a. Comdt QGE will contact QGSignals and QOGLR in order to find out how they attract members.
- b. Making Association events open to retired Gurkhas who are non-members. This should not be at the expense of encouraging Members to attend or of gaining new members.
- c. Inviting a retired Gurkha to become a Committee Member and to creating area representatives for retired Gurkha Members of the Association.

## ITEM 8 REGIMENTAL UPDATE

### 13. Commandant QGE briefed the Meeting:

- a. 69 Sqn prepared, deployed and returned home from Op BAM. The squadron also provided Search Teams for both Op HERRICK 11 and 12. Tragically, Sapper Ishwor Gurung was killed by enemy action during Op BAM.
- b. 70 Sqn deployed to Canada for a construction project and conducted various field exercises, including adventure training in Scotland and Nepal. The squadron also provided Search Team for both Op HERRICK 11 and 12, including a resources node under Captain Tara Pun as part of 21 Engr Regt group. Sadly, Warrant Officer Class 2 D Markland RE was killed during Op HERRICK 11; he was deployed as RESA. Lance Corporal Jamensher Rai was awarded a Joint Force Commander's Commendation during Op TOSCA (Cyprus). Corporal Buddha Gurung received a CJO Commendation for search operations on Op HERRICK 11. Major A Rowson RE has taken over as Officer Commanding from Major G Brown RE.
- c. Having had a successful Op HERRICK tour the Gurkha Mechanised Troop in 33 Armd Engr Sqn, 26 Engr Regt completed a construction project in Kenya and currently they are conducting training in camp. A sole Gurkha team led by Capt Meenjang Gurung was put forward for this year's Corps Operational Shooting Competition in which Lance Corporal Jay Pun achieved overall Second place and the team finished in overall Third position. Sapper Tejendra Sherchan has been awarded the Brigade Commander's Commendation for his courageous effort during Op HEBRIC 10 and Lance Corporal Dam was awarded the Commanding Officer's Certificate of Appreciation for Contribution to Peace Force Protection at 26 Engr Regt.
- d. The Gurkha Commando Troop from 24 (Cdo) Regt deployed to Norway and Belize for construction projects and field exercises. They also deployed on Exercise AURIGA in Colorado USA for joint exercise with the USMC. Currently they are on pre-deployment training for Op HERRICK 14.
- e. RHQ QGE is undertaking the restructuring of both 69 and 70 Sqns for their new role as Search Squadrons. The changes come into effect from early 2011. Overall, 36 Engr Regt / QGE will increase in strength from 650 to 800. A



Gurkha troop will move from 69 Sqn to 50 Sqn, the Gurkha element of 24 (Cdo) Engr Regt will drawdown but the size of the detachment in 33 Armd Engr Sqn will increase.

f. QGE won the Nepal Cup for the second year running but unfortunately came second in Trail Walker 2010. The Regiment also finished runner up in the RE games but did win the recent Corps football competition winning both the plate and main competitions.

g. Captain Devkumar Gurung has been selected for QGOO in Nov 2010 and Lance Corporal Nirmal Purja Pun successfully completed SBS selection and is posted to SBS; currently he is deployed on Op HERRICK.

#### **ITEM 9 – QGEA FUNCTIONS FOR 2011**

14. There was discussion over the best location at which to hold the Association's 2011 Summer Function: Perham Down; Minley – Orangery or Lendrum Club; or the Gurkha Museum Winchester. Given that the Minley Orangery will close in the next 2 or 3 years, it was decided that it would be held there in late May or early Jun 2011 but that the calling notice would emphasise the location was not the Officers' Mess and therefore open to all ranks. The location for 2012 will be considered by the Committee.

15. The main event for 2011 will be the Regimental Birthday celebrations at Maidstone.

16. The Social Member reported that "the younger cohort" was looking to hold one or more additional functions, possibly in London.

17. The President reminded the Meeting that whenever possible Association functions should represent the full Membership.

Afternote. The QGEA Summer Function has been confirmed as 18 Jul 11 at Minley.

#### **ITEM 10 – FUTURE DATES AND EVENTS**

18. The Secretary briefed the Meeting that other than the Field of Remembrance, GBA AGM and GBA Dinner on 11 Nov 2010 there are no other known for 2010. Dates for 2011 had yet to be decided and more details will be circulated in the Secretary's New Year Flyer.

Afternote. The GBA has confirmed the following dates:

14 Mar 11	Memorial Gates Ceremony
May 11	Briefing by Col BG at the Gurkha Museum
11 Jun 11	GBA Memorial Service and Reunion RMAS
1 Jul 11	Nepal Cup Final and ALL Ranks Reunion Shorncliffe
Sep 11	Inauguration of Gurkha Memorial at the National Arboretum
10 Nov 11	Field of Remembrance, GBA AGM and Annual Dinner

#### **ITEM 11 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

19. The Secretary briefed the Meeting that the Association web site's hosting agreement had apparently expired. He was working with Clare Tuggey and Will Judge to see if it could be restarted. The Meeting agreed that a web site should be funded and that the Committee would seek a suitable volunteer to maintain it.

20. Major John Parfect briefed the Meeting on the Pahar Trust:

a. The target for the Tom Langridge Memorial School is £20k, of which more than half has already been raised due to a number of substantial donations from individuals and a charitable trust.

b. In the last 12 months the Trust has raised £150k and the IoM Government has granted £26k to various Gurkha charities, including the Pahar Trust.

c. In the year Apr 2010 to Apr 2011, the Trust will complete 6 schools.

21. The President closed the Meeting by thanking Members for their support for the Tom Langridge Memorial School fund and encouraging everyone to continue to assist the Pahar Trust to reach its target.

J F Wheeley MBE  
Lieutenant Colonel  
Secretary

October 2010







### THE QUEEN'S GURKHA ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION

FINANCIAL STATE AS AT 1 Sep 2010

CAF CASH ACCOUNT

**£ 4,309.38**

### AFCIF Income units

Cost probably £1.00 per unit

24675.48 units
31/12/2007 £41,454.81
29/02/2008 £39,011.00
21/08/2008 £36,273.00
25/09/2008 £34,570.35
18/05/2009 £30,646.95
31/12/2009 £35,162.56
03/02/2010 £34,841.78

**03/09/2010 £35,236.59**

**CURRENT VALUE**

### THE QUEEN'S GURKHA ENGINEERS REGIMENTAL TRUST

FINANCIAL STATE AS AT 1 Sep 10

CAF CASH ACCOUNT

£ 1,075.20

RBS C/A

£ 500.00

RBS D/A

£ 634.04

Plus Aug subs and Charifund div

???

**£ 2,209.24**

### Investments at cost

1,838 units at £11.0204 per unit

### M&G Charifund Income Units

£ 14,146.85

### Market value as at

27/02/2004 £20,229.40
19/01/2005 £22,747.82
06/05/2005 £22,333.72
03/08/2005 £23,878.74
31/08/2006 £26,954.82
15/05/2007 £30,839.60
31/12/2007 £26,712.39
29/02/2008 £24,456.00
21/08/2008 £21,680.00
25/09/2008 £20,989.96
18/05/2009 £16,577.84
31/12/2009 £19,707.04
03/02/2010 £19,223.64

**03/09/2010 £19,723.21**

**CURRENT VALUE**

**THE PEROWNE TRUST**

FINANCIAL STATE AS AT 1 Sep 10

## CAF CASH ACCOUNT

**£ 1,451.47****Accumulation units converted to income units 21 Oct 05**

11/11/05 sold Income units to fund payment

23/1/06 sold income units to fund payment

21/12/2006 sold income units to fund payment

01/11/2007 sold income units to fund payment

29/02/2008

21/08/2008

25/09/2008

18/05/2009

31/12/2009

03/02/2010 (14/05/2010 sold income units to fund payment)

**03/09/2010****Original holding was in ACIF Accm Units**

46526.686 Accm units Cost probably £1.00 per unit

*Market value as at 6 May 05* £60,438.17*Market value 3 Aug 05* £65,509.57**AFCIF Income units**

50421.946 Income units

-2934.702 raised £4,000.00

47487.244

-2810.962 raised £4,000.00

44676.282 M/v 31 Aug 06

-1895.135 raised £3,000.00

42781.147

-2066.115 raised £3,500.00

40715.032

£ 68,401.25 Market value

£ 64,370.00 Market value

£ 59,851.00 Market value

£ 57,041.76 Market value

£ 50,568.07 Market value

£ 58018.92 Market value

£ 57,489.63 Market value

**£ 54,135.46 CURRENT VALUE**

37909.983







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