The Queen's Gurkha Engineers

2007

The Queens Gurkha Engineers

Affiliated Colonel in Chief: Her Majesty The Queen

Colonel of the Regiment: Major General DR Bill CB

Officers of the Regiment:

Lt Col R Wardlaw — Commandant
Maj (QGO) Dhanbahadur Chand — Gurkha Major
Capt D Robbins — Adjutant

Field Officers:

Maj RCD Fawcus — OC 69 Gurkha Field Squadron
Maj GAR McCallum — OC 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron
Maj (QGO) Dilprasad Limbu

Captains:

Capt MD Hendry
Capt N A Francis
Capt TP Gilbert
Capt (LE) GW Drysdale
Capt (LE) D K Kesur

Subalterns:

Lt JA Jennings
Lt Ed J de Thompson
Lt RD Grant

Queen's Gurkha Officers:

Capt (QGO) Dudhprasad Gurung
Capt (QGO) Bhismaraj Gurung
Capt (QGO) Prembahadur Ale
Capt (QGO) Krishnabahadur Gurung
Capt (QGO) Yogprasad Thapa
Capt (QGO) Rajen Gurung
Capt (QGO) Ekbahadur Gurung
Lt (QGO) Uttamkumar Sherchan
Lt (QGO) Devkumar Gurung
Lt (QGO) Bishnubahadur Ghale
Lt (QGO) Tulbahadur Ale MBE
Lt (QGO) Tarabahadur Pun

RSM:
WO1 D M Woolford RE (RSM QGE)

Affiliated Officers serving with the Brigade of Gurkhas:

Capt A Miller RE
Capt (LE) J Wharton RE

The Queens Gurkha Engineers Association

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Editorial

Iain Adamson

As your new editor, I thought that perhaps I should firstly introduce myself, for those of you who I have not met. I first served as a troop commander with QGE in Hong Kong between 1993 and 1995, and more recently, when I commanded 70 Squadron from 2004 until 2006. I am still serving, but will not be when I write next year's editorial.

Whilst in Iraq with 70 Squadron in 2005, Philip Cook persuaded my wife, Tara to help Duncan Pierce put together that year's Magazine. I should have realised that this was merely a preliminary operation, and that Philip was manoeuvring Tara into taking over as editor from Duncan, as he had decided to step down. When the call came last year we had already decided that taking over as editor would be a great way to keep involved with the Regiment, and also to play a more active role in Association life. Tara had also decided that perhaps I would be better placed to take it on, with her in a supporting role (telling me what to do!)

Having been an avid reader of the Magazine over the years, I wish to start, on behalf of the Regiment and all Association members, by thanking Duncan for the commitment and energy he has shown in developing the Magazine into what it is today. I have recently read other regimental magazines, and I can honestly say that ours is as good as it gets. For that reason, as you will see, I have tried to keep with a proven winning formula and have not changed its format, at least not deliberately.

I have found my only disappointment in editing the Magazine is that I have already read all of the articles. Otherwise, although slightly daunting at first, I have found it fascinating, especially corresponding with so many of our members across the world. I would like to thank all of you who have taken the time to write articles and contribute in other ways. Without your efforts there would be no magazine, and our family history would be the worse for it, so thank you. I would particularly like to single out the Gurkha Major, Maj (QGO) Dhanbahadur Chand, for orchestrating all of the Regimental responses, and for ensuring the new Commandant put quill to parchment so soon after taking over. Good luck with your new post at 75 Engineer Regiment.

In order that we keep the Magazine to a weight that we can afford to have sent back from Kathmandu, where we continue to have it printed, I have been forced to leave some articles out this year. I can assure the authors that they will not be forgotten about, and that they will be kept for next year. On that note of looking forward, I will happily receive contributions for the 2008 Magazine at any time; indeed the sooner the better.

I will be at the AGM at RMAS and look forward to meeting some of you then. Enjoy the 2007 issue, and please do let me have your suggestions if you would like new features included. **Jai QGE.**

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Message from the Colonel of the Regiment

Major General David Bill CB

As I write my first introductory piece for our magazine, let me first say what a huge honour and a pleasure it is to take over as Colonel QGE. I could not have been more delighted when General Tony asked me to succeed him; while, of course, more than a few of our number would be entirely justified in expressing some surprise when they consider that rather inadequate troop commander who arrived to take over 3 Tp, 68 Sqn in August 1978! Already there have been some highly memorable events: a superb evening in the HQRE Mess at Chatham to mark the handover, masterminded by Philip Cook & Co with a tremendous turn out; a wonderful family occasion at Maidstone to celebrate the Regimental Birthday in September; a typically professional recruit pass off parade at Minley; and Gay and I have just returned from an action-packed 10 day trip to Nepal.

Needless to say the Regiment remains in fine fettle. 70 Sqn have recently returned from a most productive and professional deployment to Gibraltar, whilst RHQ and 69 Sqn will shortly be deploying to Afghanistan in support of what is effectively the newly created 52nd Infantry Brigade. Meanwhile ever more QGE soldiers are passing the All Arms Commando Course with flying colours – we now have more than a troop's worth, and a field section serving with 59 Cdo Sqn RE has recently returned from Afghanistan having acquitted themselves with great distinction. And the new crop of QGE Sappers that I saw passing out from their Cbt Engr training look every bit as good as their forebears. When I say every bit as good, this particular Troop won the cup for being the best overall across the whole of the Training Regiment, and 20 of the 35 of them started commando training in May. It was also good to see that the Kasam Khane ceremony is now incorporated into the parade.

As ever, visiting Nepal was a particular pleasure. Whilst the political and economic situation remains less than stable, the welcome from the burro parties in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Dharan was as warm as ever with many old friends being met, and including being given a framed photo by Capt (QGO) K B Limbu in Dharan which showed he and I on parade in 1982 receiving on behalf of the Regiment the sword and medals of Maj Gen Lance Perowne – twenty five years on we are just about recognisable! We also took part in an opening ceremony for a school hostel in Gilung built by the Pahar Trust and funded by the Regiment. It was good to see the Trust still doing such great works in Nepal in the capable hands of Chandrabahadur and Narendra, and how proud we can be of the way that Tom Langridge's original vision continues to make such a difference in the hills.

I was treated to a most impressive brief from Capt (QGO) Bhaktabahadur Rai covering his Regional Water and Sanitation Programme and saw one of his projects in train, whilst at Gilung. Funded jointly by DFID and the GWT, this £1.5M per annum programme has now been running for many years and sets a gold standard in its effective and efficient achievement of real quality of life improvements to

the wider community in the hills. The figures are impressive: since 1999 more than 600 projects have been completed to the benefit of more than 125,000 villagers in 27 districts across Nepal, whilst not forgetting the welcome bonus of employment for a number of ex-QGE servicemen.

Of course the major news for the Regiment has been the announcement in recent weeks of significantly revised terms and conditions of service for members of the Brigade of Gurkhas – essentially putting them on to British terms of service. Whilst this is certainly good news, it does raise some difficult individual choices for many as to whether to move to the new pension arrangements or not, and will inevitably provide a source of some disappointment to many that went on pension before 1997.

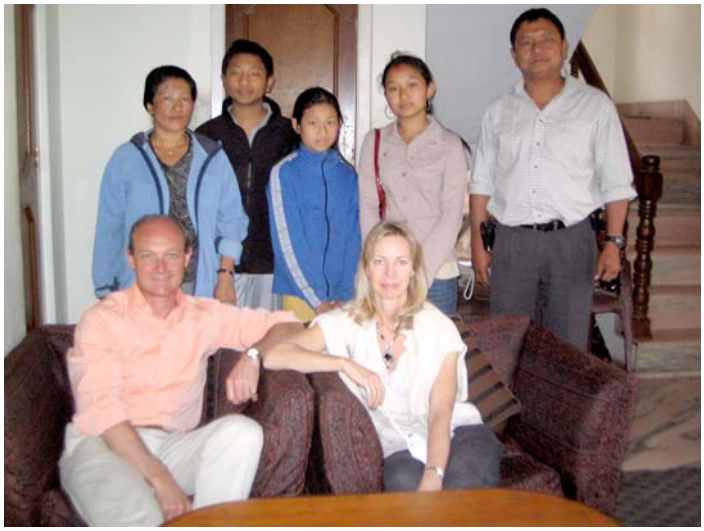
Finally I should like to make some acknowledgements. Firstly to my predecessor General Tony Pigott who at the start of his 10 year tenure saw the Regiment shrink to a squadron and recover under his hand to a much healthier and more sustainable size with the prospect of further growth a real possibility. We have been lucky indeed to benefit from his vision, wisdom and foresight over what has been a tumultuous but highly successful period for QGE. The Brigade has also recently bade farewell to its Colonel Commandant: General Phillip Trousdell, who has equally committed himself selflessly in the best interests of the Brigade over many years, and we welcome General David Richards fresh from his labours in Afghanistan in his place.

We also have a new commandant, Richard Wardlaw whom we warmly welcome back to the QGE fold together with

Judith and we wish Nick Elliott and Micky every good fortune and thank them both heartily for the major contribution that they have made to the Regiment during Nick's tenure. Meanwhile by the time that we go to print, the GM: Dhanbahadur Chand Saheb will have handed over to Dudhprasad Saheb. Again we wish him well in his new appointment as Trg Maj, 75 Engr Regt in Manchester where his CO, ex OC 69, Sean Harris will, no doubt, be delighted to see him. Dhanbahadur Saheb has been a tower of strength in the best traditions of his predecessors, providing clear and well judged counsel to his commandant and an outstanding example to the Regiment. But talking of going to print, I must thank Duncan Pierce for his sterling efforts as our magazine editor over the past few years and to warmly welcome Iain Adamson to the team, who has bravely agreed to take up the editorial burden. And finally, finally - no such list of thanks would be complete without paying tribute to your QGEA committee which, under Philip Cook's leadership and Jim Stuart's evergreen secretarial skills, continues to provide us with an outstanding service and the catalyst we need as we continually look to the future.

Wherever you may be, the very best wishes to you.

The Colonel of the Regiment with Dharmalal Thapa



Maj Gen and Mrs Bill visiting the family of the late Sgt Balaram Rai whilst on trek (Capt (QGO) Krishnabahadur Gurung and daughter also present

Chandrabahadur and Narendra of the Pahar Trust

Colonel of the Regiment 1996 – 2006: Lieutenant General Sir Anthony Pigott KCB CBE

Editor

The handover of Colonel of the Regiment and President of the Association was formally recognised by both the Regiment and Association last year. It is fitting, however, that the magazine recognises the effort and achievements that General Tony has made during his tenure as our Colonel. This article is based on comments by many, but primarily on those of John Edwards and Philip Cook, past and present Chairmen and Commandants, from Alistair Sheppard, who was OC of 67 Squadron when it was disbanded and Commandant when 70 Squadron re-formed, and from Nick Elliott, who was Commandant at the time of General Tony's handover.

In a tenure that commenced with the disbandment of 67 Squadron and ended with QGE back up to two squadrons, and the formation of a commando troop hopefully just around the corner, as well as the Association having had to adapt to these changes, General Tony's tenure has undoubtedly kept him extremely busy.

Having previously served under General Tony when he was Chief of Staff of HQ ARRC, Alistair Sheppard, when OC 67 Squadron, wrote "Subsequently, when I found myself as an independent squadron commander, I was at first surprised and then relieved to hear that General Tony would become our Colonel of the Regiment. It was a great reassurance to have the support, encouragement and calm comments from him especially as we approached the handover of Hong Kong and the disbandment of 67 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron. This was a time of uncertainty and great change, without any guarantee that things would go as smoothly as they eventually did. To have General Tony as our Colonel at this time was an inspired choice."

Alistair Sheppard and General Tony next met in an official capacity under happier times at the re-formation of 70 Squadron – "The irony of our next formal occasion was not lost on either of us; the formation of 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron, in my second week as Commandant QGE. As a CO I found myself away too often but it was always reassuring to know that the then Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Commitments) was keeping a watchful and paternal eye on QGE. With all the threats and opportunities that surround the Brigade of Gurkhas, it has been of enormous value to have someone with such a wide view of our position in the Army. When I went for our lunch meetings in the MOD, it was with the reassurance that General Tony knew the nuances and some of the inner workings of our regimental family. That touchstone was invaluable as Commandant QGE and I always knew that I could explain what was happening in the Regiment and receive wise comment and advice." Six years on his guidance and support in establishing the notion of a formed QGE Commando Troop as a credible proposition was equally appreciated by Nick Elliott - "he has been a firm source of support and guidance to each of the Commandants who have served under his tenure. A mentor to us all, he did not interfere in any way and always let each Commandant have his head. However, he was always there to provide sound advice or to lend a supportive hand on the tiller when needed."

Colonel of the Regiment and Gurkha Major – September 2006

As well as this support, his genuine interest in the welfare of the officers, soldiers and their families has also been immense. Alistair Sheppard identified this, and General Tony's enthusiasm to "get stuck in", when he wrote "I have always regarded QGE as a family unit, relying on the cohesion, respect and support between officers and soldiers of the Regiment, and the part that our families play in our success.

As a man with strong family values of his own, General Tony made an immediate impact on those of us in Hong Kong. His inimitable patience and consideration, coupled with a genuine interest in the fortunes of the Regiment, endeared him to everyone. He has always been approachable to all ranks and thus quickly overcame any lack of previous service with QGE. This came to the fore at the end of 1996 when we had our disbandment parade in Hong Kong, at which I particularly valued the unselfish and supportive role that the General played. For all present it was a poignant occasion with a disproportionate amount of media interest, nostalgia, sadness and speeches but ….one hell of a party at the end. I have only hazy recollections of who was dancing on the tables at midnight but I do believe the General was there!"

Nick Elliott gives an insight into some of the work that General Tony undertook behind the scenes – “In addition to his public support of QGE and the Brigade of Gurkhas, he has been tremendously supportive in a private capacity to a number of individual QGE soldiers, both serving and retired, using his personal contacts to help with jobs, university education and funding issues”.

Many have commented on how well regarded General Tony was within the Council of Colonels, and how much his opinions and advice were valued. Those reading about the changes in the Terms and Conditions of Service of our soldiers later in the magazine will recognise the enormous amount of work that has been undertaken to have them changed, not least by the Council of Colonels. Philip Cook spoke about this when we dined out General Tony and Felicity last September. “As a member of the Council of Colonels, it was his intellect that shaped the arguments that succeeded in achieving the greatly improved terms of service for Gurkhas that have been introduced. For that alone there are many grateful men and families here and in Maidstone tonight.” John Edwards commented that “the first thing that became clear to me was the power of his intellect. He understood issues at once, and his ideas about them were quickly and clearly expressed. He went to great lengths to find out about Gurkhas, the Brigade and the Regiment, including doing the language course, on which he distinguished himself”.

The Association has also undergone some change. Philip Cook describes the part that General Tony and Felicity have played in helping with this – “As an Association, we have had to adapt to the enormous changes of recent years. One of the problems of change is to manage it without losing cherished facets developed over many years. Gen Tony has been a source of wise counsel to the committee and very supportive in our attempts to achieve the right balance. He and Felicity have also been marvellous in supporting the Association’s functions – we are most grateful to you both for that.”

However, clearly no one is perfect. That said, the only caveat I have had about his otherwise impeccable performance, was his inability to meet deadlines for the publication of the magazine. John Edwards tells of one occasion when “the Association Secretary had to give him a direct order to produce his message!”

In this short article, it is impossible to sum up the contribution General Tony and Felicity have had in guiding the Regiment and Association over the last ten years. We have indeed been very fortunate to have his steady hand on the helm. I can think of no better way to conclude than in the words of Alistair Sheppard - “I would like to record not just my thanks, but the thanks of those who have departed QGE over the past ten years, through redundancy and retirement. They and their families, I know, have benefited from the kind and watchful eye that General Tony has kept on all of us. We hope he has now a little more time for his own family – thank you General Saheb.”

Colonel of the Regiment and the late Cpl Dave Mayhew following the disbandment of 67 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron – Hong Kong 1996 (Dave Mayhew, as a JNCO, was one of the original members of 67 Squadron in Malaya)

The Commandant's Report 2005-06

Lieutenant Colonel R Wardlaw RE

In this, my first report as Commandant QGE, it is only right that I start by saying what an immense honour and privilege it is to be selected to command the Regiment. In my first weeks in command the sense of joy in returning to this most special family has been acute and, notwithstanding the arrival of so many new faces in the Regiment since I left 69 Gurkha Field Squadron in 1998, it has been an immense pleasure to see so many familiar faces and to find the Regiment in such fine fettle. Indeed, it has not gone unnoticed that as I left Hong Kong in 1994 as a young Captain, the rate of promotion amongst some of my former section commanders has been nothing short of meteoric, as both Capt (QGO) Rajen Gurung and Prembahadur Ale will testify! To the relief of many of the soldiers, since I last served in the Regiment I have married Judith and along with our two young daughters we look forward as a family to a very happy 2 ½ years in Maidstone.

Before I provide a resume of the Regiment's achievements over the last year, I would like to record my thanks on behalf of All Ranks to the leadership and inspiration provided by my predecessor, Lt Col Nick Elliott. As you will read, he presided over an immensely successful year for the Regiment and left QGE not only in considerably better shape than when he arrived, but with the foundations laid for a much more secure future. And, as most of you will know, we bid farewell to Lt Gen Sir Anthony Pigott KCB CBE and welcomed Maj Gen David Bill CB as new Colonel of the Regiment.

2006 has been a typically busy year for the Regiment with the programme dominated by 69 Gurkha Field Squadron's deployment to Belize on Ex SAILFISH where the men successfully completed a range of complex construction tasks and revised their jungle field skills. 70 Squadron, enjoying a relatively quiet period for much of the year following their return from TELIC 6, commenced their deployment to Gibraltar on Ex 28th SHOT in December where they reside as I write. The year also witnessed the first deployment of QGE Commandos, 7 of whom joined 59 Indep Cdo Fd Sqn on HERRICK 5.

The year has been underpinned by a number of remarkable individual achievements, although two in particular are worth mentioning. LCpl Ramkumar Rai (69 Sqn) won The Worshipful Company of Tylers and Bricklayers award following his selection as the best student of the year on the ME (Bricklayer and Concreter) Class 2-1 course. Meanwhile, Lt (QGO) Devkumar Gurung was selected for the Army Shooting Team following his success at CORPSAAM 2006.

As much as individual excellence continues to be the hallmark of our soldiers, outstanding collective performances have been a regular feature of life too. In this regard the success of 70 Gurkha Fd Sp Sqn in delivering the winning section on the Regimental Section Competition earns a well deserved 'shybas', while sporting achievements have been dominated by success on the Badminton and Volleyball courts. Capt (QGO) Prembahadur Ale and Sgt Govindra Rai secured the title of Army Champions, as well as sweeping the board at the Corps Badminton Championships in both the men's singles and doubles. Lt (QGO) Uttamkumar Sherchan led the volleyball team which was narrowly beaten in the final of the Corps Volleyball Championship. Not prepared to be overshadowed, the QGE wives have also been hard at work raising more that £1000 for the Monckton Children's Ward at Maidstone Hospital, while 34 wives took part in the Cancer Research UK 'Race for Life' charity event in May.

One of the more interesting training events entertained by the Regiment this year was the exchange undertaken with the 2eme Regiment Etranger de Genie (French Foreign Legion Engineers). These French mountain specialists thoroughly enjoyed their 2 weeks in the UK, hosted by 70 Gurkha Fd Sp Sqn, although I don't think they bargained on Spr Subin beating them at their own game during the return visit, leading the nearest legionnaire to the top of a 1500m climb by 20min on the French Basic Military Mountaineering Test!

More recently, construction tasks undertaken by 69 Gurkha Field Squadron have had a decidedly zoological bent, with the construction of a gorilla compound at Port Lymne and a elephant enclosure at Howletts Zoo, both in Kent. As far as I know, the elephants and gorillas remain firmly behind bars!

Regrettably, the good news heralded by my predecessor in the last Magazine concerning the refurbishment and upgrading of the family quarters in Invicta Park has yet to be translated into activity on the ground. While I sense that the stars are aligning and that we may see the contract let for the work shortly, this has been (another) long haul and the

negative impact on the welfare and morale of our families has been significant. Away from our preparations for operations, securing a timely start to the project is my top priority.

The announcement of the new Gurkha Terms and Conditions of Service (GTACOS) has been a significant event in recent weeks and is welcomed by all ranks. Nonetheless, there remains much to be done to address the detailed transfer arrangements and ensure that our soldiers are provided with all of the information they require in deciding which pension arrangement will suit their individual needs best. At the same time, we are working hard on fulfilling the requirement to establish a Gurkha Cdo Tp in 24 Cdo Engr Regt by Apr 08. I am confident that the 19 sappers drawn from the latest recruit party to pass out from Phase 2a training at Minley will emulate their predecessors' success on the All Arms Cdo Course they commenced last week.

And if RHQ were not busy enough already, you will be pleased to hear that the Regiment must accommodate the introduction of a range of changes to the way we do business in the year ahead. Following our recent successful conversion to BOWMAN, a lot remains to be done to consolidate and build on the platform, while much of our personnel administration switched away from UNICOM to the new system known as Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) on 1 Mar. In the cookhouse, Pay As You Dine goes live on 16 Apr although I have been reassured this will not affect the generous portions of bhat the soldiers rely on! Meanwhile in the workshop we continue to work towards reduced vehicle holdings mandated under Whole Fleet Management.

Against this backdrop, the Regiment's focus has now switched to preparations for our deployment to Afghanistan as part of 52 Bde on Op HERRICK 7. While we can expect the first soldiers to leave Maidstone in September, you will not be surprised to hear that between now and then there is a considerable amount of work required to ensure that the soldiers are as well trained and prepared as possible. A key part of those preparations is the forthcoming deployment of a troop from 69 Gurkha Field Sqn to Brunei in support of 2RGR's own FTX, Ex ULUH RAJAH.

So, as I reflect on my first few weeks in command it is clear that while much has been achieved in the last period, an even busier year lies ahead. Daunting as this may seem to some, I am confident that we will deliver and that the reputation of the Regiment will be even higher on our return from Afghanistan. **Jai QGE!**

The Gurkha Major's Report

Maj (QGO) Dhanbahadur Chand

I am amazed at how quickly time has flown since my last report and I must admit that this has been another busy year for RHQ QGE. The main effort for RHQ during 2006 remained with the management and implementation of thenewly introduced Gurkha Married Accompanied Service (GMAS), switching towards the end of the year to the implementation of the new Gurkha Terms and Conditions of Service. It was predicted that the implementation of GMAS within Maidstone would be a slow and difficult process, mainly owing to the ongoing situation with regard to the refurbishment of the married quarters within Invicta Park. But due to the efforts of RHQ staff, Maj (Retd) Ray Edwards in particular, I am extremely delighted to say that all those eligible personnel who have requested accommodation have been successfully housed. In this respect QGE, have set best practise and other units in the Brigade of Gurkhas are aspiring to meet our standards.

In addition RHQ QGE has worked to find ways to expand QGE, and with the tireless efforts of the previous Comdt, Lt Col NK Elliott Saheb, QGE managed some success. Department of Manning Army have approved the formation of a QGE Cdo Tp within 24 Cdo Engr Regt. Furthermore, we are awaiting approval for a second Cdo Troop and an increase in manning for the QGE Brunei Garrison Boat Section. In addition QGE has been successful in gaining a number of UKTAP posts within the Regiment and wider army employments.

After the announcement of the long awaited GTACOS Review on 8 Mar 07 the officers and soldiers welcomed the changes, but for the RHQ QGE inevitable challenges of its implementation lie ahead. I am very optimistic this will certainly make RHQ QGE's job much simpler in dealing with any manning and human resources related matters as all of these issues come in line with the British system.

This year QGE bid farewell to the outgoing Colonel of the Regiment, Lt Gen Sir Anthony Pigott Saheb, after his 10 year tenure. We simultaneously welcomed the incoming Colonel of the Regimentt, Maj Gen Bill Saheb. Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Gen Pigott Saheb on behalf of QGE for his generous support to the Regiment. We also bid farewell to the Comdt QGE Lt Col NK Elliott Saheb, and recently welcomed the new Comdt QGE, Lt Col Richard Wardlaw Saheb.

Unfortunately, my time as GM QGE will come to end in June 07, I will miss QGE very much, but I am extremely delighted to leave QGE in the capable hands of Capt (QGO) Dudhprasad Gurung. It has been a great pleasure and indeed an honour to have served as the GM QGE. I would like to thank both serving and retired Queen's Gurkha Engineers for their very kind support to the Regiment. On behalf of QGE and myself, I would like to thank specially to Lt Col NK Elliott MBE Saheb for all the help and support given to me and the Regiment throughout my tour as the GM QGE. Without his vision and support QGE would never have been this successful. I can confidently say that QGE soldiers have continued to perform extremely well across the Corps of Royal Engineers and the Brigade of Gurkhas. Finally I would like to wish all the best to the members of QGE who are due to deploy on Op HERRICK 7 later in the year. **Jai QGE.**

RHQ QGE News

This has been another extremely busy year for RHQ QGE. Significant amongst this year's developments was the introduction of Gurkha Married Accompanied Service (GMAS) which came into effect on 1 April 06. Through sterling effort by RHQ QGE and the Unit Welfare Officer, Maj (Retd) Ray Edwards, there are now some 190 Gurkha soldiers living Married Accompanied (MA) with their wives and families in and around the Maidstone area. Although not all MA soldiers could be quartered in Invicta Park, the recent agreement to commence refurbishment of the derelict quarters on camp soon should generate greater capacity to accommodate married personnel inside the wire.

RHQ QGE has also been successful in securing employment for Gurkha Engineers outside QGE. A number of wider employment posts have been created during 2006 and filled by QGE soldiers; a QMSI post in BEW, 2 x posts within each of Household Cavalry Regiment, Gurkha Language Wing and Communications Training Wing and the Welfare SSgt post in Brecon. In addition to this QGE has nominated three candidates for the Clerk of Works courses in 2007 and one for the Military Plant Foreman (MPF) course. This is in addition to the six clerks of Works and one MPF already employed within the UKTAP posts. QGE currently have 25 personnel employed on GURTAM ERE posts, predominantly in 3 RSME Regt, 1 RSME Regt, QGE Boat Sect (Brunei), Gurkha Coy (Catterick), BGN, Gurkha Demonstration Coy, and in 22 SAS. They have been fine ambassadors to the Regiment and the Brigade.

Director Manning Army has authorised the raising a troop of Gurkha Commandos to serve with 24 Engr Regt (Cdo), as yet the funding for these posts has yet to be secured. However, the Engineer in Chief has since requested an additional QGE Troop for both 24 Engr Regt (Cdo) and 23 Engr Regt (Air Asslt). There are currently 29 QGE Commando trained soldiers, seven of whom have deployed to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 5.

In light of greater requirement for QGE soldiers within the Army, QGE welcomed a total of 35 recruits including the Champion Recruit from the Intake 06 as opposed to 22 which had been the normal allocation in the last few years.

During the summer, QGE organised a Bhela in Maidstone for the former members of the Regiment as part of the Regimental Branch Meeting under direction of the QGEA. The Bhela was a great success, former QGE soldiers were informed of what is happening in QGE, the QGEA and most importantly, meeting friends with whom they used to serve. Approximately 60 members and their families attended the Bhela, feedback was very positive. It proved to be a useful method for maintaining a strong link between QGE and the QGEA. On the same day, QGE bade farewell to Mr Tom Langbridge, the Chairman and founder of the Pahar Trust, who for the last 20 years has worked tirelessly to provide schools in the mountain hills of Nepal in order to assist in the provision of education for the thousands children who live in these remote regions. At the same event the QGE welcomed his successor, Mr Howard Green MBE, as the new Chairman of the Trust.

Sitting: Capt(QGO) Dudhprasad Gurung(GRCMO), WO1 D M Woolford (RSM), Lt Col R Wardlaw (Comdt), Maj(QGO) Dhanbahadur Chand (GM), Capt D Robbins (Adjt) Standing: LCpl Aakash Limbu, WO2 Kamansing Rana, LCpl Temba Tamang

The 58th QGE Birthday took place in Maidstone on 28 September 06 and welcomed both past and present members of the Regiment. After 10 years as Colonel of the

Regiment, QGE bade farewell to Lt Gen Sir Anthony Pigott KCB CBE MA and welcomed the new Colonel of the Regiment, Maj Gen D R Bill CB. As in past years, the

Colonel of the Regiment kindly presented awards to this year's winner of the Bowring Trophy, LCpl Bhabendra Muktan (70 Gurkha Fd Sp Sqn). LCpl Bhabendra narrowly beat LCpl Koshbahadur Gurung (69 Gurkha Fd Sqn) to the award for the best Lance Corporal in QGE.

To mark the long history held by QGE within the Corps of Royal Engineers, a room within the RE Corps Mess at Brompton Barracks has been renamed the Perowne Room. This room has been decorated with QGE artefacts, insignia and medals previously owned by General Perowne, the first Colonel of the Regiment. At an event organised by the QGEA committee, The Perowne Room was formally opened in November 06 by Mrs Iris Bolton, daughter of Gen Perowne.

QGE bade farewell to Lt Col NK Elliott MBE after two and half years of fine service and recently welcomed Lt Col R Wardlaw as Comdt QGE. Through the efforts of Gen Pigott Saheb and Lt Col Elliott Saheb, QGE continued to grow and develop during 2006, and is expected to expand even more in the coming years under their respective successors; Maj Gen Bill CB Saheb as Colonel of the Regiment, and Lt Col R Wardlaw.

RHQ QGE comprises of Comdt, GM, Adjt, GRCMO, RSM, GMSA, Mov Clk and Courses Clk. This year RHQ QGE has seen few changes in key personalities; Capt Dudh Saheb has taken over from Capt Rajen Saheb as the Gurkha RCMO and Capt Robbins Saheb has taken over from Capt Reeve as the Adjt QGE.

QGE personnel continue to receive praise and recognition for their service on operations and to the Brigade of Gurkhas.

Hand-over of Colonel of the Regiment

WO2 Tulahadur Ale was awarded an MBE for his outstanding performance on Operation TELIC 6 as the Resources Warrant Officer within 70 Gurkha Fd Sp Sqn. He was subsequently selected for commissioning as a QGO. Furthermore, for outstanding service throughout his long and esteemed career, Capt Dudhprasad Gurung was selected as Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officer. He has subsequently been selected for promotion and will take post as Gurkha Major QGE in 2007.

QGE as part of 36 Engr Regt has now commenced BOWMAN training and conversion, the training will be completed soon in time for deployments to Brunei, Gibraltar and Afghanistan.

Commandant and Memsaheb receiving their farewell gifts

69 Gurkha Field Squadron QGE

69 Sqn on Ex SAILFISH

Last years tale ended with the 2IC (Andy Gooch) pontificating on the beach in Belize. Oh how the mighty fall! But we wish him the very best for his short notice detachment as an SO3 to Afghanistan. However, I will be covering a lot more on the Belize tour in this update, along with the many other activities the Squadron has been up to.

The year has been dominated by high readiness commitments; the first was as part of the UKs' contribution to the NATO Reaction Force 6 (NRF 6), unfortunately nothing occurred and we stood down from this on 30 Jun 06. This was immediately followed by another period of increased readiness, this time as the Spearhead Engineer Squadron on 48hrs notice to move, a commitment which has just come to an end. Despite being largely tied to Maidstone the Squadron overall has been very busy and had another productive year.

Before we move onto the years activities, we should start with a mention of a number of particular individual achievements and formally thank and say farewell to those who have moved on. Throughout the year there has been a fairly steady turnover of personnel at SHQ level with the 2IC, Capt Andy Gooch leaving the Squadron after just 14 months to a high profile SO3 post in Afghanistan to be replaced Capt Mark Hendry who returns following his previous troop command tour. Similarly, the Ops Offr Capt Rich Jones moved onto 101 Engr Regt (EDO)(V) as the Adjutant to be replaced by Capt Tim Gilbert whilst the QM, Capt Kev Lillicrap has left very large boots to be filled by his successor, Capt George Drysdale. The Squadron has also got through two sergeant majors over the past year months with firstly WO2 Tarabahadur Pun and then WO2 Mohan Kumar Tamang both being selected for commission, a fantastic achievement and we congratulate them both. At the troop level Lt Simon Merrett has moved to 21 Engineer Regiment and we welcome Lt Ed Thompson and Lt Rob Grant into the fold.

On the promotions, apart from the two Commissions already mentioned, the Squadron also saw 2 promotions to WO2, 2 x Sgt – SSgt, 3 x Cpl – Sgt and 5 x LCpl – Cpl. Other notable achievements include LCpl Ramkumar Rai being awarded the Bricklayer of the Year award from the Worshipful Company of Tylers & Bricklayers and Sprs Ramkumar Rai, Pankajdev Rai and Suresh Sherma all coming top of their respective JNCO cadres. Furthermore, the Squadron has been providing members to 59 Independent Commando Squadron as part of the first members newly forming Commando troop. The first element of this, a section, is currently deployed in Afghanistan with 59 Squadron and doing fantastically well. The rest of the Troop will form up later this year.

Now to the main events of last year. As mentioned in the introduction, NRF 6 did not deploy giving the Squadron the time needed to prepare for last year's main event, that being Ex SAILFISH 06. This was a 3 month construction exercise

to Belize where the Squadron undertook a number of tasks in support of the British Army Training and Support Unit, (BATSUB) based in Price Barracks next door to the international airport (more senior readers will know the camp as Airport Camp). The deployment suffered the usual delays and breakdowns en-route, but with time in the US for most this was not seen as a disappointment. Indeed the guys made the most of the 2 days in Bangor (Maine); that said armed with only shorts and tee-shirts for Belize, the -3°C temperatures in the US did come as a bit of a shock! Eventually the Squadron of 120 arrived in Belize and were quickly plunged into the jungle for a 4 day jungle training package as part of the acclimatisation process. From there it was straight to the task sights and work proper began.

Adventure Training on Ex Sailfish in Belize

G Tp after the completion of their project in Belize

The construction work undertaken included G Troop, under Lt Ed Thompson, deploying deep into the jungle to construct a HICON facility for the BATSUB staff, which was also to be used, during quiet periods, by research students from Edinburgh University – an interesting combination, but one enjoyed by all on site! Lt Uttam and H Troop on the other hand were given the very demanding task of erecting a new Quartermasters facility for Price Barracks. This was a challenging task in anyone's books, being technically demanding and requiring construction techniques not often covered in the Corps syllabus, namely large steel framework buildings. Support Troop, under Lt Bishnu were spread across country moving materials for the task sites, whilst his plant operators worked tirelessly to improve over 50kms of the track throughout the training areas, and most importantly, the 20km road leading to Las Cuevas.

Around all this the Squadron had a great deal of fun with everyone completing a course in either: diving, offshore sailing, kayaking, caving or dingy sailing. Of course, no tour of this kind would be complete without a period of R&R, which was taken in an all inclusive hotel in Cancun. Needless to say you could write a book on that period!

Las Cuevas proved a real favourite amongst the troops, being situated in an idyllic jungle clearing, surrounded by tropical fauna and flora (most of which was edible!) and was at least 3hrs from SHQ. The task tested carpentry skills to the full and the finished product was a delight to behold. Indeed such was the reputation of the site that 'stars' of the small screen flocked to see it – at least that is what we like to think. One lasting image for the OC will be arriving on site to see the troop engaged in a game of cricket with Ray Mears and his crew - the troop won by 4 wickets much to the delight of the OC.

The QM facility was far more technically challenging and was a major construction project incorporating every trade skill. The preparatory work was done prior to the Squadron arriving, but our surveyor did deploy early to check on the local Belizean work, as one foundation bolt in the wrong place could have spelled disaster. However, with the arrival of the steel frame from the UK the build went up like clockwork and was complete inside a week. Next came the brickwork which seemed to take months, but even this was completed a week ahead of schedule, allowing the finishing trades to do their bit. Stores, as ever, provided the most stressful, with electrical items doing a tour of the US before finally arriving in Belize in the nick of time. In fact the whole project was completed ahead of time and only just over budget – Wembley next! In fact that is not quite true, the doors did not arrive until 3 weeks after our departure, this time the delay caused by the boat with our iso-container onboard being impounded in Jamaica over narcotics issues.

Not to be out done, Support Troop under Lt Bishnu were tasked with improving routes across the training area and critically the main supply route for Las Cuevas. This they did with gusto - give a POM a D6 bulldozer and you are asking for an environmental disaster - fortunately the jungle grows back fast on there was no lasting damage. Overall, the guys did an amazing job, reducing the journey time for the last 20km to Las Cuevas from nearly 2 hours to 20min, producing arguably the best dirt road in Belize. In summary, Ex SAILFISH was a resounding success and a fabulous experience for all, it was extremely challenging but more importantly it was great fun!

With Ex SAILFISH drawing to an end, I Troop under Lt James Jennings arrived in theatre as part of EX TROPICAL

STORM in support of the 2 SCOTS Battlegroup. This was a 6 week FTX aimed at teaching the Battlegroup the skills needed to operate and fight in a jungle environment. The troops were employed in a number of different roles across both combat and artisan engineering and sometimes even formed up as an extra infantry platoon when the going got very tough. All came away from the exercise having learnt a great deal, having been thoroughly tested in a very demanding environment: they were also a bit thinner!

Following the Squadrons return from Belize towards the end June, the tempo didn't slacken as the Squadron prepared to take over the Spearhead Engineer Role in support of 2 SCOTS, (previously the Royal Highland Fusiliers) from 01 Aug. Not all that easy when the unit you are supporting is based in Edinburgh, but it did mean a trip to Scotland to do OPTAG training and enjoy all that Edinburgh has to offer. Rather than sitting on their laurels and waiting for something to happen, the Squadron instead threw itself into the highlight of the autumn period and the Regimental Section Competition on Dartmoor. The preceding Squadron build up training also proved a first, being arranged at the Sennelager training area in Germany. As very few Gurkha Soldiers had visited Germany before and using my experience of soldiering on the continent and his inevitable contacts, a two-week combat engineering and general field-craft exercise took place to hone the Sections skills in preparation for Ex INVICTA GOLD, the Regimental Section competition. As ever the Squadron excelled in the competition, narrowly missing out on first place to 70 Squadron, but still fielding the 2nd, 3rd and 4th placed sections.

Running concurrently to this was a rather unusual task where the Spearhead Troop deployed to the Port Lympe Wildlife Park, near Hythe in Kent, to build a new climbing frame for a family of Gorillas. Not your normal sort of engineering task given the 'alpha' male weighed in at 30 stone! The project was competed with much local media interest and led a second equally successful task in Feb 07, Ex HATTI KO GHAR, the construction of a new elephant compound at Howlett Zoo. The tasks just keep getting bigger!

The autumn focus was very much part on the Regimental conversion to BOWMAN, our new radio system, which was far more technical than any of us imagined. That said, it is a quantum lead forward in terms of communications for the Army and will serve us well in the future. The conversion was complete by Christmas allowing the Squadron to work up to a series of supporting exercise for both 12 Mech and 1 Mech Brigades as part of their pre-deployment training for Afghanistan and Iraq respectively. Indeed one such exercise saw the Squadron fulfilling the role of the Afghan National Army and work alongside the Grenadier Guards, who were to act as mentors. Ironically, within days the Battalion was forced to ask us to slow down after which we briefed the boys to play a more realistic role and half of then promptly went AWOL or refused to soldier – much more like the real thing!

Finally, what of the future? Firstly on a policy matter; after years of lobbying we will in 2007 see a fundamental change to the terms and conditions of service in the Brigade, which will bring the Gurkhas in line with their British counterparts. This is a huge step forward and will require considerable implementation, but for the vast majority this is a truly positive development. On the operational front, the Squadron focus will very much be on the forthcoming operational tour to Afghanistan. However, before the Squadron can look forward to that, a quick trip out to Brunei to support our brothers in 1 RGR. The jungle may not be the environment usually encountered in Afghanistan, but a real challenge nonetheless and one to look forward to. Following this, there are is a raft of pre-deployment training packages to be completed, but no one underestimates the complexity and challenges of working in the Afghan arena. What is for certain, the Squadron will be ready for the tour and we can look forward to the tales from Op HERRICK in next year's magazine.

Jai 69, Jai QGE

70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron QGE

Writing this in the warm Mediterranean sun, hearing the sound of happy Gurkhas hard at work on construction sites drifting in on the sea breeze; all is well in 70 Gurkha Field Support Squadron here in Gibraltar.

The past year has seen 70 Squadron undertaking a huge array of tasks and activities, as well as a change of OC. Mountain warfare training with the French Foreign Legion, running plant projects across the UK, winning the Regimental Section Competitions, skiing in the Alps and deploying to Gibraltar on Exercise 28th Shot have all made for a rewarding and enjoyable period.

In early April Assaye Troop Commander, Capt Yogprasad Thapa, deployed with an enlarged Troop to the Joint Movement Centre at South Cerney. Their job was to provide all infrastructure support to Exercise Joint Venture, a major Permanent Joint Headquarters exercise involving over 1300 personnel. Over a period of 2 months the Troop constructed the headquarters, provided a comprehensive electrical power system, constructed parking areas, moved hundreds of ISO containers, and then returned the site to its original condition at the end. The exercise was a great opportunity for artisan tradesmen to dust off their specialist skills, and gave a fascinating insight into the workings of a four star headquarters.

Building new storerooms for Defence Divers in Gibraltar

The Plant section have had a busy year, carrying out construction tasks in Aldershot and on Salisbury Plain during the spring, and then running a major Plant exercise for all Royal Engineer Plant Operators in 3 Div, on Carewent Training Area in September, under the watchful eye of the Military Plant Foreman, WO2 Aldsworth. This year has also seen a major change in the way that all plant equipment is maintained and managed, with the introduction of the Plant Vehicle Public Finance Initiative, where by the equipment is rented as and when required, rather than held by units.

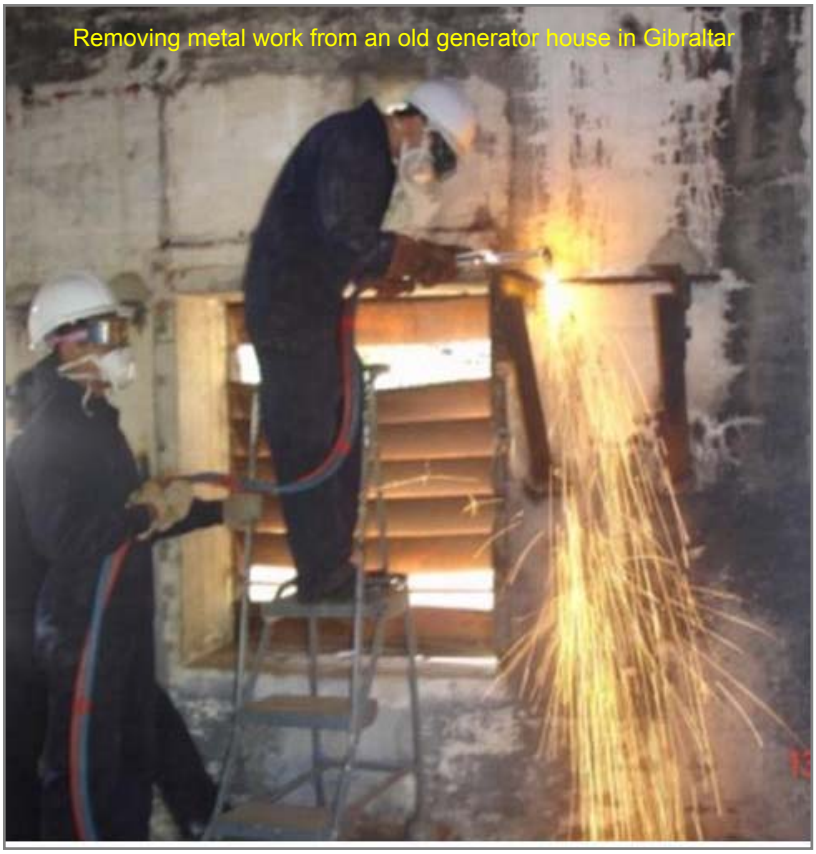
Cheval Blanc (on way to Mt Thabor)

For many members of the Squadron, the highlight of the year was Exercise Invicta Legion, an exchange exercise between the Gurkhas of 70 Squadron, and Legionnaires from the 2nd Regiment of the French Foreign Legion Engineers. 70 Squadron hosted 30 Legionnaires on a 10 day visit to the UK, and put them through their paces with Rigid Raider boat handling skills, Combat Engineer Training, OBUA skills, and the obligatory day out in London to see Buckingham Palace. The return leg of the exchange saw the Gurkhas moving to a mountain hut in the Valloire region of the French Alps, and completing a condensed version of the Foreign Legion Mountain Warfare Course. After being issued with all the required specialist mountaineering equipment the team spent the first few days covering basic mountaineering skills, progressing onto higher climbs each day. After completing a two day trek to the summit of Mount Thabor the training progressed to the technically demanding skills of rock climbing and Via Ferrata, certainly not a good time to develop vertigo! A day was then spent on the Mer de Glace glacier in Chamonix, learning to use crampons and ice axes. On the final day all of the students were put through the arduous “BAM Test”, a timed race over a long and technical mountain route. The top half of the route was well above the snow line so ice climbing skills were essential, but most of the Gurkhas decided to improvise and found that sliding down the snow slopes on your bum was the quickest form of descent. Every member of QGE passed the BAM Test with impressive times, and three Ghurkhas beat the fastest Legionnaire by 20 minutes. The parallels between the two organisations were remarkable, with mutual understanding of each other’s way of life, and the strong senses of pride and camaraderie felt by each, acting as a common bond.

Back in the UK the Squadron acquitted themselves equally impressively. In the 36 Engineer Regiment Section Competitions Cpl Kamalprasad Gurung lead his section to victory in the 5 day infantry and combat engineering skills competition in Dartmoor. Beating off stiff competition in a very closely fought contest he won the competition for the Squadron for the first time since it’s reformation in 2000. The Squadron also wish to congratulate LCpl Bhabendra Moktan

on winning the prestigious Bowring Trophy, awarded to the best LCpl in QGE.

Despite a hectic work load, the Squadron has managed to fit in some sport and Adventurous Training over the course of the year. In April the Squadron provided 5 of the 6 members of the victorious Regimental Shooting team, winning the RE Skill At Arms competition. The Workshops Manager, SSgt Quinn, had the dubious requirement of trying to teach Gurkhas to hill walk in Snowdonia. An excellent time was had by all, but he did seem a little perturbed when he was repeatedly asked “hills, what hills?” At the end of January Capt Francis, the Squadron second in command, took 40 Gurkhas from across QGE to some slightly larger hills in the French Alps, and complete with a broken arm from a previous skiing accident managed to coax them down some fairly hairy slopes, with everyone passing their basic skiing qualifications by the end of the week.


Removing metal work from an old generator house in Gibraltar

At the beginning of February the Squadron deployed en-mass to Gibraltar on Exercise 28th SHOT to carry out construction tasks in support of Defence Estates out here on the Rock. The projects (seven in all) include rebuilding a large water tank, demolishing an old look out post and building an Arabic style FIBUA house. One project at the Airport involved removing the supporting wall from beneath the Control Tower, but at time of writing planes can still land and take off, so it seems fair to assume that the boys have remembered most of their training. This project has the added bonus that it requires the use of drills and breakers against the wall of a functioning RAF office complex, so the Gurkhas are certainly doing their bit for joint cooperation and understanding!

As one of five Field Support sub-units within the Royal Engineers, 70 Squadron has a comprehensive Resources Section, within Dheli Troop. In order to practice the resources specialists and to remain isolated from any potential industrial action by civilian MOD employees in Gibraltar, it was decided that the Squadron would run all the resourcing for the project “in-house”. Financial and contractual delegation was granted to the Squadron and by dealing directly with suppliers, the Squadron managed to knock 40% off the predicted budget of the exercise.

The exercise lasts for 12 weeks, which allows scope for plenty of adventure training and other activities. Along with conducting historical tours of the tunnel system and lots of football, the OC, Maj McCallum, has been taking the opportunity to prove that Gurkhas certainly make better soldiers than sailors. Running regular trips in the British Forces Yacht “Pickle”, the OC has taken on the daunting task of teaching Gurkhas to sail, but it is fair to say that very few have proven to be seamen, and most come back slightly lighter and greener than when they left.

Looking ahead the Squadron will conduct tunnel warfare and infantry training before returning to the UK, and will then be focused on sending a resources node out to Afghanistan, and supporting 36 Engineer Regiment in its preparation for deployment.

Over the past year the Squadron has bid a fond farewell to several members, some posted, and some leaving the Army to go on pension. In July the Squadron said a very fond farewell to the outgoing OC, Maj Iain Adamson, who has moved on to work in MOD Main Building, and in his place welcomed back Maj Giles McCallum, who served with QGE as a Troop Commander 1996-1998. In keeping with tradition, McCallum Saheb doesn’t plan to finish his tour as OC as a single man, and the Squadron congratulates him on his recent engagement to Annabel Mem Saheb. Due to the recent changes in the Squadron establishment WO2 Budhi Bhandari was welcomed in to the newly established post of MTWO in September, and in November WO2 Burns replaced SSgt Quinn as the Squadron Workshop Manager. In October the Squadron said goodbye to WO2 Aldsworth, who leaves the Army after 23 years, and welcomes his replacement WO2 Hales as the new Military Plant Foreman.

Planties halfway through to demolishing a Police Post in Gibraltar

In January WO2 Tulbahadur Ale MBE gained his Commission, and as a Lieutenant he is now employed as the Squadron Operations Officer, running all the construction projects in Gibraltar.

Cpl Kamal Operating a Generator on Ex Joint Venture

Half way through an overseas exercise in the sun, life is good in 70 Squadron, but with deployments to Afghanistan and a raft of training commitments, we can expect another busy and varied year ahead. **Jai 70 Squadron, Jai QGE.**

Gurkha Commando Engineers in Afghanistan

The first Gurkha Commando section from the Queens Gurkha Engineers deployed to Norway with 59 Independent Commando Squadron Royal Engineers on 11 January 2006. This was a pioneering event since this is the first time Gurkhas have served alongside 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines. Norway was an important deployment and a significant cornerstone towards the future of Commando-trained Gurkhas. This was, in essence, a test phase to see how we adapted to extreme cold weather conditions. The outlook is positive since under Cpl Khadka (now Sgt Khadka) every member of the section passed the Cold Weather Warfare Course and took part in the confirmatory multinational exercise as part of 45 Commando Group, with soldiers from Sweden and Norway.

Currently the section is in Afghanistan and is led by Cpl Naresh Limbu. This is the section's first operational tour with 59 Commando. The Gurkha section has now become 2 Section, Condor Troop under Capt Hogan RE. There are also two British soldiers in 2 Section – Spr Hancock and Spr Phillips - which is significant since this is the first time a Gurkha corporal has had British troops under his command.

The Squadron's mission is to provide close engineer support to 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines. We arrived in theatre on 24 September 2006. After 2 days of RSOI package we received a warning order for our first op. The op took place on 27 September 2006 and we had very little time to prepare our mission-specific stores. However, it had to be done. It was a 12-hour op and its aim was to conduct a relief-in-place, exchanging one of the companies from 42 Commando Royal Marines with elements of 3 Para Battle Group from Sangin. The section played a very active and vital role throughout the op. Our primary task was to assist the Paras to enter the compounds and clear them. This was achieved by going 'angry' and demolishing the walls using mouse-hole charges or by going 'silently' and breaking the padlocks by the use of bolt croppers or using an axe to break the door. We also demolished a known Taliban trench and building using plastic explosive charges and bar mines. This is the same trench that D Coy, 2 RGR got ambushed from. Being sappers we had a lot more engineer stores to carry besides our war scale ammunition, food and water and at the same time we had to be able to keep up with the Para company. A high degree of physical stamina and mental determination was required.

We are based at Camp Bastion in Helmand province. When we are not involved in any deliberate ops we spend most of our time carrying out combat engineering trainings like demolitions, mines, field fortification, mobility (trackways, maxi/mini fascines) and water supply. One of the other roles we fulfil is that of Ops 1 Company (the QRF). We carry out a PT session every day to maintain our battle fitness.

Since 27 October 2006 the section has been serving in Now Zad – the platoon house formerly occupied by 2 RGR. When we initially arrived here this was the only active Taliban 'Out Location' in Helmand. Our main task out here is to enhance and winterise the camp and the sangars. This task involves

a lot of sandbagging. After filling sandbags and making sandbag walls for the last three weeks, every section member has now turned into a sandbag guru. After two days out here, some of the section members took part on a deliberate demolition op where we assisted the ammunition technician to demolish the unexploded ordnance accumulated from the local area. We also demolished one of the known Taliban firing points. The previous experience of building deep trench latrines and Hesco walls of the 69 boys has come in very handy out here as we have built several new ones. Apart from the tasks in the camp we also take part in regular foot patrols into the town in order to gather engineering intelligence and provide the Royal Marines with close engineer support. Since the Marines are low on manpower we also man the sangars.

Operations in Sagin

It has been a different and exciting experience for every section member as this is the first time we all have served on the 'front line' alongside the Marines. Our probable future tasks always remain unknown since we operate 'as and when' needed. To that end, we need to be on our toes at all times. We all have integrated very well within Condor Troop and the Squadron. The section's morale is high and we look forward to having a successful tour. The section's aim has always been to display high standards of Commando Spirit and to maintain the proud tradition of the Gurkha Ethos. We are determined to keep it alive. **JAI QGE**

3 RSME News – Minley Detachment

As we are approaching the end of fiscal year 2006/2007 which is normally a time for the Minley Detachment to reflect the year in summary. A noteworthy change this year has to be an increase in number of the Minley Detachment members. Two additional posts have been taken up since this fiscal year. An introduction of a first ever Gurkha QMSI post in the Battlefield Engineering Wing (BEW) has given a new dimension to the Minley Detachment. Accordingly, the Communication and Information System (CIS) Wing has also seen an increase from one to two SNCO instructors.

This is clear evidence of all the hard-work and tireless efforts that have been put in by the Minley Detachment members ever since its establishment as a Gurkha Troop in December 1993. There is no doubt that the Detachment has been through a number of changes and challenges as the years have gone by, but its members have always been able to come across them and move forward in the light of upholding Gurkha ethos and reputation.

Until last year, the number of the Minley Detachment members was constricted to a troop commander (Lt/Capt QGO), two SNCOs and three JNCO Instructors. Below is the list of the current Minley Detachment personnel, serving in the 3 RSME Regiment, BEW and CIS Wing.

Capt (QGO) Ekbahadur Gurung - Curragh Tp Comd
WO2 (QMSI) Mohan Gurung - QMSI, BEW
SSgt Madankaji Sunwar – SNCO Instructor, CIS Wing
SSgt Jangabahadur Singjali - Curragh Tp SNCO
Sgt Samir Thapa – SNCO Instructor, CIS Wing
Cpl Narendra Gurung – JNCO, Curragh Tp
Cpl Sanman Thapa Magar – JNCO, Curragh Tp
Cpl Krishna Pun – JNCO, Instructor Troop

Preparing Barmine Charges

The Minley Toli

The detachment members play a vital role in the Regiment, they are not only here to train the future and current sappers of the Corps, but they are also ambassadors for the QGE and the Brigade of Gurkhas, no matter whatever the circumstances are, they endeavour to uphold the fine standard and tradition of the Brigade of Gurkhas and the Queen's Gurkha Engineers.

60 Training Party (QGE)

Unlike past years, this year the Queen's Gurkha Engineers (QGE) managed to attract 35 trainees, the highest number in 17 years, from Recruit Intake 2006 on completion of their 42 weeks of Phase 1 Training at Infantry Training Centre (ITC) in Catterick. They arrived in Minley for the Combat Engineering Class 3 training on 13 Nov 06. They are the 60th training group to go through in the history of the QGE, hence the title '60 Training Party'. The course is ten weeks long, during which trainees are taught and tested on various aspects of Combat Engineering at basic level in order for them to become Sappers of the Queen's Gurkha Engineers/Royal Engineers. Without a doubt, it is an intensive and both physically and mentally demanding training, but equally exciting and interesting as described by the trainees themselves on completion of their course.

The first couple of weeks went on course preparation with the actual training beginning on 3 Dec 06. After just two weeks of training, the training party were very fortunate to have Christmas Stand Down leave. During this period they had some excellent opportunities to enjoy various educational visits and training organised by the permanent staff. They visited London and were taught to use the Underground, Maidstone, to familiarise themselves with their future Regiment, the Gurkha Museum to learn about their history, Stonehenge and Windsor Castle. In addition, they competed fiercely in the inter-section sports competition that included volleyball, basketball, football and cross-country.

Right after Christmas leave, the training resumed at its fast pace, learning new things each day with tests at the end of each module. The Training Party worked extremely hard and completed all 8 modules, producing an excellent course-average of 89.4%; that was quite an achievement. On week eight, the troop began a construction project at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS). The task was a renovation of stable fence that required woodworking, painting, digging and concreting. Although it was just a small project but it was enough to give the trainees an opportunity to put their combat engineering knowledge and skills into practice that they had learnt in the past few weeks. It was not just interesting and enjoyable, but also satisfying for them as they could see the end product done for real purpose for the very first time, as opposed to what they were used to with dismantling everything in training so far.

After completing the project they deployed on the final exercise for 5 days in the local training area, where they were continually assessed on their combat engineering skills. The final exercise ended with the final run, which tested their physical strength, determination, courage and teamwork to the limit.

In addition, it would be worthwhile to mention that 20 out of 35 trainees were loaded on to All Arms Commando Course (AACC) prior to their trade training, in preparation for foreseeable formation of Gurkha Commando Troop in 59 Commando Squadron RE which will become a part of 24 Commando Engineer Regiment. Hence, 60 Training Party had had a series of arduous physical training sessions and classes at a cost of their extra time during the course.

Following the final exercise, the preparation for the Pass Off and Kasam Khane Parade began. The Training Party had a few rehearsals beforehand and the actual Pass Off Parade took place on Friday 2 March 2007, in the presence of QGE, Ex QGE, QGE families, 3 RSME members and trainees' own families and relatives. The Pass Off Parade kicked off with the Combat Engineering Demonstration and the Parade including the Oath Taking Ceremony. The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas played some splendid tunes while the Training Party performed an outstanding parade. It was an honour to have our own Colonel of the Regiment, Maj Gen DR Bill CB as the Reviewing Officer who kindly presented the stable belts and officially welcomed them into the Regt and the Corps. The Reviewing Officer also presented the following awards to the following Sappers:

The Best Work Book award
21171626 Spr Krishnakumar Rai

The Best Combat Engineer award
21171619 Spr Dipash Gurung

Overall Top Student award
21171707 Spr Upendra Rai

The Pass off Parade was followed by a curry lunch and some traditional and modern dances from the Training Party in the Lendrim Club. The 10 weeks have been a remarkable journey for 60 Training Party and a great start to their Army career as QGE Sappers. The permanent staff congratulated all the members of 60 Training Party on passing the B3 course and maintaining the Gurkha ethos and a fine standard of QGE Training Party.

The Training Party after a Non-Equipment Bridge build on their final exercise

News from 1 RSME

SSgt Bhimprasad Rai GLO

Each year the Construction Engineer School based at Chatham, Kent trains approx 8000 Royal Engineers students on various trades and career courses. In some cases the courses last up to 2 years. The school has a reputation for delivering first class training which is second to none through its highly qualified staff, excellent training, various sporting and welfare facilities.

The attendance of Gurkha Students in the Construction Engineer School has been constant throughout each year. It is the second stage of phase two students which they enter from a very different training environment, having completed their Basic Combat Engineering Training at Combat Engineering School, Gibraltar Barracks, Minley. With the progression of the course they manage to blend successfully with their British counterparts. During this critical period they need proper guidance in development on the course. The Gurkha Liaison Officer actively spends his time taking care of their problems and instilling Gurkha ethos and Kaida, which includes frequent briefings and get together functions. The number of Gurkhas on a particular course measures a fraction of the whole; nevertheless, they have always enjoyed the need for hard work and have been very successful on all courses. With ever increasing levels of competitiveness and each student striving to excel, a great deal of camaraderie develops within the course to achieve the best results. The figures below show the total tradesmen and results for the Queens Gurkha Engineers over the years 2005/6. It shows the amount of effort that our students have put into the courses to achieve their best results.

Total students	30
Military Plant Forman (MPF)	1
Top student	10
Pass with Distinction	5
Pass with Merit	6

Pass with Distinction also achieving top Student.

68972	SSgt Chetbahadur Thapa	MPF NO. 42
69796	LCpl Ramkumar Rai	B&C 2 -1
69828	LCpl Sherbahadur Chongbang	H&P 2 – 1
71144	Spr Josheph Subba	FTR ACR 0 - 2
71304	Spr Rajiv Chhetri	ELECT 0 – 2
71564	Spr Pankaj Rai	FAB 0 – 2

Each year, the worshipful Company awards from the Livery Company of London are presented to Artisan trades. Those who demonstrate outstanding skills in their Artisan trade across the whole United Kingdom. This year Best Tylers and Bricklayer of the year is awarded to LCpl Ramkumar Rai who has shown outstanding skills on Bricklayer 2-1 course. Similarly SSgt Chetbahadur Thapa has received the top student award on Military Plant Forman (MPF) No. 42.

Infantry Training Centre Catterick

Lt (QGO) Devkumar Gurung

Intake 2006 passed off on 13 October 2006. Under Secretary of State Mr Derek Twigg MP was the inspecting officer for the parade along with other high dignitaries. Without doubt recruit intake 2006 was blessed by fine weather throughout their training which is unusual for this region. Hot and humid weather (just like Hong Kong days) during training exercises and beautiful blue sky on the pass off parade was some evidence. Overall, another excellent year for Gurkha Coy and QGE.

Lt(QGO) Devbahadur Gurung, presenting his platoon to Mr Derek Twigg, Under Secretary of State

This year, 35 new recruits join the QGE to be our future sappers and in particular the overall champion intake 2006 Recruit, Nir Prasad Kedem is among them. They have left Gurkha Company, Catterick with much hope and anticipation to do well for the QGE and the Brigade of Gurkhas. There are some changes on the QGE personalities here at Catterick. WO2 Buddhi Bhandari (Nepal cup star of 90's) has been replaced by WO2 Yam Pun (Trail walker runner). Cpl Shushil Gurung arrived in the early part of this year as a section commander and Cpl Sanjeev Limbu came as a Physical Training Instructor. Chautari, which is the first of its kind in North Yorkshire, has been constructed with the help of all the sappers and permanent staff of the Gurkha Coy. It has been used quite regularly during summer by platoons and the Company for various gatherings and functions.

On top of my daily routine, I led the Battalion Shooting team for this year's Divisional (DIVSAAM) and Central Skill At Arms (CENTSAAM (Bisley) competition. Whilst the DIVSAAM team came second place, in the individual competition, we had excellent results (Cpl Lila individual Rifle Champion, my self runner up). During CENTSAAM one of the members from the 5 man team qualified for the Army 100 cup for the first time. I came 8th in the army pistol competition and also got selected for the British Army Combat Shooting Team 2006 (USA,) where I had some success. On top of shooting activities, I also led the Infantry Training Centre (ITC) Badminton team for the Div competition 2006 at Leconsfield, where the team had excellent results. The team won double and single events.

Among the best achievements, the Prince of Wales competition is the most memorable to me. It is the Commanding Officer's competition, where all the training companies from the Battalion enter their best 4 man teams. Each team member had to compete on the 1.5 mile run (Old BFT), Fire APWT, and run a 2 Mile Combat Fitness Test (carrying 36 lbs). This year our team (myself, Cpl Khim Thapa and another 2) won the team competition by beating the mighty Para Company.

This is my last year here at Gurkha Company, Catterick. I will be leaving early April 07 when my successor Lt (QGO) Tarabahadur Pun Saheb takes the post. I'm sure he will keep you all up to date with the sappers in Gurkha Company in coming years.

Jai QGE!!

The Regimental Birthday

LCpl Kishan

Every year on the 28th September, no matter wherever the Regiment is deployed or whatever job they are committed on, the Regimental birthday is always celebrated with great admiration, devotion and joy.

Cutting the Birthday Day Cake by the incoming and outgoing Colonels of the Regiment

This year too, the entire members of the Regiment gathered inside the beautifully decorated marquee set up in the ABLE Hanger for the celebration of the 58th Regimental Birthday. Also amongst the attendees were quite a significant number of former members of the Regiment, both British and Gurkhas. By midday, the whole hanger was fully "chock a block" all waiting eagerly for the formal proceedings.

At about 1230 hrs the event coordinator Capt (QGO) Dudhprasad Gurung drew attention to all present. Then the formal proceeding commenced with Capt D Robbins Adjt QGE reading the Comdt's Special Routine Order followed this by customary cake-cutting ceremony. The birthday cake weighing some 25 pounds decorated immaculately in QGE colour by Sgt Safin Tamang was then dissected jointly by both departing and incoming Col of the Regt, Comdt and Gurkha Major to the deafening applause and sound of 'Jai

QGE'. The proceeding continued with the presentation of the Bowring Trophy, the worthy winner of this most coveted trophy for 2005 was LCpl Bhabendrakumar Moktan of 70 Sqn and much deserved runners up went to LCpl Koshbahadur Gurung of 69 Sqn.

The purpose of the day was also to bid farewell to out going Col of the Regt Lt Gen Sir Anthony Pigott KCB CBE MA and Lady Pigott. The former is stepping down after ten years in the office and this was also a fitting occasion to welcome the new Col of the Regt Maj Gen DR Bill CB and Mrs Bill. Before presenting the leaving gift to Gen and Lady Pigott the Comdt QGE Lt Col N K Elliott MBE formally welcomed to all present on this special occasion then on behalf of the Regt he expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the departing Col of the Regt for his sterling contribution towards the Regiment during his tenure, in return Gen Pigott sahib delivered a very touching speech for the last time as Col of the Regt and he concluded his speech stating that the Regiment is rested safe hands after him under the kind guidance and auspices of Gen Bill saheb.

By this time all eyes were focusing towards the tent put up at end of the marquee where mouth watering 'Bhat' was laid on by SSgt Raju and his team and within an hour all swept out. To digest the heavy buffet consumed the hall was soon reverberate with popular Nepali songs followed this in no time by cultural dance by Gurkha children and young sappers. As usual guests were dragged on the stage led by Gurkha Major himself for so called Khusiko dance.

Thus the 58th Regimental Birthday celebration ended leaving quite a positive note for everyone as regards to the future prospects and development of the Regiment. So far, the achievements and accomplishments of the QGE in various deployments and exercises have been phenomenal and it's down to the individual members of the unit to maintain the standards set by our forefathers and leave and exemplary record for the posterity.

British Gurkhas Kathmandu

Sgt Jiwan Rai

2006 had been a momentous year for BGK. The implementation of GMAS has resulted in the flow of dependants from Nepal to UK and Brunei rising so that we have had to prepare for up to four flights per week, excluding routine inbound and outbound flights.

I was posted to BGK on 2 Jan 06 for ERE tour to take over the post of assistant (A/RSM) / Transit senior NCO/ RP Sgt. I am one of those lucky ones to have served the Queen from my home country. I am writing this article not only to say how interesting and fun it is here, but to highlight some of the activities that the ARSM gets involved in.

Col of the Regt and Memsaheb being welcomed by the Chairman of REAN, Maj Bhimbahadur Gurung at BG Kathmandu

Transiting soldiers and dependants was not easy, especially during the turbulent period in Kathmandu. A total of 4,883 were processed in 13 months, which needed a lot of proactive approach and liaison skills. No one was left un-boarded even during the civil unrest such as curfews and protests (Bandh).

Apart from transiting soldiers and dependants on Nepal leave, the ARSM has the responsibility for compassionate cases by providing the concerned with briefing on welfare and admin procedures and making sure that they have the correct documentation.

There are 51 serving personnel and over 300 LECs in camp. As the ARSM, the involvement in the day -to-day running of the camp is equally important. Dealing with security, guard training and discipline within the premises. BGN has limited sporting facilities, as OIC gymnasium and swimming pool these are the most used facilities and keeping it updated is crucial.

I am sure I would not be wrong in saying that the ARSM is QGE's Ambassador, as it is the only serving QGE tied post in Kathmandu. It is very handy to deal with any QGE matters via the ARSM i.e., passage of information, organising QGE gatherings, hosting QGE members whilst on duty treks and also getting things done for the Regiment as well as QGEA(UK) . I have had the honour to attend the 58th QGE anniversary where I met the ex servicemen of the regiment who were still proud to be a part of QGE. I offered a 39 lbs cake to celebrate the occasion.

The future of the post is uncertain due to the plan for relocation of HQ BGN to Pokhara, however I am confidant that all is being done to retain it.

British Gurkhas Pokhara

Capt (QGO) Krishnabahadur Gurung

[Capt (QGO) Krishna Gurung is currently serving his second tour at British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP) as Quartermaster, with responsibilities for MTO, Civilian Administrative Officer (CAO), Messing Officer, Fire Officer and Health and Safety Advisor. Besides these, as a senior Gurkha Officer in BGP, he often has to stand in for the Gurkha Major.]

During my first tenure there were lots of changes in the organisation of BGP and the GWS (Gurkha Welfare Scheme). This change was known as the C2 merge. In other words, it was an amalgamation of GWS and BGP. GWS offices situated in the North Compound moved to BGP (South Compound). During my second tenure, the C2 de-merge took place, with GWS moving back to its original location at North Compound. This again involved the moving of offices and stores to ensure that everything was in its right place in order to function better.

There has been a flow of senior QGE visitors, namely Lt Col N K Elliott MBE (Comdt QGE) and Maj (QGO) Dhanbahadur Chand (GM QGE) over the period 12 to 14 Sep 05. During their visit to BGP, the itinerary included a visit to AWC Kaski and following the Recruits Doko Race Trail, which they found exciting and enjoyed the work out. In the evening, on behalf of Pokhara based QGE personnel, Hon Maj Hukumraj Thapa (Chairman QGE RAN Pokhara) organised a function at Hotel Phewa Prince where there was an opportunity to have 'bhet-ghat' and 'gaph-saph'.

The recent visit of Maj Gen D R Bill CB (Col QGE) and Mrs Bill to British Gurkhas Nepal was scheduled from 03 to 09 Mar 07. Capt (QGO) Krishnabahadur Gurung accompanied them throughout their visit in Nepal. The itinerary included the opening of a school hostel, combined with an overnight stay

Gen Bill saheb and Memsaheb at the opening ceremony of Gilung High School

at Gilung VDC (Lamjung District), visiting AWCs Tanahun, Kaski and Dharan, and meeting old members of QGE RAN Kathmandu, Pokhara and QGE RAN Dharan. The hostel at Gilung was sponsored by QGE (Co-ordinated by Ex WO2 Chandrabahadur Gurung & Narendra Limbu - Ex QGE). Before the opening of the hostel, they were graciously welcomed by the villagers and school committee with the 'phulmala' and 'panche-baja'. At that time, General and Mrs Bill were dressed in typical Gurung attires and both of them looked as if they were proper Gurung and Gurungseni.

Due to the Tarai Bandh the General was unable to fly to the East by domestic air or travel by road. Therefore, he had to fly by Heli from Pokhara (Fulbari Hotel) to Dharan and then to Kathmandu. Mrs Bill stayed at Fulbari Hotel that night but followed the next morning, flying to Kathmandu by Yeti air.

We all met at Kathmandu Domestic Airport and made our way to the Hotel Himalaya.

During his visit to the East, the Col of the Regt visited 4th QGE Gurkha Major, Maj (QGO) Retd Dharmalal Thapa, Mrs Sabina and daughter Richa (family of Late Capt (QGO) Benuprasad Limbu) and cemetery of Sgt Balaram Rai and Capt (QGO) Benuprasad Limbu. He also visited Mrs Santa and children (family of Late Sgt Balaram Rai) in Kathmandu.

The General and Mrs Bill also attended various functions organised at various locations and met a lot of Ex QGE members. Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Gurung MVO, MBE (Chairman QGE RAN Kathmandu), Hon Maj Hukumraj Thapa (Chairman QGE RAN Pokhara) and Ex Cpl Jaya Kerung (Sec QGE RAN East) organised the functions at BGN Kathmandu, Pokhara (Hotel Barahi, Lake side) and Dharan Town respectively. They enjoyed very much meeting with them, sharing the experiences and refreshing the old memories.

The BGP Kalikhola Mess hosted a curry supper in honour of the General and Mrs Bill. All its serving, honorary and associated members with their families entertained them. Serving SNCOs who are posted to BGN (SSgt Khagendra Limbu (CoW(E)) and Sgt Bikash Rai (A/RSM) also organised an evening meal at Nepali Chulo at Kings Way, Kathmandu.

The last evening meal was organised at Nepalese Kitchen (Proprietor: Capt (QGO) Retd Giriraj Thapa Ex QGE) at Thamel, Kathmandu together with few other old and bold 'burho toli'.

Thus, their visit to Nepal concluded, they flew back to the UK / Italy with lots of unforgettable memories of the exciting moments they had in Nepal. They are looking forward to visiting Nepal again with their children on the forthcoming occasion of the QGE 60th Birthday in 2008.

Honours and Awards

CB:
Maj Gen D R Bill

MVO:
Capt (QGO) Dudhprasad Gurung

BOWRING TROPHY:
21169965 LCpl Bhabendrakumar Muktan

LSGC:
21168923 Cpl Jitbahadur Gurung
21168928 LCpl Pendulal Rai
21168972 SSgt Chetbahadur Thapa
21168975 Sgt Suryabikram Rai
21168981 SSgt Bhesbahadur Thapa
21168984 SSgt Manjitsingh Gurung
21168989 SSgt Jangabahadur Singjali
21168991 A/Sgt Kamal Gurung
21168992 A/Sgt Semanta Rai
21168995 Sgt Manbahadur Ale
21168999 SSgt Balram Pun
21169000 Cpl Bilbahadur Gurung

Promotees

Selected for promotion to Maj (QGO)

Capt (QGO) Dudhprasad Gurung

Selected for/Promoted to Capt(QGO)

A/Capt (QGO) Ekbahadur Gurung
Lt(QGO) Uttamkumar Sherchan

Selected for Commissioning

21167606 WO2 Tarabahadur Pun
21167607 WO2 Tulbahadur Ale MBE
21167921 WO2 Mohankumar Tamang

Selected for promotion to Substantive WO2

21168202 SSgt Ashokkumar Gurung
21168221 SSgt Ashok Rai
21168255 SSgt Jiwanpyara Limbu
21168531 SSgt Bishwabahadur Rai
21168756 SSgt Kamalbahadur Khapung Limbu

Selected for promotion to Substantive SSgt
Not yet announced

Promoted to Substantive Sgt

21168991 Cpl Kamal Gurung
21169127 Cpl Prakash Rai
21169270 Cpl Deepakkumar Shrestha
21169278 Cpl Buddhilal Gaha
21169284 Cpl Meenbahadur Gurung
21169288 Cpl Samir Thapa
21169289 Cpl Khadkabahadur Gurung
21169292 Cpl Dilkumar Rai
21169299 Cpl Bikash Rai

Promoted to Substantive Cpl

21169275 LCpl Arunkumar Purja Pun
21169282 LCpl Karnabahadur Gurung
21169337 LCpl Dilendra Rana
21169362 A/Cpl Sanjeev Limbu
21169398 A/Cpl Arjunbikram Tumbapo
21169590 LCpl Chandraprasad Lawati
21169617 LCpl Topbahadur Thapa
21169622 LCpl Laxmiprasad Okhrabu
21169658 LCpl Dipinkumar Rai
21169671 A/Cpl Khimbahadur Thapa
21169671 A/Cpl Ashokkumar Gurung

Promoted to Substantive LCpl

21170525 Spr Jangabahadur Thapa
21170526 Spr Yakthunghang Angbuhang
21170558 Spr Deepak Tamang
21170589 Spr Tilak Pun
21170630 Spr Ekabahadur Rai
21170508 Spr Ramkumar Rai
21169986 A/LCpl Dambahadur Pun
21170001 Spr Taitex Phlamachha
21170201 Spr Chandrabahadur Pun
21170220 Spr Rajendra Rai
21170237 Spr Arjun Thapa Magar
21170242 Spr Tularam Thaklung
21170251 Spr Suryabahadur Gurung
21170260 Spr Rojan Rai
21170268 Spr Harkaraj Rai
21170269 Spr Dilbahadur Gurung
21170295 Spr Pritam Thapa
21170297 Spr Nagendrabahadur Rana Magar
21170320 Spr Yubaprakash Manglak
21170332 Spr Karma Sherpa
21170336 Spr Bhijan Rai
21170353 Spr Deepak Gharti Magar
21170527 Spr Kanaiyalal Thapa
21170536 Spr Furtenji Sherpa
21170568 Spr Raju Sunuwar
21170616 Spr Gajendrakumar Gurung
21170534 Spr Pankajdev Rai
21170652 Spr Jayandra Garbuja
21170737 Spr Suresh Sherma
21170756 Spr Chetan Thapa
21170758 Spr Ganesh Rana Magar
21170759 Spr Sachin Limbu

COURSE RESULTS YEAR APR 06 – MAR 07 (TOP/BEST STUDENTS)

21169134	Cpl Gehendraraj Thamsuhang	ME FAB Cl 1
21169796	LCpl Ramkumar Rai	ME B&C Cl 1
21169828	LCpl Sherbahadur Chongbang	ME H&P Cl 1
21170737	LCpl Suresh Sherma	RE JNCO Cadre
21170924	Spr Dattahang Limbu	ME FTR ACR Cl 2
21170989	Spr Ganga Tumbahangphey	ME FTR ACR 2
21171144	Spr Joseph Subba	ME FTR ACR Cl 2
21171512	Spr Bhim Limbu	ME H&P Cl 2
21171564	Spr Pankaj Rai	ME FAB Cl 2

Note: 21169796 LCpl Ramkumar Rai was awarded `The Best Tyler's and Bricklayer of the Year 2006'.

21170585 Spr Dekraj Thapa
21170254 Spr Deobhakta Rai
21170265 Spr Begbahadur Tamang
21170286 Spr Subin Rai
21170289 Spr Hombahadur Gurung
21170324 Spr Tapkumar Rai
21170335 Spr Bijay Gurung
21170510 Spr Sangharsha Rai
21170537 Spr Maniprasad Gurung
21170545 Spr Bikram Gurung
21170553 Spr Ramesh Pun
21170565 Spr Manoj Lama
21170584 Spr Lokendra Tumbahangphe
21170615 Spr Prakash\Rana
21170627 Spr Durgabahadur Pun
21170637 Spr Shyam Gurung
21170252 Spr Tejbahadur Rai
21170330 Spr Deependra Gurung

NORMAL PENSION LIST FOR FY 2006/2007

RC 01/06 (05 – 13 Apr 06)

21168490 Cpl Agnikumar Thapa
21168783 Cpl Yambahadur Gurung

RC 05/06 (16-24 Aug 06)
21168050 Cpl Ghanbahadur Thapa
21168990 Cpl Gopal Rai

RC 06/06 (13-21 Sep 06)

21168983 Cpl Rajkumar Gurung

RC 07/06 (11 – 19 Oct 06)

21168847 Cpl Jagatbahadur Ale
21168755 Cpl Buddha Ghale

RC 08/06 (08-16 Nov 06)

21168260 Cpl Bagmani Rai
21168994 LCpl Ashokkumar Rai

15 Jan 07

21170083 Spr Bikaschandra Rai

Gurkha Families News

Mrs Nilkamal Thapa (GSW)

Namaste and Swagatam! Happy New Year BS 2064 to you all. At the moment, there are 185 QGE families, the majority reside in Invicta Park, whilst others live in Brompton and a few others live in rented houses/flats in and around Maidstone, West Malling, Aylesford and Barming. 70 Fd Support Sqn is in Gibraltar on Exercise 28 Shot and due back in May 07. We have a monthly 'Coffee Meeting' at Invicta Park on the last Sunday of each month. We also held a Coffee Meeting for the families living in Brompton.

During the last four months we managed to hold many successful functions and activities:

After a Coffee Morning

QGE's ladies have always been involved and are very forward in taking part in different activities, like charity fund raising (Race for Life), helping schools in various activities, games, 'Wives Exercise Day', visits etc.

A very exciting and adventurous **'Wives Exercise Day'** was held at Invicta Park Barracks. Well done to all the participants and congratulations to those that won a prize.

A group photograph of the QGE families taken after the Race for Life Charity Run

"Race for Life", the charity fundraising for "UK Cancer Research" was participated by 34 ladies (26 Gurkha + 8 British) in Mote Park, Maidstone. We donated a cheque for £560.05 to them, and thanks go to all those persons who were involved. We look forward to taking part next year also.

(19th & 20th Aug) - Invicta Park ladies took part in the **'Buddha Volleyball Shield'** in Aldershot. Well done to all the participants and congratulations to Mrs Junu Thapa (w/o Sirkha Bahadur Thapa) for the achievement of 'Best Player'.

Maidstone Mela Sep 06 – Maidstone Mela has a truly International theme with stalls preparing, cooking and selling their national and regional cuisine, stalls displaying crafts and displays of national dress. In the arena there is a full programme of multi-cultural entertainment! We have been taking part in Mela since 2005; this year it was celebrated by a group of Gurkha children taking part in the custom parade and performed Nepalese dances and Gurkha soldiers displayed martial arts.

Farewell to Former CO Memsahib - It was a special 'Coffee Meeting' gathering and a farewell bid to Mrs Mickey Dunford - Elliott (CO's Memsahab) in Sep 06. She was a lovely, friendly and helpful person. We are very sad, we all miss her and would like to send best wishes and good health to her and family. All the participants brought varieties of foods from home and we had a good time together and enjoyed sharing food with each other.

We gathered at the monthly event 'Coffee Meeting' and celebrated '**Dar-Khane'** (a day before the fasting of Teej) by having fun, singing, dancing and feasting.

We celebrated our festivals of 'Saraswati Puja' (a goddess of knowledge and wisdom) and 'Maha Shivaratri' (dedicated to Lord Shiva) praying and chanting bhajans in the Mandir. We also participated and supported an event 'Nepal Day' at North Borough School', organised by Capt Prem Ale.

We recently donated a cheque for £1010.68 to Monckton Ward (children), Maidstone Hospital. We sold 'momo' on Families Fun Day and 'New Year's Eve'.

Presentation of cheque to the Ward Manageress of Moncton Ward at Maidstone Hospital on 22 Mar 07

DUTY IN BUCKINGHAM PALACE QUEEN'S GURKHA ORDERLY OFFICER
By Capt (QGO) Dudhprasad Gurung QGOO 2006/07

Most readers will be aware that each year two QGOs are selected from the Brigade of Gurkhas for the position of Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officer, an appointment considered to be one of the most prestigious. As such, at some time or other during their service, every Gurkha officer dreams of acquiring this much sought-after appointment.

It was my honour to have been selected for this appointment in February last year (see last year's magazine) and the total number of QGOOs from the Regt now stands at 10, with the

Capt(QGO) Dudhprasad Gurung QGOO/GM Des

first member to hold this appointment being Maj (QGO) Narbahadur Thapa (Father of ex-Gurkha Major Hukumraj Thapa) in 1957/58. The preparation began in earnest and my first duty got underway in July 2006, when I knew very little what lay ahead for me. Eight months on, I am much the wiser about the role and the tradition of being a QGOO. So I thought it would be worth giving the readers and especially the potential (hunewala) QGOOs a brief overview of this unique appointment.

The tradition of attendance by the Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers on the Sovereign dates back to the time of Queen Victoria. The Queen was particularly impressed with the grandeur and devotion of the soldiers of British India that she became Empress of India under the Royal Title Act in 1877, and she sought the attendance of her Indian subjects. This tradition was to continue after the coronation of King Edward VII following the death of the great Queen.

In 1903, six King's Indian Orderly Officers were appointed to attend the Sovereign in a ceremonial capacity and were brought over to England for a limited period of six months. The year following a coronation, the number was reduced to four officers, two from the Cavalry and two from the Infantry. Subedar Majors Santabir Gurung of 2/2nd GR and Singabir Ghale of 2/3rd were two of the four Kings Indian Orderly Officers who formed part of the guard at the Lying-in-State of the King in 1910.

Attendance of Gurkha Officers upon the Sovereign provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit England. England was out of bounds to all Gurkhas and those who were permitted to attend duty in England had to uphold strict caste

and religious regulations. On their return from overseas they had to undertake the strict Hindu purification ceremonies and handsome payment to the priest and local officials. After years of petition, the then Nepalese Prime Minister Judha Shamsher JBR granted permission in 1936 for the Gurkha officers to take their turns in the King's Indian Orderly Officers scheme. Subedar Major Santabir Gurung had to wait for 25 years before he was permitted to return to Nepal and conduct the purification 'puja'. The scheme continued until the outbreak of war in 1939.

Since the re-introduction of this tradition by Her Majesty The Queen in 1954, the two Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers have been selected annually to attend upon the Sovereign at Investitures and other official functions at Buckingham Palace. The tour of the QGOO duty is now for one year, and at the end of their tour both QGOOs are invested by her Majesty The Queen to become a Member of Victorian Order (MVO).

The QGOOs continue to be employed on their primary duty, which is to attend the Sovereign at Investitures and other royal ceremonial occasions. Normally, twenty two Investitures are held each year in the State Ballroom of Buckingham Palace and each Investiture is conducted by HM The Queen or HRH The Prince of Wales. Up to 150 recipients attend each Investiture.

The QGOOs attend the Sovereign as she enters the Ballroom and they remain on duty on the dais along with five members of The Queen's Body Guard of Yeoman of the Guard. The Sovereign is supported by the Lord Chamberlain, the Master of the Household, an Equerry-in-Waiting, the Secretary of the Central Chancery of Orders of Knighthood and four Gentlemen Ushers (senior retired officers). The ceremony usually lasts for one and a half hours and throughout the proceedings, selection music is played by the Orchestra of the Band of the Household Division. Over one hundred visitors also watch the ceremony. All these, combined with the unique atmosphere in the Ballroom makes the duty uniquely fascinating and gives a tremendous sense of honour.

In addition to supporting the Sovereign at the Investitures, the QGOOs continue to appear at social and recreational events in support of the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT). The QGOOs also conduct their duties and maintain the tradition associated with a series of visits to Gurkha units and act as a source of information to the units. It also allows them to provide the Brigade Headquarters with impartial advice on current issues and concerns of the Gurkhas.

The QGOOs are an essential part of the fabric of the Brigade. They provide continuing link with the Sovereign and are hugely respected and admired by members of the Royal Household and the wider public. They have a significant impact in assisting with the raising of funds for the GWT.

Buro toli go for a short run!

Capt(QGO) Prembahadur Ale

During a conversation between Maj I H Adamson Saheb (then OC 70 Sqn) and myself in the Iraqi desert on Operation TELIC 6, we came up with the bright idea of entering a Buro toli team in the annual Trailwalker 100km endurance race across the South Downs, UK. The three QGOs in the Sqn, the OC and the QM signed up for the team. As former winners of the event, QGE had a lot to live up to, and whilst the old men's team didn't hope to win, they set themselves the tough target of completing the 100km in less than 15 hours, and raising a sizeable amount of cash through sponsorship for Oxfam UK.

After a promising start to training, the team suffered a series of set backs when Capt (QGO) Yogprasad Thapa, Capt Kesur, then the OC Saheb,were forced to reluctantly drop out after a series of injuries. Rajen Saheb and I roped in two fit young "volunteers" as replacements, and started a gruelling training program. In the final month leading up to the event, the team conducted some serious training, building up to 60km runs. The QGE first team also conducted the same training regime, but were usually in the bath by the time the Buro toli had finished.

The race itself took place on Saturday 15 July 06, and with much trepidation the Burotoli team set off just after 6 am along with the Brigade of Gurkhas fast teams. After the second check point the Buro team got a big boost, realising that we were actually leading the QGE first team. Unfortunately, it transpired, this was due to a little bit of "cartographical confusion" on behalf of the younger team, rather than a sudden burst of pace from the older runners. Both teams were very ably supported by the Admin crew, with a steady supply of energy boosting food, massages and pain killers to spur us on. Both teams were absolutely delighted to see GM Saheb along with other QGOs and some SNCOs including GM Baheni. Most importantly OC Saheb supported the teams from start to finish [*this was the least that I could do having got them into this pain – an embarrassed Ed!]*. After several hours of extremely hard running, the youngsters eventually made up their extra 20km detour and regained the lead at check point 9, but by now were some way off the winning pace, and certainly learned that fitness is not the be all and end all in Trailwalker.

Of the almost 450 teams in the event, the QGE Buro team finished an impressive 7th place, in a very respectable time of 14 hours and 40 minutes. Despite running over 120km instead of the traditional 100, the first team finished in 6th place just 30 minutes in front of us, which bodes well for future events. To complete the event in under 15 hours is no mean feet for anyone, let alone a 42 year old, but with a little training and a lot of determination it is very achievable.

QGEA Chairman's Letter

Philip Cook

Looking back at our Association over the last year, my overriding feelings are ones of excitement and optimism. After almost a decade of little growth in membership and a feeling that, with the Regiment's reduction in strength following its withdrawal from Hong Kong, our Association might have been heading for its twilight years, the signs on all fronts are now much more positive.

Perhaps the key to this is the support that the Regiment is giving the Association and I am particularly grateful to the Commandant, Nick Elliott, for all that he personally has done in this regard. The formation of the Regimental Council has, I believe, also been a contributory factor. This is headed by our President and, amongst others, membership includes the Commandant, the Gurkha Major and the Association's Chairman and Secretary. It reviews the activities of the Regimental Trust, the Perowne Trust and the Regimental Association and ensures that, as far as is possible in these operationally hectic days, the activities of these bodies are coordinated with and complement those of the Regiment.

As many of you will know, the introduction of the right for our Gurkha soldiers to remain in UK once they have left the Army resulted in the overwhelming decision by our members to encourage them to join the Association. Many of them have already done so thanks largely to some sterling work by Dhanbahadur Saheb, the current GM. This new group of members bring with them their particular needs and the Committee (which now includes the GM), together with the Regiment are looking at how these can best be met. Currently the emphasis is on trying assist in finding suitable employment for them where their particular skills can be utilised to the full and to everyone's benefit.

On the social side too we recognise that different groups tend to prefer different events and it is most encouraging to see how well all these are being supported. They range from the Spring Lunch which is primarily aimed at the retired officers, the London Dinner for those working and serving officers in the South East, the Army/Navy match at Twickenham for those of that inclination, the AGM/Annual Reunion for everybody and the Regimental Birthday, again for everybody but principally for those Gurkha members in the UK who are no longer serving.

Thanks to the generosity of many life members, we are now able to meet the financial obligations of the Trusts and the Association. These members paid a single subscription, often years ago, and have now agreed to make additional annual donations of, it was suggested, £10, to the Regimental Trust so that Gift Aid could be claimed. I would urge those members who have not participated to date but who would like to, to contact our Secretary, Jim Stuart, for another set of the necessary paperwork and I suggest that this time they fill them in and return them without delay! Your donations will help to ensure that we don't have to go cap in hand to other organisations when we next need funds for such things as portraits, crossbelts and other Regimental property, Regimental publications, welfare/charitable grants and support for such events as the birthday celebrations in Nepal and Hong Kong.

Last year saw the ending of General Tony's reign as our President. A more detailed appreciation of his contribution appears elsewhere in this magazine and all I will say here is that his and Felicity's support for all the Association's activities has been outstanding and greatly appreciated. The consolation for us is that General David Bill has taken over. He and Gay are longstanding members and great supporters of our family and I am delighted that David is now our head.

Finally, my thanks to your committee for all that they do for you. Duncan Pierce has done a marvellous job in developing and producing the Magazine for the last few years. My thanks to him for this and to Maxine for her support. I am also grateful to Iain and Tara Adamson for "volunteering" to take this task over. But without doubt, particular thanks are due to Jim, our Secretary, who really runs the whole show. His enthusiasm, patience and sense of humour keep this particular family together, functioning effectively and fun to belong to.

Best wishes, Philip 31st March 2007

QGEA AGM & Reunion 2006 – RE Headquarter's Mess, Chatham

Will Judge

I could tell from the gleam in Philip Cook's eye that January morning that he had something special in mind. It all came out over the conference room table at the Committee meeting: the time had come for General Tony Pigott to hand over to his successor as President of the Association, and Philip wanted something out of the ordinary to mark the occasion. Having got into the habit of building the annual reunions around lunch over a number of years, we concluded that a formal dinner night was the right way to pull out the stops.

So I headed back to Brompton Barracks for the first time in many years to spend some time with Larry Inge. The mysteries of the Corps' people processes have never been adequately explained to me, but somebody somewhere was on top of their game when they asked Colonel Larry to become Headquarters Mess Secretary. (I still think General Tony had something to do with it.) With Larry's help, a full Ladies Dinner Night in the Corps Headquarters Mess was held on September 29th 2006 to mark the handover as President of the Queen's Gurkha Engineers Association from General Tony to General David Bill.

An admirable band of 20-odd members (the author not included) managed to make it to the AGM, but proceedings really got under way shortly afterwards. One hundred and twenty-five members and their partners attended the dinner, filling the dining room satisfyingly to capacity. We were honoured to have as our guests Colonel David Hughes, Colonel BG, and his wife and the event was distinguished by the presence of some of our more distinguished members, notably General Sir George and Lady Cooper. But it wasn't all fun and frivolity, there was a healthy turnout from the serving QGE officers and the more recently retired too.

Philip Cook opened the formalities, painting a personal picture of his recollections of three different Presidents, Generals Perowne, Cooper and Pigott. General Tony then handed over the reins to General David, and LCpl Harka graced the occasion with some piping. To be honest, things went somewhat downhill from there, (not least when Rajen Saheb decided that it was to be a Guiness night). Rumour has it that a bar extension was paid for and that the last man to bed saw 5.00am. There were certainly a few sore heads at breakfast.

QGE Birthday Celebration – Kathmandu

Lt (Retd) Ravindra Sahi

Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Gurung MVO MBE and Capt J Wharton QGE are cutting the birthday cake

The 58th QGE birthday was celebrated by Kathmandu based members on Saturday 23 September 2006. The Cinderella Party Palace, adjacent to the British Camp was chosen as the venue. This event was also celebrated in different locations within Nepal, Darjeeling and Hong Kong. Being the biggest and most important event in the QGERAN's diary, it draws an increasing number of members each year.

On the day, the turnout was over 150 members, including wives and children. The event started at around 11.30 am with the Secretary reading out the Special Routine Order, issued by the Commandant, Lt Col N K Elliott MBE RE. It was followed by a cake cutting by both the President, Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Gurung MVO MBE and Captain J Wharton QGE, Head of Delivery Officer (formerly known as Garrison Engineer). Special thanks must go to Sgt Jiwan Rai QGE, Assistant RSM BGK and RQMS WO1 Palijar Tamang ex QGE for arranging a cake weighing about 30 lbs, which proved to be ample for the party. The senior member, Hon Maj Deobahdur Thapa also presented the life certificates to Life Members and the President welcomed and addressed the gathering.

It was an extremely interesting and enjoyable day for all members. Whilst both Geet and Natch went on for late into the day, at around 3.30 pm the members started to leave, already looking forward to meeting again next year. Finally, the QGE (UK) is thanked for its financial support towards the Day.

Remembrance Parade - Kathmandu

Lt (Retd) Ravindra Sahi

A Remembrance Day Parade (also known as Poppy Day) was held in the British Gurkhas Kathmandu on Friday 10 Nov 06. Both BGN military and civilian staff, as well as representatives from Regimental Associations from across Nepal attended the parade, including 15 members and their wives from QGERAN Kathmandu took part in this parade.

The President QGERAN, who is also the Chairman of Regimental Association Nepal laid a wreath on behalf of Regimental Associations Nepal, while the COS, Lt Col G M O'Keeffe RGR laid the wreath on behalf of members of the British Gurkhas Nepal. Similarly, Maj (QGO) Padambahadur Limbu MVO, GM BGK laid a wreath on behalf of the Brigade of Gurkhas, followed by Civil Labour Officer, Hon Maj Karnasher Tamang MBE ex QG SIGNALS on behalf of all Locally Employed Civilians in Nepal.

After the parade, there was some light refreshment for all attendees at the basketball pitch followed by a curry lunch for invited guests and Mess Members at the Kathmandu Mess. Representing the QGERAN, Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Gurung MVO MBE (President), Hon Maj Surjabahadur Thapa MVO (Vice President) and their ladies attended the lunch.

The Chairman RAN/President QGERAN laying a wreath on behalf of all Regimental Associations Nepal

Colonel QGE Visits QGERAN Kathmandu

Lt (Retd) Ravindra Sahi

Maj Gen D R Bill CB, Col QGE and Mrs G Bill arrived in Kathmandu from the UK on Saturday 3th March 2007 on a week long visit to British Gurkhas Nepal. Both of them were received by Capt (QGO) Krishnabahadur Gurung QGE (QM BGP) and Sgt Bikash Rai QGE (Asst RSM BGK) at the Tribhuwan International Airport. From the airport they were driven to the Himalaya Hotel which is situated at Pulchowk, Lalitpur.

The following day, both the General and Memsahiba were welcomed at the Yatri Niwas Mess in BG Kathmandu by members of the QGERAN Kathmandu. Keeping with Gurkha tradition, the President, Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Gurung MVO MBE welcomed the General Sahib by garlanding Khada. Similarly, Mrs Bhimbahadur Thapa welcomed and garlanded Mrs Bill. The ceremony continued with a welcome speech by the President, and in response, the General Sahib updated us about the Regiment and thanked everyone who was present. After the speeches, tipan tapan was served, starting with some hot and tasty aludam, and followed by a toast of whisky for good health, which was brought in by the General Sahib all the way from the UK.

With a total of thirty members and three QGE serving members present, the General Sahib and Memsahiba were able to meet many old and new members of QGEA Kathmandu. During the lunch, a sum of NCR 20,000 (Twenty Thousand) was also collected for SSgt Kheshnarayan Chhetri (21156004), whose house had recently been burned to the ground in Darjeeling.

It was a very enjoyable gathering and it was our great pleasure to host the Col QGE and his wife. JAI QGE!

Col QGE and his spouse at Yatri Niwas Mess, British Gurkhas Kathmandu during a Welcome Party. From Left: Hon Maj Surjabahadur Thapa MVO (Vice President), Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Gurung MVO MBE (President), Col QGE, Mrs G Bill, Mrs Bhimbahadur Thapa and Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Thapa

QGEA 58th Anniversary - Kalimpong

The late Hon Maj James Bhujel

I received this article shortly before Hon Maj James Bhujel died. I never had the pleasure of meeting him, but have always enjoyed reading his descriptions of the Kalimpong celebrations. Whilst saddened to read that he was unwell at this Birthday celebration, it was obvious how much pleasure he received from presiding over this event. I have included the article as received and hope that you enjoy it as much as I did. – Ed.

Last year, before concluding the party, we proposed to hold the 58th Anniversary on 30th September 2006, in Disha Hall, Kalimpong. Later it transpired that the date ear-marked was found to be unsuitable, because it fell on "*Kalaratri*", the very first day of Dasain. So, the date was brought forward to 28th September, 2006. The reason for suggesting 30th September (a Saturday) originally, was that on Wednesdays and Saturdays a very interesting "Haat" (market) takes place at the local "Haat Bazaar" here in Kalimpong, when we have the villagers and vegetable merchants thronging to the bazaar with their wares and fares, attracting huge crowds; virtually every household sends some member or other to add to the hustle-bustle, with the sole purpose of beefing up the stocks in their kitchen stores. The convergence of merchants from various ethnic groups in their local traditional dresses and costumes interspersed amongst the western attired locals makes these "*haats*" an interesting, informal and inadvertent fashion display.

To compensate for the minor deprivation, the members from Kalimpong selected "Deolo Tourist Lodge", as the new venue. Deolo Tourist Lodge, situated at the summit of Deolo Hill, (altitude of 1704 m) provides one, along with delicious cuisine, with the scenic ambience of rolling hills, spurs tumbling down to the rushing Teesta River meeting its mate the Rangeet, in a hurry to meet the Brahmaputra, ridges leaving your feet to meet the horizon and to merge with the snow capped Kanchenjunga (8579 m) in all its majestic splendour in the middle of a chain of lesser peaks, like a gigantic pearl pendant on a necklace dropped by some Goddess on her heavenly walks. As the eyes follow the chain in the northerly direction, the famous passes of "*Jelep La*" and the "*Nathu La*" with eight other mountain ranges wake up nostalgic stories told by old Tibetan "*Palas*" and "*Aamalas*" over "*Tongba*" and "*Momo*" and sometimes "*Bhotay Chia*" (Tibetan tea) stories of the glorious days of the Tibetan Trade- the Red-Indian-like attired Tibetan traders with caravans of merchandise laden mules coming to Kalimpong. Parts of Nepal and dear Darjeeling show themselves to remind us of our dear comrades staying there. Teesta Bazaar beckons enticingly from the valley below if one so much as happens to lower ones eyes.

This year's long and dreary monsoon left heavy losses, in terms of life and property, in its wake in the Darjeeling hills. Repair work on the highways regularly delays flow of traffic: sometimes traffic jams last for more than six hours! Our programme, scheduled to start at 1100 hrs was delayed to 1230 hrs when the first large contingent of members residing in Darjeeling town and surrounding villages arrived.

Hon Major James Bhujel greeted everyone with the outline of the day's programme, followed by observing one minute's silence in fond memory of late WO2 Bhagirath Limbu who left for his heavenly abode on 24th March 2006. Then followed a reading of the Commandant's Special Routine Orders by Hon Major James Bhujel. This year too, 21140936 SSgt Puma Bahadur Chhetri happened to be the oldest member present to perform the cake-cutting ceremony. A

toast was then proposed by Hon Major James Bhujel for the success of the Regiment.

Serving of drinks set the main function rolling, with gaph-saph. Conversation amongst the members was focused mainly on the regiment's achievement, such as WO2 Tulbahadur Ale being awarded an MBE on account of his outstanding and excellent work during OP TELIC in Iraq. The other piece of good news going round with the drinks was that of the Regiment having 19 commando trained Gurkhas under the QGE cap badge. Some recently retired serving members profusely lamented, narrowly missing their chances of becoming commando trained soldiers.

Despite transportation problems, we had sixty members present; nineteen members living in Siliguri and Kurseong areas unfortunately could not make it. We were however pleased to have WO2 Sunbahadur Rai accompanied by his wife in our midst. As the name goes, he is laden with gold and owns vast tracts of land, a very rich and successful businessman. Three debutants graced the occasion. 21136153 Cpl. Dambarsing Rai, who used to be very handsome with thick curly black hair, and entertain the members of the regiment with his Maruni Nautch on Kalaratris during the Sungei Besi era.

However, natural laws of ageing have had their say and considerably transformed him from Curly to Baldy! Use of spectacles, looking like magnifying glasses, certainly doesn't help in recognition, either! Better trust his memory to recognize you instead! The second debutant was WO2 Bejoy Kumar Mukhia, who, on the other hand is still evergreen; just as he was in BGTC as Head Clerk in 1984. The third debutant was Cpl. Edwin Tamang.

Bhat was served at 1430 hrs. Mouth watering delicacies quenched our appetites. For reasons unknown many members have become tee-totalers and vegetarians! Maybe on the so called advice of those superior intellectual barbarians called Doctors who think it their divine right to dictate food habits to us ignorant denizens of mother earth! "Veg-momo" has become a popular dish in this part of the world and found its way to the party table! Nonetheless, there wasn't any dearth of non-veg items for those who felt inclined to them. Around 1530 hrs a group photograph sealed the scene for memories' sake. A brief meeting concluded to celebrate the 59th Anniversary in Darjeeling on 28th September 2007.

This writer wasn't fit when the party was held and had to walk about with the aid of a walker. All the arrangements were made and executed by Lt. Arunkumar Zimba assisted by Hon Lt (QGO) Yacoob Limbu, WOl Ganeshbahadur Lama and WO2 Dipak Rai. I thank them all for their hard work and in particular their input of enthusiasm for making this function a great success. Special thanks is also due to Honorary Major Hukumraj Thapa who somehow managed to arrange cash and QGEA Magazines, to be delivered by Lt Ravindra Sahi, at a most difficult time of Chukka-Jam (Strike} in Kathmandu just a night before he left for Kalimpong.

Finally, on behalf of all the retired members domiciled in Darjeeling District, I would like to convey our heartfelt thanks to The Chairman, QGEA, for the generous contribution in cash made annually for the celebration. Jai QGE.

Briefing from Pokhara 2006/2007

Hon Major Hukumraj Thapa

QGE Day

The 58th QGE Day was celebrated on 24 Sep 06 in the Association Compound located at British Gurkhas Pokhara. Instantly, it served as a welcome and an excellent warm up party for Dasain festivals taking place the following week. This year, on the entertainment side, we decided to supplement our funds by having a few games of Tombola and a Raffles Draw instead of staging an expensive cultural dance show. The Tombola worked well because, after the games were over, many Burho Party had a chance to recount their time of Tombola nights they had in their Squadron gatherings or in the JRC NAAFI. A staff member from KAAA won the raffle prize, a huge 'Chyangra', a mountain goat which was herded down from districts beyond the Himalayas and which are only available during Dasain time.

"Cake Cutting Ceremony": WO2 Gunjabahadur Gurung in Nepali Topi flanked by Mrs Narbahadur Thapa, SSgt Bombahadur Gurung, Hon Maj Hukumraj Thapa & Capt Bhaktabahadur Rai.

The cake cutting ceremony was undertaken by the most senior member present 21131837 WO2 Gunjabahadur Gurung. My Mother aged 80, (w/o late Maj (QGO) Narbahadur Thapa) and a senior member Capt (QGO) Minbahadur Gurung MBE were also there. I was pleased to welcome in the party Capt Andy Gooch RE, ex Project Offr GWS, who happened to be on a temporary duty in Nepal to assist in recruiting. From Gurkha Language Course was Capt Miller RE now Project Offr GWS, Lt Thompson RE, Lt Grant RE and Instr SSgt Surya Thapa QGE. Amidst the function we also congratulated Capt Bhaktabahadur Rai with a 'phulmala' for being my successor as the Director of RWSP and to Sgt Gaubahadur Pun for being the successor to Capt Bhakta as the Eastern Regional Coordinator.

I also noted that this year the number present had sadly gone down to 90 which included wives and children. Only two years ago I wrote that some 200 members attended and there were above 80 ex QGE employed in BGP, GWS and KAAA. Now the number has gone down to 44 and ex servicemen resigning from BGP employment continues. The reason behind is the Indefinite Leave to Enter/Remain (ILE/ILR) in the UK. As a result, the move trend has shifted from Hong Kong and we now find most young retirees working in different parts of the UK, the Burho Party being there to secure visas for their children who are over 18. So, do not be surprised if someone somewhere comes to you and says Ram Ram Saheb or Namaste Memsaheb! I also mentioned in my short speech that in the future our format of celebrating the QGE Day in Nepal may need to be tailored to suit the minimum number of members attending. On the brighter side, I mentioned that there is a tentative plan to hold the 60th QGE Anniversary in 2008 in Pokhara.

All in all, we had an enjoyable day, a nice curry and a chance to renew our acquaintances. I would like to thank the committee members, especially Capt Krishnabahadur Gurung QM BGP, for their hard work in laying out the party, and on behalf of all the retired members of Nepal, I would like to convey our many thanks to the Chairman QGEA for the kind cash contribution made annually for Nepal celebrations.

Incidentally, on 23 Sep, a day before our own QGE Day celebration, my wife and I managed to attend the Kathmandu celebration. I met a lot of friends, in particular some very senior members of the Regiment who are seen in the photograph. There were five ex GMs QGE present namely Bhimbahadur Gurung (8th), Bhimbahadur Gharti Thapa (9th), Hukumraj Thapa (13th), Surjabahadur Thapa (14th) and Judbahadur Gurung (15th). As a matter of fact, on the remaining ex GMs, Dharmalal Thapa (4th) and Ichhabahadur Rai (10th) are living in Dharan; Sunar Gurung (11th) lives in Kathmandu; Tshering Lama (16th), Damar Ghale (17th) and Dalbahadur Limbu (18th) have settled in the UK.

Capt Andy Gooch RE being welcomed by Hukumraj Saheb

VISITORS

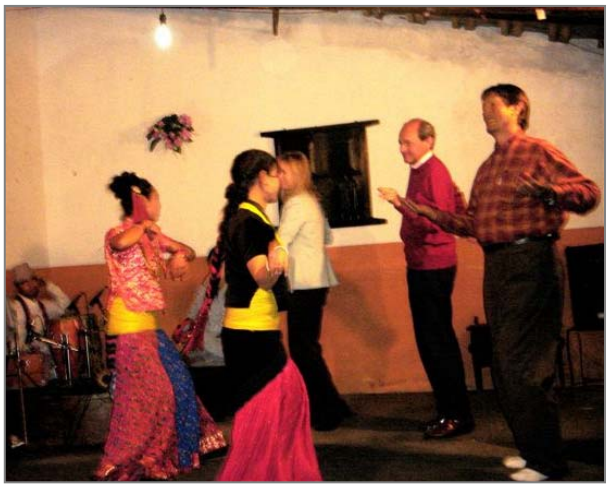
Not many visitors from QGE came through Pokhara this year. Capt Matt Commander and Pippa spent a few days over the Christmas and New year trekking around Poon Hill as part of their honeymoon. The couple were hosted at a dinner by the Ex QGE 'A Team' of Pokhara (Ref QGE Mag 2006) in the Steak House Restaurant at the Lakeside only to discover that Pippa was a vegetarian! Somehow I was unaware of the visit of Maj MacCallum OC 70 Sqn and his 2IC Capt Francis who were apparently on their Nepal trek and I was unable to meet them both.

The highlight of the year was the visit of our new Col of the Regiment, Maj Gen David Bill and Gay Memsaheb. Bill Saheb and Memsaheb arrived in Pokhara on 5 Mar 07 after their short stay in Kathmandu. While in Pokhara, they were scheduled to visit a school project funded by QGE and RE in Gilung village built by Pahar Trust and then fly to Dharan on 7 Mar. The 'A Team' and their wives had organised a dinner party in the evening of 5 Mar at Hotel Barahi at the Lakeside. Capt (QGO) Kusalsing Gurung, the eldest member of 3 TP 68 Sqn and Lt (QGO) Ranbahadur Gurung 'C' Tp of 68 Sqn were present. It was an excellent reunion party where both the Saheb and Memsaheb enjoyed the BBQ, dal bhat and later dancing on the stage with the cultural dance group. The cultural show programme normally is from 6 to 8 in the evening but for our VIPs they went on until late at 10 PM!

Standing: Capt (QGO) Manikumar Prodhan, Lt (QGO) Ravindra Sahi, Hon Maj Surjabahadur Thapa MVO, Hon Maj Lakpa Tshering Bhotia, Hon Maj Judbahadur Gurung, Lt (QGO) Bijayshor Rai, Capt (QGO) Kulbahadur Tamang BEM, Capt (QGO) Durgaprasad Gurung, Hon Maj Haribahadur Thapa, Hon Maj Hukumraj Thapa, Capt (QGO) Manilal Thapa, Capt (QGO) Jahansing Rai, Capt (QGO) Giriraj Thapa.

Sitting: Capt (QGO) Kusalsing Gurung, Maj Milanchandra Gurung, Capt (QGO) Lokbahadur Gurung, Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Gurung MVO, Hon Maj Deobahadur Thapa, Capt (QGO) John Tenzing Lepcha, Hon Maj Bharatsing Limbu, Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Thapa, Hon Maj Indrakamal Tamang.

Finally, we wish Bill Saheb and Memsaheb an enjoyable tour as our Col of the Regt and look forward to meeting them in 2008 again. As a matter of fact, we feel very proud of Bill Saheb who had served in the Regiment and visited Nepal several times and now to become our Colonel. I would also like to say thank you again to Saheb for presenting the 'A Team' with a bottle of fine scotch! Jai QGE !



An Update on the Kathmandu Burho Party

Major Milanchandra Gurung

In my report for the 2006 journal, I said I was optimistic and had hoped that the political and the social standing in Nepal would improve, and that my next report would be on a happier note. Alas, that is not to be. Queuing up to four hours for fuel, enduring six hours of load sharing everyday (apparently due to low water level), having to cover your nose and mouth to escape the foul smell of the rubbish lying everywhere (due to lack of landfills), getting stuck in traffic jams everywhere due to strikes, processions and demonstrations, and the possibility of getting mugged or robbed on the street has become the norm.

Despite the Comprehensive Peace Pact being signed between the Interim Government and the Maoists, the political situation is still in limbo. There are so many main and splinter political groups that we have lost count. And now everyone has joined the bandwagon and are asking for federal states or regional autonomy.

The Madhesis in the plains have intensified their pressure, and as I write, this there is a total "bandh" in the Terai, which means a complete standstill. Can you imagine the negative impact that this will have on the economy? The Constituent Assembly scheduled for mid June too is now looking dubious with everyone pointing fingers at everyone else. The leaders have certainly got their work cut out. I hope they have the vision and the resolution to straighten out the mess soonest for the sake of the country.

But do not despair, for the 'burho party' continue to brave the situation and hang in there (the younger ones are mostly either in the UK or spread around the world utilizing their skills they attained from serving with QGE). I enclose a short resume of the main changes from last year's Magazine of those that I am aware of, living in and around Kathmandu.

Major QGO Deobahadur Thapa. At 84, he still attends most QGE functions and still maintains a quick presence of mind. I had good chat with him when I recently met him at his grandson's wedding party.

Captain QGO John Tenzing. Head Clerk from 1968 - 1970. He has rented out his house to a Children's Foundation and all the children there call him "Baje".. He often talks about his "harrowing" time with Kalusing saheb and Aitahang saheb during 1963-67 circa! Only the veteran sahebs will know them.

Major QGO Bhimbahadur Gurung. He is still the President of the Bde of Gurkhas Regimental Association Nepal, President of QGE Association Nepal, now the President of The Himalayan Gurkhas Rotary Club and very much involved in project works..

Major QGO Bharatsing Limbu. Is still looking fit, healthy and cheerful and always relating interesting anecdotes from the past about the Regiment and individuals.

Captain QGO Embahadur Gurung. Currently living in Jawalakhel with his wife and also building a house in the Godavari area. He is, as always, keeping fit and trim and is seen in most social activities. His grandson is now serving in the brigade as a rifleman! Maybe he wants to prove himself as a sharpshooter like his grandfather!

Major QGO Bhimbahadur Gharti Magar. Remains fit and well and attends most functions.

Major QGO Sunar Gurung. Still rarely seen. Sadly he is suffering from arthritis.

Major QGO Indrakamal Tamang. Still living in Jawalakhel. I have apologized to him for getting his rank and caste wrong in the last issue. He was magnanimous and said, 'Don't worry, these things happen".

Captain QGO Lokbahadur Gurung. Met him last at the QGE birthday celebration and he was looking very happy and healthy.

Major QGO Lakpatshering Bhutia. Since his son got married in January, Lakpa sahib has slowed down a bit, however, when I asked him if he was going to sell off his 350cc Triumph Bullet, he said "No way"! Both his sons and new daughter-in-law work in HK.

Captain QGO Manikumar Pradhan. He is enjoying his retired life to the full. Still hobbling a little due to his ankle problem. Attends most QGE social gatherings.

Captain QGO Jogendrasing Gurung. JS sahib is still leading a very quiet and private life. His two daughters are now working as teachers. He enjoys teaching his grandson water-colours at home. His son coaches one of the leading Division One football teams in Kathmandu.

Captain QGO Jahansing Rai. Still looking very fit and trim and playing golf regularly. All his children are working in Australia and he with his wife are heading that way soon.

Major QGO Surjabahadur Thapa. Surja sahib completed building his new house - his pride and joy. He must have taken my hint from the last report and held a huge "house warming" party for all his close friends, family and many QGE sahibs. The house, given his talent for designs, is as beautiful as expected.

Captain QGO Damarmansing Gurung. He is still the Chairman of the QGE Association Nepal and gives close assistance to Bhim sahib on Regimental matters. He has moved into his new house near Surja saheb's.

Captain QGO Kumarsing Rai. He had been working in Bangladesh for a number of years, but I hear he is now in Kathmmandu.

Captain QGO Birbahadur Limbu. Not seen much these days. The last time I saw him was at Captain Bhakta Rai's son's wedding about six months ago.

Captain QGO Durgaparsad Gurung. Lives in Jawalakhel. I meet him once a year at the Regimental Birthday.

Captain QGO Manilal Thapa. Finished building his second house in time for his youngest daughter's wedding. She is married to an Australian policeman! An accomplished golfer who enjoys playing off 9 HC is now in the Royal Nepal Golf Course Committee.
Captain QGO Imanhang Limbu. Has a house in Kathmandu and is working in Afghanistan.
Captain QGO Kulbahadur Tamang. Has a house in Kathmandu and is working in Kabul**.**
Captain QGO Giriparsad Thapa. Owns a popular restaurant in Thamel that is often used by Regimental Associations for parties and gatherings. He is keeping himself fit and enjoys life in Kathmandu. He is a very good dancer and is often seen challenging the "marunees" on the stage during functions.
Captain QGO Bijayshor Rai. I have bumped into Bijay sahib several times and he looked very happy and content. His manpower company must be doing well.
Lieutenant QGO Ravindra Sahi. Ravi sahib continues to work in BGN as an EO in the Admin Group. He continues to do an excellent job as secretary of the Regimental Association, particularly informing QGE members whenever anyone from the Regiment is hospitalized and proposing and arranging social functions.
WO1 Khumbahadur Gurung. Is the chairman of Miteri Finance Company and doing very well. He is always there to help organize the QGE birthday party.
WO1 Arunkumar Dewan. Lives in Godavari and is running a successful educational consultancy.
WO2 Jagdish Rai. Runs a successful Trekking Company and lives in a cosy house in Godavari.
WO2. Kirtibahadur Gurung. Owns a successful hardware shop and is an active member of the QGE association.
WO2 Jogeshkumar Pradhan. Is helping his wife to run a Montessori Nursery School in Jawalakhel.
WO2 Gyanraj Rai. As always is very sprightly and active. Through his organisation he has helped a number of ex-servicemen with compassionate cases.
WO2 Siriparsad Gurung. An ever committed Regimental Association treasurer who gives a lot of his time to ensure Regimental gatherings are successful.
Major Milanchandra Gurung. I am no longer working full time with the Esther Benjamin's Trust. Besides domestic and personal commitments, the one hour journey by car, one way, was taking its toll. For those of you who have not experienced driving in Kathmandu in the last two years - it's suicidal!! Anyway, I am still a volunteer so if anyone is interested in helping the foundation please browse the website: www.ebtrust.org.uk

On a sadder note, it is with regret that the demise of Hon Major Amarbahadur Gurung and Mr Gilbert Singh is reported. AB sahib was the 2nd Gurkha Major of the Regiment, a formidable personality and very much respected throughout the Bde. Mr Singh was the GCS Headmaster in the early eighties at Perowne Barracks. He was quietly spoken, always a gentleman, and much respected for his talents in education, art and social activities.

Finally, I hope the sitrep from Nepal for next year will definitely be on a happier note. Jai QGE!!

Pahar Trust Nepal - Gilung Hostel
Lamjung District, West Nepal

WO2 Narendra Limbu ex QGE Pahar Trust Nepal

Gilung Village school hostel was funded by The Queens Gurkha Engineers (QGE) and 36 Engineer Regiment and was built as a joint venture between Pahar Trust Nepal (PTN) and Gilung Village in 2004. It was originally initiated by the then Commanding Officer 36 Engineer Regiment and Commandant QGE, Lt Col DR Burns OBE and the Gurkha Major, Major(QGO) Judbahadur Gurung.

It has 4 spacious rooms to accommodate 56 students and 4 hostel wardens. An adjoining building has the kitchen and dining room complete with furniture. It has also 4 ablutions with necessary water supply facilities. The total construction cost was £14,000. Maj Gen DR Bill CB, Col of the Regt Sahib and Memsahib officially opened the school on 6 Mar 2007 during their recent visit to Nepal. Both WO2s Chandrabahadur Gurung and Narendra Parsad Limbu of PTN attended the

ceremony. The PTN would like to thank all members of QGE and other British Squadrons in 36 Engineer Regiment who were involved in fundraising for this very special project. PTN also extends its thanks to Capt Krishna Gurung QM BGP Sahib for escorting the VIPs to Gilung and for his excellent administration. Gilung is a typical Gurung village in Lamjung District and it takes about five hours drive by jeep from Pokhara over a very scary, bumpy, muddy and dusty trail!

Famous Son – Hon Maj Hukumraj Thapa

I believe that the idea of starting a 'Famous Son' feature was sown some time ago, with my predecessor managing to sign up Hon Maj Hukumraj Thapa to write about his time in the Regiment. Sadly, I have had to shorten it slightly, but otherwise it appears as received. I found it a fascinating record of Regimental life, and I know that those serving alongside Hukumraj Saheb, as well as our more recent members of the Association and Regiment, will do likewise – Ed.

Hukumraj was one of the first line boys to be born in Kluang family lines, at a time when the Regiment was in the process of establishing itself. His mother says that they lived in tented married quarters, with officers being allocated two tents. His sister Chandrakala, now living in the USA, and younger brother Giriraj, who retired as Capt (QGO) from QGE, were also born in Kluang. Another brother, Tilakraj, whom retired as a WO2 from QGE, was born in Hong Kong. His father, then Lt (KGO) Narbahadur Thapa, ex 6GR and later to be the very first QGOO from QGE in 1957 and GM Transit Camp Barrackpore 1960-62, was one of the first batch of officers to be transferred into QGE in 1947 with family permission. His grandson Sgt Mahadev Thapa from his eldest son Padambahadur was the first third-generation sapper to join the Regiment.

Late Maj Narbahadur Thapa MVO, Mrs Harimaya Thapa, Front right Hon Maj Hukumraj Thapa, Left, Capt Giriraj Thapa, Standing left to right WO2 Tilakraj Thapa, Mrs Chandrakala Cranse (USA), Havildar Padambahadur Thapa 3/4GR (F/O Sgt Mahadev Thapa).

Hukumraj's first schooling began in 1955 in Sungei Besi when the Regiment was able to establish its own school and teachers. He then continued his schooling in a private English School in Barrackpore, Calcutta, and later in Bandipur High School in Nepal. He joined the QGE as a sapper in 1964, retiring as GM in 1992. He then joined the Gurkha Welfare Scheme and held the prestigious post of Director of Rural Water & Sanitation Project for 13 years. Now retired from GWS, he continues to be the QGERAN Representative and Chairman QGE in Pokhara and was instrumental in the successful organisation of the 50th QGE Anniversary celebration held in Pokhara in 1998.

In 1964 he walked for 7 days from Bandipur with his Gallawala recruiter to Paklihawa to join the British Army. The Recruiting Officer was Maj Alistair Langlands who automatically allocated Hukumraj his unit – The Gurkha Engineers. When Hukumraj joined the GWS in 1992, Alistair was the Rep for KAAA who would consult with Hukumraj regularly for any engineering advice!

No 1 Sect at TDBG,Sungei Patani, 1964

Standing: Rects Jaibahdur Limbu, Lachhuman Rai, Maita Limbu, Milanchandra Gurung, Muktasing Gurung. Sitting: Rects Hukumraj Thapa, Dharmasing Gurung, Cpl Dalbahadur Rana, Rects Bhanbir Gurung, Ramkumar Tamang.

As a recruit in 1964 in Sungei Patani, he found army training great fun, and feeling much more at home when he met Milanchandra (Ref QGE Mag 2001) who had joined directly from Singapore as a Line Boy. Hukumraj and Milan knew each other from their early days in Sungei Besi and somehow they were both in No 1 Section, No 6 Platoon of No1 Company at TDBG. This section was the envy of all because few could challenge them in section competitions. Both were trained as Surveyor Engineers at RSME, and both played football for the Regiment, bringing home the Nepal Cup for the first time in 1974. After 16 years of service both Hukumraj and Milan (the only two out of some fifty recruits in the 1964 intake) were commissioned to Lt (QGO) on 29 Sep 1980.

In 1965, after TDBG, it was time to be trained as a sapper in Kluang. During the training he was met by Dame Flora Macleod on her visit in 1965. She described proudly how his Father and Capt Miller, along with piper LB Tamang had presented her with a kothimohra khukri in 1956 and that it remained displayed at a prominent place at her Dunvegan Castle *[it can still be seen there today – Ed]*. Hukumraj's engineering skills were tested progressively in his career, firstly in the Cbt Engr B2 in Kluang, and then followed by the

hard and long Cbt Engr B1 (nick named QGOs course, as in the early days any one who qualified as B1 was a definite candidate for QGO commission) and Fd Sgts courses in RSME in the UK. All these courses especially the latter two were a great challenge for him in competing with his British colleagues from UK/BAOR and proving that Gurkha sappers were as good as or better than them.

On completion of Cbt Engr B3 he was posted to A Tp 68 Sqn under Lt (QGO) Rate Limbu and Capt Tony Kerr. Maj Hank Bowen was the OC at the time. Like all Gurkha officers of the era, Rate Limbu was a very strict disciplinarian. In his welcome interview he remarked that 'line boys' were cunning, selfish and idle. 68 Sqn was deployed on an operational tour in North Borneo in late 1965 for 6 months. A Tp was located in Bokah Camp, a border post occupied by an Australian infantry company in Bau district. The main task was to improve the track leading to the camp from the main road, with the additional task of constructing half a dozen heli LZs in deep jungle very close to the enemy. The accommodation for the 6 months was Bowen Bunkers for all, but later when the insurgency was nearing its end, timber 'bashas' were built for the resident company. Rations, including live chickens were air dropped periodically on a small make-do basketball court. In most cases the parachute would not open, miss the basketball court and crash in the surrounding jungle. Often a search party was detailed to recover the goods. Trying to catch escaped chickens was real fun, and sometimes took days! Their final task was to demolish bunkers and 105 pits. Hukumraj recalls that while destroying these frontier posts located on a very narrow ridge, he enjoyed demolishing the last target, normally the 105 pit along with a few bunkers. It had to be timed precisely because once the ringmain fuse was ignited, one had to quickly jump into the waiting Belvedere helicopter (mini Chinook of those days) and observe the big bang from the sky.

Upon returning from his first leave in spring 1968, Hukumraj found himself preparing to attend a survey engineering course in the UK. It was going to be a challenging course because there were less than half a dozen Gurkha sappers who had qualified as surveyors or design draughtsman. In those days the Commandant used to meet all individuals who were about to attend UK courses. As such Hukumraj arrived at the RHQ 15 minutes before the appointed time to report to the GM Maj (QGO) Dhojbir Limbu. Soldiers were very frightened of approaching the GM, RSM and British officers and would in fact change their direction or hide if they glimpsed one in the distance. He found RHQ very quiet with no one in their offices. The Comdt, Lt Col G G Roach saw Hukumraj waiting outside the GM's office and greeted him, "Ah, Spr Hukumraj, son of Narbahadur, come in my son". Not being Kaida, Hukumraj was not comfortable sitting in one of the Comdt's armchairs. Having looked for the GM and leaving RHQ having not seen him, he was surprised to find a search party looking for him. Back in RHQ, before he could explain what had happened earlier, the GM nearly killed Hukumraj with his cane, pushing it into his stomach. In the autumn of 1969 Hukumraj boarded a RAF VC 10 at Changi, Singapore for a long haul flight to the UK, with a stop over at RAF bases at Gan and Bahrain. Pre UK English courses at TDBG in Sungei Patani and Beaconsfield gave Hukumraj the opportunity to meet other members of the Brigade of Gurkhas. Beaconsfield was a good time to explore the UK and Hukumraj found watching UK Div 1 football at weekends very interesting and a good place to catch some English phrases from the fans. Things were cheap and for one pound he could buy 20 pints of Double Diamond in the NAAFI, or travel to London with a cheap day return ticket, watch football for less than 10 shillings and have a nice Indian Curry in London for another 10 shillings. His salary was just over 28 pounds and he was allowed to draw 7 pounds every Friday.

In RSME at Brompton Barracks Hukumraj found himself very lonely as there were no other Gurkhas there. Visit by Nick Tomlinson saheb was always very encouraging. Soon he got used to living with his British colleagues and quickly learned about the ways of dealing with them, which included late night work at weekdays and pub crawling at weekends. In those days there were no computers or hand held scientific calculators. All calculations were done with the help of Shortrede's and Chambers' Seven Figure Mathematical Tables which required a lot of patience. Hukumraj completed the 5 month long course with a very good grade. He returned to RSME in 1974 to find that the security situation had gone up to high alert, there were no shillings any longer, and the cost of beer had shot up. There was, however, more than a troop worth of Gurkha ranks attending various trade courses. It is notable that after 1973 John Edwards, then Comdt QGE, opened the door for UK courses across the board, allowing Gurkha Sappers to be recognised by the rest of the corps.

As a surveyor, Hukumraj was involved in several projects in Malaya and in Hong Kong, including major roads projects in Luk Keng, Castle Peak Field Firing Ranges and Yun Tun Youth Training Centre. He was an all round sportsman, playing football and badminton for the Regiment, and won the Nepal Cup a few times. He was also a handy crewman to John Edwards and Philip Cook in their dingy sailing races at Gordon Hard and Stone Cutters Island. A real UBIQUE sapper, but sports and duty clashed at times, such was the occasion when one day the SSM's high hukum was confusing, and Hukumraj was absent, sailing with John Edwards, OC 68 Sqn, for the weekend. Spr Hukumraj was severely admonished the next morning by Gurkha Captain Bhimbahadur Gurung (nick named John Wayne). That was in 1970. In 1992, Maj Hukumraj and his wife, who were leaving the Regiment on retirement, were dined out by Brig John Edwards, who was the Chairman of the Hong Kong Yacht Club.

In the spring of 1971 after 7 years of service Hukumraj was promoted to Lance Corporal (fortunately subsequent promotions were more rapid). Being an NCO and all round sportsman he found his responsibilities more challenging and had to work harder to manage his time accordingly. The daily routine was quite hectic, starting with Nepal Cup training for about 2 hours. The lunch vehicle was then caught to join the troop project somewhere in the new territories border locations, returning back for training or a match, followed by cold late bhat and then planning for the next days work with the troop seniors until late at night.
In the mid 70's as a section commander on various exercises planned by Mike Gaffney, Hukumraj was involved in MGB and mine field clearance at Maipo, laying reserve demolitions at Tailam, constructing aerial ropeways at Taipo, search operations in Saikung, riot control at Sek Kong, and joint exercises with the police, when his section were airlifted to Tuen Mun to embark into an armoured vehicle with local police to search for an armed gang. One memorable exercise concluded with a final section and company attack in Lantau as part of the Infantry Role. One commitment abroad was Ex Palm Frond in Brunei, later named Ex Jungle Trooper, which involved jungle training and minor engineer projects.

In 1980 he was posted to 1 Tp 68 Sqn as a SSgt, and later to Boat Tp serving under David Bill, now Maj Gen/Col QGE, as his Tp Comd. Having trained with the Royal Marines at Poole on speed boat operations he was promoted to Lt (QGO), becoming the Boat Tp QGO. Hukumraj was one of the first Tp QGOs to move to Kitchener Barracks with the

newly formed 69 Sqn in early 1981, holding the responsibility of I Tp Comd. With Bill Chesshyre and later John Baker as OCs, and Sunar Gurung G/Capt, Kitchener Barrack was converted into a comfortable home. In late 1982 Hukumraj was posted back to D Tp, 68 Sqn. With Maj Andrew Tuggey as OC, the Sqn deployed to Brunei on a jungle exercise. Upon returning, Hukumraj became Asst Trg Offr, with Peter Gilbert and Peter Wall as Trg Offrs in 1983-84. He was promoted to Captain (QGO) and from 1985 – 87, he was the Senior G/Capt of 69 Sqn, taking over from Capt Kharkajung Gurung. James Anderson was the OC, and the Sqn had a marvellous time on Ex Famous Grouse in Scotland, and a 4 months stint in the Falklands. In Scotland Maj Anderson praised highly the malt whiskey and highland water to go with it, however both OC and Senior G/Capt were bedded down for two days with high fever on their initial visit. And in the RAF Mess at Kelly's Garden in the Falklands, both were baptised with a deadly hot chilly/vodka drink called 'Huby". The tradition was copied and implemented in the 69 Sqn SNCOs Mess in Kitchener Barracks, where all new comers were welcomed by a thimble of deadly 'Huby". Maj Anderson handed over to John Durance, who Hukumraj had played football with in their early days in Hong Kong. The highlight of their tour together was in 1986 when QGE, represented by 69 Sqn, was given the Freedom of the City of Rochester. Between 1987-89, Hukumraj was the G/Capt of 67 Sqn in Hong Kong, serving with Len Chapman and later Peter Blundell as OCs.

On 20 Oct 1989 Hukumraj took over as GM QGE from Kharkajung. The 13th GM, Hukumraj had a very successful and enjoyable tour as a GM, serving with John Baker and later Colin Peebles as Comdt. He played a key role in the Brigade when Gurkha pay scales were under review and ensured the Regiment kept pace when Options for Change was going to affect manpower considerably. During his tour he witnessed the Regiment reaching the Nepal Cup (every GM' pride) finals in 3 consecutive years, winning twice, but sadly runners up in his final year. In early 1991 Hukumraj accompanied Gen Sir George Cooper, Col of the Regt, to Nepal on a duty visit. On their visit to GWS projects, the Brigade Welfare Officer (BWO) Maj Richard Willis (7 GR) and Hukumraj discussed engineering issues. The BWO, realising the engineering skills that Hukumraj possessed, did not waste anytime in inviting him to take up a post in GWS on retirement. In April 1992 Hukumraj handed over as GM to Surjabahadur Thapa, another line boy of the Regiment. Hukumraj was promoted Hon Lt (GCO) and was dined out formally from the Regiment in the British Officers Mess.

In the GWS Hukumraj was quick to adapt to his new job. He attended several national and international conferences, travelling around Asia, Europe, Africa and South America, presenting papers on development. In early 1995 he successfully completed a post graduate diploma on Water Quality and Community Development at the University of Surrey in Guildford and University of Cali in Columbia. He produced new manuals and procedures, introducing the 'step-wise approach' to implement projects, where communities had the responsibility for decision making, ensuring that they felt that they owned the project and had the skills to maintain the systems. Hygiene & sanitation became an integral part of projects and villagers started building house hold latrines. He also introduced 'simple drip irrigation' at low cost and income generating technology to grow vegetables even in the dry season. His last venture (which can be read about in the 2006 magazine) was the introduction of horizontal drilling to extract water. IN recognition for his outstanding work in the GWS, he was the very first officer to be promoted to Honorary Major in the Brigade. Maj Wylie Carrick, BWO wrote, "Hukumraj continues to make an outstanding contribution to the success of water projects. He is dedicated to achieving the best results and continues to demonstrate the breadth of vision required to improve and adapt projects to meet the rapidly changing social and technological changes. This is an outstanding achievement and reflects greatly on the managerial ability of Hukumraj". Col P R Sharland, Director GWS/Comd BGN, remarked, "The reputation and achievements of Hukumraj are legend, and understandably so. He has been responsible for developing and expanding a quite outstanding project, through sheer commitment and inspired management. We are extremely fortunate to have an officer of his calibre at the helm and I have every confidence that he will be able to take forward the ambitious and challenging Phase 4 programme during these difficult times. Well done".

Hukumraj retired from the GWS on 31 Oct 2005. Extracted from the farewell note is, "…the contribution given by Hukum saheb was of gold standard throughout his 13 years service with the GWS and that his 41 years of distinguished service to the British Crown is an immense record which can be hardly matched by anyone".

Hukumraj and his wife Parvati live in Pokhara but visit their home village on occasions. He has 3 daughters and one son. His eldest daughter Bhagwati is married and lives in Hong Kong and has a son named Rajul. 2nd daughter Geeta is a medical doctor who is married to a doctor and lives in Connecticut, and his youngest daughter Jayanti is working as a nurse in Vermont in USA. Amrit Raj, his son and the youngest in the family did not join the army but is studying A Levels. His mother also lives with him. Hukumraj welcomes all visitors from QGE to Pokhara and he says he has plenty of time to entertain them.

'Retired and Relaxed'

The Regiment and Association in Action

Commando Section in Afghanistan

69 Sqn in Belize

70 Sqn in France

69 Sqn in Belize – Ex SHELLFISH

70 Sqn in Gibraltar

70 Sqn with the French Foreign Legion in Maidstone

Mrs Iris Bolton opens the Perowne Room in the Corps Mess

Farewell from the Regt to Lt Gen Sir Anthony and Lady Pigott

Col and Mrs Hayes (Col BG) with Capt (QGO) Dudhprasad Gurung

Farewell to the Commandant

Gurkha wives in Teej

QGOs Gathering

Young Trailwalker Team

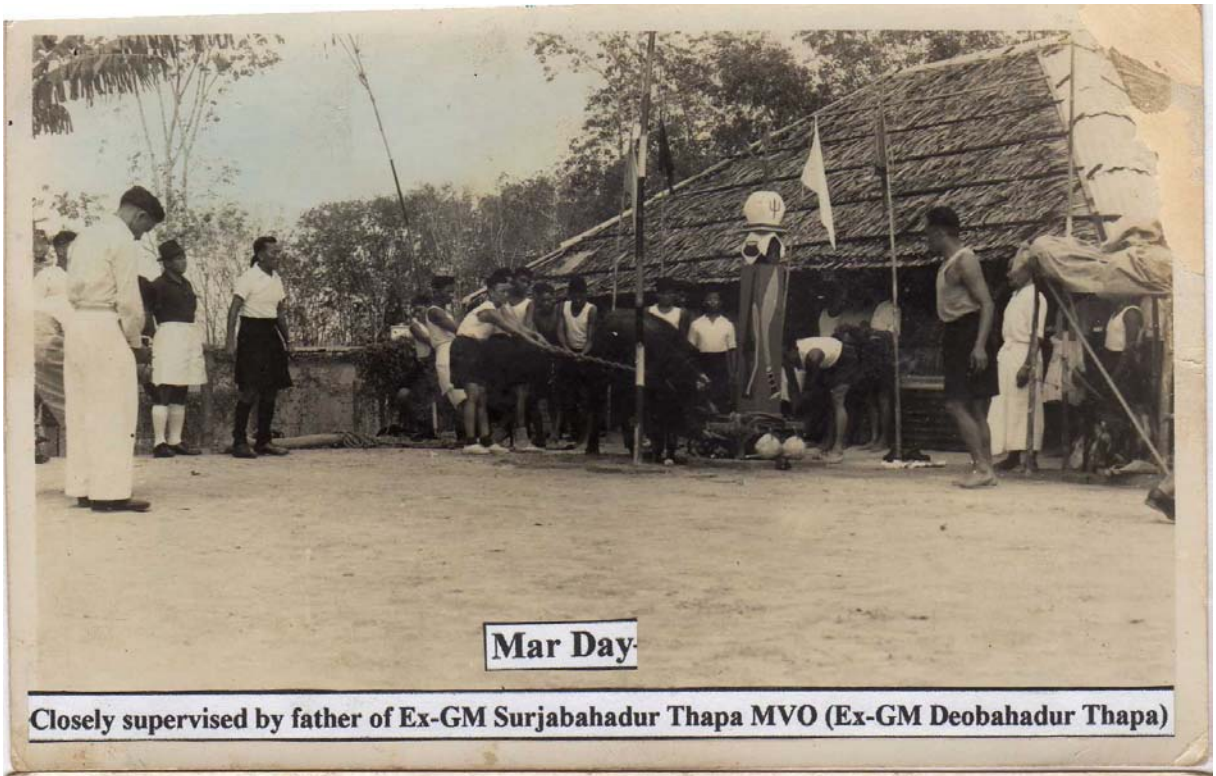
Not so Young but still ek dam Chito Toli

QGE 2006 Intake with Commandant, Gurkha Major and RSM

Ex QGE Toli Bhela

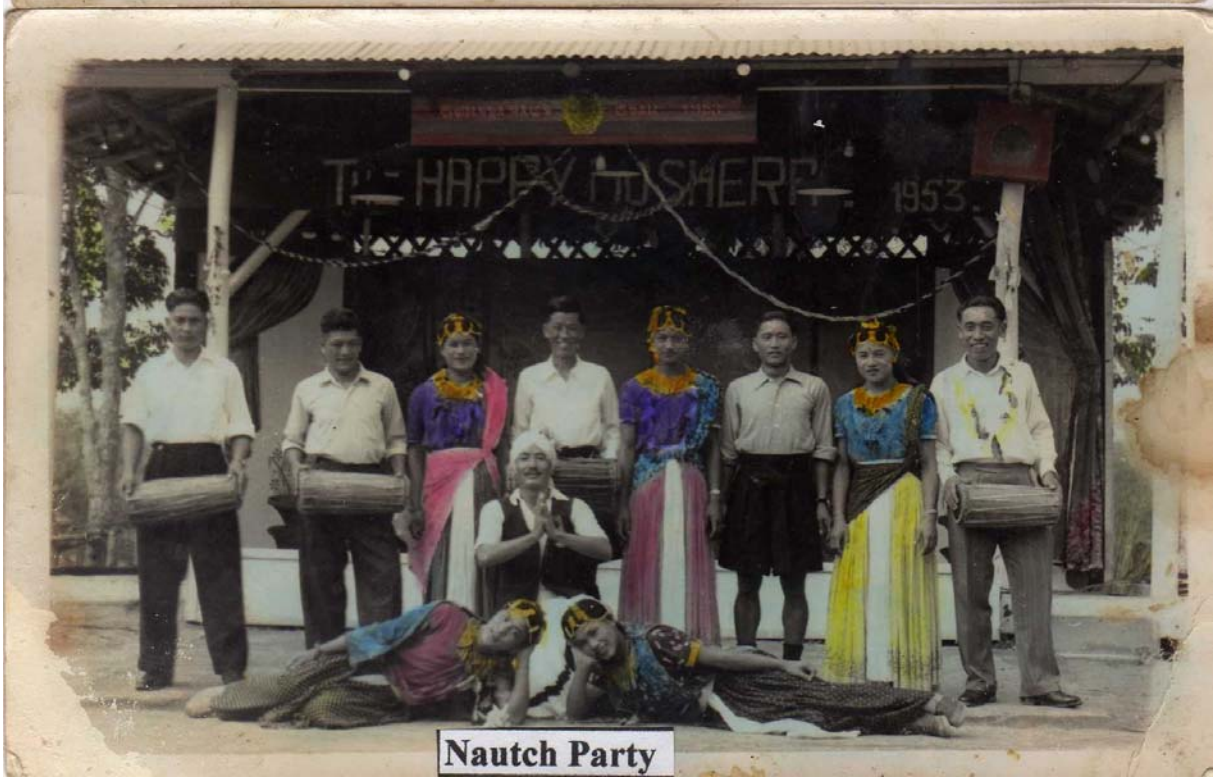
LCpl Harkaraj

Archive

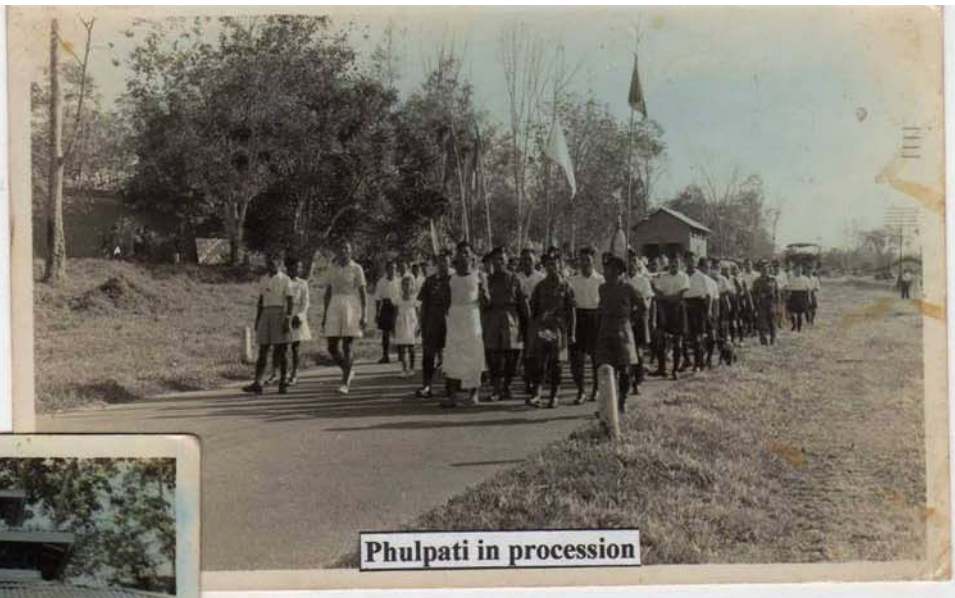


Mar Day-

Closely supervised by father of Ex-GM Surjabahadur Thapa MVO (Ex-GM Deobahadur Thapa)



Nautch Party



Phulpati in procession

British Officers in Day Muffti

Dashain 1953, Kluang

Firing Party

Closely supervised by father of Ex-GM Hukumraj Thapa (Ex-GM Narbahadur Thapa MVO)

Bits and Pieces

A Late Adjournment in the House

Capt (Retd) Sandy Reeve

It was with a certain sense of trepidation that I accepted the invitation to the QGE Christmas dinner at the House of Commons, or at least it would have been had it not been the early hours of the morning in the Mess at Chatham after the QGEA Dinner. In the cold light of day however I realised that as the most recently retired QGE officer without a job, and with the exhortation to network, network, network, ringing in my ears I should place it in the diary.

I had been informed by a particular recent Squadron Commander (who holds editorial sway over this publication) that it would be a very friendly crowd who would make everyone very welcome. Having missed pre-dinner drinks in a local pub I was very pleased to bump into the self-same former OC at the door to the house, and indeed upon reaching the bar, I immediately ran into the erstwhile Commandant who had managed to escape main building for the evening.

Our host for the evening was Mark Lancaster MP who due to fond recollections of his time with QGE in Hong Kong, had kindly arranged for us all to dine in the House. This allowed us the privilege of using one of the Commons dining rooms, which due to the excellent turn-out, we filled with over 60 people sitting down to supper. While I am sure the House of Commons is subject to the same strictures of contracting out of services that has become a feature of the Army, it was reassuring that we were treated to an excellent meal and very efficient service. After supper we were given a brief insight into the life of a young MP and are now aware of the procedure for initial entry into the House upon appointment. A very rigorous process, readers will be relieved to hear!

After a few more drinks in the House the evening progressed into town with a procession of individuals playing follow my leader to destination unknown. Somehow a sizeable group congregated in a particular bar, the name and location of which somehow escapes me, and as I departed in search of a taxi, there seemed to be considerable impetus to push through until dawn.

The organisation of an event comprising such a range of people from across the QGEA was a Herculean task. Considerable thanks must go to Jerry Williams who coped admirably with an expanding and contracting attendee list and managed to collect all payment even when it came in the form of Afghan goat futures!

Bureaucratic cock-up Spotted by Hamish MacLeod in The Times Friday 11th August 2006

Question: Is there an historical example of a massive bureaucratic cock-up, or is this a modern phenomenon?
Answer: At Pejiru Camp, in Borneo, where I was posted towards the end of the "confrontation" in 1966, we found a delightful flat-pack chalet, which had just been built by Gurkha Engineers for the use of Dennis Healey, who had been on a tour of inspection. It had a beautiful planked ceiling stencilled "floor" and a lovely plywood floor marked "ceiling".

Hamish sent this out by email asking if anyone was willing to take ownership - 2008 Magazine perhaps? - Ed

Guidance of GM's Lecture to Leave Party
The Gurkha Engineers – Kluang, Malaya 1966

This word for word copy of the advice that was given by the GM, Maj (QGO) Kalusingh Limbu to the Leave Party, was sent to our Secretary by John Elderkin, the then Regt 2IC. Whilst I have taken out the names of those used as examples of bad kaida, the remainder of the article remains as it was written. I was reminded that as Gurkhali was the language of the day, British officers' Gurkhali was stronger than it is perhaps today, and the Gurkha officers' English, slightly less so. One can read about Kalusingh Limbu Saheb in 'Queen's Gurkha Sapper', however, I am also told that he was an extremely well respected officer. - Ed

I as a Gurkha Major, this is the duty of mine to tell you the following points. The points, which I am going to tell you will be very important throughout your journey.

De-kitting You must take your leave scale kits that you have given by the QM, but you should certainly not be permitted you to take more than that.

Clearance You must pay your (credits) bills and you should have clean hands from unit canteen, shops, darzi, char wallah etc before leaving the camp.

Movements and time Once you will leave here your journey will be continue until you will reach at your home. You should not forget the right time of your move which will tell you by some in the future.

Discipline This is most important part of our lives. Your appearance, smartness should always with you in all the time especially at the transit camps and the depots throughout your journey. You should think yourself that you are the best soldiers in your leave party.

Hair cut You are not a sikh (sardarji) you should have a good hair cut which a Gurkha soldier always does it. If you are married see your children as well. If you are a NCO check others. I do not want to see a soldier with long hair like beattles.

Dress. CO Saheb seen some leave men without a mufti and ties. You are a pakka Gurkha soldier. You are not Amarican, hopsi etc.

Customs. You must be careful to deal with customs specially in Calcutta, you must obey orders, rules, regs, that you have been told here or will be tell you whenever necessary. Be very careful with your tongue whenever you speak, must be polite as a gentleman with a good discipline. You can not and you must not take anything which you are not authorised to do so such as raw gold, silver and spirits you have been told by our record sec and you have seen orders that you can not take watches, radios more than you are entitle to. If you do so you will be accused and charged as you are smuggling. You must fully declared in your custom forms.

Thief you must be careful to keep or to look after your belongings including your families, specially when you stop overnight in transit camps, travelling by rail in india or even you are tracking in the hills.

From depot to home your bariya should select by help of serving qgos or ncos in the depot. They will tell you more about journey from and to home.

At your home you must talk to your parent and relative in polite with good manner. For all concerned in your village you should not tell them any shortcomings which you may have seen or hear within the regt or in the journey. You should tell them good and interesting things only. Being an engr (spr) you should help on any sort construction br, house etc in your village during your stay at home.

Reporting back to depot you must come and report in the time that you have been told you. You must not absent without leave, (34 lp) 00** spr ******* thapa of 68 sqn absent. 1st charge – absent without leave, 2nd charge – failing to attend military duty.

Bringing a new wife other's wife and any 2nd wife you should not try to bring at all. Before you have propose to get marriage you must obtained your parents' permission to do so. If you are vd patient do not married at all, until you are alright you are not allow to bring any other children here when you return from leave. You can bring your own children if you wish so but you must tell the truth the age of your children.

Marriage laws - nepal the nepal government by a law passed in 1965 have forbidden any second marriage whilst the first wife is still lining, unless the first wife suffers from certain disabilities.

Good names you must think about your own good name. You must try to make a good name for the regt even if you are away from the regt.

Quarreling you must not quarrel at any place with any one. You should never try to make any arguments especially with indian.

Married men those who have families with you here tell all about which i hate told you today. It will help you in your family discipline too.

Pension jane haru le afna paisa kam laune.

Notes when left transit camps you must clean:-
around and inside the bks and put off tie lamps or light and left clean and tidy as you do here.

ex 35 lp 54358 thambahadur rai left a prs of trousers and his pay book in transit camp singapore. This is very bad example.

lost of leave certificates uk 36 lp 73** cpl ********** gurung and 72** cpl ********** gurung. What sorts of ncos are they?

ex 36 lp 55*** spr ********** gurung lost his pay book. Careless one day he will lost his wife as well.

information received that leave and discharge party pension personnel expected free transport prom dharan to chautra and phusre and have expressed surprised that this was not authorised. Sometimes as a payment bases a converted 3 tonner bus may available.

36 lp 40*** ******** rai at dharan depot on 25 may given his wrong name such as 51*** ******* rai, 69 sqn and also shook his fist at capt nr neate 10 gr – 14 days detention.

(there were more such examples but the flavour is clear)

walker scholarship

the aim of the fund is to provide scholarships for children, whose fathers have died whilst serving or result of disability receiving whilst serving. Scholarship will normally be provided at the bde of gurkhas schools in paklihawa and dharan. Please let me have if any of this kind in your village.

I wish all of you to good luck and i hope the advise which i have said for you will help you a lot. If you will remember and enjoy your chhutti very happily. At the end i hope that you will return here with a good name and good respects.

QGE Officers at HK Sevens

Graham Price

Graham Price, Ian McEvoy and Richard Beazley conducting their own reunion at the HK Rugby Sevens.

Having met up with Ian and Richard, Graham wrote – "Richard is working in Thailand at the moment on a petrochemical project, and Ian McEvoy is setting up a factory in Shenzhen to manufacture industrial fans. So he passes through Hong Kong and we have met up a few times. I am now running a personnel company matching people to jobs. That of course always wins me a few friends!

I hope to attend some of this years functions, but don't know which yet."

There were other Sappers present whom Graham met - "It is fast looking like a venue for a Far East get together! Also present were John McLennan (Controller RA) and Bill Fergusson of 70 Sp Sqn QGE (I believe Bill was a SSgt in 70 Sqn in 1978/9?)".

Readers will also be interested to note that the elements of the Pipes and Drums still play in Hong Kong. Ex-Pipe Major Yambahadur Gurung recently played at the HK Ex-Serviceman's Dinner. The picture below shows him wearing his Securicor uniform and wearing the QGE tartan.

Ian McEvoy, Bill Fergusson and John McLennan

Easy Landings

Arthur Dixon

In 1975 a small team from the RE Diving School at Marchwood visited the Regiment in Hong Kong, (as was the arrangements in those days), this was to assist in keeping the Regimental Diving Team up to date and assist with local training.

The photographs shows those that took part in the training (the group) and several of the divers preparing to dive off Gordon Hard.

On that visit the opportunity arose to accompany a Field Troop to the near by island of Ping Chaw, where they were improving the accommodation for the Infantry Platoon stationed there, and also carry out some off shore diving. The third photo shows the troop “storming ashore”.

The Britain Nepal Medical Trust

This was sent to the Secretary by Dr Ian Baker, Father of Capt Mark Baker (2000 – 02)

The Britain Nepal Medical Trust (BMNT) will be celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2008. As a marker, Dr Gillian Holdsworth, a Trustee and former staff member will be undertaking a sponsored trek across Nepal from the western border at Hilsa in Humla to the eastern border with Sikkim in Taplejung between September and November 2007.
The trek will incorporate major and lesser known routes over a sixty day period, but broken up into eight to thirteen day stages. Trekkers may do any combination of days.
The full itinerary is under Trek on the Trust’s website www.britainnepalmedicaltrust . . Dr Holdsworth's email address is: phulmaya@yahoo.com.

BNMT has had a longstanding relationship with many QGEs who have been posted to Dharan in Eastern Nepal in past years. The Trust has its anchor still in tuberculosis control in all 16 Districts and now seeks to promote better health access for poor and marginalised Nepalis.

If you can’t make the walks, please consider making a donation to BNMT through its’ website.

Guilty Conscience

Brig Tony Rickets
OC 67 Gurkha Indep Field Squadron 1965 – 68 Borneo
Commandant 1970 – 73 Hong Kong
Chief Engineer UKLF 1978 - 81

Guilty conscience? Afraid so, yes. Haven't written before, but what to tell of interest to those in the Regiment today? I was in Malaya when the Regiment was formed, but I wasn't part of it. I was with the Federal Field Squadron, the Kluang Cowboys as they called us because of our wide-brimmed South African hats. But we all did the same job, often turn about – laterite roads, wooden bridges, cement bridges, piled bridges, camps, airstrips, jungle patrols, river patrols, sometimes ambushes. It was the Malayan Emergency, with the Communist terrorists (CTs) the opposition.

My early introduction to the Regiment was a guest night, in Sungai Besi, where Gil Roach picked me up bodily in one of the usual gentlemanly games which we all enjoyed in those days and hurled me through a wardrobe – in at the front – out at the back. Didn't feel a thing and, having previously served with Gil in the parachute squadron, didn't find it unusual.

Folk from those days will remember the night train north from Kluang. Led by a couple of armoured cars on rail wheels, the old steam loco hauled itself slowly along, jungle thick on either side, the air-conditioned buffet car dispensing Anchor Beer, whiskey stengas and nasi goreng with a fried egg on top, most of its occupants in uniform and propping up the bar, pistols loaded in their holsters.

Travelling by car, the roads were rough, pot-holed and lonely except for the big timber lorries. Overloaded, tyres bare, they hurtled along, a spare Chinese or Indian hanging precariously on top to bang on the cab for the driver to pull over, while heart in mouth you accelerated past.

Driving at night was different and a bit scary, the roads deserted, the villages closed up behind barbed wire and floodlights, and police and army road blocks. Evenings in the Asia in Kluang, the only watering hole there, were special too. Chin Peng as we called him, after the great CT leader, behind the counter, super food cooked on charcoal, Black Hills of Dakota loud on the jukebox, the planters stacking rifles and automatics behind the door.

The Singapore Straits Times had a scoop for their headline. Chin Peng (the real one) had arrived at night at RAF Seletar in a light aircraft for the impending peace talks and been smuggled away in an ambulance. Wrong! It was my son Tim being casevac at one day old from Kluang.

I joined the Regiment later on, 1966, taking over what was then 67 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron from guess who – Gil Roach. The scene was confrontation with Indonesia which had been quite heated but was now well under control. The Squadron was based in Seria, Brunei, and scattered by troop and section all along the central border area supporting the resident Gurkha battalion. Based largely where the Sakai longhouses were and accessible only by air over deep jungle, they lived entirely on supply drop from the main supply base on Labuan island. The squadron radio never closed. Bids came in and were passed on. The crates would be loaded overnight on Labuan and arrive by parachute the next day. And the supply folk took great pride in never being beaten, though sometimes of course they might miss the DZ. One troop storeman was not at all surprised when a huge crate landed right in front of his store and was found to contain everything asked for including a particular toothpaste for the Troop Sahib.

When Dasera time came, the supply system went partly into reverse. Buffalo, goats and chickens were cheap up in Bareo, one of the forward bases with a good airstrip and a longhouse of some 2000 inhabitants. The Gurkha network buzzed and one or two helicopter pilots perhaps flew with fingers crossed lest a tranquillised buffalo might wake up before he got down to Seria.

What an introduction to a Squadron! Gil and I went from base to base, a tremendous farewell to him at each, till finally we poured him onto the aircraft for Singapore, loaded with gifts; blowpipe, carved sticks, Sakai belt. Much loved was Gil and sadly missed. So Jimmy Nobbs and Dhojbir Sahib ran things while I went off to learn Gurkhali!

It was a great life – meaningful, hard going sometimes, immense satisfaction, enormous pleasure. Where else could you drift over deep jungle watching the hornbills floating over the tree-tops just below, or sit in Paul Reedman's house on stilts at Bareo, trying to hit the chickens down below with a blowpipe, or have to issue a direct order to Nick Tomlinson who enjoyed his life with his troop so much at Black 60 that he refused to come out (and who could blame him?) or sit in an armchair in the bow of a longboat ploughing up the Temburong River with an ice-cold beer from the haybox, in a silver tankard of course!

My next tour with the Regiment was as Commandant, but that's another story – perhaps for later?

“I remember, I remember…..”

Dick Francis (1950-56, 60-63)

It seems to be a universal experience that the older one gets, the more fallible one’s memory becomes, but this is only true of trivia. Trivia, being quite lacking in memorable quality, are instantly forgotten, whereas anything inspiring, exciting, beautiful, funny or whatever may remain in the memory for a lifetime. One example is the following bit of doggerel which I have always known, but I have no idea when, how or why I memorised it, nor do I know the author:-

“This world of ours is wondrous large,
Seven seas from marge to marge,
And it holds a mort of different kinds of men.
And the wildest dreams of Kew
Are the facts of Kathmandu,
And the crimes of Clapham chaste in Martaban”.

It sounds like Kipling, and who but Kipling would ever have heard of Martaban or known and used words such as “marge” and “mort”? It is not in any of my anthologies, and I should be grateful to a reader who could confirm that it is Kipling.

Next, to confirm the stickiness of memory, I have always known of a strange people called the Ainu, who, in Victorian travel books, lived in Hokkaido, the northern island of Japan. They were big-bodied, with abundant body hair, and quite different from the Japanese. My other childhood memory was of the Yeti. These were humanoids, who, perforce, lived on the snowline in the Himalayas. They too were big-bodied and hairy, with feet which had developed backwards so that one knew where they had been, but could not tell where they were going, and they had a basilisk power in the eye, whereby anyone who held eye contact was instantly turned to stone. I very much regret that in my nine years in the Queen’s Gurkha Engineers, I never attempted to update this ancient memory with whatever may have still prevailed among our Gurkha ranks.

In my recent situation (long retired and getting less and less mobile), the brain remained active and curious, and I often wondered what other strange creatures such as the Yeti and the Ainu still existed. Tibetans I knew were big stone fellows, unlike the other Mongols they were surrounded by. Was it possible that the Yeti was a mere folk-memory of an Asian tribe long extinct in the Himalayas, but not quite yet in Japan?

I then remembered that my youngest son was not a nineteenth century type like me, but a very modern man who not only had a computer in his house, but who had practised access on the Internet. I asked him to get what he could on

Yeti and Ainu, and let me have print-outs. These I now have.

It seems that the Yeti are pure myths born of imagination and incorrect identification of sightings of brown bears and footprints in the snow. All fabricated relics purporting to be of Yeti have no DNA with human characteristics. The Ainu on the other hand are real and extant, but only in Hokkaido and Sakhalin. Their language is unique, and their ethnicity and social customs totally different from the Japanese. They used to occupy most of Honshu as well as Hokkaido, and DNA traces of them remain in the Kurile Islands, Kamchatka Peninsula, the

Amur River Valley and in Ryukyu. Even more remote traces are said to exist in the indigenes of North America, Papua New Guinea, the Andaman Islands and among Australian Aborigines. So, in pre-history there was a very extensive spread of Ainu hunter-gatherers. They are now all but extinct, having been exterminated or absorbed by cleverer, more aggressive and more persistent newcomers.

So much for my memories. Facts have now flooded in, and the magic, mystery and wonder have gone forever. Still, it was exciting while it lasted, and it very nearly lasted me out!

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers Association- Nepal Reunion 2008

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QGEA is organising a reunion in Nepal to mark the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Regiment. At present it is intended to follow the pattern of the very successful event in 1998 with a meeting in Kathmandu, a main party in Pokhara, dispersal to three or four alternative optional programmes, followed by a final gathering in Kathmandu.

As in 1997, the events in Nepal and the gathering of the pensioners within Nepal will be organised by QGEA Nepal. The move to Nepal and within Nepal of members from the UK, Malaysia and Hong Kong will be run by Dom Verschoyle.

It is planned that the reunion will take place after Dashera 2008 and will last just under two weeks for those who choose the full programme. Those who want to join for part and do their own thing, or leave early or late, are welcome.

Details of events, timings and costings will be distributed in November 2007. Expressions of interest will be needed by December 2007.

DELHI DAY

As our 2007 AGM and Reunion will be held at RMAS on 12th August alongside the tamasha for the 150th Anniversary of the Siege of Delhi, I thought of no better way to get us in the mood than to remind us of the valour shown by the Bengal Sappers and Miners during the blowing of the Kashmir Gate – Ed.

Delhi Day, 14 September, was the Regimental Day of KGVO Bengal Sappers and Miners and commemorated one of the most gallant feats in the history of the Royal Engineers and of the Sappers and Miners.

During the Indian Mutiny, the rebels held Delhi against the Government forces. After fierce and continuous fighting from 9 June 1857, Major General Sir Henry Barnard ordered an assault on the fort through the Kashmir Gate on 14 September.

Under covering fire from HM's 60th Rifles, Lieutenant Home RE, Sergeants Smith and Carmichael and a party of Sappers and Miners, in daylight, and in full view of the enemy, advanced to the gate carrying the explosives. The bridge over the moat had been destroyed, but a few planks remained, across which the party went.

During this outstanding example of bravery, Sergeant Carmichael was killed and Havildar Madhu was wounded by heavy fire from the rebels. The explosive charges were, however, finally placed and the firing party, commanded by Lieutenant Salkeld RE, advanced. Lieutenant Salkeld was wounded twice but, before dying, he handed over the fuse to Corporal Burges who, although mortally wounded himself, fired the charge and blew in the gate. Sepoy Ramnath and Havildar Tiloksing were also wounded.

For their bravery in this action, the following were decorated:

Lieutenant Duncan Home RE	- VC
Lieutenant Philip Salkeld RE	- VC
Sergeant John Smith RE	- VC

In addition 12 Indian Order of Merit (IOM) and 3 Order of British India (OBI) were awarded to the Sappers and Miners. The Governor General wrote about the action:

"Where so much has been done to command admiration it is difficult to select acts for particular notice. The Governor General in Council feels honour that no injustice will be done to any men if he offers tribute of admiration and thanks to the brave soldiers who, under Lieutenants Home and Salkeld, accomplished the desperate task of blowing open the Kashmir Gate."

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Queen's Gurkha Engineers Association

Held at Chatham on Friday, 29th September 2006

Present:

Lieutenant General Sir Anthony Pigott KCB CBE	President and Colonel of the Regiment
Major General D R Bill CB	President elect
Lieutenant Colonel P W Cook	Chairman
Colonel W J Chesshyre	Nepal Member
Captain D F Pierce	Magazine Editor
44 Members of the Association	
Colonel J N B Stuart	Secretary

Apologies had been received from many absent members including Generals Cunningham and Peck, and Brigadier Bowen.

ITEM 1 – Opening Remarks by the Colonel of the Regiment

1. The President opened the meeting by welcoming members and thanking the Commandant RSME for hosting the AGM and Reunion 2006. In particular he welcomed his successor – Major General David Bill, and wished him luck. He gave a summary of how the very busy Army, with a high operation tempo, was in many ways good for QGE. Recent developments had resulted in the formation of a QGE Commando Troop, with, hopefully, scope for further expansion. He spoke on the work of the Council of Colonels during the changes of the past decade and mentioned the continuing great success of the GWT.

ITEM 2 – Previous Minutes and Matters Arising

2. The Minutes of the AGM for 2005 were passed as a true record.
Proposed: Col Bill Chesshyre Seconded: Maj John Parfect

3. The Chairman covered the following matters:
   a. Obituary for a prominent Gurkha for the Magazine. Although no particular obituary was included, Major Milanchandra's letter on a number of burho wallahs and Maj Surjabahadur's article had provided updates. The new Editor would pick up the matter and would also cover Hukumraj Thapa's career for the 2007 Magazine.
   b. Regrettably there was no MOD money available for Regimental magazines.
   c. Mr Howard Green had accepted Honorary Membership and was attending the dinner.
   d. Subscriptions for LE Officers had been discussed; the general feeling was that LE Officers who wanted to join should be offered the same terms as QGOs: to date there had been few applications.

ITEM 3 – Accounts

4. The Chairman explained that as the three QGEA/Trusts accounts were now combined as sub-accounts in one fund and audited together; it was the Trustees who had to approve the accounts at the Regimental day in January.

5. He thanked all those who had joined the annual donation scheme as they had made the three accounts solvent again. Additionally, the summary showed the benefits of Gift Aid – the Regt Trust had benefited by £500 from members adopting the Gift Aid. Members were content with this arrangement.

6. The Chairman proposed an annual honorarium for the Secretary of £250 – this was passed. The Secretary thanked Members but declined to accept.

ITEM 4 – The Magazine

7. Capt Duncan Pierce gave his report on this year's production of the Magazine; he had used the Nepal printers for the first time and considered that this had generally been a success. This year's experience suggested that photographs could be better produced. The increased contribution from the Regiment had made the Magazine a proper QGE/QGEA one and he thanked all those who had contributed. Col Campbell congratulated him on an excellent production; members concurred. The Chairman stated that Maj Iain Adamson had kindly agreed to produce the Magazine in 2007.

ITEMS 5 AND 6 – Nepal Matters and the Pahar Trust

8. Regrettably the new Chairman of the Pahar trust - Mr Howard Green had been delayed and so Maj Perfect gave a summary of Pahar Trust matters. He stated that Mr Green had continued the drive and initiative that had been the characteristics of Tom Langridge's tenure and that the Trust was building its 44th school.

9. Col Bill Chesshyre gave an outline of the recent situation in Nepal as he saw it. Members will have been aware that the King had surrendered most of his traditional roles and that the seven party coalition and the Maoists were drawing up a new constitution: the King's part in the future of Nepal was not clear at present. The ceasefire was being observed, and elections were scheduled for early 2007.

10. Col John Worthington questioned whether there was a threat to BG activities and Col Harry Vialou Clark questioned whether there was a threat to Pahar Trust schools. Col Chesshyre hoped that neither was compromised.

ITEM 6 – Membership and the Maidstone Branch

11. The Chairman thanked both the Commandant and the GM for all they had done to foster the Association especially for ex-QGE Gurkhas in the UK; he mentioned the two meetings/briefings for ex-QGE wallahs that the GM had arranged over the past year, and the excellent Regimental birthday party that had been and attended by many UK based and some Nepal based ex QGE wallahs.

12. He went on to say that there had been a very successful Western lunch organised by Col John Kitching and hosted by Maj John and Beroë Freeland. There are also the London dinners by and for the younger members and, of course, the annual reunions which were being well supported. He hoped that these events met the needs of our diverse membership but suggested that there could be support for an event in the North. A volunteer was requested to investigate this.

(Afternote: Col Colin Peebles had volunteered to take this on.)

13. The Chairman also spoke on the problem for ex QGE tradesmen gaining employment commensurate with their skills; many went into security rather than engineering and construction. He considered that whilst the QGEA could not act as an employment bureau, it could help educate potential employers about what our tradesmen could offer. He, the Commandant and the GM would meet shortly to discus this further. The Commandant and Col David Caulfield both stated that EinC/HQRE was already working on this problem.

ITEM 7 – Revised Rules

14. The meeting approved the revised rules distributed earlier in the year: these are attached for the record.

ITEM 8 – 60th Birthday Arrangements

15. The Chairman opened this Item by explaining the progress so far on arrangements to celebrate the Regiment's 60th Birthday. The recent problems in Nepal had delayed any firm decisions and resulted in investigations of alternate venues such as Hong Kong. Col Dom Verschoyle had kindly offered to arrange the UK part of any visit and Maj Graham Price had agreed to help with any visit to Hong Kong. The association needed to decide by early 2007 whether a reunion was "on" and where to hold it so that the arrangements could start to be made.

16. Members agreed that Nepal was the proper venue, with Hong Kong as a back up; that a calling notice must be sent in early 2007 for numbers; that the reunion could be close to Dashain and that fundraising for Nepal members would be needed and should start soon. Brig John Edwards mentioned the windfall that had made the 50th Birthday Reunion viable. Col Malcolm Campbell asked whether sufficient numbers would attend; Maj John Parfect stated that 6 GR had held a very successful tamasha recently – approximately 2000 had attended Pokhara for it.

ITEM 9 – Any Other Business

16. The Commandant explained that the old ladies' room/reading room had been refurbished and renamed "The Perowne Room"; General Perowne's portrait had been hung there and other QGE possessions were on display. Hopefully this would reinforce the bonds between the Corps and the Regiment. The Meeting congratulated all who had been involved with this very welcome arrangement to perpetuate the Perowne name. The Chairman mentioned that Generals Perowne's daughter, Mrs Iris Bolton, would inaugurate the room when she attended the Perowne Trust annual meeting there later in the year.

17. The Chairman mentioned two housekeeping matters: first that the Committee needed a replacement for the Social Member – preferably a younger member to keep the age balance correct. Secondly, he urged members to use email and to keep the Secretary up-to-date with changes; this really was the only way to reduce the Association's administration costs.

J N B STUART

Colonel

Secretary 20th October 2006

Ex QGE Deaths 2006-07

My thanks to Hon Maj Hukumraj Thapa who supplied much of the detail

Number	Rank	Name	Enlisted	Died
414619	HON MAJ	AMARBAHADUR GURUNG	5-Jan-31	29-Jul-06
494371	HON MAJ	JAMES BHUJEL	1-Oct-56	1-Apr-07
21132614	SPR	MAISING GURUNG	2-Jan-43	10-Jul-06
21137948	SPR	BHAKTABAHADUR THAPA	17-Mar-43	1-Sep-06
21137605	SPR	RAMPARSAD RAI	23-Mar-43	23-Oct-06
21132816	SPR	KRISHNABAHADUR RAI	15-Oct-43	11-Dec-06
21136797	SPR	MANBAHADUR RANA	18-Nov-43	19-May-06
21132821	CPL	BARMAN PUN	19-Nov-43	10-Jan-07
21145952	SPR	PURNABAHADUR MALL	14-Sep-44	24-Jul-06
21132880	SPR	RAGHU PUN	17-Sep-46	24-Oct-06
21131949	WO2	KRISHNABAHADUR RANA	29-Dec-49	22-Nov-06
21131834	LCPL	DAMARSING GURUNG	9-Nov-51	16-Jun-06
21140761	SSGT	RESAMBAHADUR GURUNG	14-Oct-54	4-Dec-06
21140892	LCPL	PREMKUMAR RAI	10-Nov-54	26-Jan-07
21141471	CPL	LALBAHADUR GURUNG	4-Nov-55	12-Nov-06
21147198	CPL	HEMKARNE RAI	11-Nov-55	28-May-06
21136106	SGT	MUKTASING RANA	21-Nov-55	25-Dec-06
21150154	SPR	CHULAKARNA LIMBU	20-Nov-58	18-Oct-06
21151149	LCPL	DILBAHADUR LIMBU	29-Nov-59	29-Mar-06
21151527	SSGT	LALKRISHNA GURUNG	3-Dec-59	15-Apr-06
21151291	SPR	AMBARSING DAMAI	5-Dec-59	8-Jun-06
21158961	LCPL	HARKABAHADUR LIMBU	19-Nov-67	23-Jul-06
HEADMASTER	PEROWNE GCS	GILBERT KALUSING		30-Sep-06

We also record the following deaths:

Lt Col RF (Ray) Pye MBE on 25th April 2006 after a brave, year long battle with cancer.

Maj (GE) BAR (Rob) Thomas died on 13th March 2007 after a long period of ill health. On the disbandment of 54 (HK) Ind Sp Sqn, Rob transferred to the QGE and served with the Regiment during the period 1976-77. Rob was the first Commander of the Design Troop in Support Squadron

WO2 WE (Walter) Richards MM on 5th June 2006. Served as a SNCO between 1950-55, and 57-63.

Obituaries

Honorary Captain Amarbahadur Gurung MBE (1914 – 2006)

Brigadier Hank Bowen and Hon Maj Hukumraj Thapa

Honorary Captain Amarbahadur Gurung MBE died in 2006, aged over 92 years old. He was Gurkha Major of the Regiment from 1953 to 1958 and of the Depot Brigade of Gurkhas from 1958 until retirement in 1961 serving three Commanding Officers, Lieutenant Colonels John Carver, John Bowring and Bill Jackson. He came from the village of Deopur in Parbat District where he was brought up by his grandmother. He had no schooling and enlisted in the 4th PMO Gorkha Rifles, Indian Army in the early 1930's aged 17 years. He once told a visiting officer that he had only once in his career stood on sentry duty – when questioned he said, proudly, that he was always chosen as commandant's stick orderly and therefore did not go on sentry but stood outside the Commandant's office when the great man was inside, accompanying him on tours of inspection and running errands as required. He gained early promotion, becoming a Lance Naik (Lance corporal) within three years and rising through the ranks to Jemadar (Viceroy Commissioned Lieutenant) within 13 years. He fought in Burma and in Indonesia finishing as Subedar (Captain) and went on premature pension in 1946. He became one of the Assistant Recruiting officers in Nepal but then re-enlisted on the insistence of Colonel RAN Anderson, who had been his Adjutant in 4th Gorkhas. R A N Davidson recommended Amarbahadur as the Gurkha Major of 50 Field Engineer Regiment in Hong Kong in succession to Major (KGO) Parmansing Rana in 1953.

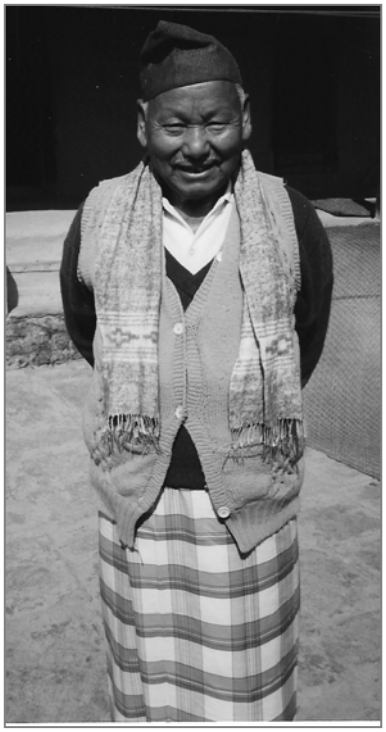
Amarbahadur, during his five years in the Regiment, contributed immeasurably to the standards and reputation of the Gurkha Engineers. He was a man of great character with an abundance of energy and determination who quickly gained the respect of all and, in the eyes of the men, did more to bring about regimental unity. No more were separate squadron 'kaidas' allowed nor those of the previous battalions or regiments of the older hands. Everyone was now a Royal Engineeer (Gurkha) and 50 Regiment was 'hamro paltan'. He was endowed with great charm, dignity and presence, and plenty of common sense, and above all was a wise man moulded in the old tradition. He was by any account a great man and in many respects a remarkable Gurkha. He understood that an engineer regiment could not operate in the same way as an infantry battalion but had the intelligence, adaptability and patience to establish himself and exert his authority in what was to him a novel environment.

He proved adept at working the system to achieve improvements to the camp accommodation that he thought essential on a 'no cost' basis. The Camp Hall – a single span open shed erected as a wet weather drill hall slowly acquired accretions in the form of verandahs (carpenter, blacksmith and sheet metal training), end walls (brick-layer training) and a cinema projection room (electricians) and became the centre for every kind of function. Amarbahadur refused to call it either the Dashera Ghar or the Cinema Hall, it was the Camp Hall.

He was a powerful personality who would stick tenaciously to his point in anything he thought important but would give way graciously in matters that he felt less strongly. On one occasion during a heated discussion at a Gurkha Majors' conference, at Sungei Patani, Amarbahadur commented 'It is a small matter – The Queen will decide'. That ended the discussion!

English he understood well enough, but would not use it unless he had to. When one Commanding Officer suggested that there should be one day a week during which all regimental business was transacted in English he resisted saying that it was more important that the young British Officers learnt to speak Gurkhali properly!

He would start his morning reports with 'Khas kehi pani chhaina' (there's nothing particular to report) followed often as not by some hair-raising disclosure. Young British Officers practically sprang to attention when he condescended to speak to them; his expression 'Ani bata chain' (and another thing) prepared them for a ticking-off in the nicest way. Socially he was jovial and cheerful – but his 'Hilo mat' (don't move) would bring everyone sharply to attention and 'Lau lato gar' (Idiot, get on with it) would galvanise the regiment on Saturday Gurkha Major's parades.



His were the all important affairs of kaida, of discipline, family welfare, and festivals, and he did them, and the Regiment well. He was held in respect by all, British and Gurkha alike, of all ranks. He was appointed MBE in 1955 and retired on pension in March 1961, and was granted the rank of Honorary Lieutenant GCO in recognition of his services. He was promoted Honorary Captain GCO later.

He was followed into the Brigade of Gurkhas by two of his sons – Dambarsing joined the Regiment, where he gained fame as a footballer as a member of the winning Nepal Cup Team. His last appointment was the SSM of 69 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron in Chatham. His second son Rajendra joined the Brigade of Gurkhas Band, trained at Kneller Hall but was made redundant in 1970. He then joined the Royal Nepal Police Band where he became Director of Music and is still serving as Deputy Superintendent of Police. His third son, Rajbahadur served in 6 GR, reaching the rank of Lt QGO before retiring to Kathmandu. He had 7 daughters, all of whom are married.

Those of us who were fortunate enough to attend the 50th Anniversary celebrations in Pokhara will have memories of a wonderful man obviously held in great respect and affection by all the old and bold who were there. He really did hold court that day. He was a great man who did obey the Regimental motto 'Baliyo Rahanu Hos'. He was and remained strong.

Honorary Major James Bhujel (1936 – 2007)

Hon Maj Hukumraj Thapa and Brigadier Hank Bowen

Hon Maj James Bhujel joined the Regiment as a clerk and was promoted to Lt (QGO) on 01 September 1972. During his service in the Regiment he had been Chief Clerk of 68 Squadron, Orderly Room Quartermaster Sergeant, Records QGO and, finally, Head Clerk of the Regiment from 27 September 1973 to April 1977, and later on various key appointments within the Brigade of Gurkhas. He was dedicated to the Regiment and entered fully into all activities. He was respected and trusted by every British Officer who had the good fortune to work with him, and was equally respected and trusted by the Gurkha Majors, QGOs and men who served in the Regiment during the time that James held the reins of Records QGO and Head Clerk. The many changes caused by redundancy and the move to Hong Kong, in disbanding and then re-raising 69 Squadron, in manning, organisation and training, together with the need to keep 69 Squadron up to strength in the UK, would not have been possible without the herculean efforts of the Head Clerk. James Bhujel was in the same mould of Head Clerks who had served the Regiment so well over the years, with great ability and utmost dedication, starting with Aitahang Subba, who ran the organisation for a record seventeen years, followed by John Tensing Lepcha and Bharatsing Limbu.

He always said that the highlight of his tour as Head Clerk QGE was that on 29 October 1976, as a Detachment Commander of the Pipes and Drums, he had the opportunity to meet Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh on the Royal Visit to the Corps of Royal Engineers at Minley Manor. James proudly describes that upon arrival of the Royal Couple at the QGE Stand he was introduced by Gen Hugh Cunningham, Col of the Regt. He himself then had the privilege to present the Drum Major WO2 Thamansing Gurung to Her Majesty.

On his return from his trip to England he went on to replace Capt Bharatsing Limbu QGE on 11 April 1977 as Head Clerk Training Depot Brigade of Gurkhas. From Jan 1980 to Jan 1983 he held the responsibilities of Head Clerk at the

Defence Section at the British Embassy Kathmandu. He then moved on to replace Bharatsing Limbu QGE for the second time as a Head Clerk of HQ British Gurkhas Nepal on 01 May 1983 on promotion to Maj (QGO). He retired on 14 July 1986 after over 29 years of service.

In 1989, after a short break, James chose for his second career to work with the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS) in Dharan, and later in Pokhara, following the closure of Dharan. He was appointed the Administrative Officer of the Individual Aid Cell with responsibility to ensure that GWS provided appropriate assistance to any individual ex serviceman and his family with hardship caused by natural disasters. He retired from the GWS in 1995 to his home town in Kalimpong, India.

Unfortunately, just before his retirement from the GWS in 1995, James injured his right hip and had to undergo major surgery in Kathmandu. This was to cause him pain and discomfort for many years, culminating in an eight hour operation in Kathmandu in 2006. James described with great pleasure that when he woke up after his 8 hour operation in a Nursing Home in Kathmandu on 28 March 2006, he was extremely surprised to see a beautiful plastic basket containing fresh flowers and Greeting Cards which touched his heart and abruptly boosted his morale sky high. He and his wife were delighted to meet so many old friends whom they had not seen for many years, and very thankful to them for their company right till the last day of his 35 days stay in the hospital. In James' own words "Every dark cloud has a silver lining. The dark cloud in my case was the acute pain I had to bear; and the silver lining, a relief from this discomfort following the successful operation, substantiated by the golden opportunity to meet so many friends in just under a span of one month."
No less than eighteen retired QGE, including Major Milanchandra Gurung and nine Gurkha Majors, made the effort to call on James in hospital.

James was a fun loving and cheerful man with an easy going personality. He was respected by all and he will be missed by many friends in UK and Nepal. He is survived by his wife Anne, son Reginald, and 5 daughters Jane, Stela Janet, Jenifer, Evelyn and Angela Helen to whom we send our condolences and best wishes.

Family News

Iain and Tara Adamson 1993-95, 2004-06

The 'Stop Press' in 2004 was that Tara had given birth to our second son, Oliver. Oliver is now 3, and his elder brother Henry started school last year. On leaving Staff College the family moved to Maidstone, where we had a fabulous and very happy two years serving with QGE. During our time there, Henry was at the Regimental playgroup, where most of his friends were Gurkha children. He now has a developed taste for spicy khana, whilst his martial art skills, learnt from his Nepali friends, are still tested on his suffering Father! We have since moved to Shepperton, from where Iain commutes to Whitehall. All good things come to an end, however, and we have decided to leave the Army in October of this year in order that we can put down slightly firmer roots than Army life promised. Around editing the Magazine, Iain continues to juggle his MoD desk, whilst madly networking in pursuit of his first proper job. We are currently house hunting in South Oxfordshire and hope to move in the summer.

Alex and Annabel Brown 1997-99

Alex and Annabel returned from an FCO posting to Argentina in autumn 2005 and have since been languishing in London. Annabel is now a big wheel with English Heritage while Alex remains a somewhat smaller wheel in the FCO. We're still chasing that elusive Kathmandu posting...

Richard Beazley 1972 -75

I was 3 Troop Commander 68 Squadron at Perowne '72 to '75, with John Speight and then John Worthington as my OC's. Tony Ricketts and John Edwards were my CO's. Happiest days of my life. I am now Project Control Manager for Foster Wheeler in Thailand working on a major refinery upgrade. Married to Elizabeth (from the Philippines and James will be 4 this month. ALL QGE are welcome any time in Pattaya… you will be royally entertained!

Jeremy and Sarah Chapman 1967-72

Youngest son, James, has moved to Canada with his Canadian wife, Dawn. They have produced our first grandson with another on the way. James is doing very well in the Canadian construction project management industry having finally managed to quit archaeology. Alastair has recently married Juliane who is a Doctor who practices in this country and they have just had a baby boy. They enjoy a rural idyll in Herefordshire.
Jeremy has had some health issues which probably mean a change of lifestyle and Sarah is now Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Association and finds this is more than a full time job. Life in general in Somerset remains fun.

Andrew and Paula Foxley 1986-88

Andrew left the Army (RE then AAC) in 2000. Left to fly with bmi (British Midland Airways) flying the Airbus A320 series of aircraft. Currently part-time flying and also consulting at Dstl Farnborough in Rotorcraft Acquisition studies group. Family - Paula (wife) and daughter Phoebe 2 and a half years old, living in Inkpen, near Hungerford, Berkshire. Still flying Gazelle helicopters for the TA out of Netheravon. A busy life.

Steve and Teresa Gadd – 1990-92, 2002-04

After my first tour with QGE as the BQMSI in Hong Kong, I never thought that I would have the opportunity to serve with the Regt again. However, I was very fortunate to and consider it an honour to have served a second and most enjoyable tour with 70 Gurkha Fd Sp Sqn as their QM.

After this tour, Teresa and I decided that we wished for a little more stability in our lives after living in 14 houses in 20 years of marriage. I applied for the post of Permanent Staff Admin Officer (PSAO) with 108 (W) Fd Sp Sqn, RMon RE(M) based in Swansea and have now been in post for two and a half years. Teresa is employed as a Practice Nurse now and thoroughly enjoys her job. She has also joined an Amateur Dramatics group and now spends a lot of time at rehearsals and on stage. She has also roped me in and I usually run things behind the scenes as the Stage Manager. Sian-Louise is now 17 years old and making me go grey with her driving lessons and clubbing down town, interspersed with a little work at college. Emma now 15, is studying her GCSE's and joins Teresa on stage for most productions. We brought an old doctors surgery on the North Gower coast and I am in the process of "doing it up".

Dal Saheb, ex GM is working in South Wales and a number of ex QGE wallahs are now living in Llanelli and working for CORUS steelworks. We get together occasionally and reminisce about the good times in HK and Maidstone that we all shared.If anybody is ever in South Wales or at any of the glorious beaches on the Gower then please call in for cockles and welsh cakes.

Peter and Julia Harvey 1957-60

It was good to rekindle the A Troop linkage last summer by staying at John Freeland and Beroe's wonderful country house at Kintbury when we had a Harvey's Batch 54th reunion. And on another foray into the country with my sister to Romsey in July to enjoy an evening with the Gurkha Band and Dancers in the grounds of a country house, as we spread our rather inferior picnic on the grass instead of on a folding table with champagne on ice (!), who should come into sight but John Croft. It is nice being back at home on these occasions and finding the ties are just as real as ever. We live in sunny Clapham, on the Brixton side, and move largely by bus and tube now "Our Ken" has effectively banned cars from the centre except for w/e and evenings. And it is much more convenient and we don't need nearly so many £1 coins for parking as of old.

Rising 75 this year and therefore receiving the "compulsory" tax free 25% of a pension fund to spend or save, we have taken a conference centre annex near Bridgwater in Somerset for the family in April with 28 beds for 3 days. 22 beds are taken and ages range from 3 - 75. Bonfire on Wednesday night, visitor night on Thursday and ping-pong, pool, outdoor pool and cousin Richard Swinburn's sheep farm nearby to explore.

Otherwise, Julia and I enjoy life in London and see lots of friends as they pass through. Come and see us sometime, like Staff Sergeant Bhimbahadur Gurung, one time A Troop Commander saheb's driver, did 5 years ago - out of the blue.

Douglas and Margaret Humphrey 1966-71, 1984

Douglas has retired from Millfield School but the overseas agents with whom he worked refused to let him bow out. He has now set up an Educational and Guardianship Company, York International, and places Russian, Thai and UAE students in full-time education in schools, colleges and universities and on MBA and vocational courses. The company is expanding rapidly and Douglas is constantly looking for host families in the S and SW prepared to accommodate school children for Exeat Weekends and other times. Interested? Give him a call: 01458-223703 or email humphreydr@aol.com

Richard and Val Marriott 1961-67

Since my last effusion in 2001 retired life seems to have become more rather than less busy. After my three years driving change in on-course bookmaking (I still have a pass which gets me in to all 59 racecourses) I spent two years as Director of the International Longevity Centre (UK), promoting public debate on, and carrying out research into, the implications of an ageing population. My main project now is chairing the governing body of Westonbirt School (girls and boys 4-11, girls 11-18), described by the Good Schools Guide as “a lovely atmosphere for treasured daughters”, and consistently in the top 5% of value added nationally. Many readers will know from personal experience that such responsibilities are non-trivial, particularly when the school concerned is only four miles away. We have the benefit of royal neighbours (Highgrove), both of whom came to open our new sports centre last year). This year I step down after eight years as a non-executive director of Siemens in the UK, but am still a non-exec of Intelligent Engineering (small company, big name and ambitions; check it out at www.ie-sps.com).

Val is in her tenth year as a Trustee of the Dartington International Summer (Music) School, and has recently become Treasurer of the Tetbury Music Festival. We share the running of another music charity, the Schubert Ensemble Trust. Val is now the church organist, having mastered the trick of managing the feet as well as the hands; she took her first music exam for 40 years in November (and passed with more than flying colours, but can I stand the stress of more exams?).

Allie and her Richard (both GPs) live under an hour away from our Cotswold base and have produced two grandsons. Jamie works in the Bristol University Library to earn the basic necessities while he writes for fun and even profit. His latest hardback is “Horror Movies – the Cinema of Fear”! Caroline married her James in 2005; she is now an Assistant Producer in BBC Television, he is in Citigroup and they live in Clapham, as all their friends seem to.

Last year we went on the trip of a lifetime to Peru (Machu Picchu), Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands. Swimming with sea-lions was a life enhancing experience! That’s probably our last long-distance trip; every year we do a walking holiday somewhere in Europe; back to Italy this year after Greece and Spain. We much enjoyed seeing so many old friends at the QGEA Reunion last year.

Andrew Mills 1982-85, 1994

Colonel Andrew Mills continues to command 12 (Air Support) Engineer Group in Waterbeach, which (on balance) takes most of his time. As Commodore of the Royal Engineer Yacht Club, he manages to spend the rest of it somewhere offshore. He’s even spending three weeks on Antigua Race Week which, by the editor’s reckoning, leaves 2 weeks unaccounted for!

His cousin, Captain Alasdair Miller, is enjoying life in Pokhara where, between bouts of adventurous trecking, he’s the Project Engineer with the Gurkha Welfare Service.

Ian and Denise Moore 1998–00, 2002 – 04

Denise and Ian with Alex and Annabel Brown

Denise and I are still living in Camberley, although having moved jobs to Bristol, I now spend an inordinate time on the M4! I completed ICSC(L) last summer and took post as a Requirements Manager with an MOD/industry partnership, NITEworks, in Farnborough. Unfortunately, this post folded within 4 months and I moved at short notice to become the Military Assistant to the Quarter Master General. Obviously this has turned out to be a far better job and despite the tedious weekly commute, has proven great fun and a tremendous learning experience. Come summer, I hope to move back to Minley, so I will at least be able to brush up my Nepali with the training party.

Aside Denise also changing jobs, life ticks on as ever. We seem to spend too much time working hard and not enough, travelling and having fun!

Having just taken over the mantle of social secretary from WIll Judge, should anyone have any fabulous ideas for QGEA get togethers, please get in touch.

David and Marita Owens 1958-63

After waiting a few years for son no three, Robert, to get spliced, he and Emma presented themselves with a daughter Rose. She is a toughie with a steady unblinking look, and promises to be a handfull. She is up on her feet at eight months. She is now our seventh Grandchild.
Our eldest son, Julian took his family to New Zealand in November, hoping to settle but as his profession is satellite communications, with some military connections, he could find no job, so we were delighted to see and welcome them back. Our second son(Mailo), because he was an Army Qualified Canoe instructor, was netted by a Canadian girl, would be canoeist, and took him, Peter away to Vancouver. They as with the eldest have three children. With Robert going to Australia for the wedding of a friend in July 07, we had nightmares of having one son in Canada, one in New Zealand and one in Australia, and would have to sell up and buy a boat and anchor off each continent in turn to visit our sons and their children.

I worked mostly abroad from 1975 to 2001, surprise , surprise building roads. [David went onto write about his efforts in working towards securing better pensions for Grkhas, which I am sure contributed towards the recent announcement – Ed]

Graham and Rebecca Price 1977-80, 81-83

This time last year I was writing about how life in Hong Kong was looking up. I had just got a new (paid) job, we had plans for the future and were upbeat about the year ahead. That all changed in June with the death of our much loved son Samuel, destined we thought for Sandhurst, but that was not to be. We were so grateful for the support of our QGE family in a difficult time. Soon after, we were in communication with my good friend Ian McEvoy over his sad loss of Sean. We have been in close contact since, and Ian has visited us many times in Hong Kong as he transits to china where he is establishing a factory. The Hong Kong economy is looking healthy and there is movement in the job markets, which is good for my recruiting business. Rebecca continues to study, this time an MSc in Special Education. I am also assisting a fellow sapper in his efforts to promote business links with North Korea, and we attended the first "business golf" weekend in Pyongyang, DPRK in October. Anyone interested in visiting North Korea please get in touch. We have just finished the HK Sevens, of which there are photos in the magazine of the confluence of QGE there. My contacts with the QGE toli in Hong Kong have been sparse, and so I'm not able to report on Dashera parties and the like.

I for one am looking forward to details of the next Nepal re-union. See you all there!

Colin and Moneena 1977-80, 83-85, 90-92

Malcolm, Moneena, Catriona, Colin, Kirsten and Callum (Euan in South America)

This is a long overdue update from Clan Peebles now firmly based in Bridge of Allan in Central Scotland. We ‘landed’ here in 1994 when Colin left the Army to take up the post of Director of Corporate Services in Lothian and Borders Police in Edinburgh. He is still there although planning an escape soon to resurrect the golf swing which has deteriorated over the last few years. Kept busy as Chairman of the local SSAFA Branch, with charity work for Rotary International, a small business and a large garden.

Moneena having returned to University for a post graduate degree, worked for a few years lecturing and teaching special needs children, then suffered a hip problem. Since 2003 she has been busy establishing the family property

business and is just making a return to golf following her injury.

Kirsten (now also called Fi) is a senior Captain in the AGC (ETS) and has just moved back to Worthy Down to teach potential officers. A St Andrews graduate, she seems to spend her time on netball tours to the most glamorous places such as the Caribbean, South Africa and Cyprus at the taxpayers' expense although to be fair, she has completed 2 tours in Basra. Visited Nepal some years ago where she lost her identity by mentioning parental links thereby becoming 'Peebles sahib ko nani!'

Catriona graduated in European Business Studies and German from Aberdeen and after spending 2 years working for an American IT company in Germany, returned to complete a Masters degree in Banking and Finance. Having worked for Bloomberg in London for a year she is now about to return to Germany with her new employer, a German merchant bank.

Callum graduated in Business Studies from Edinburgh and then joined the Halo Trust, a charity which undertakes humanitarian mine clearing, weapons and munitions disposal. Having spent 3 hard years in Angola, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, he resigned in January this year and is now globetrotting round pleasanter parts of the world before deciding what to do next.

Euan (21), reading Law and Spanish at Glasgow University, is doing his third year at a university in Buenos Aires, having spent much of his gap year travelling in South America. Now 6'7", an accomplished bag piper and rugby player, he has just completed his first half marathon loping in with a time I could only dream about!

Malcolm (19) is an Army Scholar with a talent for singing, full bore shooting (at which he has represented Great Britain) and rugby (2 appearances in the winning side at Murrayfield). He is now perfecting the finer points of student life at Edinburgh University where he is in his second year reading politics and economics.

Ken and Sandra Reader 1988-00

It does not seem that long ago that we got married (June 1967) but here we are, fast approaching our Ruby Anniversary. As predicted in our last submission we became grandparent's compliments of Natasha and Lee and in August, just over 3 years later, Harvey will have a sibling. Nicholas and Nina are hoping to give us news about a third in the not too distant future. And yes Sandra is over the moon being a granny!

Ken is still working but has cut down to 4 days with a further reduction to 3 days by the end of the year; well that is the plan. The 4 day week is achieved sometimes but enjoying the job of running the training division makes it difficult to give up. The work still requires the occasional visit to various barracks at home and overseas and therefore provides a continuing opportunity to meet service friends old and new.

The result of the busy work load is that we are still labouring on the garden and getting there slower than we would have wished. However, the lack of speed allows reflection before committing ourselves to anything expensive or time consuming. Don't get the wrong idea, it is not huge but it does give us satisfaction.

We manage to keep in touch with a number of friends from our time in QGE but, regrettably, have little opportunity to meet. Modern life or the onset of retirement seems to lead to trying to cram more into what feels like less time. Maybe when the 3 day week starts; who knows…..

Sandy and Felicity Reeve 2006

Felicity and Sandy were married on 19 August 2006 at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Elmley Castle, Worcestershire. Despite Sandy having retired as Captain AJR Reeve, Adjutant, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers one week previously, the Commandant and Gurkha Major were kind enough to allow him the honour of a Gurkha piper to play at the wedding. Lance Corporal Harkaraj Rai played excellently throughout the day, adding significantly to the occasion; a true credit to the Regiment and a memorable sight for a small Worcestershire village.

Philip and Tricia Rich 1955-60, 66-68

The only snippet that I can offer as an old soldier is that Tricia and I will be celebrating our Golden Wedding in June this year with luncheon party, rather dominated by our large family with all the grandchildren. I was serving in the Regiment when we got married, but as this was in London, I think the only representative from the Regiment was Ian Thomson, who will be attending the lunch.

Ian and Sally Slack 1989, 91-93

Life continues to move apace in the Slack Household since leaving the Corps in '97. For the past 6 years, I have been running Programmes for UBS Investment Bank which has kept me away from home with a similar frequency to the forces. Two years ago we were invited to move to the US with the company which has been an excellent challenge and given the whole family a feast of memories. Having spent the winter weekends being shown up on the ski slopes by the boys, we are about to change climes and will be moving to spend a few years in Singapore, again with UBS. We are especially looking forward to exploring some of our QGE haunts whilst in the region. Somehow Sally has managed to continue with her photography, Gym and Desk Top publishing whilst battling the house and three Ginger haired boys (Tom 12, Ben 11 and George 8) Should you wish to catch up more or get in touch you can do so through http://web.mac.com/sallyslack

Charles and Roma Spottiswoode 1958-63, 68-70 DCRE Nepal 70-72

2006 was an eventful year for us. In July we celebrated our Gold Wedding Anniversary with a lunch party for 60 under a marquee in our garden. The weather was beautiful, as were many of our guests, and several of them were QGEA/Bde of Gurkhas members. The wine flowed, the musicians played 'rustic classical' music (R's definition) and, as far as I can remember, we all had a very good time. Come October we went to China for three weeks with the splendidly named Wendy Wu Tours (W.W. an Australian Chinese who set up originally in Sydney and recently opened an office in London). Just we two Brits and 16 Australians, all of whom were 10-20 years younger than us, but we survived. We covered Shanghai, Peking (I still prefer the Cantonese name), Xian, the Terracotta Army, 3 Gorges Dam, a Yangtse River cruise, the Stone Forest and some beautiful country in Yunnan Province. Wonderful to look back on, but we were tired. 2007 will be quiet.

Children and grandchildren all flourishing in their own ways. Our 'guest wing' still open to all our old friends if they feel like a break in beautiful Shropshire.

Tim and Emma Treanor 1991-93, 94-96

Tim retired in September 2006. For the last seven years of his service he was employed in the Defence Communication Services Agency involved in major Information Systems projects, including BOWMAN. For a while, Tim and Bob Peet worked together again: Bob as the 'Customer' for battlefield applications in Whitehall and Tim as his Requirements Manager in the Integrated Project Team in Abbey Wood.

Tim is now at Ripon College Cuddesdon, Oxford undertaking 2 years ordination training. There are 60 ordinands in full-time training, many accompanied by their spouses and young families. Sometimes it feels like being back in Perowne Heights! It is likely that Tim will serve a curacy for 3 – 4 years in the Diocese of Exeter (that is, Devon).

We continue to live in Barnstaple. Emma works 3 days a week in the local hospital. She is, of course, very busy running the house, children and dogs (the latter, literally running, mostly over the dunes at Braunton Burrows and Saunton!). Charlotte is 18 and is currently spending 8 months in northern Tanzania teaching English in a primary school. Come the new academic year, she is off to Bristol to study Medicine. Georgina is 17, artistic and sociable and is at the Sixth Form College. She is just about to start working part-time as a life-guard, so those hours in the Gordon Hard swimming pool are paying dividends! Will is 15 and thoroughly enjoying West Buckland; he plays lots of sport, especially tennis.

Our warmest greetings to all our friends in QGE!

Andrew and Clare Tuggey 1969-70, 75-78, 82-84

The Tuggey family is happily settled in Monmouthshire. Piers (29) is leaving the Army (RGJ/Rifles) in the middle of May and hoping to be employed elsewhere immediately. He married Laura in April 2006, three weeks before a six month tour in Iraq, and whilst he was away became the father of George Tuggey. They plan a blessing and the reception that they never had, on their first wedding anniversary. Oliver (26) runs his own successful Kitesurfing School in Pembrokeshire - www.bigbluekitesurfing.com; what a life! Henry (24) was commissioned from Sandhurst in December 2006, joined RGJ/Rifles and will be in Iraq from the middle of May. Andrew has been running the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Westminster since January 2004, thoroughly enjoying it and weekly commuting from Wales (he doesn't enjoy that part so much). Clare runs the home and designs and manages web sites www.uptodatematters.co.uk.

Harry and Alison Vialou Clark 1964-66, 74-77, 77-79

Our waking thoughts are often of events many thousands of miles away from these shores. Our lives are dominated by the charity work we do in Kenya and it is from all this that we gain our greatest 'buzz'. Never thought I would ever become the touchy-feeling, open toed sandal type but for 'Those Who Know Africa' - as the Bata shoe advertisement goes - surprises on the Dark Continent are always a constant threat. We now have 132 bright, often destitute, young Kenyans on our books who we see through secondary and tertiary education. The senior one is in his third year at Nairobi University reading Electronics and Electrical Engineering. He saw his first white man at the age of seven - me - so you can imagine the satisfaction his success gives us.

The second charity I founded builds primary schools 'in the bush'. We are now planning our thirteenth school. This one will be funded by Ardingly College, my former school in Sussex, to mark the 150th anniversary of our foundation. A total of about 5200 children are taught in our schools at any one time. I knew there had to be a reason for becoming a PQE while in the Army!

On the family front, for those still reading this, daughter Victoria is teaching at the British school in Cairo and moves to Moscow in August to do similar. Alison has dug out her fox-fur hat. Son Max still has three children all of whom are perfect and hugely talented, of course. They live in Harrogate, as I type.

"Our Balding Hero" [*not my words - Ed]*

Bill & Janet Wiggett 1965-71

As this is my first entry into the Family News section since I left The Regiment many decades ago, it would be almost impossible to catch up on events that have passed since then. It has, however, been good to meet old friends during the various reunions I have been able to attend, especially the last dinner at Chatham when we bid farewell to General Tony as Colonel of the Regiment. Strange, as it seems only yesterday when Captain Tony Piggott was calling me from his then job with AG7 offering me the job of OC RE Sales Team, Chattenden. I suppose it's thanks to him that from this job I was able to have a close relationship with industry which eventually led to me doing what I am still doing today.

I have two companies, both dealing with the supply of military equipment worldwide. In particular, as Chairman of CQC Ltd – manufacturers of body armour, webbing, sleeping bags, etc for the MOD and other overseas forces – I am still very much in touch with the military. My other company, MilMark UK, deals mainly with the Middle East and I travel regularly and enjoy the sunny delights of the United Arab Emirates.

Janet and I have two children, Alice aged 19, who left Stowe in September and is enjoying a "gap" year which includes studying history of art in Italy for three months, before going up to university this September. Tom is in the lower sixth at Stowe and plodding through his A2s. He managed to get promotion to Corporal in the CCF but I feel it is unlikely that he will pursue a military career. Like most 17 year old boys he himself has no idea where his future career may take him.

Janet continues to busy herself looking after an aged but indecently fit father who lives close by and other aged relatives. As Chair of Governors of a local school she is also kept off the streets at night! I seem to spend my time buying 'interesting' cars and hope one day to commit myself to a re-build of my E Type.

We are fortunate to have homes overseas and look forward to un-scheduled holidays once the restrictions of Tom's school holidays are past. Yippee only 18 months to go!

We live with three Labradors, a Cocker Spaniel, two horses and a tame brown ram, near St Albans in Hertfordshire and have plenty of room for passing firemen so please get in touch – details in The List – if you are down our way.

Mike and Margaret Wright 1950-53, 60-63

Mike and Margaret are now in their early 80s and still live in the middle of Oxford where they lead a very active life. Mike went out to Bangalore last year for the 225th birthday of the Madras Sappers and was given a wonderful welcome.

Their son is still a foreign correspondent in the Middle East for Reuters and is based in Cairo. They go out for a month each winter to stay with his family and to avoid the bad weather. On their last trip they hired a 4x4 and drove out to the Siwa Oasis for a few days. On the way there, they stopped at El Alamein to tour the battlefield and war cemetery where Mike took photos of all the graves of Madras Sappers, which he later sent to the Commandant in Bangalore.

They are both still deeply involved in project work in India, but no longer spend a month each year working in the villages. If the QGE 2008 reunion in Nepal goes ahead, they hope to combine that with visits to projects in India.

They very much enjoy all the QGEA social events and are grateful to those who do all the hard work to organise them.

Gurkha Terms and Conditions of Service Review

This is included for those who have been unable to review the recent announcement on the changes to GTACOS. The Brigade of Gurkhas website www.brigadeofgurkhas.mod.uk *provides further details. There is a link to this website on the Association's website* www.qgea.org *- Ed*

Nationality & Status

Gurkhas should continue to be selected and recruited in Nepal, and remain Nepalese citizens throughout their service.

Formed units consisting entirely of Gurkhas except for British officers and a few specialists, should be retained as the Brigade of Gurkhas; and Gurkhas should be recruited only to those units.

The practice of compulsory discharge in Nepal should be discontinued.

Wider Employment & Transfer

Gurkha soldiers should be eligible to apply for transfer to Corps/Regiments outside the BG, on the same terms as the rest of the Army, after a minimum period of 5 years service in BG.

Recruitment & Selection

Recruiting and selection of Gurkhas is to remain in Nepal.

Recruiting and selection of Gurkhas should be owned by the Army Recruitment and Training Division (ARTD).

Selection standards for Gurkhas to be aligned with British selection arrangements in due course.

Nepalese women to be recruited into the Brigade of Gurkhas.

Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT)

The GWT support the British Army's recruiting and selection process should be formalised.

Training

The current Gurkha training regime should be retained for the time being.

The current regime is unlikely to be sustainable and ARTD should lead a programme aimed at alignment with the UK training regime.

ARTD should commence a programme to develop an acceptable training regime for Gurkha women.

Engagement & Commissioning

Engagements

Gurkhas to be enlisted to the Versatile Engagement when it is introduced for the wider Army.

The use of Condonation of service as a manning tool should cease (also applies to Queens Gurkha Officers (QGOs)).

Commissions

Nepalese DE officer recruits should be sought from within BG.

The QGO commission, the Short Service Commission (Gurkha) commission and the current system of awarding honorary rank should end.

The existing QGO population should be transferred to the Short Service Commission (Late Entry) (SSC(LE)), subject to meeting the standard.

Non-DE candidates in future should be commissioned only to the SSC(LE) within the BG.

Gurkha Other Ranks (GORs) may seek commissions in other Arms and Corps.

Current Short Service Commission (Gurkha) officers to be transferred to Intermediate Regular Commission (Late Entry) (IRC (LE) and will compete for posts alongside those from the wider Army.

Gurkha SSC (LE) officers in future may be selected for conversion to the IRC (LE) according to the same rules as for British SSC(LE) officers now.

GORs should be given access to employment opportunities outside the BG on the same basis as British personnel.

Gurkha LE officers should be permitted to seek transfer to other parts of the Army according to normal rules after 3 years commissioned service.

Gurkha LE officers are to be career managed by the Army Personnel Centre and be able to compete equally with their British counterparts.

BG units should be permitted a higher proportion of LE officer posts than corresponding units in the wider Army, for practical and cultural reasons, but that this should be subject to review.