

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers



2012

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers

Affiliated Colonel in Chief:

Her Majesty the Queen

Colonel of the Regiment:

Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB

Regimental Headquarters

Lt Col E G Robinson
Maj Ekbahadur Gurung
Capt T D Wootten
Capt Bishnubahadur Ghale

Commandant
Gurkha Major
Adjutant
Gurkha RCMO

Field Officers

Maj A A Gooch
Maj A C J Rowson
Maj Yogprasad Thapa
Maj Rajen Gurung Ech Comd

OC 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Search)
OC 70 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Search)
Sp Offr HQ 63 Works Group
70 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Search)

Captains

Capt Devkumar Gurung
Capt Tarabahadur Pun
Capt Meenjang Gurung
Capt Mohan Gurung
Capt Bishwabahadur Rai

Capt EJDeM Thompson
Capt Tulbahadur Ale MBE
Capt Yambahadur Pun
Capt Dirgha KC
Capt Purnasingh Tamang

Capt S I Ahmed
Capt Mohankumar Tamang
Capt Ashokkumar Gurung
Capt Buddhibahadur Bhandari
Capt Kamalbahadur Khapung Limbu

Subalterns

Lt D W Luttig

Lt D C Snook

Lt MJ C Romaniuk

Lt H M G Bailey

Lt M Kennedy

RSM

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



The Queen's Gurkha Engineers Association

President – Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB

Chairman – Brigadier (Retd) A D Harking OBE

Secretary – Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) J F Wheeley MBE

Treasurer – Mr M Adler

Nepal Member – Colonel A M Mills

Editor – Major A A Gooch

Social Events Member – Major I Moore

Website Controller – Maj A Rowson

Gurkha Major – Major Ekbahadur Gurung

Contacts:

Secretary: 02392 594661

jfalwheels@o2.co.uk

Editor: 07841 507560

andy_gooch@hotmail.com

Editorial

Andy Gooch

Our Association Chairman states in his introductory note, the magazine seems to come round quicker each year and for my family and I, this year has certainly been the case. I bring you this magazine from the privileged position of being back in the Regiment having taken command of 69 Sqn in early Sep. Within 3 weeks of taking over the Sqn Charlie and I were greeted, some 7 weeks early by the arrival of our daughters Alice and Beatrice and things have not stopped since. By the time you receive the magazine, I along with most of 69 Sqn will be in the final throws of preparation for a 6 month tour in Afghanistan as part of the EOD & Search Task Force in our new role of Advanced Search.

This year I have included a few more photos than usual about what is going on in the Regiment and you will see that whilst some things may have changed many have not; especially Dashain and Tihar where new troop commanders still dress up as Marunis and entertain everyone on Kalaratri. This year it was the turn of Lts Luttig and Romaniuk as you will see on page 34.

To be able to be part of a family with such a strong tradition and esprit de corps is something that makes those of us lucky enough to serve with QGE always seeking out when the next opportunity may arise to return. This incredibly strong sense of family is almost unique amongst the wider Corps of Royal Engineers and it is something that stays with you no matter whether you are serving in the Regiment, the wider Army or have retired. Col Ian Rigden, the current Col BG uses the motto of 5GR to explain just this, "*Hami jasto aru kohi china*" (There are no others like us).

This was brought back to me when I returned to Maidstone, as the Comdt (Col Simon Hulme) was my OC when I was an Ops Offr, the Sqn 2IC an old Tp Comd of mine as well as so many other familiar faces in 69 Sqn.

Once again I am for ever grateful to all of you who have contributed to making this years magazine one of the largest I have produced to date. There are articles on Hong Kong, a mad mountain bike race around Annapurna and an Indian reunion. A special thanks must also go to Lt Col JP



Cross for a number of articles, some of which I will keep for next year. There is also a good selection on Regimental information and 3 articles from those seconded outside the Regiment to organisations such as Cambridge UOTC, 33 Engr Regt (EOD) and 170 Infra Sp Gp in Chilwell, testimony to the flexibility and employability of our soldiers.

Before I make one more request and sign off for another 12 months I would like to thank a few people in particular who have played a significant part in producing this year's magazine. In the UK, GM Saheb (old and new) and Capt Bishnu Saheb have been a valued source of advice and direction. In Nepal, all of this would not have been possible without the hard work of Hukum Saheb, Sgt Binam Rana and of course the printers, Repro Vision Press Pvt. Ltd., Nepal.

It is a habitual request but I will finish as ever by asking that if readers have something they want to put in next year's magazine please do not wait for me to send out the calling notice, send it now. Likewise, there have sadly been a number of members of the Association who have passed away this year and we have not been able to commemorate their life with a fitting obituary. If you would like to write a few words on any of our former colleagues I will be happy to publish them next year. Jai QGE

Contents

Editorial.....	1
Message from Colonel of the Regiment.....	2
The Commandant's Report.....	3
The Gurkha Major's Report.....	4
RHQ QGE News.....	5
69 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search).....	8
70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search).....	11
50 Field Squadron (Search) Gurkha Troop.....	13
Gurkha Commandos.....	14
Mechanized Gurkhas.....	16
Gurkha Company.....	17
3 RSME News.....	19
1 RSME News.....	20
Brunei Boat Section.....	20
British Gurkhas Pokhara.....	21
Chilwell Update.....	23
Cambridge University Officer Training Corps.....	25
33 Engineer Regiment, EOC Gp.....	26
Dashain.....	27
Farewell to Gurkha Major.....	28
Gurkha Family News.....	29

Regimental Photo News.....	31
QGEA Chairman's Letter.....	37
The Association in Action.....	37
QGEA Nepal Update.....	39
3 ½ Years in Paradise.....	43
The Gurkha Welfare Scheme.....	44
Yak Attack.....	46
Morning Walks.....	49
Hong Kong 40 Years On.....	50
Yung Shue Au Helipad Revisited.....	54
4th Gurkhas Reunion.....	55
Nepalese Army High Altitude Warfare Course.....	57
A Garden Idyll.....	58
A Nepal Journey.....	59
An Army Schoolmaster's Challenge.....	60
Pahar Trust Health Posts.....	62
Archive – The Falklands 30 Years on.....	64
Ex-QGE Deaths and Obituaries.....	66
Family News.....	70
QGEA 2010 AGM Minutes and Finance Report.....	77
Late addition - QGEA Minley Summer Lunch.....	81



Message from the Colonel of the Regiment

Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB

As you can see in the various contributions throughout your annual magazine, the Regiment remains in excellent fettle as it faces up to a number of significant challenges, brought about by its change of role to high risk search; the ongoing redundancy programme; and the uncertainties surrounding further structural change as the Army is required further to reduce its numbers to circa 82,000 under Army 2020. It remains operationally focused as ever, with QGE elements almost permanently represented in Afghanistan. The commando troop has recently returned as I write, only to be replaced by the armoured troop based at Tidworth. RHQ deploys in September to take command of all Joint Service EOD Operations with 69 Sqn undertaking its first tour in the high risk search role.

There has been change at the top as we have paid fond farewell to our Comdt, Simon Hulme and GM, Prembahadur Gurung. They have been a quite excellent team in steering QGE through some choppy waters. We warmly welcome Ed Robinson as our new Comdt, who has already shown impressive commitment in attending the 3 month language course at Pokhara prior to taking command. Like so many of his recent predecessors, he faces a particularly challenging time in balancing his commitments to QGE with those of commanding 36 Engr Regt - and in preparing for operational command. I know that he will be selflessly supported by our new GM, Ek Saheb, and I am confident that QGE could not be in better or more dedicated hands.

The quality and performance of our soldiers continues to be universally impressive and widely appreciated. I had the privilege, once again, of inspecting this year's Kasam Khane parade. A slightly smaller party, consistent with our immediate requirements but an impressive body as ever. I would add that the new crop included as one of their number, Spr Pahalman Gurung - the adopted grandson of no less a brigade notable than Col John Cross! Sadly, I must report that Phase 2 of the redundancy programme will ask some 30 more of our soldiers to leave prematurely - a number without the benefit of an immediate pension. Meanwhile we continue to match up most impressively against our RE counterparts with increasing numbers being selected for promotion in direct competition, and invited to transfer. Hearteningly, the majority opt to stay within QGE family, although in these uncertain times some measure of outflow can provide us with a degree of flexibility.

Turning to Nepali matters, Gay and I, together with our oldest, James, visited Nepal in September and October last year. We could not have had a more enjoyable time and Andrew Mills put together an action-packed programme for us. Our visit coincided with the regimental birthday as well as Dashain. We managed to take in Kathmandu, Pokhara, Dharan, Darjeeling and Kalimpong as well as a short trek East, meeting so many old friends along the way and being royally entertained wherever we went. I must record here our heartfelt thanks to the various branches of the QGE RAN for looking after us so well. We had an unforgettable time.

Whilst in Nepal, I had the opportunity to visit the recently established GWT Residential Home at Khaski and to view the site of the second one, to be situated just below the Dharan AWC. These facilities are a tremendous initiative in ensuring that our most vulnerable pensioners are much



better able to live out their remaining years with dignity. Where we GWT trustees take this initiative from here is now the subject of further consideration. I also visited Chandra and Narendra in the Pahar Trust offices and received a very clear briefing. The Trust continues to have a most impressive story to tell in country, whilst Howard and Sue Green based in the Isle of Man are taking fund raising efforts from strength to strength. In all a remarkable achievement in taking on Tom Langridge's vision.

Finally I must once again pay tribute to your QGEA committee under the wise hand of Tony Harking and the indefatigable secretariat provided by John Wheeley. The committee has finally managed to secure a rationalisation of the various charitable elements associated with QGE, including the Perowne Trust. In so doing we are presently in the process of setting in place Nepal-based procedures to assist with management and administration of Perowne Scholars using the good offices of the senior cohort of the QGE RAN under Andrew Mills' hand. I must also mention the remarkable job Andy Gooch is doing in editing the magazine - even more remarkable when one considers that he is presently commanding 69 Sqn *and* has the joy of newly arrived twins at home when he ever leaves his office!

I very much hope to see you at either Minley in June or at Maidstone in September - or indeed at both. I would also mention the GBA annual dinner at the Rag on 8 November. It can be an excellent evening. Perhaps we should consider making up a QGE table this year. Wishing you all the very best for the coming year.

Jai QGE!



REGIMENTAL NEWS

THE COMMANDANT'S REPORT

Lieutenant Colonel E G Robinson RE

Commanding The Queen's Gurkha Engineers is a privilege and honour that is bestowed upon only a few very fortunate officers. Since arriving in December 2011 I have had the chance to visit most of the Regiment, but a trip to Brunei has alluded me thus far. I deploy in September 2012 to Afghanistan to command the EOD and Search Task Force on Operation HERRICK 17 and am fortunate to be accompanied by much of 69 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search).



I have been impressed by the honour and pride that each soldier and officer has to be a member of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers. My family and I have greatly enjoyed the many welcomes and functions that we have been invited to attend. In particular, I am very grateful to the Gurkha Major who has done much to smooth my arrival in post and has wisely guided me. The sense of family, 'Kaida' and Gurkha professionalism makes this unit special and very enjoyable to command.

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, and wider 36 Engineer Regiment (Search), have operationally been very busy. A significant number of soldiers have deployed on Operations HERRICK 15 and 16 as a part of the EOD & Search Task Force. Support has been provided at Squadron level to facilitate the EOD & Search Task Force Mission Rehearsal Exercises in Jordan – a significant undertaking and repeated every 6 months. In the UK, the Regiment will deploy a Venue Security Force and four Advanced Search Teams and Advisors to contribute to the maintenance of security during the Olympics. Furthermore, since March 2012 the Regiment has maintained a number of Advanced Search Teams and Advisors at Very High Readiness for deployment on contingent operations overseas. Put simply: if not preparing for or deployed on operations, the balance of the Regiment is charged with supporting training.

Beyond military training and operations, at the time of writing the Regiment won the Corps Badminton Championships and came top of the Corps Operational Shooting Competition – subsequently winning one of 3 inter-Corps finals. Consequently, for 2012 the Regiment will make up most – if not all – of the Corps shooting team. Following our second place in the Nepal Cup and a third place on Trail-Walker in the military division during 2011, I very much look forward to these during the summer months of 2012. It is a tremendously busy time, but we still find time for sport, adventurous training

and a healthy amount of leave combined with many social gatherings – Nepali New Year was a particularly fun evening during Easter leave.

We have for some time maintained a troop level presence with 24 Commando Engineer Regiment, but numbers will reduce as redundancy trims the manning surplus that we have enjoyed. Since returning from a very successful Operation HERRICK 14 they are supporting the Lead Commando Group. It is hoped that the commando flame will be kept alive and some individuals with the right guile and aptitude continue to attempt the commando course. The Mechanised Troop at 26 Engineer Regiment have deployed on Operation HERRICK 16 and we await their safe return. I was fortunate enough to visit Capt Meenjang's Troop and their families before they deployed and was impressed by how well they had integrated with 26 Engineer Regiment. These experiences, plus those I gained from visits to 3 RSME Regiment and Gurkha Company Catterick, convinces me that once the step is taken to serve beyond Maidstone it is rarely regretted.

A considerable amount of churn has happened over the past year. The Queen's Gurkha Engineers have said farewell to Colonel Simon Hulme MBE who is now working at the Combat Support Capability Directorate where he is shaping the future of the Corps. The previous Gurkha Major, Major Prembahadur Ale MVO, is now working at Sutton Valence School with their Combined Cadet Force and has been replaced by Major Ekbahadur Gurung. Major Chris Warhurst (soon to be Lieutenant Colonel), as Deputy Commandant, has been replaced by Major Mat Short and Captain Tristan Wootten, the Adjutant, has been replaced by Captain Richard Scott. Beyond Regimental Headquarters the churn has been equally as impressive. Major Andy Gooch (Gurung) is welcomed back, replacing Major Iain Moore as Officer Commanding 69 and Major Adam Rowson moves on in mid 2012 to be replaced by Major Mark Baker who returns to us as Officer Commanding 70. There are many more moves throughout the Regiment than is possible to mention here, but they all leave thanked for their valued service and those joining or returning are welcomed with open arms.

Congratulations to Staff Sergeant Khadka Gurung for receiving the Durand Medal and Lance Corporal Suman Ghale for receiving the Bowering Trophy. We must also congratulate Captain Purnasingh Tamang and Captain Bishwai Rai for commissioning in 2011 and most recently Captain Ganesh Gurung for commissioning in April 2012. Finally, congratulations are also due to Captain Devkumar Gurung for being selected for promotion to Major and his investiture as MVO.

One aspect about the future is certain: it will be busy and Gurkhas will continue to deliver operational capability to the highest of standards. There will remain some uncertainty for the Army as the redundancy programme progresses, but the shape and size of the future is gradually becoming clearer.



We must remain optimistic and always be ready to seek and exploit the next opportunity. Some of our Gurkhas who were selected during Tranche 1 of redundancy will sadly be leaving us in August 2012 and I am charged with making the announcements for Tranche 2 in June 2012. Though difficult to contend with, it is the only way to make the Army and Defence affordable in the current fiscal climate. Against this backdrop there is no capacity for anyone to have a manning surplus which the Gurkhas have enjoyed for some time. There is nothing personal about this or any slight towards those selected for redundancy. The pride and 'kaida' that bonds our Gurkhas - serving and retired - is unique and can never be taken away.

I am confident in The Queen's Gurkha Engineer's future. The young Gurkhas will find themselves joining a different Army to the older generation – which includes the Gurkha Major and I! So long as the standards, 'kaida' and ethos of the Gurkha soldier are well maintained, the British Army cannot afford to do without what is a potent capability and strategic reserve.

Jai QGE!

THE GURKHA MAJOR'S REPORT

Maj Ek Gurung



Having served for almost 27 years in the British Army and the Brigade of Gurkhas, it is a great honour and privilege to write a few lines in the 2012 QGE Magazine as the Gurkha Major. The announcement of my selection as GM QGE came out in December 2010 and I fully took over the post on 5 August 2011.

Soon after I took over a customary farewell event was organised in honour of the outgoing Gurkha Major, Maj Prembahadur Ale MVO and his family by all ranks of The QGE and their families. Maj Prem Ale MVO retired after 27 years of loyal service to the Regiment, and we wish him and his family a very happy retirement and every success in their civilian venture. On behalf of QGE we would like to thank Prem Saheb for his valuable contribution to the Regiment in which he spent almost three decades.

It has been almost eight months since I arrived in post and the time has flown by with a busy schedule that is inevitable in this current climate. In addition, the post has a lot of challenges to face due to the Defence and Security Review (SDSR) which has brought a massive uncertainty to everyone in the forces, particularly, in the Brigade of Gurkhas. QGE has been hit as badly as the rest of the Bde and when the results of Redundancy Tranche 1 was announced on 1 Sep 11, 13 members across all ranks were selected for redundancy. We are fully aware that a series of redundancy tranches are

ahead of us and no doubt it will bring more difficulties to QGE.

Despite of this uncertainty, as would be expected, QGE continues to perform to the highest standard on both and on operations. QGE Commando boys had a successful Op HERRICK 14 tour and they all returned safely in September 2011. The Gurkha Mechanised Troop in 33 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 26 Engineer Regiment deployed to Kenya on Exercise ASKARI THUNDER 7 in support of the 1st BN Royal Welsh Battle Group and the troop has since completed pre-deployment training in preparation for their deployment on Operation HERRICK 16. No doubt the Troop will perform well throughout their tour and we all await their safe return in September 2012. 69 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search) deployed to Kenya on Exercise NORTHERN QUEST for 3 months where the Sqn tested their trade skills and produced high standards in all they did and set The QGE standard as a bench mark for others to follow. Currently, the Sqn is busy preparing for Op HERRICK 17 and will deploy in the High Risk Search role. The majority of 70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search) have been busy with two major constructions projects in the UK, one being a local footbridge at Leeds Castle and the other was the construction of a new Gurkha Village at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Today the spirit and energy of QGE remains strong, The QGE enjoys great and ever growing esteem and all members of QGE should take pride in their achievements.

Besides the above major events, QGE has continued to celebrate all the Regimental activities with pride. The 63rd birthday was celebrated on 24 Sep 11 when ex-servicemen and their families enjoyed the day and meet their former colleagues as well as young serving members of QGE. Subsequently Dashain and Tihar were celebrated in a traditional manner. Recently the QGE PNCO cadre was run by the Regiment and 29 young QGE sappers (out of 60 students) attended and all completed the cadre with credible reports. Not surprisingly, Spr Manoj Gurung finished as Top Student and was promoted to Lance Corporal on the parade square.

This year QGE received 18 new trainees from intake 2011 and I was fortunate to attend their Cap Badging in August and subsequent Passing Out Parade in September 2011 at Gurkha Company Catterick. In QGE the trainees from intake 2011 are known as 65 Training Party and all received a warm welcome at Invicta Park in September 2011. On completion of their education package in October 2011 they went to 3 RSME Regiment where they all successfully completed their Combat Engineer Class 3 Course. They had their attestation parade on 9 Feb 12 when the Colonel of the Regiment, Lieutenant General Sir David Bill KCB Saheb witnessed the parade as the reviewing officer. Currently, all the trainees are busy on Phase 2B trade courses.

Almost 250 Gurkha families are settled and integrated within Invicta Park Barracks as well as more in the surrounding area. These days, our bahiniharu are more committed to their husbands' service and my personal thank goes to all for being supportive and tranquil whilst their husbands are busy in high tempo schedules both in the UK and on operations. It is great to know that the families are more devoted towards their religion even in this modern world and all religious ethos



and practices have been well retained. Definitely a large chunk of credit must go to Pundit Prem Prasad Gaire Jee who has immense knowledge supported by his 30 years of experience with the Bde Gurkhas. Frankly, QGE is blessed to have such a high calibre religious teacher who has been responsible for all religious matters including teaching moral understanding to the QGE soldiers. In addition, Pundit Jee has been teaching formal Nepali classes for the Gurkha children.

The life in RHQ is as busy as ever and in to it have come some new key personalities in particular the Commandant QGE. Lt Col Ed Robinson Saheb took command of the Regiment in the first week of January 2012. The new Comdt QGE has never served with QGE in the past; however he had an ideal opportunity to learn about Gurkhas as he attended the Nepali Language Course for three months in Nepal prior to taking over the appointment. Now, he has almost grasped QGE ethos and the Regiment is looking forward to serving under his command.

In summary, the Regiment has changed its role and continues to deliver in all it does. So far, QGE has a total of 67 personnel across ranks trained as All Arms Commandos and one third of them are still serving with 24 Commando Engineer Regiment, RMB Chivenor, North Devon. 8 Mechanised Gurkha Troop is serving with 26 Engineer Regiment, based at Tidworth whilst Maidstone still remains the main hub for all QGE soldiers and their families. Regardless of their locations and roles, QGE soldiers are flying the QGE flag as high as it should be and RHQ QGE is rightly proud of their achievements and performances. The Regiment has much to look forward to and there is no doubt that the fighting spirit of QGE soldiers and the professionalism of the Gurkha Sapper will remain in demand.

Jai QGE!

RHQ QGE NEWSLETTER

Capt Bishnu Ghale (GRCMO)

RHQ QGE is immensely privileged to inform you that the Regiment is in great form and as strong as ever and playing a full part in all aspects of military activities, fulfilling a multitude of roles and operational commitments, all with utmost professionalism and persistent courage. In periods of significant changes within QGE, the work of the RHQ QGE throughout the year has been to tackle the inevitable challenges faced as a result of redundancy and re-rolling to new the Advanced Search role which has seen both 69 and 70 Sqns re-roll to Fd Sqns (Search). In this current climate, the new role will steer QGE in to a strong position to feature in the Future Army 2020. Over the past 12 months, the Regt has been extremely busy on exercises to Kenya, pre-deployment training for Op HERRICK 17, Very High Readiness commitments, Op OLYMPICS as well as the EOD & Search Task Force preparations and mission rehearsal exercises in Jordan. The Gurkha Troop from 24 Cdo Engr Regt successfully completed Op HERRICK 14 and returned in September 2011 whilst the Gurkha Troop at 26 Engr Regt deployed on Op HERRICK 16 in March 2012 and will return in September 2012. We wish them a very safe and successful tour.

The current strength of QGE stands at 409 including 18 newly arrived Sappers. There are altogether 79 QGE

members working outside the Regt; predominantly, 26 Engr Regt and 24 Cdo Engr Regt where 30 and 16 QGE members are employed respectively. QGE members serving outside the Regiment have been fine ambassadors for the Regiment and the Brigade of Gurkhas. In addition to this, five Cpls will complete their Clerk of Works Course in July 2012 and promote to SSgt on transfer to the RE. Similarly, 3 x LCpls have been selected for this year's Clerk of Works Course, starting from September 2012. It is very good news that so many QGE Sappers are transferring to the RE on promotion and so far 96 QGE members have been transferred to RE and other British Army units. Whilst this has been a very good opportunity for the young enthusiastic (Joshi) Gurkha Sapper, at the same time, the Regiment is facing fresh challenges as a result of last year's Defence Review. This has led to a degree of uncertainty with the prospect of redundancies across the Armed Forces over the next three years and it is a sad fact that the Regiment will undoubtedly going through some difficult years. We shall very sadly have to ask some of our QGE personnel to leave on redundancy before they would wish to. In Tranche 1 QGE has had to lose 13 members (1 x Oftr 1 x SNCO, 4 x Cpls, 6 x LCpls and 1 x Spr). Tranche 2 will be even painful and on a bigger scale, with a maximum of 48 personnel from all ranks to be made redundant between 12 Jun 12 and 11 Jun 13. The Queen's Gurkha Engineers will provide them with every support in their transition from military to civilian life. We have every confidence that with the skills they have attained during their military service and the excellent qualities that made them a Gurkha Sapper, they will all make a successful transition to civilian life - wherever that may be. We wish them the very best of luck for their future whatever it brings.

Following our fine traditions, the departure of Comdt QGE and the Gurkha Major is always a major event and highlight in the Regimental history. A traditional farewell function was organised to bade farewell to Comdt QGE, Lt Col S H Hulme MBE after two and half year of fine service and we subsequently welcomed the new Comdt QGE Lt Col E G Robinson RE. In similar style, the Regt bade farewell to Gurkha Major, Major Prembahadur Ale MVO and his family after his long and distinguished career in QGE. Many congratulations also go to Major Ekbahadur Gurung for on taking up the prestigious appointment of the Gurkha Major QGE.

The 63rd QGE birthday was celebrated in Maidstone on 24 September 2012 and we welcomed both past and present members of the Regiment. The winner of the Bowring Trophy for 2011 was awarded to LCpl Suman Ghale as the best LCpl of the year and the Regt also announced the winner of the prestigious Durand Medal, SSgt Khadkabahadur Gurung (24 Cdo Regt) for his outstanding achievements. As always, Dashain and Tihar were celebrated in the traditional manner, kick started by the Dashain Guest Drinks and the Kalaratri Night celebrations with all ranks and families in the well decorated ABLE Hanger.

It is worth mentioning that the quality and dedication of the Gurkha Sapper is unquestionable and that it contributes to achieving huge successes on both the sporting field and in military activities. During the Regimental Section Competition, QGE sections secured the top 8 positions out of 23. During



the recently run PNCO cadre the overall result for QGE Sprs was excellent and the top student award was presented to Spr Manoj Gurung. QGE personnel have also been very successful on sporting field with the following successes:

- Nepal Cup - Runner up
- Trailwalker - 3rd and 5th place
- Badminton – Div and Corps Champions
- Army Operational Shooting Competition 2011 (Bisley) - 5 out of 8 man team qualified for the Army 100.

These are times of relentless change, which is never an easy experience but through all of this RHQ QGE has , and will continue to work hard in the best interests of the Regiment and the families. Whatever the future holds, the spirit and energy of The QGE remains strong and it enjoys great and ever growing respect. The Regiment continues to perform outstandingly in every department – operationally; in training and in the diligent and dignified execution of its wider duties; and it is these qualities, in the best traditions of the Brigade of Gurkhas, that should secure our future. The following lists personnel achievements and awards for the year:

Honours and Awards

Durand Medal 2011

21169289 SSgt Khadgabhadur Gurung	Winner
21167998 Capt Meenjang Gurung	Runner Up

Bowring Trophy 2011

21170999 LCpl Suman Ghale	Winner
21170767 LCpl Tarjan Subba	Runner Up

Selected for promotion to Major

563523 Capt Devkumar Gurung

Selected for Commissioning

21168542 WO2 Ganeshprasad Gurung

Selected for promotion to WO2

21169283 SSgt Govindaprasad Rana
21169289 SSgt Khadkabhadur Gurung

Selected for promotion to SSgt

21169327 Sgt Narendrahoj Gurung

Promotion to Sgt

21169976 Sgt Prithibhadur Chhantyal

Promotion to Cpl

21170030 Cpl Chandrabhadur Budha Magar
21170737 Cpl Suresh Sherma
21170536 Cpl Furtenji Sherpa

21170652 Cpl Jayandra Garbuja
21170545 Cpl Bikram Gurung
21170100 Cpl Bhimbahadur Pun
21170353 Cpl Dipak Gharti Magar
21170510 Cpl Sangharsha Rai
21170286 Cpl Subin Rai
21170221 Cpl Dalbahadur Ringjali
21170767 Cpl Tarjan Subba
21170789 Cpl Deepak Rai
21171099 LCpl Nirmal Purja

Promotion to LCpl

21170809 LCpl Mahendra Angbuhang
21170844 LCpl Bikram Gurung
21170934 LCpl Buluhang Rai
21170989 LCpl Ganga Tumbahamphey
21171049 LCpl Yogesh Gurung
21171075 LCpl Ishwar Thapa
21171138 LCpl Hiunraj Gurung
21171153 LCpl Poshankumar Baidhya Tamang
21171200 LCpl Lokendra Yakso
21171244 LCpl Kumar Pun
21171322 LCpl Satish Gurung
21171392 LCpl Milan Garbuja
21171424 LCpl Bikash Gurung
21171431 LCpl Santosh Gurung
21171465 LCpl Dilbahadur KC
21171468 LCpl Balaju Thapa Magar
21171503 LCpl Basanta Gurung
21171512 LCpl Bhim Limbu
21171558 LCpl Santoshkumar Rai
21171581 LCpl Degnath Pokhrel
21171619 LCpl Dipash Gurung
21171664 LCpl Jitbahadur Thapa
21171707 LCpl Upendra Rai
21171726 LCpl Krishnakumar Rai
21171739 LCpl Bhupendra Rai
21171751 LCpl Dinesh Gurung
21171803 LCpl Dibesh Lama
21172020 LCpl Manoj Gurung

Transferees

RE as Clerks of Work

21169965 Cpl Bhabendrakumar Muktan
21169426 Cpl Kriti Rai
21169969 Cpl Tanka Ambohang
21169824 LCpl Birendra Rai
21169964 LCpl Kishan Gurung

RE

21169123 Sgt Narprasad Gurung
21169288 Sgt Samir Thapa
21169318 Cpl Gangaram Rai
21169546 Cpl Dipraj Rai
21169599 Cpl Lalbahadur Pulami Magar
21170627 Cpl Durgabhadur Pun
21179676 LCpl Bhimlal Rai
21169679 LCpl Dilprasad Gurung



21169784 LCpl Karmaraj Rai
 21170102 LCpl Chandraman Gurung
 21170242 LCpl Tularam Thaklung Limbu
 21170254 LCpl Deobhakta Rai
 21170265 LCpl Begbahadur Tamang
 21170268 LCpl Harkaraj Rai
 21170320 LCpl Yubaprakash Manglak
 21170324 LCpl Tapkumar Rai
 21170326 LCpl Jamansher Rai
 21170336 LCpl Bhijan Rai
 21170361 LCpl Rajbahadur Gurung
 21170525 LCpl Jangabahadur Thapa
 21170527 LCpl Kanaiyalal Thapa
 21170553 LCpl Ramesh Pun
 21170558 LCpl Deepak Tamang
 21170801 LCpl Angtshiring Sherpa
 21170842 LCpl Tekbahadur Gurung
 21171524 LCpl Mukeshkumar Sunwar

AGC (SPS)

21169275 Cpl Arjunkumar Purja Pun
 21170537 LCpl Maniprasad Gurung
 21170646 LCpl Mohankumar Senehang
 21171019 Spr Rajat Gurung

Best Students

ME Electrician Class 1

21170898 LCpl Deepak Rai
 21171617 Spr Bobin Gurung

ME Welder Class 1

21171917 Spr Tulbahadur Thapa

ME Bricklayer and Concretor Class 1

21171806 LCpl Santosh Goley
 21172025 Spr Sujan Pakhrin

ME Heating and Plumbing Class 2

30085718 Spr Bhuwan Rai

ME COW(M)

21169965 Cpl Bhabendrakumar Muktan

ME Bricklayer and Concretor Class 2

30120258 Spr Balkumar Budha Magar

CMT Classs 1

21171582 LCpl Jas Rai



RHQ QGE

*Standing L to R: LCpl Deekpak Rai, Capt B Ghale (GRCMO), Pandit Prem Prasard Gaire WO2 Arjunkumar Rai (GSA)
 Sitting L to R: Capt T Wotten RE (Adj), Major Ekbahadur Gurung (GM) Lt Col E G Robinson RE (Comdt)
 WO1 (RSM) J Banham, Maj M Short RE (Dept Comdt)*



69 GURKHA FIELD SQUADRON (SEARCH)

Capt Ed Thompson, Sqn 21C

Although 69 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search) has recently re-rolled it continues to be committed to global and local operations and tasks in support of community engagement, defence diplomacy, foreign policy and international security. This sounds fairly busy; it has been!

Since July 2011 the Squadron has completely re-rolled into a Search Squadron, deployed to Kenya on a construction tour for 3 months, completed 2 community construction tasks and supported various local Combined Cadet Forces. Most recently the Squadron has focused on their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 17 in September 2012. The training burden for this

has been immense; nearly 90 soldiers have been trained in High Assurance Search (a 2 month course) and have also been trained to drive or command the new MASTIFF vehicle, as well as learning battlefield first aid and trauma management and been taught how to use various specialist search equipment all in preparation for their new role.

Clearly the reshaping of a Squadron has required considerable management. Although manning has been managed by the Regimental Headquarters it must be mentioned that Capt Tul Ale MBE and Capt Tara Pun have run the Echelon and Operations departments with exceptional competency. Their meticulously management and commitment have ensured that the Squadron has been appropriately resourced and trained and able to tackle all of the challenges their new role will bring. It is now prepared and focused on their upcoming tour to Afghanistan.

From May to July 2011 the Sqn deployed 110 soldiers of various trades to Kenya on Ex NORTHERN QUEST 11. The Sqn was tasked to complete elements of the new Forward Mounting Base at Laikipia Air Base in order to increase the size of the BATUK training estate to better reflect the current

Contemporary Operating Environment. This task not only allowed the Headquarters to get to grips with the complications of a Squadron Level deployment but also offered the soldiers a good opportunity to practice their trade and combat engineering skills in an austere environment. All levels of command were tested over 3 independent but concurrent construction tasks.



Capt Yam's H-Tp

Capt Yam Pun had technically the most complex and labour intensive site. His team was tasked to build two ablution blocks, 1 to completion and the other to roof height (including trusses and CGI) to ensure it was waterproofed against the elements. The ablution blocks were a traditionally constructed block building on a concrete pad with

wooden frame trussing and CGI roofing which included solar water heating. The completed ablution blocks were able to provide washing facilities for up to 500 soldiers at any given time.

Capt Kamal Khapung Limbu and his troop constructed the dining hall and refuge pad. The dining hall was the single largest task; a Tenko style building with a half block half timber frame constructed on a concrete pad and able to house 600 soldiers at any one sitting. Although technically not difficult it needed a lot of forethought and planning to ensure the required tradesmen were at the right place, at the right time.



I Tp and the nearly complete dining facility.

Sgt Birendrakumar Kambang took over the construction of an incomplete Main Entry Point (MEP) from 32 Armd Engr Sqn. Using a collection of locally employed civilians (LECs) Sgt Birendra worked tirelessly to construct, weather cap and render the walls to the enormous MEP.

Prior to the Squadron's departure his team had completed 80 % of the work with only the painting and the attachment of the entry gate being left for the incoming Sqn.

Clearly the deployment was not all about work and each of the soldiers managed to get away for some much needed



adventurous training and rest and recuperation, enabling them to refresh and refocus on their responsibilities on the task site.



In December 2011 SSgt Subash Rai, with the support of Cpl Juddha Limbu managed the construction of a reinforced concrete plinth that would later display a Terrier armoured vehicle at the Royal Engineer Museum. Having just returned from a large construction tour in Kenya this was a rather more straight forward task but it did provide more valuable trade and combat engineer training. Using a small team of various tradesman they completed the task in under 2 weeks and handed it over to a very happy museum curator.



RE Museum Terrier plinth project

Also in December 2011 Sgt Birendra Kambang managed a small team of tradesman and combat engineers throughout the construction of a Wild Cat enclosure in the Wildlife Heritage Foundation in Smarden, Kent. Once again this gave the Squadron a great opportunity to actively support the local community whilst concurrently developing their specialist artisan and combat engineering skills. Retaining the individual artisan skills has become far more difficult as the Squadron has focused much of its time on specialist search training for their new role so these tasks have been gladly welcomed by the new Officer Commanding Maj Andy Gooch.

From January through to September 2012 the Squadron will be focused on their deployment to Afghanistan. Our new role of search has given troop commanders, troop seniors and section commanders the opportunity to test themselves in a

completely new and unfamiliar environment. All commanders have embraced this challenge and have performed extremely well on the various prerequisite courses with Capt Purna Tamang, SSgt Subash Rai, Cpl Rojan Rai, Cpl Surya Tumbahangphe, Cpl Man Sunuwar and Cpl Khrishna Thapa leading the way and being the first to successfully complete the training.



WHF Lion Enclosure task

In June 2012 the Squadron will deploy to Jordan for 6 weeks for their first Mission Rehearsal Exercise in this new role and each team will be tested under conditions similar to those that they will experience in Afghanistan. The Squadron will deploy in September 2012 for 6 months to Afghanistan and the Rear Party of approximately 60 soldiers will be commanded by Capt Thompson and SSgt Prakash.

Although the Squadron is mainly committed to the Afghansitan deployment LCpl Joseph Subba, Spr Roshan Chantyal, Spr Shakti Gurung and Spr Prabin have been selected to deploy on OP OLYMPICS where they will be part of a team providing venue security during the Olympic period.

Congratulations must go to all those who have been selected for promotion over the last few months; WO2 Ganesh Gurung has been selected for commissioning and has handed over SSM to WO2 Manjit Gurung, SSgt Govinda Rana has been selected for promotion to WO2 and Sgt Narendra Gurung has been selected for SSgt. Cpls Chandra Lawati and Om Budha Magar have been selected for Sgt on transfer to the RE whilst LCpls Surresh Sherma, Jayandra Garbuja, Bikram Gurung, Sangharsa Rai and, Bhim Pun were selected for QGE Cpl. LCpls Tej Rai and Bishnu Gurung were selected for RE Cpl and Sprs Yogesh Gurung, Milan Garbuja, Huinraj Gurung, Bhim Limbu, Basanta Gurung, Kumar Pun and Santosh Gurung were all selected for LCpl.

During another busy and testing year the support the Squadron receives from all of its associated families continues to be extremely humbling and we must once again offer our thanks to our families. The tour to Afghanistan in September 2012 will indeed be challenging but I look forward to covering the successes of our deployment in the next publication. Jai 69 Sqn! Jai QGE!



Ex NORTHERN QUEST SNAPSHOT



70 GURKHA FIELD SQUADRON (SEARCH)

Capt S I Ahmed, Sqn 2IC

There is no such thing as a quiet year for an Engineer Squadron in the British Army these days and this is no less true of 70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search) in 2011/12. The year began in a very busy fashion, as I am sure you remember, with the re-role of the Squadron to the Search role. There is a significant difference between the shape of a Field Support Squadron and that of a Field Squadron, not to mention the added complications of the Search aspect. The consistent undercurrent of this process has been in the world of G4, with the back-loading of old equipment and the arrival of new, slowly bringing the Squadron to the point where it is effective in the new role. The Squadron Echelon department has worked tirelessly and mention must go to SSgt Buddhilal Gaha, Cpl Pratap Gurung and LCpl Pendulal Rai who carried on these essential works whilst the Echelon Commander was trawled to support BATUK last summer. The Squadron is, as a result of the hard work of this team, now almost fully equipped as an Engineer Search Squadron.

Of course, the re-role has been an important undercurrent to the year, but as usual soldiers from 70 Sqn have been off doing their jobs around the world. We have had section commanders employed on the ranges in BATUK supporting the summer training season, several soldiers spent the summer at the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK) either supporting or conducting training alongside 23 Amphibious Engineer Squadron or 26 Engineer Regiment. The Squadron also deployed its Communications and Information Systems department in support of the 2011 Cambrian Patrol where we were responsible for several re-bro sites critical to the successful running of the exercise. Signallers were also key to the running of Ex PASHTUN LINKS 3 in October which saw 70 Sqn troops deploying to Jordan to provide support to the Op HERRICK 16 EOD and Search Task Force mission rehearsal exercise. In total, 70 Squadron has deployed well over 50 personnel on over 20 trawls to 7 different countries totalling around 39 months duration!



RMAS messing area under construction

However, trawls are not all we do in 70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search)!

In May 2011 Capt Mohan Gurung Saheb deployed to RMA Sandhurst with a crack team of artisans, drivers and combat engineers to build a new messing area for the RMAS Gurkha Company Sittang. The idea behind the project was to update the existing facility to provide the perfect location for the Company to be able to hold all manner of functions no matter what the weather. The project went off without a hitch and was easily completed within the required time frame and as you can see from the photo it is an impressive new facility.

The first major deployment for the Squadron took the form of Ex PUL NIRMAN 11, the regular Combat Engineering Exercise that the Squadron uses to ensure that basic Sapper knowledge and experience is maintained. This exercise took place at Wyke Regis Training (WRTA) and consisted of two weeks of hard work. The highlights were both the visit by General Sir David Bill Saheb and the messing hosted by the Squadron for the staff at WRTA.



Ex SAHASI SAPPER, walking on Dartmoor

Shortly after this successful training period, the Squadron deployed on Ex SAHASI SAPPER; adventurous training in Cornwall. The package consisted of trekking across Dartmoor followed by a week at RAF St Mawgan conducting a multi activity package consisting of Kayaking, Mountain Biking, Surfing and Coasteering. I was amazed to see how quickly the bhairu got on top of the surf at Phistrel Beach and by the end of the morning it was like a scene from a Beach Boys video (almost). I had never tried coasteering before and was surprised to find that it consist of climbing along the coast, falling into the sea and swimming in equal parts. Levity aside, there was some highly impressive climbing involved with the everyone scaling up to 20m of rock face with no climbing ropes and only the pulsing sea beneath as a safety net only to then have to leap into nothingness to get back down again. Upon returning from Ex SAHASI SAPPER, the Squadron took part in the Commanding Officer's Summer Challenge where we emerged victorious with LCpl Niranjana Gurung, once again, winning the prize for strongest Sapper in the Regiment.





Mountain biking on Ex SASHI SAPPER

Following on from Summer leave, the Squadron began training for its commitments in 2012, namely supporting the Airborne Task Force (ABTF), an organisation designed to rapidly deploy to anywhere in the world, at short notice in support of UK foreign policy and also providing security forces for Op OLYMPICS. As such, the run up to Christmas was largely filled with search training and all of those short but important courses that build up to a fully capable unit. The Squadron now has 4 fully trained Advance Search teams who are on 5 days notice to move so that they can deploy with the ABTF should the need arise and we are also still in the process of preparing for Op OLYMPICS.

Between August and November of 2011, 70 Squadron provided the military construction force to 2 very high profile tasks. The first was the construction of a C-IED training facility at 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD). Cpl Buddha Gurung and his team spent several weeks working very hard on site in order to bring a demanding project back onto schedule and they received much praise for their diligence and hard work. The second project was the completion of the ground works for a Forward Operating Base training facility at 3 Royal School of Military Engineering Regiment in Surrey. This time Cpl Ramesh Rana spent 3 weeks with his team laying the foundations for the construction of this new facility. Before his arrival, the project had been plagued with manpower and weather issues, but in three weeks, with remarkable diligence, Cpl Ramesh and his team managed the job, again attracting high praise from the task commander.



MT Troop on Parade during Ex SIPALU DRIVER

More recently the Squadron ran Ex INVICTA PERSUASION, an exercise designed to encourage cadets at RMA Sandhurst

to apply for a commission in the Corps of Royal Engineers. This is a very high profile event and was the main focus for the Squadron for weeks preceding. The visit consisted of a series of stands at Lodge Hill Training Area, Upnor Hard and the digging field at Ponderossa, showcasing the best that the Royal Engineers have to offer. Amongst the Engineer Armour display and boat demonstrations, soldiers from 70 Sqn were responsible for showing off their core skills, wielding power tools, purifying water and blowing things up. The visit ran without a hitch and feedback was very positive from both the cadets and Commander 29 Group who also attended for a short period.

The second day focussed on demonstrating the specific roles that Engineer Squadrons undertake, with 70 Sqn responsible for promoting both QGE and our current search Role. SSgt Krishna Thapa and his REST team put together an excellent capability display for the cadets and spent a great deal of time explaining the roles they carry out on a search task.



Search Demonstration for RMAS Cadets

As I write this article, the Squadron is preparing for its second major task of the year, the execution of the Corps Operational Shooting Concentration (CORPSOSC). Having come home victorious from this competition on so many previous occasions, it appears that someone has decided that QGE must be hampered in their efforts by tasking one of the sub units with coordinating the event itself. I am sure this will be a strategy doomed to failure and I fully expect the usual raft of silverware to return to the Regiment in a couple of weeks time.

The future for the Squadron is also a busy one, with support to Op OLYMPICS including venue security and the raising of flags at the victory ceremonies for both Swimming and Cycling events. No doubt if you watch your TV hard enough this summer, you will see members of the Squadron front and centre. Search teams from the Squadron will also be on standby for the Airborne Task Force for the foreseeable future, providing that vital search support for the Nation's contingency operations forces. This year will once again see Ex TRAILWALKER and Nepal Cup support fall to the Squadron and so 2012-13 is already shaping up to be just as busy as 2011-12! Jai 70 Sqn, jai QGE!



3 TP, 50 FD SQN (SEARCH)

Spr Nirajan Budathoki

24 Feb 11 was a great day for the Squadron and it was an honour to have, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visit the Regiment to officially announce its re-role from General Support to a Search Regiment. At the same time 50 Squadron underwent its own transformation from the old Headquarters and Support Squadron to become 50 Field Squadron (Search). It had also been decided to cross post a selection of QGE personnel to form a Gurkha Troop (3 Troop) as part of a mixed Squadron. This was a completely new experience and working environment for all involved, and one which we all adapted to quickly.

17 July 11 saw the whole Squadron deploy on Ex GRIFFIN FINDER, a week long combat engineer exercise in Weymouth. Here we completed bridge builds, water points and raft races where everyone from 3 Troop performed to the highest standard. The evenings provided a good opportunity to interact on a social basis and many laughs were shared over a few beers between the Gurkha and British soldiers. Shortly after the exercise was the long awaited week leave and some of the Troop went back to visit family in Nepal and others stayed in the UK with their own families.



Ex GRIFFIN FINDER, combat engineer trg in Weymouth

Following summer leave there were a number of sporting activities the first of which was the Inter Squadron Sports Competition where everyone participated in numerous events and we managed to come first place in football. From this competition teams were selected to participate in the RE Games held at Waterbeach. Many of the Squadron were selected to represent the Regiment at this two day event and overall 36 Engineer Regiment finished in the top three, showing the effort and determination given by all.

23 Oct 11 saw the majority of the Troop deploy to Jordan to support Ex PASHTUN LINKS 3. This exercise is designed to give training and authorisation to members of the EOD & Search Task Force about to deploy on an operational tour to Afghanistan. This provided a good opportunity for new sappers from our troop to work in a different environment and gain some overseas experience. In the support role our troop was tasked with a variety of jobs including; Main Operating Base (MOB) set up, HLS construction, plant tasks, enemy and guard force. All performed to the highest standards and

thoroughly enjoyed the experience, especially the day trip to one of the wonders of the world that is Petra.



Some of 3 Tp in Jordan supporting Ex PASHTUN LINKS 3

On return from Christmas leave three of the troop (Sprs Nirajan, Sagar & Suraj) were selected to attend a gruelling four week Potential NCO Cadre in Thetford. This was physically and mentally challenging with a lot of new information to take on board. All three emerged, having passed with high scores, confident and more importantly now eligible for promotion.



A cadre lesson being delivered in a cold and snowy Thetford

Our troop has also taken part in a number of plant tasking; Cpl Prem was IC of a spillway task, building a base ramp for a construction project for the Maidstone community. As well as this we worked to upgrade one of the ranges at Hythe.

The Squadron now has two main focal points; firstly Op OLYMPICS, where we will provide venue and baggage search capabilities for both the Olympics and Paralympics. Second is for deployment as part of the EOD & Search Task Force on Op HERRICK 18 in Mar 13. As such we have all been busy with Search courses, Team Medics qualifications, MASTIFF and WOLFHOUND driving courses to make sure we are all qualified for the above commitments. The rest of this year will continue to be very busy with continuation training, Mission Specific Training, Search Authorisation in Jordan and all the come continually improving physical stamina and robustness. We are all looking forward to these upcoming deployments to show our skill and professionalism.



QGE COMMANDOS – ANOTHER GLITTERING YEAR

SSgt Khadka Bahadur Gurung & Sgt Prithi Chantyal

This has been a demanding year for QGE Cdos in 24 Cdo Engr Regt, vastly dominated by the deployment on Op HERRICK 14 (Op H14). After completion of the hectic Pre Deployment Training, most of us were out in Helmand by early March 2011 and a total of 23 out of 27 QGE Cdos deployed many of them on their third tour of duty.



Cpl Prithi and LCpl Prakash on Op H14

On Op H14, 24 Cdo Engr Regt provided the nucleus of the Task Force Helmand Engineer Group operating in support of 3 Cdo Bde across central Helmand. 24 Cdo Engr Regt provided vital engineer support to both 42 and 45 Commando RM in the Nad-e-Ali district of Helmand Province; reinforced by field squadrons from 32 Engineer Regiment. Op H14 was notably different from both Op H5 and Op H9; the AO had changed dramatically and the Task Force is now focussed on holding the more populated areas of central Helmand with US forces having assumed responsibility for the Upper Geresk Valley. Generally, the AO was, in parts, less kinetic than previous tours and the focus of the entire Task Force was now very much on securing the support of the civilian Afghan population. The Brigade Commander summed this up very neatly in his mantra for H14; "People first, insurgent second". The days of Explosive Methods of Entry (EMOE)

through Afghan compounds was well and truly over and every action taken by the Task Force had to be assessed in terms of the potential collateral damage to the civilian population and infrastructure. The Afghans became the focus of our efforts with the insurgent a close second. This is not to say the tour was any easier than previous deployments, if anything it became even harder to meet the insurgent on the battlefield as we kept our focus firmly on the civilian population – a true test of courage, professionalism and moral conviction for any soldier.



SSgt Khadka & Cpl Ganesh build 4 Bay MGB to support 45 Cdo RM BG

Thankfully the Regiment and QGE contingent returned home safely at the end of Sep 2011 after seven months of hard but ultimately successful work in Afghanistan where once again the combination of Gurkha and Commando ethos had proven to be unstoppable. Despite not serving together as a Cdo Tp, QGE Cdos performed to the highest standard in a variety of roles from providing close support and artisan skills within 59 Commando Squadron, technical recce and design as part of the Construction Design Cell and even within the Brigade Reconnaissance Force (BRF) who took the fight to the insurgent.

The QGE Commando experiment has been phenomenally successful and Gurkhas are now an integral part of Commando Forces within 24 Cdo Engr Regt. Gurkhas can now be found in every part of the Regiment from the



Dashain 2068 at RMB Chivenor



Field Troops to Support Troop and the HQ Sqn and from Resources to the Recce Troop. We are truly 'ubique' within the Commando world. After the Welcome Home and Medals Parade, it was a time for the celebration of Dashain which was observed by all Gurkha ranks and families in a very unique style. The presence of Lt Col Tingey (CO 24 Cdo Engr Regt), Capt Grant (Adj 24 Cdo) and their families along with Gurkha Major QGE, Maj Ek Bahadur Gurung Saheb and GRCMO QGE, Capt Bishnu Ghale Saheb made the occasion even more special.

On completion of the Post Operational Tour Leave the Regiment took part in various adventurous training packages. Most notable was "Ex TIGER HIMALAYAN DAGGER 12" which involved trekking the Annapurna Circuit, Dhoko Race at Pokhara, Rafting the Trisuli River and cultural visits to Pokhara and Kathmandu. This was led by Lt Clark and seconded by SSgt Khadka. All outdoor enthusiasts who participated thoroughly enjoyed the trip which was meticulously planned, well executed. An outstanding service was provided by the Gurkhaadventures.com; run by Cpl Khil Thapa QGE (retired).

This year marks a significant milestone in the history of QGE Cdos. After, 6 Years since the first QGE Cdo section came down to 59, the withdrawal back to Maidstone is well under way leaving just 13 of us back here. Although, the timeline for the complete withdrawal is yet to be confirmed, the end of this chapter looks rather evident. Serving in 24 as a QGE Cdo soldier is a unique experience. The opportunity of commanding and serving alongside British soldiers is a privilege in itself. Every QGE Cdo fully understands and appreciates the fact that he is an ambassador to QGE. Wherever we are serving, maintaining QGE tradition and Gurkha ethos always remains at the forefront of our priorities. Upholding the finest traditions of QGE history, the pass rate of QGE Sappers on the All Arms Commando Course remains extremely high and we have taken home a number of very special awards over the years including several Commando Medals and Commandants' Certificates. Even the small number of QGE 'Dagger Wallahs' who have not yet served within 24 can be proud of having earned their green beret – no doubt they are all better soldiers for having done so.

For all the success of QGE Commando Sappers, none of it would have been possible without the steady fast and resolute support of the Gurkha families who have been instrumental to QGE success at RMB Chivenor. We recognise that initially it was very hard for the families to leave the well-established community in Maidstone and we are forever grateful for their sacrifices in making a home for us all in North Devon.

Last but certainly not least it has been an absolute pleasure for us to be a part of such a unique and professional unit

as 24 Cdo Engr Regt and I hope this special relationship can continue for many years to come so that future generations of QGE Sappers have the chance to experience what we have started. The ultimate combination of Gurkha ethos and Commando spirit, the Khukuri and the Dagger, is a truly unique force multiplier and the relationship that now exists has been forged on the battlefields of

Afghanistan. With Commando Forces being an integral part of the UK's rapid reaction forces I can only hope that Gurkha Sappers continue to be represented in the years to come.

United We Conquer!

Jai QGE! "Balio Rahanuhos"



QGE Commandos at Annapurna Base Camp



MECHANISED GURKHAS - 8 TROOP 33 MECHANISED ENGINEER SQUADRON

Capt Meenjang Gurung

This has been another busy year for 8 Mechanised Gurkha Troop starting with Exercise ASKARI THUNDER (AT) 7, where supporting elements from the Squadron deployed to British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK) to give close support to the 1 Royal Welsh Battle Group during Apr – May 11. Straight after AT 7, preparation for Ex SHAMROCK GLADIATOR (Jun – Jul 11) - an Armoured Engineer Exercise, kept us extremely busy. Prior to the exercise, the re-rolling of the QGE Troop into the Mechanised Role was the biggest challenge since none of the troop personnel had previous experience of Armoured Engineering. After gaining qualifications as vehicle commanders, operators and gunners we finally rolled out of Swinton Barracks and onto the Salisbury Plain Training Area alongside Titan and Trojan as a mechanised troop. The smiles on our faces at yet another new experience said it all. Each individual has played an instrumental part in making this exercise a success and none more so than Cpl Chandra Pun, whose effort was recognised by the award of a Commanding Officer's Commendation.



After summer leave, most of the troop personnel took part in the RE Games supporting the Regiment at various sports including SSgt Dilkumar Rai who lead the Regimental Volleyball team and myself the Shooting team. From mid Sep 11 we entered in to a very active period as we started 6 months of Mission Specific Training (MST) in preparation for Op HERRICK 16. This was another demanding and tough period for the troop but importantly it made sure each individual was fully trained for the operation tour ahead.

Even during such a busy schedule we were involved in a variety of Regimental activities; 8 members of the Troop took part in the Royal Engineers Half Marathon securing very good positions. A Khukuri and Taekwondo demonstration during the Regiment's Open Day was led by Cpl Jay Pun and a short presentation on Gurkhas was given at the Kiwi School in Bulford led by LCpl Dinesh Gurung. All were well received and this is just part of a much longer list.



As usual our wives have also played a vital part in our success in the Regiment. They have been involved in various activities, most notably the Race for Life Charity event where 7 ladies took part in the 5km run at Salisbury and raised £375.00 for a great cause. Their participation on almost all troop functions and Regimental wives activities has remained a key source of morale for the Troop.



Finally, 22 personnel from 8 Tp are now on Op HERRICK 16 spread around various parts of the AO and waiting their first task to commence. 8 Tp is at Patrol Base RAHIM and on his second day at the Patrol Base, Spr Bikash Gurung used his personal weapon by returning fire on an enemy position, providing accurate target indication while on sangar duty. We are now looking forward to a safe and a very successful tour.



GURKHA COMPANY CATTERICK – THE QGE PERSPECTIVE

Capt Ashokkumar Gurung (Training Officer)



Background. Gurkha Company is a unique part of the 2nd Infantry Training Battalion (2ITB), Infantry Training Centre (ITC) Catterick. Corps units from the Brigade of Gurkhas and the Royal Gurkha Rifles combine to produce 80 Permanent Staff (PS) that deliver

the 37 week Combat Infantryman Course (Gurkha) (CIC(G)). The Corps units / RGR split is approximately 50:50. The QGE delivers several vital functions for 2ITB so the aim of this article is to inform the reader about Gurkha Company, with a specific focus on QGE and ultimately highlight the career opportunities that exist for members of our Corps. PS within Gurkha Company have a vital role in influencing and training the future generations of Gurkha soldiers and despite the mixture of BG units the mission for us all remains the same:

“To deliver trained Gurkha soldiers in order to meet the operational requirements of the Brigade of Gurkhas”

Support to Selection and Foundation Training in Nepal

Gurkha Company PS are tasked annually to support Regional and Central Selection in Nepal. Every year almost 50% of PS deploy from mid-November to early January in numerous appointments. The Coy Training Officer is appointed as the Recruiting Conducting Officer (RCO) and he is one of the board members on the final interview panel. Once potential recruits are selected, they are handed over to Gurkha Company and we conduct foundation training in Pokhara prior to returning to CIC(G). This training culminates in the attestation parade in front of their friends and family and for Recruit Intake 2012, The Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir David Richards KCB, CBE, DSO ADC Gen, was the Reviewing Officer. On completion of the parade both PS and recruits head to the UK and into CIC (G).

Combat Infantryman Course Gurkha (CIC) (G)

The CIC (G) starts in January and Trainee Riflemen (T/Rfn)

complete their training in late September. Gurkha Company currently consists of 176 T/Rfn organised into 6 separate platoons. It is here that Gurkha soldiers are trained to be part of the modern British Army whilst still retaining their proud heritage. The Gurkha mottos – “Kafar hunnu bhandha marnu ramro”, “It is better to die than live being a coward” and “Hami jasto kahi chhaina”, “there is nobody like us” are taken very seriously here in Gurkha Company. An underlying theme that runs through Gurkha Company training is DAI (Discipline, Aggression, Initiative). All training and instruction is then underpinned with Value Based Infantry Leadership (VBIL)¹

Current performance from across the Bridge of Gurkhas on operations highlights that the success starts with the selection of T/Rfn in Nepal and the subsequent delivery of the CIC(G) in Gurkha Company. The unique zero wastage figure (176 T/Rfn start the course and 176 Rfn complete) often causes an eyebrow to be raised but it is a figure of real significance and one that is only sustainable due to the quality of T/Rfn arriving out of the selection process, quality of NCOs sent by Brigade units to be instructors and the quality of the CIC(G). Overall the duty of care to the T/Rfn must never be compromised and a failure in any of the above, or equally important the Brigade Pillars, will result in fractures that will have an irreparable impact. Zero wastage and the outstanding First Time Pass Rate are something to be proud of; no one else can match us on this - there is nobody like us.

QGE Within Gurkha Company

For QGE there are various opportunities to support future generations of Gurkhas. Any trade is acceptable but the



Capt Ashok (RCO) escorting CDS during RI12 Attestation Parade

key is that you must be of the right quality and ability. There is no doubt that my various postings to Gurkha Company over the years have been rewarding, challenging and ultimately benefited my career. Most recently I was stepped up by the Officer Commanding to be the Training Officer. This is my second year in ITC and having completed one intake as a PI Comd this next opportunity to develop has opened up for me

For all ranks the most obvious opportunity is that of the individual platoon

instructors (Cpls, Sgts and Officers). These appointments deliver the CIC(G) at its grass roots level, on a day to day basis and at an intensity that is far more than other CIC programmes. An example is that the training staff between January -October are required to work part or all of 80%

¹ VBIL centres on using the infantry values of selfless commitment, discipline, integrity, respect for others, courage and loyalty.



of the weekends. The duty of care burden for the T/Rfn is greater than that of a British training company and whilst it sounds painful it must not be watered down any further. Whilst the intensity of training is clearly high we are capable here in Gurkha Company of stability. We know the training programme for months ahead and will not be expected to deploy overseas on operations or any last minute com



*Cpl Om Budha Receiving Comdt Trophy from Cpl Jayandra Garbuja Receiving the Comdt Trophy Lt Col AB Jackson
PARA CO 2ITB*

Breaching the infantry gap is a challenge but it should not be seen as intimidating. QGE successes illustrate how well you can do here. It is about VBIL and over the last two years Cpl Om Budha and Cpl Jayandra Garbuja proved up to the challenge and stood proudly as the winners of the Commandant's Trophy². Cpl Suresh Sherma received an outstanding course report from the Brigade Training Team (BTT) during his Train the Trainer package in Shorncliffe and he also was graded highly competent during the mandatory



² The Commandant's Trophy is awarded to a member of the permanent staff with held rank of Sgt or below and considered to have made the greatest contribution to the Gurkha Company throughout the year.

Cpl Jayandra being presented the Comdt's trophy by Lt Gen M F N Mans CBE, during the Passing Out Parade

Attend the BTT Train the Trainer package, gain suitable qualifications, and be prepared to compete against the best of the Brigade, Guards and PARAs. Opportunities exist for further training and recently Cpl Eka Rai has successfully completed a Range Management Qualification (RMQ) course.

While the platoon staff provide a key role in moulding newly arrived Nepalese boys into T/Rfn and beyond, the functions of the G7 (Training) Cell are crucial to enabling the delivering of training effect. WO2 Janga Sinjali (Trg Coord) currently stands at the heart of a successful Gurkha Company; whether this is the running of day to day training or Gurkha Company deployed on exercise. Sgt Kamal Gurung is instructing at the Gurkha Language Wing and often gets the opportunity to deploy to Nepal in order to deliver Nepali language courses. Other supporting staff for Gurkha Company includes a PTI, Cpl Subin Rai who works tirelessly alongside his British counterparts here in the ITC Gym. LCpl Santosh Rai is the only QGE G4 representative here in Gurkha Company yet he often holds significant responsibility. The OC Gurkha Company endeavours to reach every single Brigade merit batching in order to represent his staff. Now here is what some of QGE Cpl Instructors say:



Cpl Jayandra Garbuja, 5 Platoon,

It feels like only yesterday that I was a T/Rfn in Gurkha Company. I always admired my section commander and wanted to be in his shoes for a change. A decade has passed and now I am where I wanted to be. 18 months into my posting and each day is a new experience here in Catterick. The job of a section commander is a challenging one as it requires a lot of experiences which I have accumulated through 10 years of service. The responsibility is huge as every individual needs to be well looked after, in the best possible way in order for them to excel well. As a section commander there is no qualified section 2IC, it is just you, so the T/Rfn watch everything you do.

A section commander is a teacher, a friend, a family member who teaches, guides, motivates and watches their every step. The job of a section commander is demanding but rewarding and seeing the T/Rfn develop and improve every day makes it a 100% fulfilling job.

Cpl Eka Bahadur Rai, 1 Platoon



It is absolutely great being back in Gurkha Company where I did my basic training in 2001. Since being a T/Rfn I had a dream of coming back here to train future generations of Gurkhas. For my own professional development my time in Gurkha Company has combined neatly with my two and half years in 24 Commando Engineer Regiment. You have to be tough mentally and physically to be a role model for the T/Rfn. With



a QGE background, I had to work and train myself for the infantry lessons and tactics. The T/Rfn are only as good as what you teach and they deserve and demand the highest attention to detail and professionalism. They are our future. As an instructor you are the only role model they have. You can see your own influence in them as they try to become like you, at that time it satisfies you more than anything else. I would say it is the most satisfying and rewarding job that I have done in my army career.

Future Challenges and Training

Significant changes in training are coming to Gurkha Company over the next 24 months. Striving for the Best is the principle for the QGE training team here in ITC. The Op ENTIRETY based CIC Extended and New Basics are due to be implemented and this includes C-IED training, GPMG training, Close Quarter Marksmanship and Driving training. The recent operational experience of QGE will ensure that those from our Regiment posted here will be well placed to deliver and instruct. Along with English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Entry levels, every T/Rfn will have an opportunity to enrol on the Wiltshire & Somerset Colleges Infantry Apprenticeship. This means students can start their study during the CIC training and continue to enhance their future units in order to achieve a Diploma Level 2 accreditation in Functional Skills, Personal Living and Thinking Skills, and Employees Roles and Responsibilities. Close Quarter Combat using a Khukuri is also part of the new changes. This is the only formal training of Khukuri and is a requirement. Sgt Rastrakumar Rai (Ex QGE) has recently been delivering refresher training for the PS. With Tae Kwon Do as a basis of this training, the robustness, core strength, agility, discipline, aggression and initiative of our T/Rfn leaving Gurkha Company will be stronger.

Jai Gurkha Company and Jai QGE

3 RSME

Capt Yam Pun

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers Minley Detachment has had another busy year. The Minley Detachment comprises of Curragh Troop A and B/REMCS within 57 Training Squadron. In addition, Sgt Ashok is the sole QGE soldier in Command Support Branch (CSB), (previously known as Communications Training Wing) as a part of Royal Engineers Warfare Wing (previously known as BEW). Curragh A delivers combat engineering courses and the recently affiliated Curragh B/RECMS has been responsible for conducting the Royal Engineers Common Military Syllabus Course (RECMS) since 2009.

Last year, Curragh Troop said farewell to Capt Mohan Tamang and Capt Yam Pun took over just before the Summer 2011 break. He handed over the troop in a very healthy spirit and the good work and dedication of Capt Mohan Tamang is not forgotten by the Minley Detachment. The main focus of the year has been the 65th Training Party (18 x new Gurkha Sappers) going through the Combat Engineer Class 3 Course and joining QGE family. Since its formation, Curragh Troop has been extremely active and taken part in numerous

Regimental high profile activities and this continues to this day. Activities such as sporting events, community relationship and charity work all figure highly on the troops calendar. In particular the charity bag packing for ABF - the Soldier's Charity has been very successful as has as the Big Curry Lunch, raising a substantial amount of money for SSAFA. After the 65 Trg Party left, Curragh Troop then switched its focus to conducting the Royal Engineers University Officer Training Corps weekend for nearly 250 Officer Cadets – another highlight of this year's busy calendar.



The Minley detachment is fortunate to have both a Commanding Officer, Lt Col J R Fernandes MBE (Jim) and Officer Commanding, Maj F J Scotter MBE (Fiona) who are both ex-QGE officers. The look forward is very challenging and there is a busy year ahead with several courses lined up. Currently almost all the Gurkha Sect Comds are temporarily posted out to other British Troops within the Sqn until the next Gurkha Training party reports in October 2012. Above all, it will be particularly beneficial for the individuals and the Troop to have the opportunity to integrate more effectively with their British counterparts.

Overall, the QGE Minley Detachment had a very busy but successful year and is maintaining the standards and expectations of all by flying the flag of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers in the military engineering home of the of Corps of Royal Engineers. The spirit and morale is high as we stride forward to face the challenges of the contemporary climate. Jai QGE.

1 RSME

Sgt Purnasingh Thakuri - Gurkha Liaison Officer

The Royal School of Military Engineering provides training in all engineering disciplines, providing students with a range of skills and career courses that are fundamental to the Royal Engineers. In a Public Private Partnership (PPP), Holdfast and the RSME have been modernising the training and the management of training through the development of new initiatives and are continually responding to the operational demand of the Royal Engineers.

Due to the reputation of delivering first class training the school is becoming more and more popular, gaining an ever increasing number of civilian accreditations for its courses.



A web-based Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) has been introduced which is designed to support learning and teaching. It helps instructors to plan resources and track students' progress as well as helping students by allowing them to access course-related material anytime, anywhere in the world via the internet. The VLE has greatly helped those students whose first language is not English, i.e. our QGE soldiers.

The number of Gurkha Students at 1 RSME Regt has fallen this year due to the preparation of 36 Engineer Regiment for operational commitments. Five QGE Clerk of Works students completed their course in July 2011 and currently there are six QGE students, five of which will complete their course in July 2012.

Most of the Gurkha Students at 1 RSME Regt are young soldiers who have completed their basic combat engineering training at Minley and are moving on to trade training. The students enter into a very different training environment and during their time here they manage to blend in successfully with their British counterparts and learn the differences in the two cultures. During this critical period they need proper guidance to help their development on their course. The Gurkha Liaison SNCO actively spends his time taking care of them, looking after their concerns and offering technical support during the course as well as maintaining the Gurkha ethos.



Course Personnel Social Outing 2011

Since I wrote the article in the last years' QGE Magazine there have been a significant number of remarkable achievements from our QGE students with SSgt Bhabendra Muktan achieving first place on the Clerk of Works (Electrical) course last year. His dedication certainly left a very good image within the Professional Engineering Wing here at Brompton. Each year, various Livery Companies award prizes to those artisan tradesmen who have demonstrated outstanding trade skills and in 2011 the Tylers' and Bricklayers' Stokes Award was presented to Spr Balkurmar Budha Magar. There have been six students who achieved top of their course and particularly mention should go to Spr Sujan Pakhrin who achieved the highest ever grade on the ME B&C 2-1 Course. Gurkha soldiers have also been actively taking part in various Regimental sports activities and Spr Adip Lungeli represented 1 RSME at the Army Taekwondo Championships and won the Gold Medal.

I hope this short article shows the amount of effort that our students have put into their courses. All the students are

working hard and doing well, a trait they will need throughout their Army career and I can say with no doubt that the Gurkha soldiers are more enthusiastic and more versatile than ever before and are certainly fit for purpose.

BOAT SECTION BRUNEI GARRISON

SSgt Man Bahadur Ale



Boat Section (Brunei) comprises five QGE Sappers and a Locally Engaged Civilian (LEC) who all work under the administration of Training Team Brunei (TTB). The Boat Sect



was formed in June 2003, meaning it is now approaching its 9th year. Currently the members are:

SSgt Manbahadur Ale
Cpl Minbahadur Gurung
Cpl Mekhabahadur Rai
Cpl Jasbahadur Thapa
Cpl Gajendra Gurung



BRITISH GURKHAS POKHARA

Capt Buddh Bahadur Bhandari, QM BGP



Time flies! It seems like yesterday when I took over the QM post in BGP. Naive and excited at that time, I have now completed nearly two years (extremely rewarding) and am

already worrying about packing and moving once again. This tour has been enormously satisfying, full of surprises and exciting. The highlights have been performing the multifaceted responsibilities of the job, visiting the countryside of Nepal and rare AT achievements.

I remember putting pen and paper down for my first article last year as the QM British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP). Since then we have moved on far. Most of the old boys have left BGP for their own reasons including Capt J Waller and Sgt Narprasad Gurung. Despite most of the serving personnel being new to their post, BGP is moving ahead firmly and there is a strong QGE presence in Nepal. BGN welcomed new QGE boys, Capt Richard Gale - DIO Nepal (ex SQMS, 70 Gur Fd Sp Sqn), Capt Doug Brian - Project Engineer and Sgt Binam Rana - MT Sgt BGK. Another lot of 176 recruits for British Army (BA) and 60 recruits for Gurkha Contingent Singapore Police Force (GCSPF) have been successfully administered and the whole year has been extremely rewarding and was unquestionably topped off by the presence of the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS)/Col Comdt Bde of Gurkhas, Gen Sir David Richards GCB CBE DSO at the Pass off Parade of Recruit Intake 2012. We were very fortunate to celebrate the 63rd QGE Birthday in Pokhara with Col of the Regiment, Lt Gen Bill Saheb and his family along with, Comd BGN, Col Mills Saheb and Comdt QGE, Lt Col Robinson Saheb. The Buro toli (old boys) haven't changed a bit with no sign of them getting old! It was a great pleasure to meet the old and bold ex QGE wallahs.



As the time went on I realised that there is more responsibility to fulfil than just being the QM. One of the associated roles is the Civil Administrative Officer which includes administering 116 MoD LECs on a daily basis along with their recruitment, selection, training and annual appraisals. Other responsibilities are: Messing Officer, H&S Advisor, MTO and many more/ All of them making sure the rest of

my time is interestingly occupied. If you have visited BGP recently, you might have noticed that the camp had been dug out completely and looked more like a big construction site than a military camp. You will be glad to know that this is all over now and camp has come back to its usual shape with all facilities up and running.



Like last year, the situation in Nepal has deteriorated further. Unpredicted strikes and Banda's across the country have become the norm of the people and unprecedented numbers of organisations. All which impact BGP's core business and at times raised serious challenges in the G4 capability. However, as always all G3 and G4 objectives across the country were successfully achieved. A total of 7819 Potential Recruits (PR) applied for selection this year of which 6581 PRs passed registration, 582 PRs passed Regional Selection and finally 176 were successfully enlisted into the British Army. British Army recruits were fortunate to be attested by the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) General Sir David Richards on 4 Jan 2012 and the parade was witnessed by many VVIPs including HMA, Mr John Tucknott MBE and more than 1500 proud families and friends of the recruits.

Throughout the year the BGP management team has had the pleasure of hosting many high profile visitors including Lt Gen Sir David Bill KCB, Field Marshal Sir John Chapple GCB CBE, GOC Sp Comd Maj Gen Boag CBE, DG ARTD Maj Gen Dicky Davis CBE, Col BG, Col I A Rigden OBE and the list goes on. As always QGE officers are continuously dominating the SLP Language Course and the Doko Race. We were privileged to have the new Comdt QGE, Lt Col E G Robinson on the winter SLP course at BGP. He thoroughly



enjoyed his time in Pokhara and his AWC attachments and I am sure he is busy sharpening his Nepali language skills with soldiers and families in the UK.



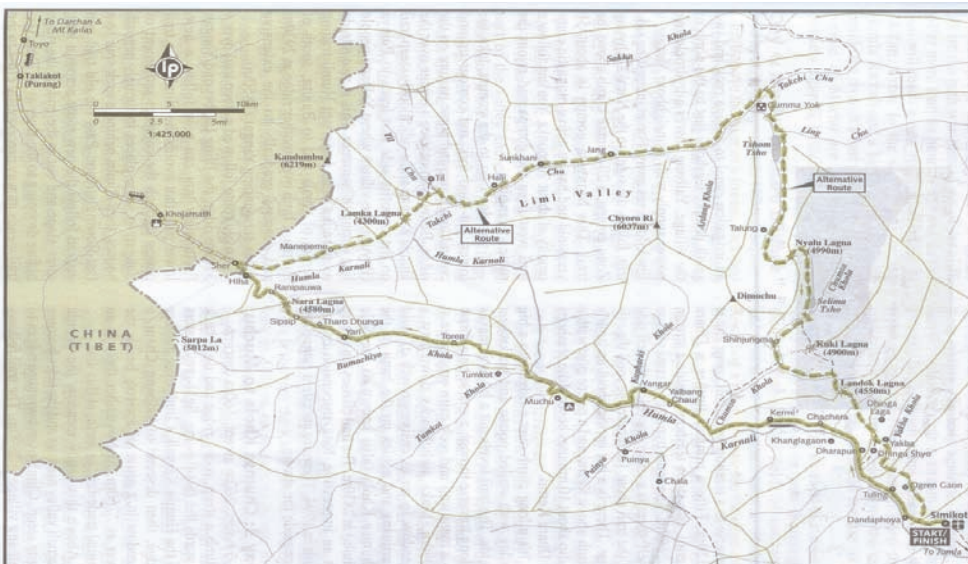
Although current times are not easy unique opportunities still exist for officers and soldiers alike. With huge support from HQ BGN and various other organisations including RHQ QGE, RHQ 2 RGR and RHQ QOGLR, I managed to organise Ex HUMLA TIGER, a high altitude level 3 adventure training expedition to the Humla region, one of the remotest part of Nepal and first of its kind ever organised by the British Army. Following two days journey into the back of beyond and a flight through towering mountain passes "Humla tigers" (six members of BGN) landed at Simikot (3000m), a two week walk beyond any civilisation. The objective was to trek the Limi valley, the Southern part of the valley to the Tibetan border to Hilsa and then continue along the remote Northern section (only re-opened) back towards Simikot. After a one day acclimatisation we set off for a solid 14 day trek walking 6-8 hours a day in the wilderness of unknown valleys. The overwhelming experience of high altitude wild camping (on occasions not 100% sure if we would survive the next day!) overpowering high altitude deserts with no civilisation, and continual ascent/ descent (flat was rarely an option) made the whole trek thrilling. Maintaining the teams moral was not easy (just dhal/bhat three times a day or some time dry noodles) but we were all soldiers and made it all the way back to Simikot without any major injuries and sickness. Not to mention the BURO BAGH's relieved face when all members safely arrived back at camp after 21 days in the wilderness.



The team at the highest point of the trek, Nyalu Lagna Pass

Completely different to the above, BGN also had the privilege to take part in a paragliding course again this year. As promised last year, I somehow managed to keep my flying skills alive and have become an advance pilot. (Pilot rating yet to be achieved ...maybe next year?) Freedom to choose your own flight path, flight duration and the altitude was the most exciting part of the course. An hour and 31 minutes was the longest flight I managed to achieve during this course. Before the course, a one hour flight was the milestone to reach but as the days passed one hour flights started to feel very short ones. I could have done more but I had to abort my mission several times due to scary rocket thermals, unforeseen sinks and unpredictable weather/strong winds. In my age, addiction to paragliding sounds a bit fanatical but trust me, in your own hands you are in the safest of hands and you have no more fear of height and turbulence. Flying around beautiful hills with stunning views of the Himalayan range has its own magical quality and I feel extremely fortunate to have been able to grab this unique opportunity. Also I finally managed to persuade Narbada to go for a tandem flight which she thoroughly enjoyed (I hope!!).

Bipasna and Bishesh along with Narbada are enjoying Nepal and Narbada has now developed a new hobby. She is into trekking and has already enjoyed the beautiful landscape of Kande, Gulmi, Ghorepani and the surrounding hills of the Pokhara valley. Bishesh had the opportunity to see my village and he thoroughly enjoyed the trip but still moans about not getting cornflakes and sausages for his breakfast. Bipasna has come down to Pokhara for her Easter break and is busy planning her journey across the West part of Nepal. Apart from missing us some time, she has blended extremely well with her friends in Kathmandu.





Along with the ECI, LSI and all other mandatory inspections knocking on the door we are simultaneously preparing for the selection for Recruit Intake 2013, Earthquake training, Porter's exercise, GWS conference and other numerous events not forgetting the VVIPs visits. Doug Brian is busy setting up the new residential home at Dharan. Lt Kennedy and Capt Haigh kindly updated me us Regimental commitments both current and future whilst they visited Pokhara and as I write, I have been in touch with Burke Sahib (you might remember him from Nepal Cup in 90s) who is visiting Nepal in late April. Hukumraj Saheb has come out from his secret hiding now and is busy coordinating the much awaited 'A' Team's 54th outing. I will be visiting Maidstone with my family in summer. Looking forward to seeing you all! Jai BGP, Jai QGE



CHILWELL UPDATE

Maj Yog Thapa QGE

When I received "Hukum" to prepare an article for the QGE magazine I was unsure what to include! I pondered a lot and eventually started to jot down "Chilwell Update" rather than anything specific. I make no apology for writing a boring article but I feel it is appropriate to give you an update on our ex QGE wallahs – or as we may call them - "the separated QGE family"!

Serving away from QGE is always exciting and challenging! For some people it is rewarding whilst others find it daunting! For me, I am experiencing a bit of both. Since I left QGE in mid 2010, I spent first year as 2IC of 518 Specialist Team Royal Engineers (STRE) (Works) and subsequently as a part of Op ENTIRETY which coincided with my promotion to Major and that pushed me into the Support Officer role in HQ 63 Works Group RE, primarily responsible for G1, G4 and G8. In addition, during the Works Group deployment on Op HERRICK 14/15, I had the privilege to work as Rear Party OC for almost 8 months covering all aspects of G1 – G9 including the welfare of the families. Before I carry on any further I must confess I am the only one with a QGE cap badge in Chilwell and with a non-technical background – in other words I am a "Gurkha Hat" or "Flat Hat"!!!

As you may be aware Chilwell is the home base of 170 (Infrastructure Support) Engineer Group which consists of five hybrid Works Groups (62, 63, 64, 66 and 67) and one TA Works Group (65) and these are commanded by a full Colonel. The mission statement of 170 (Infra Sp) Engr Gp is "to provide operational effectiveness through infrastructure". Each Works Group consists of approx 90 Regulars and 34 TA and it is commanded by a Lt Colonel. Each Works Group is structured differently to provide specific support and my Works Group, 63 Works Group consists of 2x STRE (Works) and 2x Heavy STRE (Power) (1 x Regular and 1 x TA). Each team has 8-10 Clerk of Works (CoW) (Electrical, Mechanical and Construction) and a Military Plant Foreman (MPF), who work under Garrison Engineers and are commanded by an OC who is a Professionally Qualified Engineer (PQE). Under the current Campaign FORM Cycle two STRE (Works) will work with a Works Group Headquarters and deploy on a 6 month operational tour every 24 months. Heavy teams operate differently as they provide power advice and are subject matter experts both on operations and in peacetime.



The TA STRE (Power) is 34 strong and they backfill the Works Group during deployments. It consists of highly technical and academic professionals with astonishing civilian backgrounds who voluntarily share their experience with the military.

Nowadays it is suffice to say that Chilwell is no longer a strange place for Gurkhas. QGE personnel started to serve in Chilwell circa 1970s and gradually numbers have increased and gone from strength to strength. Currently there are more than 15 CoWs and MPF (almost the strength of one STRE) serving in the station but this time as ex QGE wallahs. In the past, they used to serve in Chilwell wearing the QGE cap badge but since the introduction of the new terms and conditions for Gurkhas and the long term manning issues for CoWs and MPFs within QGE this has opened up opportunities in the wider army. These days, when a QGE soldier opts to veer down the CoW or MPF route they have to change their cap badge to Royal Engineers from the day they successfully complete the course, and they become ex QGE wallahs. Once they change their career, there is no "U" turn, they can no longer come back under Gurkha Terms and Conditions and their careers are in line with their British counterparts. This has opened up huge opportunities and also challenges in the wider world allowing them to compete in a larger cohort and in a very competitive environment. Those who can prove themselves will float above the water and those with average ability may find it a disadvantage! For the first time in the history of ex QGE Wallahs, last year Capt Ashok Khanal Saheb was commissioned as a Garrison Engineer (GE) and our heartfelt congratulations and "Thulo Syabash" go to him and his family for a thoroughly earned commission. He has proved and led the way for future generations in what can be achieved and we hope to see many Ex QGE wallahs following his footsteps in future.

CoWs and MPFs have proven extremely invaluable and offer a versatile career move; once they complete the gruelling CoW or MPF course they get a HND qualification and since last year they also get a Foundation Degree with the majority of them completing top up degree courses within 1-5 years of completing the course. This allows them to be equipped with academic qualifications while they are in service making them competitive with their civilian industry counterparts. In addition they get many opportunities to enhance their experiences by working in different environments either on operations or during peacetime. Op HERRICK has been very rewarding for the CoWs and MPFs as they get ample opportunity to plan, design, implement and monitor tasks that may vary from a small task to a multimillion pound project. In my experience as a non-technical person, Chilwell is an impeccable place for technical people with a "can do attitude" as it offers maximum opportunities for technical people. However, the only down side I can see is that due to the nature of work and the necessity of operations it is almost guaranteed that once you are posted to Chilwell half of your tour will be spent serving away from it – some people enjoy it while others may find it very difficult!

Currently there are 15 Nepalese families in Chilwell and numbers are increasing every year. Albeit they are away from QGE but they still maintain QGE and Gurkha traditions that they learnt whilst with QGE. Time to time they hold

coffee meetings, ladies functions and celebrate religious and regimental occasions and so allow families to bond, something that plays a vital part during the time their husbands are away on operations. It is pleasing to see that the families are also adjusting to the new environment whilst still maintaining Gurkha traditions and religious beliefs and preserving their values and importance for future generations.

Before I close my article I would like to wrap up with a farewell to Capt Bhismaraj Gurung Saheb who has been serving as Ops Offr 521 STRE(Well Driller) since 2010. He has served over 28 years in the Brigade of Gurkhas and in the wider army and retired from Chilwell in Aug 2011. Our "Best Wishes – Happy Retirement" and "Thulo Subhakamana" to Saheb and family for their future. WO2 Chirtabahadur Rana is also close to retirement and he is currently attending resettlement courses.

I firmly believe the decision to transfer QGE soliders to the RE on completion of the CoW/MPF course was the right one. All Ex QGE wallahs are fully embedded with their British counterparts in this technical environment proving their capability and showing the multi-faceted role a traditional hill boy can play in this modern day and age.

The future looks bright for talented and gifted people who aspire to be a CoW or MPF in future. I have no doubt, if inflow of CoWs and MPF continues to grow at the current rate we will see more Ex QGE wallahs as Garrison Engineers in the Corps in the near future. Last but not the least, all Ex QGE wallahs, no matter wherever they serve are an integral part of The QGE family. They are the ambassadors of QGE and the Brigade of Gurkhas are equally if not more responsible for securing a future for a new generation in the wider army.

Current serving personnel in Chilwell:

Maj Yogprasad Thapa QGE -	Sp Offr 63 Wks Gp RE (QGE Cap Badge)
Capt Ashok Khanal	GE(E) 62 Wks Gp RE
WO1 Jiwan Pyara Limbu	Resources WO1, HQ 170
(Infra Sp) Engr Gp	
WO2 Chitrabahadur Rana	QMSI Cbt 66 Wks Gp RE
WO2 Chirinjibi Limbukhim	Clks Wks(C) 67 Wks Gp RE
WO2 Khagendra Rai -	Clk Wks (E) 64 Wks Gp RE
SSgt Dilendra Rana	MPF, 64 Wks Gp RE
SSgt Bhim Saru -	MPF, 62 Wks Gp RE
SSgt Gahendra Thamsuhang -	Clk Wks (M), 63 Wks Gp RE
SSgt Anand Gurung -	Clk Wks (E), 66 Wks Gp RE
SSgt Kriti Rai -	Clk Wks (M), 62 Wks Gp RE
SSgt Balkrishna Gurung	MPF, 62 Wks Gp RE
SSgt Rudraprasad Gurung	Clk Wks (C), 66 Wks Gp RE
SSgt Bhabendra Muktan	Clk Wks (E), 62 Wks Gp RE
SSgt Birendra Rai	Clk Wks (E), 63 Wks Gp RE
SSgt Kishan Gurung	Clk Wks (E), 63 Wks Gp RE
SSgt Tanka Ambohang	Clk Wks (M), 63 Wks Gp RE

Farewell

Capt Bhismaraj Gurung Ops Offr, 521 STRE (Well Driller) (**QGE Cap Badge**)



LIFE IN CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY OFFICERS' CORPS (CUOTC)

SSgt Jiwan Rai

I am honoured to be writing for the 2012 QGEA Magazine and reporting the achievements from CUOTC.

The opportunity for this posting was offered to me in 2010 when the GRCMO hit the panic button and this coincided with my time as a Troop Sergeant coming to an end. The question was where do I move to? I was asked what my thoughts were to be working as a Permanent Staff Instructor (PSI) away from Regimental Duty, I immediately replied "Huncha Saheb" in a Gurkha manner. I was interviewed by the OC and then the CO. Little did I know I was being screened for a key role in the RE as a Gurkha PSI at the most prestigious University in the world, one from where the RE draws some of its top talent.

A few days later, while awaiting my posting orders I visited CUOTC to see for myself this mysterious posting. My predecessor, a RE PSI greeted me with "Welcome to CUOTC mate", after a few minutes in the office he introduced me to the other PSIs and officers. Whilst being introduced to everyone my thoughts were still "what does this job actually involve?" The purpose of the visit was to meet and greet, therefore there was no time to discuss the job description in depth. All I was told was that I would be in charge of Military Leadership Training Programme (MLDP 2) and Wing Training and other miscellaneous activities. It was only during the hand over and takeover week that my job description started unfolding with a bit more clarity.



I found a poster in the training wing stating the CUOTC mission was:

"Develop the leadership potential of selected university students, raising awareness of the Army's ethos and building interest in its career opportunities; in order to secure their commitment, whether as officers or as future leaders in their chosen profession, to champion the Army in the Society".

The above mission is achieved by high quality military and adventurous training. During Michaelmas Term (Autumn Term) selected students undertake MLDP1 over several weekends, similar to basic training. Second year students

undertake MLDP 2, and gain a Chartered Management of Institute (CMI) level 5 accreditation in Leadership and Management. This is where my main responsibility is - a busy QMSI running two courses a year. It prepares Officer Cadets' (OCdt) for Sandhurst by teaching them low level section and platoon skills, the combat estimate (7Q) and the delivery of orders. During the Lent Term (Easter Term) the emphasis is on special to arms training on which I take pride in running combat engineering training as do the other PSI's from the other arms (RAC, RA, Inf inclusively). The special to arms training inspires OCdts not only to join the relevant Wings but the Arms and Corps later on after graduating from university. This period is vitally important to our (RE) recruitment drive and I value all the support offered across the Corps.

In the Summer OCdts are exposed to an array of activities namely; Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), a Leadership Development & Assessment Course at Fort Lewis in Washington State alongside US Reserve Forces, a 2 week annual camp, as well as community engagement tasks such as MACC tasks. Other activities have included Ex BLUE ODIN - a sailing expedition in the Baltic, a shooting Camp at Lydd and Hythe Ranges, Paragliding, the Queen's Challenge Cup (OTC Sports Competition) and supporting the Inspirational Development Group (IDG) challenge at RMAS to name but a few. All these ensure that the Staff at CUOTC have a fair share to plan and organise. Adventurous training and charity fundraising plays a huge part in leadership development, with the OCdts constantly looking for every opportunity to try new things. The questions and want for more information is never ending here.



Two years have passed since I first arrived at CUOTC with little knowledge of how and what an OTC does/operates; now I am glad to be reporting to QGE on my achievements. I must admit that I have faced such a diversity of challenges that this is truly a unique posting and one that I shall fondly remember forever. Reflecting on my Gurkha career, I feel it unfortunate that I did not experience some of my very challenging situations I have faced here at CUOTC before and therefore allowed QGE to benefit from my experiences while away from the Regiment. However, I will be forever grateful of the experiences and the wealth of knowledge I've gained here.

My perception of the TA has completely changed during the last 2 years, having experienced first-hand, working side by side with the TA at CUOTC I have been amazed to see so



many enthusiastic and inspiring young OCdts, constantly looking for challenges, willing to come out of their comfort zone and who are steadfast in their individual pursuit of a successful career; both in the military and in the civilian world. Most activities are organised over the weekends, allowing maximum attendance from the OCdts who have to manage their busy academic responsibilities, while learning superb leadership skills through military/adventurous training. I have learnt over time that OCdts are attracted to arduous, interesting and fun military training, which is diverse in content. With OCdts keen to experience all that they can from the OTC it makes for pleasant instruction. They do not hesitate and are keen to explore all their human senses in order to achieve and conquer what appear to be alien and sometimes personally frightening challenges.



My posting as a PSI at CUOTC has not only given QGE a foothold into the OTC, the Gurkha element has added a strong dimension to the potential leaders in their chosen profession. I whole heartedly support any SNCOs striving to take up the challenge of a PSI here. With the OTC being a small cohesive team of officers and SNCOs I will happily recommend another Gurkha to fill my boots and I know that the CO CUOTC would be ecstatic for this to happen. I have full hope that with QGE support this and other similar posts will be available to our Gurkha engineers in the future. I know that OCdts are keen to join Gurkha Regiments because of me being here and promoting our brand to the future leaders of this world. Jai QGE

33 ENGINEER REGIMENT (EOD), EOC GROUP

Capt Dirgha KC

I believe myself extremely privileged to be given this opportunity to briefly highlight the role of the Explosive Ordnance Clearance (EOC) Group. My posting to EOC has been unusual for a QGE officer. I had to assume the role of the Second in Command (2IC), immediately following my commissioning and with no other officer experience. Normally QGE officers will serve 3 years in QGE on commissioning before working in the wider Corps of Engineers. However, having done 22 years of service as a soldier I was well prepared for the job. I approached the role cautiously at first and it was a great learning curve in my career as an officer. Despite minor hiccups at the start, I have been thoroughly

enjoying the diversity of the role and working with a mixture of both civilian and military personnel.

The 2IC is the line manager of all 81 civilian staff within the EOC Gp, with the OC being responsible for all Military personnel. The MS is the hardest part of my role as I have to complete their mid-year and final year reports within specific timeframes. Due to the nature of the job I spend 30% of my time out in the field working with the sections, as they are dispersed around the country. Whilst in the office, I am busy dealing with the People, Pay and Pension Agency now called the Defence Business Service (DBS), in areas as diverse as civilian staff's pay, pensions, leave, discipline, sickness and welfare related issues. In addition, I also co-ordinate individual and collective training for all civilian and military personnel within the EOC Gp.



2IC EOC Gp being briefed by Charge Hand

The total liability within the EOC Group is 102 Civilian Staff and 17 Military personnel however, the current manning level is 81 Civilian Staff and 14 Military personnel. The OC and 2IC's posts are rank ranged posts of Capt/Maj whereas the Tp Comds are SSgts and Sect Comds and Sect 2ICs are Sgts and Cpls respectively. The 81 MOD civilian staff are equally divided into 6 sections and each section is commanded by a Bomb Disposal Officer (BDO) qualified Sgt and a bomb disposal No2 qualified Cpl. The Civilian Staff have their own Team Leader and two assistants, known as the Charge Hand and Leading Hand respectively.



2/3 inch mortars found at Folkestone.



EOC's mission is to provide well trained, well-motivated and well led Explosive Ordnance Searchers (EOS) that are able to offer effective Explosive Ordnance Clearance (EOC) on MOD land in the UK, but also when tasked by Regiment, on ranges abroad in order to reduce UXO on MOD training areas thereby providing a safer environment for the civil and military community. EOC clearance tasks are predominantly confined to the UK mainland, although EOC Group supports the Regiment on various overseas exercises such as Ex PINEAPPLE - Kenya, Ex WINDBREAK - Belize, Ex RANGE SWEEP - Canada, and Ex KELP SWEEP - Falkland Islands.

Following the completion of a reconnaissance, EOC tasks are prioritised as below.

- Immediate and serious risk to life.
- Risk to life exists.
- No direct threat to life exists.
- Clearance is desirable. (No public access)

Currently the EOC sections have been tasked to the following locations in the United Kingdom.

Barry Budden, Scotland	- 1 Sect
Buxton, Derbyshire	- 2 Sect
Nesscliff, Shropshire	- 3 Sect
Pirbright, Surrey	- 4 Sect
Dartmoor, Devon	- 5 Sect
Bramley, Hampshire	- 6 Sect

2011/12 has been an interesting and busy year for the EOC Gp with plenty of small, varied tasks around the United Kingdom. Additionally the EOC Gp has also provided manpower to Kenya, Canada, the Falkland Islands and Belize with positive feedback from all who deployed. Currently the majority of tasks are focussed around ranges/training areas where the EOC are guaranteed to find ordnance. However, due to the drawdown of training areas and the cessation of operations Iraq alongside pre-deployment training for Afghanistan, access to ranges for clearance work has been limited.

Finally I wish every success to the QGE magazine which has played a vital part in bridging the gap between the retired and serving members of QGE both on the UK and abroad.

DASHAIN CELEBRATION IN THE QUEEN'S GURKHA ENGINEERS

Sgt Birendra Kambang, 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Search) QGE

After re-rolling from general support to advanced search, the Regiment is busy undergoing training to make the troops fully search capable for upcoming operations in Afghanistan. Yet despite this Headquarters The Queen's Gurkha Engineers still managed to celebrate the Dashain Festival on Sat 1 Oct 11 at Invicta Park.

If we look back at our Brigade of Gurkhas history, every Gurkha unit has celebrated the Dashain Festival in their own way. This festival normally falls in September or October and QGE celebrates Dashain as it is one of the most important events in the Regiment's calendar. This tradition is not just

a QGE one but is also celebrated in the Brigade. QGE has even celebrated this festival whilst on operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan to name but a few.

Dashain is the most important festival in Nepal and it falls in the Nepalese month of ASHOJ or KARTIK and it lasts for fifteen days. During the festival, we celebrate with religious ceremonies and as Gurkha soldiers we celebrate to symbolise the victory of the Goddess Shree Nawadurga Bhawani over the evil giant Mahishasur.

After completion of Ex NORTHERN QUEST 11 in Kenya, 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn (Search) QGE was tasked to organise both the QGE Birthday and Dashain and Capt Tarabhadur Pun was nominated as Dashain OIC and SSgt Govinda Rana as entertainment IC. A white marquee and number of tents were erected inside the large ABLE hanger and a welcome gate was constructed at the entrance.



Sgt Birendra Kambang with his family and parents

Dashain as usual, was celebrated in two phases. The first phase was Dashain Drinks Party on 28 Sept followed by the main Kalratri Party on 1 Oct 11. The drinks party took place inside the prepared marquee and Brigadier SP Hodder, Comdt RSME was the chief guest with other past and present QGE Officers being invited. The Nepalese Defense Attaché, Col Bishwanath Ghimire and the Nepalese Ambassador, Dr Sureshchandra Chalise were also invited. The main Kalaratri Party also took place in the well decorated marquee and The Commanding Officer of 36 Engr Regt (Search) / Commandant QGE, Lt Col SJ Hulme RE and his family were the main guests of the night. A Nauch Toli including the new British Officers was formed up and the spectators were entertained by the QGE Pardeshi Band, who performed a very good mixture of songs. After the Gurkha Major and the CO's speeches, the Nauch toil, QGE families and soldiers from both 24 Cdo Engr Regt and 26 Engr Regt performed a mixture of modern and traditional cultural dances until well after midnight.

Dashain is particularly a special event and a chance to get together and to exchange good wishes between families, relatives and friends. It is part of our culture which should



be maintained not only within QGE but also in the Brigade of Gurkhas.

For more photo of Dashain see pages 34-37



Meanwhile in British Gurkhas Pokhara there was a plethora of QGE personnel. From L to R: Capt Buddhi Bhandari, Col A Mills, Lt H Bailey, Lt Col E G Robinson, Sgt Binam Rana, Capt D Brain, Lt D Snook

CO'S 2011 SUMMER CHALLENGE

LCpl Niranjan Gurung

The Commanding Officer's Challenge takes place twice a year, once in the summer and the other in the winter. This year, the summer challenge took place on 2 Aug 11, just before going on summer leave, in Invicta Park Barracks, Maidstone. The challenge was competed for between the squadrons with all members of the Sqn taking part in every stand. The challenge consisted of 8 stands; 60 non-stop PFA press ups, 1500m rowing in 4min 45 sec, 100 non stop squat thrusts, 80 non stop inclined sit ups, 25 over grasp heaves, 60 non stop dips, kits stack under 2 mins and the bleep test.



I missed winning last year's individual trophy and had to settle for the runner up instead and so my ambition was to go one better this year. I started off pretty well with full marks on the press up stand and I knew it I had to score full marks or near enough in every other stand to have any chance of winning the competition. The short breaks between each stand were a god send as they were certainly needed. Every individual gave 100% effort and more, not only for themselves but for also for their Sqns. It came as an extra boost when everyone was cheering from outside. As I scored full marks on 5 stands and near enough on the other 3. However, I was not that sure about the result until the Commanding Officer called my name as the most robust soldier in the Regiment. Moreover, I

was so proud to win the Squadron competition as my Sqn, 70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search), was announced the winner of the CO's 2011 Summer Challenge.

FAREWELL TO GURKHA MAJOR, PREMBAHDUR ALE MVO QGE

On 05 August 2011, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers bid a traditional farewell to the 21st Gurkha Major, Major Prembahadur Ale MVO and his family. It seems like only yesterday since he took over the appointment of Gurkha Major but the two years have gone quickly and the unit is sad indeed to lose an officer who has served for almost 3 decades in exemplary style. He was succeeded by the Maj Ekbahadur Gurung on 5 Aug 11.



The Gurkha Maidstone leaving RHQ

The ceremony took place at Regimental Headquarters QGE where Major Prembahadur Ale MVO and his family were blessed with garlands and khadas from the Comdt QGE, Panditji, Officers their families prior to being towed out. While this took place, all members of 36 Engineer Regiment lined up on both sides of the road to the main guardroom to say their final goodbye.

On leaving the RHQ, the Gurkha Major was towed out in a freshly decorated Land Rover, pulled by the Officers and Senior NCOs led by QGE Pipers. The whole Regiment cheered as he went past on his elaborately adorned vehicle. On arriving at the guardroom he shared some of his sentiments in his final speech. He expressed his profound gratitude to the members of The QGE and congratulated them on their outstanding and incredible performance on recent operations in Afghanistan. Finally, the Gurkha Major received a final salute from a magnificent Guard of Honour prior to being driven off for the very last time. Major Prembahadur Ale MVO assumed the Gurkha Major appointment in October 2009. He has completed his tenure on a particularly high having been instrumental in reorganising both 69 and 70 Squadrons into new their role of high risk search. His outstanding contribution to QGE has been second to none and will always be remembered.



Major Prembahadur Ale MVO was born in Tanahun District, West Nepal and enlisted into the Brigade of Gurkhas on 9 February 1985. In his 26 years of service, he has been involved in many operations and exercises across the globe including Hong Kong, Brunei, South Korea, Malaysia, Cyprus, Great Britain, Kenya, Gibraltar, Kosovo and Iraq. He also had a rare privilege to serve The Queen as one of the Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers and is a Member of Victorian Order (MVO).

He is married to Pabitra Ale and they have two sons and a daughter- Sudip, Anup and Salina. The QGE wishes him and the family all the best for their life ahead in Civilian Street.

Finally, we congratulate new Gurkha Major, Major Ekbahadur Gurung and wish him and his family all the best for tenure as Gurkha Major.

costumes were on display along with some mouth-watering food. The morning was very interactive and the children loved tasting the food and trying on the costumes.



The Gurkha Major being towed out of camp on his final day in the Regiment



Gurkha Major, Major Prembahadur Ale receiving a salute from a Guard of Honour prior to leaving Invicta Park

QGE FAMILY NEWS

Mrs Ganga Gurung

Namaskar! I am the Gurkha support worker for 36 Engineer Regiment and am based at Invicta Park Barracks. I am delighted to say our families have tripled since the humble days we first arrived in the UK. We have now 116 families living in the Invicta Park Barracks, 57 in the Brompton area and many more are expected to arrive in the future. Over the last year we have successfully organised and run many activities and functions for the Gurkha families and wider community on behalf of QGE. Being a GSW also means we have a responsibility to assist with the Youth Club every Thursday, at which the children of 36 Engineer Regiment can come together and enjoy range of activities and sports.

One of our main responsibilities is to develop and introduce our culture and tradition to the wider community and to further this aim, a Nepalese Workshop was held at West Brook School for years 3/4 on 15 March 11. It consisted of a brief presentation on Nepal, followed by a cultural dance. Many traditional Nepalese items, musical instruments and

Over the past 9 years Gurkha ladies of QGE have played a role in raising money for MacMillan Cancer Research UK and last year was no exception. Many congratulations must go to the all Gurkha ladies who successfully completed the 5km Race for Life on 10 July 11 and helped raise funds for the charity.

Another great highlight for 2011 was the Teej celebration on 25 August 11 when all the ladies of QGE marked one of biggest Hindu festivals. On the same evening they said farewell to GM didi Mrs Pavitra Ale and they also welcomed the incoming GM didi, Mrs Bhima Gurung which made

the evening even more special and memorable.

An educational and religious trip was organised for the families during the festive season of Dashain and on 25 Sep 11, 52 families enjoyed a trip to newly built Shree Sanatan Bishwa Hindu Temple in Wembley where families got the opportunity to observe a puja lead by our Panditji. This was followed by an equally exciting shopping trip to Southall.



During the Westbrook School Cultural display.



During November baby massage sessions were organised for new mums and their babies. Though motherhood comes naturally to every woman these sessions provided the new mums with a wonderful bonding opportunity and gave them valuable skills in how to look after the new ones.



Community liaison officer and Mrs. Rinki Hellok in the baby massage session.

Once again, on Christmas Day a badminton tournament was held for the Gurkha families and children in Regimental Gym and in the singles category Mrs Gita Pun managed to lift the Pearl Island Cup beating Mrs Shobha Ghale in the final. The doubles was equally competitive and once again the duo of Mrs Gita Pun and Mrs Maya Rai beat their rivals, Mrs Budhisara and Mrs Sunita Rai. Among the children Miss Salina Ale and Mstr Anup Ale were the winner and runner up respectively. Exhausted players and their families enjoyed lovely homemade sandwiches and snacks as the day came to a close.

As we said good bye to 2011 and reflected on the many wonderful experiences of the past year we were able to kick start 2012 with Saraswati puja on 28 January. This is the day to worship the Goddess of wisdom, Saraswati and to gain knowledge and skills for the future. In the morning families and children gathered in the temple to show their devotion towards Goddess Saraswati and our Panditji highlighted the importance of education by relating it to Goddess Saraswati.



During the coffee evening with BFBS staff on Nov 2011.

We also organised our first ladies' charity function on 25 February 2012. In the morning the families enjoyed a basketball match which saw a great turnout and was supported by all. The evening was equally special with a quiz, raffle draw and delicious homemade tipan tapan. It brought all QGE families together and provided a wonderful opportunity to socialise and act as a platform to share our experiences with one another. My sincere thanks go to all the didi bahinis and bhais who worked behind the scene since without their relentless support this function would not have been a success. It also gives me much pleasure to announce that we have managed to raise £500 from the tipan tapan sale and raffle draw which will go towards Help for Heroes.



During the Basketball Competition on 25 Feb 2012.

I would like to thank QGE magazine for giving me this wonderful opportunity and allowing me to share my thoughts with the readers.



Outgoing and incoming GM Dids, Mrs Pabitra Ale and Mrs Bhima Gurung with CO Memsahab Mrs Louise Gotting



THE REGIMENT IN ACTION



Above and below: The Kasam Khane Parade for 65 Training Party QGE.



Maj Gen Peck CB presents the Bowring Trophy to LCpl Suman Ghale



Comdt QGE, Maj Gen Peck CB and Gurkha Major QGE cutting the 63rd QGE Birthday Cake





*The Regimental Badminton Team with Divisional and Corps Winners Trophies
Back Row L to R: Cpl Chandra Lawati, Cpl Ramkumar Rai, SSgt Govinda Rana, LCpl Yehang Limbu
Front Row L to R: Spr Umesh Bhujel, Spr Sabin Limbu, Spr Shakti Gurung, Spr Prem Tamang*



Lt Col J Fernandes, CO 3 RSME presents prizes and stable belts to QGE Sprs from 65 Training Party on completion of their final exercise



QGE Offr and SNCOs say farewell to Comdt QGE, Lt Col Simon Hulme MBE and his family





Comdt QGE takes the salute at the Beating the Retreat to mark the end of his time in command



Comdt QGE commissions WO2 (SSM) Ganeshprasard Gurung (left) and promotes to SSgt, Sgt Narendrahoj Gurung



GM Saheb wishing the outgoing Adj, Capt Trist Wooten RE farewell



DASHAIN 2068







QGEA Chairman's Letter

Tony Harking



The arrival of the request from the Editor for a short piece for the magazine seems to come around more quickly each year which is probably symptomatic too of the pace of change experienced by the Regiment as much as anything else. The reductions in the size of the Armed Forces will hit the Regiment hard and it makes the purpose of the QGEA as a forum for all those who have served with QGE even more

important. We can provide a forum for mutual support as well as providing the camaraderie which is a feature of service with QGE. I therefore encourage everyone who is or has served with the Regiment to join the Association

Later this year we will see the Regimental and Perowne Trusts join with the Association which will reduce administrative costs, ensure coherence in their aims and conform to the Charity Commission's wish to rationalise charities where it is sensible to do so.

I continue to be very grateful to the Committee who do so much behind the scenes on your behalf and I think the Magazine reflects a vibrant Association which will continue to support links between the QGE serving and non-serving communities. I hope you will support our activities in 2013 as you have done in 2012 and will enjoy this magazine as a record of yet another busy, challenging and fulfilling year.

Jai QGE

THE ASSOCIATION IN ACTION – QGE BIRTHDAY, MAIDSTONE 2011





and of course, let's not forget those in Hong Kong



Shall we?



....go on then!

NEPAL UPDATES

KATHMANDU UPDATE

Lt (Ret'd) Ravindra Sahi¹

Regimental Birthday Celebration

The 63rd QGE Birthday was celebrated by the Kathmandu based members on Sunday 25 Sep 2011 in the Crystal Party Palace located at Man Bhawan, a favourite, convenient and suitable place for all members. This year, we were unable to hold this function on the actual day, 28 September due to other commitments and it was also necessary to tie up with the visit of Col QGE, Gen Sir David Bill KCB and his family.

The registration for members started from 1100 hours, followed by tipan tapan and drinks. The chief guests also included Lady Gay, their son James and Commander BGN who all arrived at the reception at 1130hrs. The Col QGE

was here on his official trek to Nepal for three weeks and his family accompanied him on a private visit. The day was very lively and entertaining and all members and their ladies turned up smartly dressed and were busy meeting and talking to each other. The main programme of the day started with a welcome address by the Chairman, Hon Maj Surjabahadur Thapa MVO followed by the reading of Special Routine Order of the Day by the Secretary, Captain Manilal Thapa. (we missed our President, Hon Maj Bhimbahadur



Address by Col QGE

¹ Lt (Retd) Ravindra Sahi served in The QGE from 1975 – 1995. Since then he has been working in BG Kathmandu as a MOD locally engaged civilian since, working as an Admin Officer in Transit Office. This year he retires from military service having served 37 with the British Gurkhas.



Gurung MVO MBE who was on an overseas visit). Soon after this, it was time for the cake cutting ceremony by the Col QGE. Both the Chairman and Sgt Binam Rana QGE helped the General in the cake cutting and Sgt Binam Rana, a QGE serving member in BGN had sponsored the cake which has become a tradition. The Col QGE distributed the certificates and offered khadas to life members and delivered a speech in Nepali on the occasion and also highlighted the new roles of the Regiment. He also expressed his pleasure at visiting Nepal and especially at having the opportunity to meet a number of old friends.



Cake Cutting by Col QGE, assisted by the Chairman and Sgt Binam Rana QGE

On the entertainment side, WO2 Siri Gurung was responsible for arranging a cultural show and a traditional dances, from the Aandhikhola Tamu (Gurung) Samaj Kathmandu. Our grateful thanks to all those members who generously sponsored and contributed some money towards the cultural show to make it a success. At the end of the show, the guests and members were invited to show their talents and dancing skills with the artistes. Finally, it was the time for all guests and members to disperse.

I know all 120 members and ladies present on the day had



A group dance by the team

a good time and they really enjoyed the event. The QGE birthday is not only to celebrate but it is also a chance for a re-union once a year and reminisce about the past. We all dispersed to our homes, looking forward to meeting again on the next QGE day. The Kathmandu based members were very grateful to QGEA (UK) for their financial support, without

which would not have been able to organise and celebrate this historic annual gathering.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the Chairman and his committee team for organising such a pleasant and a memorable day. The committee team achieved what they set out to do under the guidance and leadership of the Chairman who put an incredible amount of effort to make this year's QGE Day a success.



A Group of 17 Trg Party (1965 intake). From left: Chairman, 57663 LCpl Dambarbahadur Limbu, 57685 Spr Huddabahadur Rai and 57707 Cpl Amarjung Gurung. The Chairman and Spr Huddabahadur met each other after a gap of 42 years, a historic meeting!



Queuing for Bhat. Comd BGN and Hon Maj I K Tamang. Cpl Yasbahadur Rai is also seen in the front.

The following members are currently working in the Committee:

- Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Gurung MVO MBE - President (Central Committee)
- Hon Maj Surjabahadur Thapa MVO - Chairman
- Capt Giriraj Thapa - Vice Chairman
- Capt Manilal Thapa - Secretary
- 21159033 WO2 Jogeshkumar Pradhan - Treasurer
- 21159652 WO2 Keshav Thapa - Member
- 21155310 Cpl Prembahadur Gurung - Member
- 21157707 Cpl Amarjang Gurung - Member
- 21158975 Cpl Khadgabahadur Gurung - Member



REMEMBRANCE DAY IN BRITISH GURKHAS KATHMANDU



A QGE contingent at the Remembrance Day in BG Kathmandu.

Like every year, a strong contingent of 18 QGERAN members attended the Remembrance Day held in British Gurkhas Kathmandu on Friday 11 November 2011. The occasion was marked with two minutes silence and all serving BGN members, locally employed civilians and their ladies and a few members of all the Regimental Associations were present, smartly dressed in their Regimental blazers and wearing poppies. After the main programme, all attendees were ushered to tea and biscuits which was followed by a curry lunch for all mess members and a few invited members of the Regimental Associations.

A VISIT TO NEPAL BY MAJOR GALLAGHER AND HIS SON

There was a good gathering of members of the QGE Kathmandu Branch at the Bagaicha (Garden) Restaurant on Sunday 18 March 2012. The aim of this gathering was to welcome Major (Retired) Gallagher and his eldest son, Brian. Sadly we missed memsahiba who was unable to travel to Nepal due to her age and health.



Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Thapa welcomes Maj Gallagher



Maj Gallagher and his son with Kathmandu based QGE burho toli

The programme started with the offering a khada to Major Gallagher by one of the most senior member present, Hon Maj Bhimbahadur Thapa. The party lasted till 1430hrs and it was a memorable day and gave us the opportunity to get together and enjoy a lot of food and drink and more importantly chatting about the good old days in Kluang (Malaysia), Hong Kong and the UK.

Maj Gallagher sahib served with 68 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron (1966-68) as a SQMS at Kluang (where Maj SB Thapa and Capt DP Gurung joined the Sqn as a young Sappers) and helped move the Sqn to Hong Kong. He returned to the Regiment from 1979-82 where was posted as OC Resources Troop in 70 Support Squadron. Maj Gallagher retired from the Army in 1987 after 37 years of dedicated and distinguished service. After retirement, he worked in a Retired Officer's job from 1988 - 1994 and now lives in Cambridgeshire.

Finally, the gathering ended with a group photograph. We all wish Major Gallagher and his wife all the best for the future.

A VISIT TO KAILASHNATH MAHADEV STATUE

The statue of Kailashnath Mahadev (Lord Shiva) is situated just 20 kms from Kathmandu at Sanga on the way to Banepa. This Hindu God statue is the tallest in the world and was opened to the general public on 20 June 2011 after the inauguration by the then Minister for Tourism, Mr Sharad Singh Bhandari. The statue is 108 feet tall (after the holy number 108 as per Hindu mythology) and it sits on a base 35 feet high giving and overall height of 143 feet. The construction started in 2004, paid for by an Indian businessman, Mr Kamal Jain and his family. It took 6 years



The writer under the shadow of Lord Shiva



to construct and involved about 100 Nepali tradesman and some skilled workers from neighbouring India.

I had heard a lot about this statue and I therefore visited on Saturday 4 February 2012. The site is located in a tranquil environment amidst verdant greenery and tall pine trees and one can see the snow capped Himalayas in the pollution free environment. My family along with my sister's family left Baluwatar at 1300 hours and reached the location around 1400 hrs which was an experience in itself as it was my first time driving on the 6 lane super highway connecting Tinkune in Kathmandu with Suryabinayak in Bhaktapur. This 9km road was widened with a grant from the Japanese government and although I had been driving in the Kathmandu Valley for more than 10 years it was the first experience that I had of driving on a highway at a speed of more than 60 km/h. Elsewhere in the Valley I had never driven at this speed due to the narrow and bumpy roads which restrict me into 1st and 2nd gear. The improved road will help link Nepal with the neighbouring countries of China and India. The Government is also expanding the link road from Tinkune – Maitighar and this 2.6km highway is in its first stage of construction and will be completed within 2 years at an estimated cost of Rs 660 million. It is said that the new road will be of the same quality as for Tinkune-Suryabinayak road once it is completed.

The other place to visit in this area is the Hilltake Health and Homes which is a 15,000 sq ft complex that houses an exotic spa, yoga and meditation rooms as well as 36 deluxe air conditioned rooms. Other facilities include: a banqueting hall, swimming pool, hot stone massage, steam bath, sauna bath, electrical massage chair, acupuncture, diet and mud



The Sahi family and it's relatives posing for a photo at the site

therapy. The entry fee is Rs 100/ person and the car parking is free. Whilst entry is free from the west gate, visitors will not be allowed to visit the Hilltake Health and Homes areas. All visitors should note that the area is a strictly vegetarian and no one is allowed to take non vegetarian items inside with them nor can they eat meat inside. There is a vegetarian canteen which sells samosas, pyaji, pakora, tea, coffee and soft drinks and many more vegetarian snacks.

The weather was sunny and warm but windy and I think the temperature of this area is generally about 5 degrees lower

than that in the Kathmandu Valley below. The greenery and the chirping of birds makes one forget the hustle and bustle of urban life and it provides a calm atmosphere and gives a panoramic view of the Himalayan ranges and the Kathmandu Valley. A view one must see!

DARJEELING UPDATE

The 62nd Birthday Celebration²

SSgt (Ret'd) Khesh Narayan Chettri

The 62nd birthday was celebrated on Tuesday, 26th Sep 2010 at "BLUE PINE RESTAURANT AND BAR", Batasia View Point P.O Ghoom, Darjeeling (The restaurant is owned by Lt Pasang Tamang Ex 1/2 GR). The party was organised by the Darjeeling members led by SSgt (Retd) Kheshnarayan Chettri and luckily this year the weather conditions were better than the previous year and as such the attendance of was also better than last year.

The event commenced at 11:00 am with offering of khada to the President, Lt A K Zimba and SSgt (Retd) Purna Bahadur Chettri. SSgt Purna Bahadur Chettri welcomed all the members present and hand over the proceedings to the President. The President called for a minutes silence to be observed in honour of those members who had passed away that year and he then read out the special routine order issued by Comdt QGE, Lt Col S Hulme MBE RE. After The honour of cutting the birthday cake was given to SSgt Purna Bahadur Chettri (Senior and the oldest member present) and after that a toast was raised to the Queen and the QGE, Jai QGE, QGE baliyo rahaunos.

It was a great gathering with a lot of gossip, drinks, titbits, and delicious lunch. It was an extremely interesting and enjoyable day for all the members and their wives. The President thanked all the members of the Darjeeling Branch for organising such an excellent party. He also thanked Maj Hukum Raj Sahib and Lt Ravi Sahib for helping to arrange funding and the QGE magazine.

Finally, the President on behalf of all the retired members of Darjeeling thanked the Chairman QGEA and all the members for their kind contribution for QGE day. Jai QGE



2 **Ed.** This submission missed the deadline for last year's edition and so is included here for the sake of Regimental history.



3 ½ YEARS IN PARADISE

Colonel Andrew Mills, DA Kathmandu



The gods have smiled on me, rewarding me with one of the best jobs going. Forget OIC ranges Brecon, or even Warden of Lundy Island – it's Defence Attaché Kathmandu that wins the prize. Were that not enough, I've got two other subsidiary roles: Commander British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) and Director of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS).

Defence Attaché.

As DA, which occupies some 40% of my time, I support and help to develop the Nepal MOD and Army, and work to provide the influence necessary to sustain our own Brigade. Working with a small team from the Embassy in Lainchaur, we also assist FCO and DFID initiatives in support of British Foreign Policy. Finally, I coordinate MOD/GWS activity and represent a single point of command to the Ambassador.

We have many friends across the Nepal Army, not least because many of its senior officers attended Sandhurst or the Staff College, it's also rare to find anyone who doesn't have a brother or a cousin serving in our own Brigade of Gurkhas. Like our Gurkhas, though, they're terrible at giving notice for things that we *have* to attend. It's not uncommon to be invited to something important, an hour beforehand.

Commander British Gurkhas Nepal.

BGN, which numbers some 400 military and civilian staff, carries out firm base operations for the Brigade. We recruit, provide local support and maintain disaster relief (earthquake) preparedness. Recruiting is the most exciting of these activities, not least because we attract some 8000 applicants for the 176 Brigade vacancies and 60 in the Singapore Police.

The recruiting process hasn't changed much in recent history, despite the science and objectivity that we now employ. Whilst some 80% of the recruits come from the traditional Magar, Gurung, Rai and Limbu jhats, we now attract youngsters from other areas including the Terai. Despite the concern of some, we continue to run the iconic dhoko race in which potential recruits compete over a mountainous 5 mile course carrying a 25 kg dhoko filled with sand. Amongst a few other

requirements, we insist that recruits are at least 5'3" tall. One, who measures just 5' 2 ½", has spent an hour a day for the past two months hanging from a tree by his arms trying to gain the important ½".

Fit, bright and eager, the recruits are a pleasure to work with even though the final cut is heartbreaking for all. It's grim to have to discard many capable youngsters who usually end up, like so many of their peers, doing menial jobs in the Middle East.

Director Gurkha Welfare Trust.

The GWS, which is the operating arm of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, is all about "Gurkhas living out their lives with dignity". With some 300 staff we provide aid to needy ex-servicemen, their dependents and communities. Key is the payment of 8600 welfare pensions. £45 a month may not sound much, but it is a life saver to those who receive it. In addition we pay other grants and carry out project and health work from our



network of 20 welfare centres. We also run one Residential Home in Pokhara, for the elderly, and are building a second in Dharan and perhaps a further one, later, in Kathmandu.

The Scheme has an annual budget of some £14M, most of which is collected by public subscription in the UK, with further donations from the Kadoorie Charitable Foundation, other private donors, the MOD and DFID. Staffing has the potential to be problematic as nearly all of our soldiers now retire to the UK, but we are just managing to attract sufficient quality and numbers to sustain the required level of activity.

Of course, Nepal, its people and scenery attract large numbers of visitors; understandably our supporters love to come out to see what we are up to. To my astonishment, last year, we received one official visitor every 44 hours. And, this year, I count a Secretary of State, 2 Ministers, a Field Marshal, 3 Generals, 2 Lieutenant Generals, 4 Major Generals, Joanna Lumley, 3 Trustees and perhaps a Prince amongst them! However, it is always good to host such enthusiastic guests and to show them around.





So, is there a Colonel out there who wants his turn in Paradise? I'm off in July 2013. I'm not sure what follows next, as this is my final posting; but, whatever it is, this will take some beating.

THE GURKHA WELFARE SCHEME

Capt (QGO) Ret'd Bhakta Bahadur Rai QGE



I honestly didn't realise what the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS) was and why it existed until the day of my retirement from the Brigade. However, eventually I joined the organisation as the EO(L) School Project Cell on 01 Apr 1997 as my second career. Time flew by and now I am serving

as Programme Director, Rural Water and Sanitation Programme (RWSP) in GWS. Therefore, I would like to give an update about this organisation to my colleagues and the young Sappers in case they too are also unaware of the GWS.

The GWS is the field arm of Gurkha Welfare Trust.. It is a unique organisation in Nepal since unlike other NGOs and INGOs it has been recognised by the Nepal Government as underpinning the 200 year historical relationship between the United Kingdom and Nepal. Although the GWS started its operations in Nepal before 1976, an official protocol has been recorded since 1978. Its core mission is to enhance the quality of life for the Gurkha ex-servicemen and their dependants in Nepal and India who find themselves in poverty, distress and who are in need of help. This has been achieved through the provision of both Individual Aid and Community Aid.

In Nepal, the GWS is directed by Col A M Mills (ex-QGE) the Director Gurkha Welfare Scheme and he is supported by the

serving Field Director GWS, Lt Col J D Fenn QOGLR. Retired Gurkha Officers and other ranks from the Brigade and Locally Employed Civilian (LEC) staffs complete the staff.



The GWS administers its aid through its 19 Area Welfare Centres (AWC) based in Nepa and 1 in Darjeeling. In addition there are an additional 13 patrol bases throughout Nepal and India; the Indian ones being in Kalempong, Kursyang and Derahadun. The Government of Nepal (GoN) formally annually endorses all GWS activity through the British Gurkhas Welfare Coordination Committee (BGWCC).

As every year, during Fiscal Year 2010/11 the GWS has achieved all its goals and delivered welfare pensions to 9,012 deserving Welfare Pensioners (WP) and 2,655 Service Pensioners (SP). This is done on a quarterly basis through its AWCs. This year 318 welfare cases have been received and adequate welfare support had been provided. A total of 121,437 primary medical care, 10,181 secondary medical care and 4,600 long term sick cases were treated in this fiscal year. Furthermore 406 students of different categories have received the education grants.



As a new initiative the GWS recently built a Residential Home (RH) in Pokhara within AWC Kaski's premises which accommodates 26 of the elderly and most lonely welfare pensioners. The construction of another RH will start in Feb 12 in the East, within the premises of AWC Dharan which will have the capacity to accommodate a further 23 pensioners.



The Kulbir Thapa VC Residential Home, Pokhara

In regards to Community Aid (CA), since 1988 the GWS has built a total of 123 Major School buildings in hill communities and another one is under construction in Lamjung District with a target completion date of June 2012. In addition, numerous school extension and refurbishment projects have been carried out and this directly contributes to the GoN's efforts in raising the education standards in remote villages. Furthermore it helps the dependants of ex-servicemen to receive education in potential recruiting areas. At present this School Cell is led by a serving RE officer, Capt D H Brain QGE.



Another magnificent part of Community Aid is the water and sanitation projects. Between 1989 and June 2011 the GWS had implemented 1,331 water and sanitation projects in remote hill villages through its RWSP. This has benefited 38,577 households and 259,588 people by providing access to clean water and adequate sanitation. Additionally 324 school latrines have been built with full water supply. A further 64 water projects are under construction and will be completed by June 2012. These projects have enhanced the livelihood of the poor community and directly contributed to Nepal's National Development Plan and the UN Millennium Development Goal.

Through the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association (KAAA), the GWS has built a total of 20 new trail bridges; 2 Tarpul, 1 gravity ropeway, 11 drinking water networks, 5 micro



hydroelectricity stations and 13 cliff tracks this year alone. In addition 60 solar cookers and 304 solar home lights were distributed to the rural communities.

An additional burden on the GWS this year was due to the earthquake on 18 Sep 11 scaling 6.9 on the Richter Scale which had the epicentre in Taplejung District, East Nepal. The earthquake damaged 153 welfare pensioners' houses and caused minor damage to 25 GWS water projects. All of these are in the process of repair.

Since the starting of the GWS, ex Sappers of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers have played a substantial part in the running the organisation. To date, 195 sappers have served in the organisation so far and at present the following Sappers are still serving in the GWS or KAAA:

Maj Judha Bahadur Gurung,
Maj Dal Bahadur Limbu
Hon Capt Mohankumar Gurung,
Capt(QGO) Retd Bhakta Bahadur Rai

SSgt Gambahadur Thapa,	Sgt Kamalbahadur Gurung
Sgt Harkaraj Rai,	Sgt Rajkumar Limbu
Sgt Bharatkumar Rai,	Sgt Purnabahadur Pun
Cpl Gagaram Rai,	Cpl Minbahadur Magar
Cpl Tilok Bahadur Rai,	LCpl Krishnabahadur Gurung
LCpl Harkabahadur Gurung,	LCpl Lilbahadur Pun
Spr Durgabahadur Rai,	Spr Topbahadur Borathoki

The GWS has gone through many erratic, challenging and busy years in the past and will no doubt enter more in the years ahead. Despite the current changing scenario and grave challenges in Nepal the GWS is prepared and determined to guarantee the delivery of welfare aid to Gurkha ex-servicemen and their dependents who are in need. Whatever happens the GWS will continue to play an important role in ensuring the future of the Brigade.



YAK ATTACK 2012

Captain Douglas Brain, Project Engineer GWS

Ask any Nepali to describe their country and they will probably reply "a little bit up, a little bit down". If understatement was an Olympic sport, Nepal would be taking gold in London this year. But without their candid optimism and ever sunny disposition, a race like Yak Attack could never run.



The start of stage 2 from Nuwakot.

On 3 Mar 2012 32 riders from seven countries convened in Kathmandu to participate in the sixth iteration of the highest mountain bike race in the world. The event, regarded as one of the five toughest mountain bike races on earth, has never been won by an international rider and attracted a motley crew from fully sponsored professional rider, to the likes of me, who hadn't ridden a bike in four years. At Kathmandu Guest House in Thamel, most riders compared bikes (I was a little lost, but some were more shiny than others) and downplayed their training and experience. However, I couldn't help notice their lycra clad iron legs and suspected this belied a very different truth. At the starting whistle, my fears were quickly confirmed. The lead pack exploded forward at an awe-inspiring pace, uphill! The race would take 12 days and consisted of 10 race stages, one rest day, and one group ride on the last day (to ensure the more hung-over riders didn't get lost). Over the gruelling stages we would cover 400km, climb over 12,000 metres, culminating in the crossing of the Thorong La pass, at 5416m it is the highest mountain pass in the world. As I quietly slipped into my lowest gear and spun my way up the climb, I wondered what I had let myself in for.

The first four days traversed the foothills of the Himalaya, travelling from Kathmandu to Besi Sahar, the gateway to the Annapurna region. The sub tropical climate and 30 plus degree heat was scorching as we ascended long switch backed dusty climbs. These quiet jeep tracks and trekking routes don't see much traffic, which was a welcome change to the smog and chaos of Kathmandu roads. But as we swooped downhill at speeds in excess of 60kmph, we were faced with a different challenge; people. The absence of traffic in these sublimely serene regions made us quite a surprising spectacle. Unfortunately for some we were a little too shocking and dodging locals who were obstinately oblivious to our frantically spinning wheels became the order of the day. Just a couple of hours into the race I had my first big tumble as a young boy stepped out straight in front of me. I flew over the handle bars, bounced on the track

and slammed into a (thankfully soft and muddy) paddy field a metre or so below the road. I was miraculously unscathed and the mudpack gave me baby soft skin as a souvenir. In these early days a professionally sponsored team from America led the internationals. However, despite their best efforts they could not match the pace of the most elite Nepali riders. At just 45kg, two time Yak Attack winner Ajay Pandit Chhetri seemed to effortlessly soar up the climbs whilst the rest of us trudged at a more humanly pace. But despite the divide in athletic ability, the group bonded quickly. United by a common sense of adventure, challenge and determination, there was always someone to sip tea with, discuss the odd race tip, or in my case, do some serious catch-up on this whole cycling business!



Recovering in Dhading Besi

On day five the race suddenly changed. Departing Besi Sahar, we bid farewell to balmy weather and tree clad hills as we started to wind our way into the Annapurna Conservation Area. The mountains funnelled riders into a deep gorge and rose skywards above us, whilst below the mighty Marsyangdi (raging river) roared with deafening white, foamy, fury. As the road gave way track, porters took over and the Jeeps returned to Kathmandu with all but our most essential supplies. For the next five days there would be no more fast and manically enjoyable descents, just one, long, lung bursting, grind uphill. Play time was over.

As we crept further into the epic Himalayan landscape, trekkers appeared ahead of us on the rocky trail, looking utterly bemused by our presence. But locals appeared largely indifferent. As I rounded one corner I felt a smack, then ice cold water trickle down my back. I looked back and 'thwack', another water bomb hit me square in the head, much to the delight of the bowler. Furious, I plodded on, only to get paint thrown in my face! Quite literally seeing red I was ready to explode, then the penny dropped; it was Holi Day, the Hindu festival of colours. Celebrated at the end of the winter season on the last full moon day of the lunar month Phalguna, bonfires are lit and scented powder and perfume are thrown at one another. I found out later that other riders had adopted various tactics to deal with the onslaught, from riding full pelt towards suspicious looking crowds to 'borrowing' water pistols and returning payment in kind. However, after crossing a long slender suspension bridge, marvels of engineering that would be at home on an Indiana



Jones set, our attention quickly found new focus as we were confronted by the final climb of the day. 12km of steep scrambling goat track meant it was time for our faithful steeds to ride us for a while. With bikes over shoulders, strapped to backs and balanced on helmets we hiked our way to Tal. Situated in a hanging valley next to a wide gurgling river it was a welcome sight. Less welcome, however, was the weather. As the heavens opened our thoughts were consumed by the prospect of fresh snowfall on the pass which could mark the end of our journey.



Climbing into Manang

Over the next three stages we gained 1000m a day, the stages grew shorter, from a standard 50-60km to just 17km. But the times for each stage remained largely the same as we spent ever longer stretches on foot and off the bike. Stage six took us to Chame, with the porters now following us on foot there was a long pause before our clothing and equipment joined us. But the altitude, cold and living conditions were starting to take their toll and the race claimed its first victim, forcing one rider to retire over fears of angina and altitude sickness. I meanwhile swallowed the little fashion sense I had and resorted to buying rainbow coloured yak wool socks to get life back into my feet, probably my finest investment yet. Stage seven continued to Manang, a beautiful, desolate, moonscape valley set against a backdrop of pristine white peaks. Here, our efforts were rewarded by a very welcome rest day. Whilst some took the opportunity to acclimatise or tinker with bikes, most set about the important task of topping up lost calories in the German bakery (which also had the best heating in the village). Manang was also home to the aptly named 'Snow Monkey'. Playful, mischievous and ruthlessly efficient he was the race logistician who made everything happen. Dressed in a bright Technicolor hemp suit, somewhat akin to Joseph's dream coat, and topped with a Davey Jones style beaver hat he entertained us by guiding the group around town, briefing us on Tibetan and Bhuddist culture including a visit to the Monastery rarely open to the public.

From Manang the going got tough, but sadly, not everyone got going. Riders who had overexerted themselves in the early stages fell sick, leaving their immune systems to the mercy of the sub-continent. Team America was superseded by Team Australia after one professional rider was forced to retire. By the end of the day five riders would have retired from the race. The 17km to Thorong Phedi started with a steep climb on foot. Despite the rest day there was a

subdued mood – an omen of things to come. We slogged up a series of smaller climbs which all but the most elite racers had to tackle on foot. Some of the flatter sections weren't much kinder, either glazed with lethal ice or lined by precipitous drops and scree slopes to a frozen river below. Overestimating my ability, I learned that riding these trails wasn't a good idea. Taking my eye of the track for a second whilst having a drink, my front wheel strayed from the narrow path and plunged downwards. Bucked over the bars I had to fight hard to stop myself cart wheeling to a wintry end. It was only when we reached Thorong Phedi, perched beneath the Thorong La pass at 4500m that we noticed the breathtaking views behind us. Having had our eyes glued to the rock, hunting for lines, hazards and the inevitable oncoming Yak or Donkey train (remember, stay 'top side' if you don't want to nudged into the canyon below) we had the opportunity to soak up some of the most stunning scenery in the Himalaya. As the sun grew golden on the blanched slopes high above us, the temperature plummeted and we rushed back to our sleeping bags to escape the cold and prepare for the 'big day' over the pass.



En route to Thorong Phedi

3am. I reached down to take a slurp of water to lubricate my parched mouth, desiccated by altitude, only to find my bottle frozen. Astonishingly getting up wasn't hard at all, after a fitful night of sleep everyone was keen to get the pass over with. Breakfast was a lethargic affair with other grey faced zombies, before reluctantly heading outside to start the race. As the starting whistle blew, there was no rush, no sprint, just a slow, steady and determined lurch forward. The line of headlamps snaked up the pass against an eerie canvass of moonlight on snow. Bikes rigged to our backs and heads in every feasible configuration, we hurried past ever more bewildered trekkers. The quickest were over the pass in a little over two hours, well before dawn whilst others took up to four hours to crest the 900m climb from our warm tea house below. As I reached the pass (after 16 heart sinking false summits) I was greeted by a bitterly cold wind. Keen to get out of the weather as soon as possible I dropped my sack and started unclipping the bike, but the tiny clips were too small for my cumbersome gloves. Without thinking I pulled the glove from my already icy hands to release the bike, and within seconds my hands were frozen. With the dawn light still stirring, and the promise of the suns warming rays still



a long way off, I rushed into the lonely hut that marks the top of the pass. I threw my hands over a gas fire, just six inches above the blue flame but couldn't feel a thing. With lips slurred by fatigue and cold I ordered a hot chocolate, probably the most expensive in Nepal, but I was in no mood to barter. It made little difference. Better just to keep going. The descent was almost as hard as the climb, feeling tired, sluggish, and with no feeling in my hands to brake on the snow covered tracks, they were lethal to ride. Time and again my front wheel strayed into soft snow, sinking, stopping, and launching me over the bars. After 1300m of frustratingly slow descent the snow cleared and tracks finally became rideable again. Sweeping single track, rock gardens and sets of steps would normally have me whooping with delight, but instead all I could think about was getting warm. Speed became my ally as I zoomed along, but paired with slow, lethargic reactions catastrophe was averted only by luck as I flew off drops and round loose pebbly corners. Arriving in Kagbeni I had expected to be overcome by a sense of elation, but only found relief. However a burger from Yak Donalds went some way to restoring morale.

The last day promised to be a hoot; 60km and almost 1600m of descent. Everyone had quietly congratulated themselves on a job well done, we were over the pass, it really was all downhill from here. How hard could it be? But the great Himalaya doesn't concede easily, and it had a sting in its tail. As we rallied at the start line a huge dust storm closed in, sand blasting us with a ferocious head wind. Once again some riders were reduced to walking as the head wind became too powerful to cycle in, whilst buffeting side winds threatened to throw people into the canyon below. We slowly crawled forward, blinded by the frenzy of grit. The wind favoured the heavier riders, and the international cyclists finally got out in front as the light Nepalis were tossed about like rag dolls. After 30km, the gorge changed direction, got steeper and the wind dropped. In every sense we had turned a corner. The jeep track was littered with large sharp rocks, edged by an unprotected drop into the impressive Kali Gandaki river, snaking its way towards India. From the river bed the valley rises to two 8000m peaks forming the deepest canyon in the world, but no-one noticed as grins crept over our faces and disc brakes screeched back into life. For the fearless the ride was fast and fun and over all too quickly. Rolling into Tatopani I shot through the finishing banner and had a beer thrust into my hand. As we stood around waiting for the other riders, backslapping and shaking hands someone pointed out the tear in my front tyre, I never knew how close to a disastrous crash I had come. But it didn't matter, half an hour later we were in the hot springs (still in Lycra, of course) chinking glasses and comparing battle scars.

Ajay Pandit Chhetri secured his third consecutive win, and Peter Butt of Australia became the first international to earn a podium finish in third place. Despite coming a lowly 18th position of 32 riders, I was amazed to learn I would have been the second quickest international if I had competed in 2011. But Yak Attack is changing. Gathering momentum every year, and with it more competitive riders, it will undoubtedly attract some serious competition all aiming to be the first international to secure pole position. The riders overcame extreme heat, cold, altitude, sickness, sleep deprivation,

basic living conditions and some of the most rugged riding on the planet to complete Yak Attack, quite deservedly one of the toughest mountain bike races on the planet. It was an awesome adventure, planned to perfection and elegantly executed by a great team. It truly was an experience of a lifetime. If you want to find out more or enter the race visit www.yak-attack.co.uk.



Crossing the finishing line into Dhading Besi

But for me and many of the other riders it was more than just a challenge. During my tour of Afghanistan in 2010 Sapper Ishwor Gurung, a Queens' Gurkha Engineer soldier, was tragically killed. I am aiming to raise £10,000 to build a school extension to Ishwor's school, in a small poor town near Pokhara, to commemorate his bravery and sacrifice. As the Project Engineer of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme in Nepal, I am in the unique and fortunate position to oversee the construction from foundation to inauguration. If you would like to support this cause and honour the lives of fallen Gurkha soldiers, please visit www.justgiving.com/Yak-Attack.

Finally I would like to thank my generous sponsors. Jelly Belly Sports Beans for sponsoring me yet again, and kindly donating my sports nutrition. Fisher outdoor for providing me with a much needed Met helmet and excellent Santini cold weather cycle clothing. Swrve for providing hard wearing, waterproof trousers and shorts with an urban chic edge! Whitby and Co for providing a Princeton Tec headtorch (my salvation on the Thorong La), a Geigerrig hydration system which kept my going every day, and a Leatherman which healed many bikes, not only my own. Amer Sports for their kind donation of a Suunto watch to tell me just how far I'd climbed, Lyon Equipment for their Exped sleeping mat which helped keep me warm each night, and Wiggle for a discount for the odds and ends I couldn't do without.



MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES

MORNING WALKS

Lt Col JP Cross

(Ed. This is the first of 3 articles for the magazine by Col Cross. He writes this year with even more interest in QGE as his adopted grandson, Spr John Pahalam Gurung has recently joined QGE)

"Grandfather, take out one of your eyes." The command was imperious and insistent: its deliverer was a tousle-haired nine-year-old Nepali boy, with authority well beyond his years, clearly leader of the cluster of kids with him. Surrender or walk on regardless? I was two hours from home and not quite halfway round one of the circuits of my morning walks. I looked at them, all with eyes button-bright and overflowing enthusiasm: how many other mid-octogenarians would be similarly challenged?

I suppose the morning-walk' habit started when I was in Laos, living alone. On high days and holidays I would take my dog, Singha, my pedometer showing me that I walked between twenty-one and twenty-eight miles. In my early days I would take language cards and I would ask people I met a question from the top word in the pile. They would be surprised to be asked if they caught crabs in the swamp or what noise their buffalo made when scratched. I was only accepted without hostility or suspicion when people learnt I was neither French nor American but a 'khon Añgit', an Englishman.

I met Pathet Lao patrols as I ranged far and wide. After the Communists had taken over, every morning, everywhere, the ritual of political indoctrination would take place. One Saturday morning, early, miles out 'in the sticks' and still a bit chilly, I saw an armed group of young Pathet Lao soldiers – looking for all the world like our Gurkhas as to visage – sitting cross-legged in a circle in a harvested rice field on the outskirts of the village they were garrisoning, being lectured by a hard-faced 'cadre'. They were directly in the line I was taking. I did not deviate but kept on towards them. I talked to Singha, in Nepali, telling him not to chase the goats or the pigs. The soldiers saw me coming, then heard a strange language. The cadre stopped talking, turned and stared at me, as did the soldiers, scowling severely. I sensed tension in the air but, having committed myself, chose to ignore it. I walked into the centre of the group and told the dog to sit, give me one paw and then the other. He obliged me. In Lao I said to the group, "That's discipline. That's how you won the war. Without it that's how you'll lose the peace." I pointed to Singha. "You can call him the 'little soldier' but don't call me the 'big dog'."

Blank amazement greeted this utterly unexpected stricture. Nothing existed in the book of rules for such behaviour that was neither hostile nor rude, merely eccentric. I wobbled my hands and knees, then my eyebrows and ears, asking the soldiers if they could. They burst out laughing, all semblance of severity gone. I put my arm round the shoulders of the

cadre, a Vietnamese, my hand on his head and made a squeaking noise with my mouth. He gave a start but stayed silent. Such an occurrence was evidently not yet a common experience.

"You've got a mouse in your head," I said sympathetically and inanely. "I hope it doesn't hurt. And you teach politics?" By then I had gone as far as I dared so, telling the dog to follow me, turned and left without looking behind. For a brief moment I felt it mighty cold on the back of my neck. I never heard anything about that trivial, unnecessary and entirely unrehearsed incident.

Once I had started living in Pokhara, in 1986, I only started walking after we began to keep dogs. With dogs, the morning walk habit set in really properly. The dogs loved it: we had two. Three neighbours' dogs joined us to make five and the most I ever had trailing behind me was seven. 'Morning walk', along with 'half brain' and 'love marriage' are Nepali neologisms – 'paper wedding', to aid foreigners' citizenship process, is another, fairly new one. No, I will not put words into your mouth by conflating the first two.

By now I have, on a conservative estimation, walked over a hundred thousand kilometres, more than three times round the world at the equator. It was on one of our earlier walks when Buddhiman and I were wondering how much or how little the countryside had changed in the past five hundred years did the idea of historical novel writing occur to me.

When I was struggling with any passage in the book I was currently writing, for instance when I had nearly had the hero killed halfway through, I felt I had to have him rescued even though the scene I had set did not allow it. 'Winking little thoughts into my tiddlecup', unquote *Lolita*, I would drift for two or three hours mulling over a number of possible scenarios. Then suddenly, bingo, an answer would come.

On one walk in an unusual place in my early days I was called, rather rudely, by some schoolboys. I was, as normal, wearing shorts and traditional Nepali headgear. I did not answer them. I was chi-hiked again and did not answer. I then heard an interesting comment from one of the boys. 'I thought he was a foreigner but he must be a Nepali because he refuses to talk to us.'

Twice I have limped back to the house bitten and bleeding, once when attacked, from either side, by two dogs and once when I found myself in the middle of our dog and a neighbour's fighting: anti-rabies jabs both times.

Buddhiman and I have seen pine martens, ferret badgers, mongooses and once, a badger. Twice we have seen either a leopard or a tiger in the flesh and separately, their droppings. Then the dogs seemed almost to walk on tiptoe, directly behind us. Our small bitch, Leenie, always attacked snakes. She would bite them on the tail several times, shaking them violently. The hapless creatures would turn round to try



to retaliate but eventually would tire when she would bite them behind their head. She was equally industrious with mongooses. Once one clung to her nose as she clung to its tail and almighty squealing ensued from both creatures. Buddhiman's wife, Bhim, was angry that we did not bring the skull back as it makes excellent anti-diarrhoea medicine. We have seen a group of mules chasing a horse's foal, trying to kill it. Monkeys are always a target for the dogs. Once, near a river, one swam a surprisingly long way under water trying to escape. They got it when it eventually came up for air on the far bank.

The 'foot' part of 'foot and mouth disease' is distressful to see. The cure is to soak the infected feet with crocodile's urine (ten rupees per bottle from the Kathmandu zoo) and molasses. We have seen a distraught bull watching over his mate's tiger-torn body.

The only fish we have come across have been in the monsoon when some have foolishly ended up in water-filled paddy fields (first cousin to the Irishman with the same name?) and those trying to climb a concrete dam on their way to spawn.

As for birds, I am always fascinated by watching long-tailed tits diving on vultures or jumping on their back and pecking them to drive them away but unhappy to see a vulture tearing the innards out of dying cattle – that is why they have featherless necks to stop them sticking halfway. No dying or dead cattle are attacked when they lie exactly on a north-south axis. Egrets, in flocks of many hundreds or individually amongst cattle, are a commonplace. I have only once seen a dozen vultures fighting hard to get at a recently decapitated sheep's head. Our dogs have been swooped on by long-tailed tits and, twice, by an aggressive fish owl.

Only once have Buddhiman and I been swept down a river in spate – and that was once too many.

As for men, some of the jogis on their morning food-collecting ritual talk to me. Once an Indian Army man on leave jogged passed me before turning round to come back to ask me my 'sepoy number'? I said I didn't have one and he apologised for wasting my time. Occasionally I come across a young man giving a weeping woman the rough side of his tongue. I have come across a dead person twice. When I walk up to Tiger Mountain I carry two sticks. My reply to 'why two' is that vehicles have four-wheel drives and I have to have a four-legged drive.

Wearing tunnel vision spectacles means I don't see "hand signals" from a flank. I then hear a plaintive voice asking why I am walking past without speaking. I try and smooth hurt feelings. Phatic remarks pose their own problems. I have learnt what to say to the womenfolk: when they are laundering beside the road I tell them that if they had a rupee for each article washed, they'd be millionaires by now, and often I comment on how it is the women who keep the country ticking. Sometimes I say that even with twenty-five hours a day they can never get everything done. These remarks always have a positive reaction, with a smile and a spoken agreement. Also the obvious one to shoppers: 'it is easier to spend that to earn'. That always earns me a rueful smile.

People clean their teeth as they wander outside their house. Sometimes I ask the women if they know the song one Mitra Sen wrote [in 1943]? 'My queen-love's teeth are like cucumber seeds and her ankles like pigeon's eggs.' None have yet admitted to knowing it.

With smiles galore, laughter often and frowns seldom, usual questions asked me are: how old am I? How much is my pension? What do I eat? What religion am I? Why walk? Where is 'mother'? – which means my wife. When my questioner sees me around the same age as his father, the relationship always being as he or she would see it, never from my point of view. How many children have I? Political points are hardly ever mentioned and, when they are, are 'in code'.

I was once shocked to see a woman binding her screaming son with a rope and tying him to the house door. I felt I had to go and ask the reason. 'To make him do his homework,' came the unexpected reply.

I have only once been asked, by a young man, to bless the girl standing next to him so that her first baby would be a son. It took me by surprise and I still don't know if what I expressed was correct. School children, including pubescent girls, routinely ask for blessings to pass exams. I was upbraided by one such when she failed her School Leaving Certificate mathematics paper and I only managed to save my face by saying that I had not blessed the person who had marked it. I was asked for a repeat blessing and was thankful to learn that she had passed on the second time. Pre-selection potential recruits are another lot wanting blessings: I am cagey then and always add a rider 'were I the person who chooses... but I'm not.'

Cuckoo and dove calls, blowing tunes on my walking stick, eyebrow and knee-wobbling (I tell smiling mothers that children come in two types, the real smallies and the real oldies), fingers up the nose and in the ear and..."Grandfather, you haven't been listening. "Take one of your eyes out."...and, by sleight of hand and a popping noise made with my tongue, the mission is completed to hoots of wonderful laughter from some and a look almost of reverence from others.

HONG KONG 40 YEARS ON

Richard Beazley

Outside my bedroom window there's a very distinctive mountain peak in the distance, and it brings me great joy because it is the same peak I saw from my room at the Officers' Mess, Perowne Barracks 40 years ago, namely Castle Peak.

My view today from Hung Hom where I'm staying, is framed by Kowloon's mass of high rise buildings and it is just by chance that there's a gap revealing Castle Peak, whereas 40 years ago the view was framed by trees and shrubs, with hardly a building in site.

I arrived at Perowne fresh from my degree course at Shrivernham, the same month that the first harbour tunnel opened in 1972. That changed the lives of everyone in Hong



Kong as until that moment one would only cross the harbour by ferry if it was absolutely necessary. Interestingly it was funded by entrepreneurial companies at the time because the Hong Kong Government thought it wouldn't serve any great purpose! And today there are three road tunnels and three rail tunnels and it's difficult to imagine where we'd be without them.

I remember being bursting with ambition to get selected for the Regiment as my only brother and sister were both in Hong Kong in 1972, and as I had grown up in Hong Kong from 1951 onwards by virtue of my father's employment with HSBC, it was home from home. So I was very thrilled when I heard that General Jackson had selected myself and Clive Lowe for QGE from those that had applied.



The photo opposite is from 1972 and was taken at the Cenotaph with Jardine House behind (then known as the Connaught Centre) shows myself, my sister Christine, and my brother Mike who followed my father into HSBC.

So what has changed in the intervening years and how does it impact on our lives today? Well, from my perspective the changes have been dramatic, and almost without exception, for the better.

Hong Kong's infrastructure is as good as you will find anywhere. It is so easy to get around and there's a great choice in the various modes of transport. Most significant is the MTR: When I left the Regiment in 1975 the MTR was just starting. Today it has 155 stations and carries on average four million passengers a day. It has been hugely successful and in 2008 formally took over KCR, making it the largest employer in Hong Kong after the Government. It is effectively a property company that happens to run a railway and much of its success is due to the business model it has established whereby property is developed above and around each new station. This creates a win-win-win situation because the property is highly sought after by the public, both for the convenience of commuting and almost guaranteed rise in property value, the property developers make millions, and MTR makes even more by selling the rights to the developers. MTR is now so successful that they are running operations in London, Stockholm, Shanghai, Shenzhen and various other Mainland cities.

Then there is the light rail system, a complete network connecting with the MTR, based in the New Territories covering all the property developments and villages that stretch from Tuen Mun to Yuen Long and beyond. <http://issuu.com/efilm/docs/lr-route-map> As we used to routinely pass through Yuen Long to get to Sek Kong from Perowne and Bowring any readers who have not visited HK in recent

years would be amazed. Tuen Mun in the early seventies was a fishing village with the majority of the residents living afloat in their sampans. Today Tuen Mun is a concrete jungle extending in all directions, such that it is difficult to say where Tuen Mun ends and Yuen Long begins.

In 1997 the Octopus Card was introduced, a stored value card that can now be used on all buses, trains, trams, ferries and even for purchases from Seven Eleven and other convenience stores. It's a brilliant concept and a major step towards a cashless society. I think HK was one of the first countries to introduce this idea, and the creators were pretty smart as on any card purchased for \$150, \$50 is below the line, so with upwards of 5 million cards in circulation, they are sitting on \$250 million in cash !!!

The Handover on 30 June 1997 is arguably the most significant event in Hong Kong over the last 40 years. It proved to be one of the wettest days that year and Prince Charles and Chris Patten, the Governor, and all the visiting dignitaries got very wet. If I understand correctly, under the terms and conditions of the handover, as drawn up by Maggie Thatcher, HK's status quo remains for 50 years, and it has every sign of doing just that. HK has gone from strength to strength in the last 15 years, with Beijing appearing to take a fairly "hands off" approach with regard to political issues.

A noticeable change is that the HK-China border is more porous than ever, with road, rail and ferry crossings trying to keep up with demand. Every self respecting Chinese businessman has one or more cars with dual number plates and can commute daily to the multitude of factories in Guangdong Province where overworked and underpaid staff work 24 hours a day to make products for export to the world, generating huge profits for the business owners. There's now a major border crossing at Lok Ma Chau where tourists would go to peer across the river towards Shenzhen and the odd Liberation Army soldier in his pillbox. Today Shenzhen is a huge metropolis with its own subway, shopping malls, high rise towers and traffic jams.

Having just spent a year in Chengdu, right in the heart of China, I was able to get a glimpse of life today on the Mainland and it is quite breathtaking! The pace of development is staggering with thousands of hectares of high rise buildings going up simultaneously.

Something that is a little surprising is that the quality and quantity of spoken English since the handover is remarkable. Courtesy is very often rewarded with a "thank you", an apology on the street is often "sorry", taxi drivers are polite, well-spoken and give the exact change automatically, without exception. It is a truly cosmopolitan environment which displays to the world the antithesis of apartheid. You can be the only 'gweilo' on a bus or train and nobody takes any notice of you, unless you are old or disabled when the local Chinese will instantly give up their seat for you.

Something that any ex Gurkha will notice very quickly is the next generation of Nepalis, born in HK to serving soldiers' wives, who now have the right of abode. Particularly pleasant for ex Gurkha residents are the numerous tarunis working



in the pubs and restaurants around HK. Speak to them in Nepali and they are delighted to tell you which regiment their father was in, etc. There is no doubt that Nepalis, along with many other minority groups, including Filipinos are regarded as second class citizens in many ways, but they get used to it and live with it.

Another major change in recent times was the opening of Chek Lap Kok Airport (CLK) in July 1998. It was a remarkable feat of planning and logistics to move all the aircraft, equipment, staff, transportation etc overnight from Kai Tak to the new airport. This part of the process went smoothly but there were problems. The freight terminal at CLK was not ready on time and it took a further month before it was functional with catastrophic results to fresh food and livestock. CLK is one of Asia's finest airports and the airport railway is world class with its pledge to get passengers from the airport to city centre in 23 minutes, with trains running at 135 Km/hour every 15 minutes. The fact that a third runway is being built and a third terminal between the existing runways is an indication of HK's seemingly unstoppable growth. Combine that with the bridge/tunnel combination from Lantau to Macau and Zuhai and the future of HK's construction industry and trade and commerce looks very promising indeed.

CLK holds very vivid memories from 40 years ago when we were exercising on Lantau and CLK was a very unremarkable small island with one very sleepy fishing village. We had intelligence that there were dushmen on CLK and I was tasked with planning and executing a night attack on CLK from our base on Lantau. I did a careful recce in an assault boat in daylight hours while my troop rested and studied the profile of the island in the hope that there would be sufficient natural light to guide us to our landing point. We set off at midnight after thorough briefings and a visit from the Brigadier, whom I assured that we were well prepared. What followed was a total disaster, as it never occurred to me or anyone else that in the time between my recce and the assault, a fishing net had been deployed covering the entire coastline of CLK. One assault boat after another fell foul of this net, and without exception the outboard motors became totally entangled in the nets and 'died'. My brave Gurkhas lifted the propellers out of the water and desperately tried to cut them free from the nets. The nets were made of very fine, very strong nylon and cutting them free was just the first step...removing the mesh which was wound a thousand times round each prop shaft, in the dark, in a rough sea was not for the faint-hearted. We managed eventually by the time dawn was breaking to reach the shore of CLK and regroup, but the assault was totally compromised. Many lessons were learnt that night, not least by the troop commander! What we can be sure of is that it won't happen again...in those waters!

In the intervening years I was very privileged to meet up with a number of retired Gurkha Engineers including Capt. Kusalsing Gurung my troop QGO and many others from the Regiment and we enjoyed a number of barbecues at Butterfly Beach, executed with typical QGE tradition and style, during the late '90's, but having just returned to HK after an absence of 8 years I have yet to meet any Gurkhas from my era with the Regiment. The only retired Officer I know from QGE

currently in HK, is Graham Price and we meet for a beer and a chat from time to time.

I'm not sure how much the news has spread outside Hong Kong, but recently the HK Government announced that it was going to hand out HK\$6000 (that's close to 500 pounds at today's rates) to every single HK Permanent Resident world wide. So any of you who happen to have HK residency, now is the time to apply. I have received my \$6000 and most welcome it was! It just shows how cash rich the HK Government is.

As many readers will be aware, we now boast a Disneyland on Lantau, complete with its own spur line and station linking it to the Airport Railway. It is a very poor replica of the USA Disneys, but seems well patronised.

Lan Kwai Fong is worth a mention. This tiny side street inland from Pedder St in Central is now the focal point for eating, drinking and entertainment after business hours and at weekends, and definitely the place to see and be seen. For older folk it is too full of yuppies and far too expensive.

All the barracks in the New Territories were handed over to the Peoples Liberation Army at the Handover in 1997. The PLA keeps a very low profile. I haven't visited Cassino, Gallipoli and the other camps but I imagine they are still there and largely abandoned. Perowne on the other hand is due to open this year as "Harrow International School" following successful implementation of Schools in Beijing and Bangkok under the Harrow banner.



A Maccu Cassino



Stonecutters Island is no longer an island, Ma Wan the tiny island between Tsing Yi and Lantau, which we all saw from Castle Peak Road heading in to Tsuen Wan, is now a massive dormitory of high rise blocks, and also serves as the base of a pier for the Tsing-Ma bridge which carries the airport railway and a 6 lane highway.

Macau deserves a mention. Two major changes have impacted Macau, firstly the handover to Mainland China on 20th December 1999. Hardly anyone noticed but it has meant that mainlanders arrive daily in their thousands to come and gamble as gambling is illegal in China. Secondly de-regulation of the gambling monopoly held by Stanley Ho, which opened the doors for licences to the rest of the world. The proliferation of casinos in Macau is staggering. The Lisboa is still there but my favourite is the Venetian, supposedly a carbon copy of the one in Las Vegas.

We stayed there recently in what I consider to be a seven star hotel. Where else can you take a gondola ride in a canal on the 5th Floor? Add to that the enclosed ceiling, which when you look up at the blue sky the clouds actually move! Split level rooms with two double beds, two flat screen TVs, gold taps etc are very cheap, and the décor is spectacular as in the photo on the previous page. Suffice to say that Macau has overtaken Las Vegas as the gambling capital.



Does any reader remember the QEII being torched by an arsonist at anchor in the harbour on 9th January 1972? What hasn't changed? The harbour, albeit many hectares smaller than it was 40 years ago due to massive reclamation. Also much of Saikung remains unspoilt and as it was 40 years ago.

Bamboo scaffolding is still used with great effect all over Hong Kong. Income tax hasn't changed much and remains at around 15%. Happy Valley Race Course hasn't changed although there are more buildings around it. The Peninsula Hotel remains a great place for afternoon tea, however, its fleet of Rolls Royces has changed.

The whole of Kai Tak is being redeveloped with housing, shopping, sporting facilities and a huge Cruise Ship Terminal. Kowloon City...the "walled" one that once was filled with triads, criminals and opium dens is now an open air park, after being totally demolished.

Finally three icons that have not changed in over 100 years in Hong Kong's fascinating history are: the Peak Tram, The Star Ferry and the street trams on Hong Kong Island.



Only the skyline has changed since 1972 and maybe some of the crew



My wife and son, Elizabeth and James with a tram in Causeway Bay



New carriages, they used to be green, but otherwise much the same as in 1904!

On the personal front I started work with MTRC on the 7th November 2011 as a Senior Consultant on a 6-9 month contract to assist the Planning and Scheduling for five new railway lines currently being built by MTRC. This is a huge undertaking costing tens of billions of dollars. I was recruited by my best friend, Henry Young who joined the Corporation



at the same time as me in 1994 and has remained with MTR. He is now Chief Programming Engineer, and has executive status. No application forms, no interview, not even a CV required! His department currently has 50 Planning Engineers and the budget is for 90 by this time next year. So I'm quietly hoping to stay as long as possible as there's work here for the next 10 years. Being elected Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers last year probably helped my cause. I received my certificate from the President of the ICE, Richard Coackley at the Hong Kong Hotel adjoining Ocean Terminal accompanied by a lot of red wine on 9 January 9. This was followed by a pub crawl with Gilbert Kendzior and his wife May, who 40 years ago was known as Tracy, QM Larry Batty's secretary at Perowne. Great to see them again and their next destination was the South of France where they plan to buy a house and settle down.



Many will remember the Better Ole in Fanling, long since gone from that location but a favourite watering hole of the Brigade for many years. The pub and restaurant got its name from arguably the most famous cartoon to emerge from the First World War, created by Bruce Bairnsfather in 1915 and shown below. Granted we are not at war, but I certainly don't know of a better ole!



"Well, if you knows of a better 'ole, go to it."

To conclude, as an engineer, whether a Gurkha Engineer in 1972, or a planning engineer in 2012, Hong Kong was and is today one of the most exciting places to be and long may it remain so.

YUNG SHUE AU HELIPAD REVISITED

Gilbert Kendzior was OC. "A Troop", 67 Sqn from 1977 to 1979. One project early on during his tenure was completion of a helipad in a village overlooked by Sha Tau Kok.

Since leaving the Army in 1979 I became a Tea Taster and Buyer for Lipton and worked in several continents. His final posting was to New York for 18 years.



Helipad surface and author

Having recently retired from Lipton, my wife and I decided to return to Hong Kong for an extended stay. For those readers who do not know my wife, May, used to work in the QM's Dept.

One day in late December a group of us decided to take a hike in the area to the north of Plover Cove Country Park and follow a series of paths along the north shore facing China. Parking at Luk Keng, colloquially known as "widows village" was readily available and the trails well marked. We followed the well signposted trail, along the shoreline and went up and down a few slopes and after about three hours we descended into the village of Yung Shue Au.

Across a stretch of water bounded by a sea wall we could make the outline of the helipad for which I was somewhat responsible. The village itself did have one house occupied back in the 70's but now it is completely deserted and even the roofs have fallen in. The snorting and grunting of wild pig made us move pretty sharply to the helipad..... or rather its remains.

With little or no maintenance since 1997, the structure clearly showed the corrosive effect of sea water. The decking which previously abutted the sea wall was completely corroded and had collapsed. Gaping holes were evident in the remainder of the pad. The concrete stanchions and presumably the pads on which they rested, appeared to have survived well.





Helipad surface

During the construction work accommodation and food was shared with us by the resident infantry platoon, that base has also fallen into disrepair.



Derelict infantry patrol base

An interesting contrast to the depopulated village was the stunning growth of the Chinese part of Sha Tau Kok. The transformation from a small and very traditional fishing village to extremely expensive high rises is almost unbelievable.



Sha Tau Kok

Adding to scenery and activities on the Chinese side is the permanent mooring of a decommissioned Russian aircraft carrier "Minsk".



Minsk, Sha Tau Kok, China

The bay of Starling Inlet separating Yung Shue Au and Sha Tau Kok has become a major spot for smuggling from Hong Kong to China, favoured items are hard drives and seafood, especially lobsters. To combat the smuggling there is now a huge barrier of floating 40 gallon drums chained together forming a barrier to the high speed smuggling operatives. The inlet has very clear water and much of it is a marine park, perhaps that explains the large numbers of diving sea birds which were resting on floating polystyrene and drifting with the tide.

Should any reader consider hiking in the area, I highly recommend it. Be sure to take your own refreshments as there are none except on weekends. Allow six or seven hours and take your camera and binoculars.

FOURTH GURKHA REUNION, NOVEMBER 2011

David Owens

As sons and grandsons of the Gurkha Brigade, and our father having served from 1917 to November 1945, my brother and I were with others, invited to the reunion of the Fourth Gurkhas.

The system is that those who served and their wives or widows are invited to the reunions which take place every four years. They are held at the new depot of the 1st and 4th Gurkhas called the 14 GR depot and training centre. It has been the custom that we children who were living in the Regiment are also invited. Most British regiments had the same arrangements.

Last November my brother Robin, born in Assam and me born in Bakloh and my wife Marita were invited to the Regimental Reunion in Sabathu the new depot of the 1st and 4th Gurkhas (now Goorkhas), and we flew to Delhi. Because our travel arrangements were done by an Indian Company, they were oblivious of the fact that the Indian Empire was supported by Gin and Tonic and India Pale Ale, and we were booked into



a DRY hotel. For anyone who has lived in India , most parts of the year one needs to consume lashings of fluid and the water tastes ghastly, is often full of infections which at the least gives Delhi belli, but can also give cholera and typhoid. The alcohol in beer is a sanitizer and a facilitator to sweating. Young Officers who volunteered for the Indian Army used to say that they were only at home when they had learned to sweat. Beer is often the only beverage that is not overladen with salt and sugar and is one of the 'Staffs of Life ', or was in the Empire days. So, as the climate has not changed it was a serious blunder. We had to smuggle some in.

A small diversion: I was sent on trek to Nepal in November 1960, and flew in a Comet to Dumdum Airport, Calcutta, from Paya Lyba, in Singapore. I stayed in Barrackpore and had supper with Narbahadur Gurung the first Gurkha Orderly Officer of Gurkha Engineers. I went to the main Howra railway station for the Blue train for Amritsar, to get off at Benares, (Venerasi). I found my berth on the sleeper, which I was to vacate at 0600 next morning. I was accosted by two (boxwallas), Indian Businessmen and asked to get a bottle of whisky from the restaurant as I was white and was so authorised to do. Soda water, for a century had come in bottles with a captive glass ball, holding in the contents by the pressure on the ball against a rubber ring in the neck. They bought a crate of this drink and we set to on the whisky and soda and after a while retired to sleep. I woke next morning to leave the train at Benares and the bottle was missing.

From Delhi we ten, one who served and the rest sons and daughters of the past officers, went on an air conditioned sitting train to Kalka which is at the bottom of the hill upon which is Simla (Shimla), and were met by the Reps of the Regiment and the local Video Press. We got aboard a bus and were whisked half way up to Simla, and turned left, northwest gong to Kasauli where we and other officers were accommodated. This was a modern hotel where there was no outside access to the bathroom for the 'Knight of the Broom' to collect the contents of the thunderbox and water. There was a bath, not tin, a genuine enamelled iron one and a shower were plumbed in. It was marvellous.

We were collected morning, midday and evenings and attended all the events. We had events at the Mess, built in 1790 by the Resident British Battalion on the old road to the Simla. There was by chance, being a hill station, the only white leper colony there until it closed

Instead of a Beating of Retreat there was a musical evening where the voices and instruments of Asia and Europe were paraded and it was rather good. We went to the Junior Commissioned Officers' Mess for midday drinks and to the CO's House for music and personal involvement at dancing Asian style in the evening. There was a reception at the Officers' Mess with a sit down dinner, like an informal Ladies Dinner Night. There were film clips put on a screen of Press capture of various groups arriving at the Railhead or the barracks.

Those attending consisted of 9x Lieutenant Generals, 2x Major Generals, 13x Brigadiers and many Colonels all from a regiment of five battalions. There were hundreds of other

ranks who attended the reunion, and all were met and escorted to the tamasha.

I had been part of Engineer Branch HQ BAOR in the 60s and went round the Engineer Squadrons and Regiments in Germany to establish if the units were fit to execute the Denial Scheme if the Warsaw Pact Armies headed for the Channel. As I was a mere Major, I was very soon aware of the quality of the units I visited. I was immediately aware of the fitness of units for role just by the attitude of those on the gate and those functionaries in the mess. I did however do a detailed check on the standing orders and call out instructions and the knowledge in the unit of their roles and this detailed check always confirmed my first impressions. My impression of the Regiment of 4th Gurkhas was good and never wavered. One picks up the quiet confidence of all members of the Regiment and it is marvellous. I am of course somewhat privileged as when I speak Gurkhali, the Gurkhas will say what they feel rather than anything rehearsed. One's method of speech also calms the recipient and they are disarmed instantly when we speak fluently and with their customary politeness.

Marita and Robin were hit by flu/gastric upset and were treated by the RMO a charming young and rather small Sikh. We hesitated a day before continuing our trip, as both needed more than the usual attendance at the toilet and that would have been tedious on a narrow road with a precipice on one side and a sheer vertical rise on the other side. We did some shopping for silver and other trinkets and nicknacks. As we were no longer billeted in the hotel we stayed in a suite of two bedroom/ en-suite bathroom complexes beside and below the Mess which was on the watershed. These rooms were of the classic design with the outside lockable access to the Bathroom for the Knight of the Broom. He was no longer on call as much had changed with an electric waterheater (then known as a Geyser) and both toilet and baths were plumbed into pipes.

The next day we had to be on our way and both having taken stoppers we took sandwiches and a tin of Kingfisher beer. I was wholly impressed.

We left Sabathu and went North to Dharamsalla (Sikh for Rest House or Temple) and visited the War Memorial for Gurkhas post 1948. In Mcleodganj by Bhagsu and Dharamsalla is the second oldest Anglican Church in India called St Johns in the Wilderness. In the grave yard is the body of my mother's aunt. I had sought to locate it on a previous trip but had not seen it. However, with some guidance from the Minister for Dalhousie and Dharamsalla, we knew that all the victims of the 1905 Earthquake were assembled in a certain patch and Robin actually found the grave. It was the most well preserved one of that era and had the inscription Caroline Maud Holderness. She like our Grandmother was a Grey of Essex.

We 'did' a quick chakkar of the Dalai Lama's Palace and shrine and headed for Bakloh and Dalhousie. We trundled along the ridge way from Dharamsalla to Bakloh Bazaar and then past it to Bhanikhet before climbing up to Dalhousie. The hotel was not old nor new and was very cold, but it had adequate food.



The next day we went to Bakloh and arrived at the First Battalion's Parade ground and we got permission to continue and visit my birthplace and where Robin, me and the family had spent the years from 1940 to 5 November 1945. When there I went to visit my birthplace while Robin and Marita looked over the house where we stayed during WWII. Sadly the termites had done some damage.

The Officer's Mess at Bakloh is quite unique in that it's Balcony faces Lahore, a hundred miles away. During the rainy season, in the evening one can see the city of Lahore. When visiting the Mess we saw it was decked out for a function and while we were inside seeing all the maintenance recently done, a Sikh Brigadier arrived with a dozen young officers, one Dogra and the others from Gurkha Battalions who had all been competing in a skill at arms tournament and the Dogras who were in the 1st Bn lines were the winners.

When we were visiting our erstwhile houses we parked outside a quarter and when we came back to the car were met by the wife of the Dogra who had won the competition and had been invited to lunch. So while he was having lunch in the Mess, we were being given lunch by his wife, who was chaperoned by her father and father in law who just happened to be visiting.

We thanked all and left back to Dalhousie rather later than we had expected, and so were not able to visit the Cotswold style house built by Lord Dalhousie when Viceroy, who used this place as his cool, summer palace. The British capital of India was Calcutta and though many from Calcutta went to Darjeeling, he went to this place in the State of Chamba, which borders on the famous Kullu Valley. This house is now owned by the Rajah of Chamba. The Rajah who in 1942 died as the result of drunkenly driving into a lamp post in Delhi. When his son reached 16 his uncle refused to allow him his inheritance, so my father took 600 Gurkhas down the track from Bakloh and surrounded Chamba and sent his Subedar Major in to see the Regent. The Regent left the next day, but as the son's mother had been overly friendly with his uncle since his father had died, the lad was brought to our house in Bakloh along with his younger sister, until he went to officer training in Quetta. After the departure of the Regent, his mother sorted herself out and the daughter went back to Chamba and then to a school.

The next day we went to the Golden Temple in Amritsar where the Military memorials would not look odd amongst the plaques in the Sandhurst Chapel.

We returned to UK from Delhi after an overnight train journey to the dry hotel in Delhi and then home. I twice had a visit from a rat who had taken up residence in the AC unit. The first visit was over my feet, alerting me to possible thieves, who are famously not unfamiliar on that train. The second visit was over the sheet which I had draped over my head. In retaliation I stuffed a plastic bottle into his front door after he scuttled back and I had no further visits. Marita could not sleep after that, but I had no such problem, as they say, it is part of the service in India!!

It was fun and most enjoyable.

NEPALESE ARMY HIGH ALTITUDE AND MOUNTAIN WARFARE COURSE 2011

WO2 Roberts (INT Corps), SA G2 HQ BGN

The Nepalese Army (NA) High Altitude and Mountain Warfare School (NAHAMWS), in Jomsom, Mustang, holds its international student course during August and September and lasts seven weeks. The school is approximately 50kms north of Pokhara and the content of the course comprises of three weeks rock craft (Jomsom), one week acclimatisation (Kesang), one week glacier training (Munang) with the final ten days culminating with the ascent of Mount Thorang (6154m, 20,200ft) in the Annapurna Conservation Area. The aim of the



Acclimatisation training south of Jomsom at the Kholi Khola junction

course is for international military mountaineering specialists to familiarise themselves with the NA's mountaineering craft and similarly for the NA to become familiar with other nation's army's Tactics, Techniques and Procedures in mountainous terrain. On the 2011 course there were 12 students on the course comprising, South Korean Special Forces, People's Republic of China's People's Liberation Army, United States of America First Special Forces Group, United States Marine Corps, Canadian Para-Rescue, Indian and Pakistani High Altitude and Mountain Warfare instructors, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan Commandos and myself - an attached support staff member of the Brigade of Gurkhas. The timing of the international student course coincided with both the NA's Special Force and Para Commando courses which allowed for interaction between both mountain warfare specialists and Special Forces.

Despite NAHAMWS joining instructions stating that all attendees must have been proficient in mountain warfare, it was clear from the outset that the school was very willing to cater for all comers and novices alike, which it did with great aplomb throughout the course. 50% of the course was neither a mountain warfare specialist nor mountaineer of any fashion as became apparent when instructors directed that jumars and prusick knots had to be attached to harnesses which was met with a number of blank expressions. However, within the first three weeks all members of the course had become fairly proficient at using their ascender, creating a triple sliding



hitch (prusik) and most importantly how to belay a climber using either a figure of eight or an ATC (Air Traffic Controller). During the second half of the course every student became acutely aware of safety being paramount, regardless of what rank you were, and even more aware of the effects of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) if not diagnosed in a timely manner.

The course was physically very demanding and from Day 2 all students were expected to carry 18kgs every day, except Saturdays, on marches which varied between a one hour run, a two endurance march and a six to eight hour forced march between various heights (during the glacier and ascent period, forced marches of between nine to twelve hours were not uncommon). Marches were followed by rock craft, which was again physically very demanding and due to it being unsafe to climb after 11am, due to the wind, more regimental physical training followed lunch.



End-ex. Returning from Jomsom to Kathmandu in a Mi-17.

The highlight of the course was undoubtedly ascending Mount Thorang and whilst it is acknowledged that Thorang is not the most technical of climbs, the tactical manner in which it was accomplished was no mean feat. We went over the start line (High camp) at 2am to reach the summit by 6am. The euphoria mountaineers experience at the summit rapidly disappeared as I knew that within 20mins we would descend, via fixed line, which would take its toll on my ageing knees.

In short the NAHAMWS course is a unique and very demanding experience which brings 'mountaineers' from numerous nations together and allows them to ascend 20,000ft, which is not an option outside of the Himalayas.

A GARDEN IDYLL

John Edwards

Last September I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to entertain two very old friends, and their wives, both of whom were over from Nepal, visiting their sons in this Country. It was a beautiful warm sunny day, and we enjoyed a very relaxed lunch, together with a few libations, in the garden.



Bhimbahadur Gurung is without doubt one of the outstanding sons of the Regiment. He was the first home-grown Gurkha Major, having been one of the first military plant foremen, QGOO and filled all the significant posts at successive levels in the Regiment. He was GM when I was Commandant. Subsequently he was GM at the Depot, and then went at short notice, with Bruce Niven (10GR), to sort out the Gurkha Contingent Singapore Police, who had had a near mutiny. He stayed with the Contingent for 10 years as Adjutant.

Kusalsing Gurung was in my troop when I first joined the Regiment in 1957. He spent a good deal of his career in education, at a time when it was top priority. In the 60s the Regiment was expanding fast, and as Adjutant I was desperately trying to find sufficient young soldiers who had enough education to cope with all the trade vacancies we had to fill. There not only had to be round pegs for round holes, and square pegs for square holes, but some funny shaped ones for Clerks of Works etc. Kusalsing was a key member of the team that produced what was required. He retired as a Gurkha Captain.

Our three fathers had served together in 1/3 GR in the 30s. Bhim's father was the Battalion Signals Jemadar (Jhandi Wallah), Kusalsing's father was a Subedar, and mine was 2ic, having been transferred to 1/3 from 1/7GR, to get to know



the Battalion before assuming command, which sadly never happened because he died of a fever (when I was 6 months old). As we sat in the sun reminiscing (and my Gurkhali, which has become a bit rusty with disuse, magically returned), the scene can not have been too different from one that might have taken place in the hills of Baluchistan, involving our fathers, eight decades earlier.

A NEPAL JOURNEY

Lt Col A W H H MacLeod



We live on the Buchanan Castle Estate near Drymen. The Castle was the seat of the Dukes of Montrose. It was used as a military hospital during WW2, but is now a ruin because after the war the owner removed the roof to avoid paying rates. The Estate lies near Loch Lomond, the largest stretch of inland water in the UK. All that water has to come from somewhere ... but it seems to have rained much more heavily and much more frequently over recent years. We are noticing the effects of climate change.

I visited Nepal in November, accompanied by daughter Ali and her friend Bruce, to visit her twin sister Kirsty who was on a Final Year Medical elective with the GWS. Kirsty managed to escape for a few days and we trekked with her to Bumdi, to the west of Pokhara, with full support bandobast. We then trekked to Ghandruk, a Gurung village in the Annapurna Sanctuary, staying in tea houses. It was a delight to walk through the pahar as the harvest was being gathered. But everywhere we went, the cherry trees were in full blossom, many weeks ahead of the normal season. Gumbu Sherpa, our Sirdar, also pointed out that the snow line on the Annapurna Ridge was several thousand feet higher than would have been the case at that time of year, ten years ago. So Nepal, too, is noticing the effects of climate change.

Nepal has been transformed since I first visited in 1980 and I found myself reflecting on the changes I have seen at first hand. It seemed that village water schemes now provide water direct from village taps in most areas and women or children do not have to trek to water sources to fill containers. Sanitation is available in most houses, and cat sanitation is far less prevalent, if not almost wholly eradicated. Medical care is far more accessible, and diseases such as goitre and cataracts are no longer the commonplace they used to



be. Education is still highly prized and schools have been built in most villages. Cash crops, such as tea and coffee and kiwi fruits, are replacing subsistence agriculture. In the Kathmandu Valley and the Terai, more and more factories are springing up. There are far more and far better roads and jeep tracks in the hills. Conversely, more attention is paid to conservation, and deforestation is now better controlled than it once was.



Nepal seems as gripped by technology as the rest of the world. Electricity in the form of micro-hydro plants and solar arrays is much more available and the heavy reliance on lamp oil imported from India is a thing of the past. Everywhere we went people were using mobile phones and laptops, or watching television. Motor bikes and scooters were being ridden wherever there were roads. It seemed there were ATM machines in all but the smallest towns.

I was told that the Gala Wallahs were returning empty-handed from some areas because the young men have left the hills. We were told, too, that many of the schools in the hill villages were emptying as people with young families migrate to the cities to reap the benefits and the opportunities afforded by industrialisation. The downside is that Kathmandu is very crowded and the air is heavily polluted.

There were many highlights of the trip. Graeme Price agreed to meet us in Kathmandu ... and promptly ambushed us on



the way there in Mumbai Airport. He led us to what turned out to be the most expensive bar in the whole airport ... where he paid using a wad of ancient rupees retained from previous trips. The cost only became apparent when I asked to pay in US Dollars - I balked at paying almost US\$ 40 for 4 beers! We spent a couple of hilarious days in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur before we went trekking and he returned to Hong Kong. We enjoyed the bustle of the Lakeside in Pokhara with Captain Buddi Bahadur Bhandari, the current QM of BGP, along with Ex-Captain Bhaktabahadur Rai (0857), Project Director of GWS Water Supply Projects.



As we neared time to leave Nepal, the QGE RAN in Kathmandu arranged a most enjoyable lunch presided over by Hon Major Bhimbahadur Gurung, Hon Major Sunar Gurung and Hon Major Surjabahadur Thapa, along with an enthusiastic lot of retired Gurkha Sappers of all ranks. We were entertained to supper by Andrew Mills in his Residence at the Embassy. The whole trip was great fun, and it was a delight to introduce Ali, Kirsty and Bruce to the wonders of Nepal, and to meet Graham Price.

Otherwise, Clan MacLeod rumbles on. I left PA Consulting 3 years ago to join Lloyd's Banking Group's Insurance Division in Edinburgh, as Head of Integration, following the acquisition of HBOS. The Programme is now in close-down mode, with Insurance in a good position: My reward was to be asked to do the same, in parallel, for the Solvency II programme and most recently, implementing a new Group Strategy. I seem to survive successive corporate organizational changes. Lizzie teaches at Killearn Primary school. Ali is a large animal Vet in Castle Douglas. Her twin sister Kirsty is an Army Medical Cadet, finishing her MB ChB at Aberdeen. Amanda has started Music at Edinburgh and aspires to be an opera singer.

NAMASTÉ v NAMASKAR

Lt Col JP Cross

Many people may wonder what the difference between 'namasté' and 'namaskar' is. Briefly, in Saṁskṛit, 'nam' implies any bending and 'namas' is a bending in respect, salutation or obeisance. 'Namas té' can be translated as '[I make] a namas [to] thou'. However, the word 'namas', when used by itself – and here the learners of grammar at school will come into their own – 'takes' a dative case which, in Saṁskṛit means the addition of 'kar' on the end, ergo 'namaskar'.

In other words 'namasté' now means 'I greet you' while 'namaskar' merely means 'greetings'. So take your choice: English idiom has 'hello' rather than 'I make a 'hello-type-greeting' to you yet, lurking under the surface, so to speak, some will opine that 'goodbye' is the shortened form of 'God be with ye' – as opposed to that obsolete, except in prayer, 'thou'.

AN ARMY SCHOOLMASTER'S CHALLENGES

Lt Col JP Cross

From late 1949 to early 1951 I had the high-sounding title of Chief Instructor, Army School of Education (Gurkhas) (ASE(G)). We were billeted in an old lunatic asylum near Tampoi Village, not far from Johore Bahru. The wits said that that was the only time they had heard of the inmates of such an establishment administering themselves. The camp also included training facilities for jungle warfare and weapon training and was known as the FTC, short for FARELF, itself short for Far East Land Forces, Training Centre. At about the same time embryo Gurkha sappers (more than half were from 1 GR and I had the idea of the Gurkha Engineers being King George V's Own), Signallers and Military Policemen descended on us and had to be overlooked in their English work.

The first two OCs of ASE(G), now mercifully no longer with us were cap-badged 7 GR. Both were peace-loving people who sensibly preferred text books to tactics, grammars to grenades and reference books to rifles, realising that military value did not necessarily embrace military valour or virtue. When, in 1948 future boss number 2 was recruiting in Lehra he enlisted a Darjeeling 'wide boy' – whose local history would have prevented him being enlisted in the East. The Recruiter then came to command ASE(G) as boss number 2, bringing with him the Darjeeling 'wide boy', by now a Colour Sergeant. Quick promotion, if you know other channels than that of normal command. I found that besides being an ex-Indian Gorkha League man and a Communist to boot, his secret aim was to try and subvert all students to be anti-British and pro-Communist.

He asked for local leave and went to Bhutan Estate (near Seremban where there is a Gurkha labour force, brought over from the Darjeeling area in 1904. There are two other estates in the area, Bute and Lothian, with a Gurkha labour force). He went with a Lt (KGO), a potential instructor. The aim of his



visit was to try and meet any Communists on the estate who could get him up to the Secretary General of the Malayan Communist Party, Chin Peng. He failed in that. He and the KGO had a violent quarrel and the Sergeant took his belt off and thrashed the officer who, shamed, asked to go back to his unit, 1/7 GR. He was a B Company (Royal Company as it was known from it being Ganju Lama's when he was awarded his VC) man: he asked to do an important camp recce after B Company located a large dushman camp. He was allowed: he walked straight up to the camp and was shot dead – killer and killed on purpose. With a certain amount of difficulty I managed to get rid of the 'wide-boy; instructor – who was clever: he could compose English sonnets – and his boss also felt it was time for him to go.

The third OC was a Royal Army Educational Corps (RAEC) officer who had served in 2/10 GR in Italy and, before joining up, was the reserve goal keeper for Liverpool Football Club. He was a friendly enough soul who passed most of his days in an alcoholic daze and whose brigadier boss, stationed in GHQ Singapore, fancied his wife as much as, if not more than, her legal owner. That ended by the OC being posted to Penang. I was blamed, rightly as it turned out, and when the brigadier was made a major-general in charge of all army education in the War Office, he got his revenge by turning down my Singapore-published, later HMSO-produced, *English for Gurkha Soldiers* as not being professionally produced. (I found it being used 60 years later in the hills.)

The fourth OC, also an RAEC officer, was a close relation of a legendary and ultra left wing Welsh socialist minister who had been with the Trade Unions Movement since a lad: he told me he wanted a new sort of roll call where the men would vote for what to do the following day. I told him that the Brigade of Gurkhas had not reached the pinnacle of excellence by such methods and, grudgingly, he admitted 'perhaps they are not ready for it.'

During my early days we had an inspection by a group of earnest men from the heart of army education in Eltham Palace, London. I was asked what teacher training I had done and received tut-tuttings of disbelief when I said none but any infantry officer worth his salt was always instructing his men so I felt there was no need for any. Besides which, I added, I had started to read an educational pamphlet that on the first page asked the reader 'how long he had not thought of a steamroller for'. With such nonsense I was quite content to stay as I was. The tut-tuttings were joined by frowns and shaken heads. I did not let on that I had once got 0% for an essay at school and had also failed my School Certificate (later known, I think, as 'O' Levels) when I first sat it.

An historical note: at the end of the war, the British Military Administration (BMA) ran the country until returning or liberated colonial functionaries took over. One aspect not quickly resolved that caused difficulties was tracking those on our side reported as 'believed killed in action'. After the Japanese had taken the then-lunatic asylum over in 1942, they let most of the loonies out to fend for themselves. Some were shot, others wandered away but most loitered about till they died. Not only that, some wounded British troops being treated there were killed and their bodies buried in shallow

pits without any individual markings. Low mounds were all that was visible. A hundred odd yards away from our farthest building was the jungle and in between was some open ground where we played football. The area to be looked at was where we had seen some humps of earth just inside the edge of the jungle.

I can still vividly see one incident in early 1949: a small team from the Graves Registration Unit, comprising a few British soldiers under a time-worn if not time-expired officer, came along to see what was in those mounds of earth, to see if any skulls or skeletons could be found for identification. There was more than sentimentality in the gesture as such matters as life insurance or knowing that one was no longer a wife but a widow made a hard post-war life even harder. It was important for 'believed killed in action' to be confirmed as such. After so many years in a tropical country, it seemed a hopeless task but, if that was what was wanted, so be it.

On the morning in question I was teaching a practical map reading lesson and so we were out of doors. We were at the top end of the football pitch, the end nearest the class rooms but, naturally, we wandered as near as we could to where the soldiers were carefully scraping at those sad looking mounds of earth. By that time we saw that they had dug up a number of skulls, six by one mound of earth, and a couple each in another three. It was clear that, by then, the team had had enough and we saw that none of them was keen on his task.

We watched as the oldest of the soldiers went over to the officer and from his pocket, produced a flask – what of? Rum? Whiskey? Who knows but it was alcohol of some sort. The officer still seemed hung over from the night before and as he reached for the flask, we could see his hand shake. As the soldier engaged him in conversation the other men quickly lit some cigarettes and put one in the mouths of the every skull. At a quick glance it looked as if the skulls had come alive and were smoking. The soldiers moved smartly away out of sight. The officer turned, suddenly saw the appalling sight of the skulls smoking and, to everybody's amazement, did not take it as a harmless practical joke but believed the evidence of his eyes. He shrieked and fell into a dead faint. For the few seconds he was unconscious the other soldiers returned and in a flash, removed the cigarettes from the skulls' mouths. The wretched officer obviously thought he had been hallucinating. The last we saw of the officer was being led away. History never related what happened to him but, according to the Gurkhas, the two things that money cannot buy are parents and self-respect. We had not thought about the former but we now knew about the latter.

We were threatened with another visitor, completely different this time, the CIGS – I for 'Imperial', in those days, please don't forget. Before he arrived, during one English class, I told the students about the CIGS. "Who knows what CIGS means?" I asked and had visions of a baton cross my eyes at the answer: 'Chief Instructor, Gurkha School'.

Although I had never been an essay writer I had to teach students how to write the wretched things. I said that their essays had to answer the questions why, where, who, how and what. Blank stares greeted that sally. Luckily we were



on a verandah and a chicken was wandering around. I told one man to catch it: he did. I held it beak down on the table in front of the class, took a piece of chalk and drew a line from the end of the beak to about a foot away. The chicken squinted at it and made no movement. I gave that as an example of what to write about. Only about half a minute later did I clap my hands loud enough to wake it from its trance.

During my time at the School Britain recognised Red China. "Any questions?" "Yes, we did not know that Queen Victoria had promised the Chinese their inding-pinding."

However, I want to leave such dull and trivial matters and turn to what happens when confronted with madmen. The first, an ordinary student, was a rifleman from 2/10 GR, Chapalsing Rai. In those early days of the Emergency we had to carry loaded weapons with us wherever we went, the guerrillas not yet having lost their zest for being pugnacious. One evening I was called from my room by the Orderly Sergeant, Sete Gurung of 2 GR, and asked to go to the canteen where Chapalsing was trying to balance beer bottles on glasses and not paying any attention to being told to desist. I was intrigued so went. "Chapalsing," I said, after temporarily dissuading him from not making any more mess, "Let's go to your barrack. It is time for bed." He looked for his rifle, now in the Orderly Sergeant's hands, and away we went. Once out in the open Chapalsing asked me to run away with him and hide. I demurred, saying to leave it to the morrow. Reluctantly he agreed and we got to his barrack room. He sat down by his bed and tried to take his boots off without lifting his feet off the ground. Eventually we got him under his net and I left. Next morning, early, I was sent for by my boss, the one who had enlisted the Gorkha League man. "Chapalsing has run away. Go and look for him." To which I asked "Where are you going?" "Back to bed as I have a cold" was the reply.

I went to below the camp buildings to the open space that we used as a football ground above the sad mounds of earth. From the far end a line of men were slowly beating up towards me. In the foreground I saw Chapalsing lying on the grass. He got up when I approached him. Six yards away he came on the 'on guard' position, safety catch off, and told me that I would get shot if I came any nearer. Over his shoulder I saw the line of men, some thirty yards away. I spoke with Chapalsing, to no effect until I used an English word. I think it was 'boot' but I can't remember. At that he lowered his rifle. I took two paces towards him and one of the advancing men, by now in earshot, used an unpleasant word that Chapalsing heard. He thought it was I who had spoken so this time I had his rifle two yards from my navel. I used another English word when talking to him and he lowered his rifle and, from behind, was overpowered. I looked round and saw the Major sahib looking at me from behind a bush. I waved to him and shouted out that I thought he had gone to bed with a cold. Rather shamefacedly he said it had got better before he had reached his room so he had come back.

Before we took Chapalsing to hospital the camp doctor decided to inject him with Pentathol. He went back into childhood in what he told us: fascinating! At the hospital he was found to have a tumour on his brain. He was utterly shocked when I told him about the 'incident', nor would he

believe me when I told him how he had threatened to kill me, twice.

It was during my visits to him that I was asked to see a 2/7 GR man who was of unsound mind. I had to look at the name board above the beds to see which one he was in. Next week he was in a different bed and the week after yet again in a different bed. I had to look for him each time. As I left the ward the third time a Tamil, a civilian from HM Dockyard, jumped out of his bed and came up to me and angrily accosted me. "You are the one who is mad. You come from another ward, put on officer's clothes and look for the bed you feel you should be in. We here are the sane ones," and I managed to run away before he clobbered me. I did not go back on any more visits.

However, one night not so long afterwards, I was woken up by a KGO in 2/7 GR. I found out later that he and a British corporal had beaten up the corporal's wife and a few others, got into a car and driven off. The car with the corporal in it was on its side in a ditch at the bottom of the hill where our Mess was and the KGO came to me for help. "What do you want, Sahib?" I asked. "To go and see the ship's captain and for him to take me to see Pandit Nehru and then on to see Winston Churchill." "Now?" "Yes," and hinted it would be unwise of me not to help him. "Hunchha, let me get dressed."

Luckily my own Singer Roadster was nearby and in we got. "Tell you what," I said coaxingly, "you won't be allowed on the boat if you have not been jabbed. Let's do that before we go to the docks." "Hunchha."

I took him to the BMH and dumped him in casualty reception, gave an adequate reason and left to catch up on my sleep. The RAMC major in charge of him was an Irishman. "Oh yes," he told me later, "I thought he'd go mad again and I wanted to see just by how much."

As I write this I ask myself how long can I not think of a mad Gurkha for?

PAHAR TRUST

Dr Tim Mitchell, Trustee PTN

As many readers will know, the Pahar Trust Nepal was set up by Tom Langridge and Chandra Gurung to build schools in remote areas of Nepal. We also look at requests for other projects such as water supply, solar energy and health posts. As a former QGE RMO (Hong Kong 1984-1986) I take a particular interest in the way we can provide access to health care in some of these out of the way places. There are a couple of Health Posts in the West but the ones I am most involved with are in the East.

Suketar Health Post was my first, built in 2007, following a visit there in 2006. As with all our projects we needed to feel that the whole village was behind the request for assistance as we would be relying on them to cover the running costs once we had built it, as well as helping with the construction process. The latter involves providing the land and clearing it, then helping to haul the building materials to the site and keeping the builders supplied with sand, water and firewood.



That might not sound too difficult until you think of the geography – Suketar is at 2500m and the supply of sand and water was a few kilometres away and several hundred metres down! The text box shows the Health Post and some statistics of its work over the past 12 months.



Annual workload at Suketar for Bikram our community medical assistant

GENERAL INFECTIONS	210
SKIN PROBLEMS	44
OBSTETRIC & GYNAE PROBLEMS	92
INJURIES/LACERATIONS	203
GUT/LIVER PROBLEMS	147
GENERAL MEDICAL CONDITIONS	46
MISC EYE PROBLEMS & PSYCHOSIS	24

Once everything was agreed, it only took a few months to complete the building and it has now been open for 5 years. At present it is the most remote of our health posts and has struggled to support the community medical assistant who provides basic primary care but, as can be seen, a wide variety of conditions are managed and treated. Officially it is a 'Sub-Health Post' under classifications used by the Nepali government and recognised by WHO and more information about the medicines that are used can be seen at

http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R085_MOHNEPAL_2009_EssentialDrugs_Medicines.pdf

Now that the new Maoist Government in Nepal is improving the infrastructure in the Himalayas, it is likely that the community will find it easier to support the health post but it will probably stay as a small unit, relatively unsupported by the nearest larger health facilities down in Taplejung. Our post at Bhedetar however, is much busier with good links to the hospital in Dharan. The local authorities are also building a new maternity facility next door as they have been impressed with the successful work there to date. I had the opportunity to work at BMH Dharan back in 1984 and photos of my first ever trek up into the Himalayan foothills show me eerily close to the site of this health post – amazing how things work out sometimes.

Our next health post is planned for a more remote location than Suketar, being 2-3 days trek away towards Kanchenjunga at Ekhabu. The final site and layout are not yet finalised but I hope to lay the foundation stone on my next trip out in December. The layout will depend on an assessment of what building materials are available locally. It will serve villages around Ekhabu and Khupatal where we already have 2 schools. Inflation is quite high in Nepal so our costs are rising but I think that an estimated cost for the new health post of £16000 still represents good value for money.



For more information about the work of the Pahar Trust please look at the website and use the contact details on there. www.pahar-trust.org

A Warning to OC 69 Sqn Hune Wallahs

As you have probably already read in September 2011 I had the double joy of taking over as OC 69 Sqn and also the arrival of twin daughters, Alice and Beatrice. In the UK in 2010 the number of twin births was around about 1:64 or put another way 1 in 32 of every child born was a twin. (the average for identical twins is 1:285) But here is the warning, of the 22 OC 69 Sqn since the Sqn's formation in April 1961, 4 have had twins, (as well as a Comdt QGE on top) a rate of 1:5.5. So why is this? Some have said it is to do with eating goats testicles, whilst in Nigeria it would be put it down to eating a certain type of yam. There is even some evidence that suggests the number of daylight hours may influence this. Whatever it is all of us are incredibly luckily and anyone thinking of putting 69 Sqn on a posting preference form should be prepared for the unexpected!



ARCHIVE

As this year is the 30th Anniversary of the Falklands Conflict, and with access to the 69 Sqn photo albums, below are a series of photos taken from 69 Sqn's 6 month tour in the South Atlantic immediately after the hostilities finished. The Sqn deployed on 28 July by VC10 to Ascension and then boarded the MV St Edmund for the final leg of the journey.



Time to relax in the sunshine, Spr Moti, Lt SB, Spr Gimahang, Spr Jiwan, Spr Durga, LCpl Dholbir



H Troop morning PT



G Tp reconstructing of a damaged bridge at Moody Brook



64740 Spr Rameshkumar Rai fencing south of the Darwin Road



H Tp were responsible for minefield fencing through out the tour. Spr Gimahang and Spr Motiram fencing on Stanley Common



Bhat Break. 57992 LCpl Harka, 5 9346Cpl Hari, Lt SB, 55506 SSgt Mani and 51489 Sgt Resam



It was during a clearance operation in November that Cpl Krishna Kumar Rai was killed by a bobby trapped Argentinian missile. His funeral was held in Chatham and he is buried in the military cemetery there.



2107 Spr Ripu with Ammunition stockpiled ready for destruction.

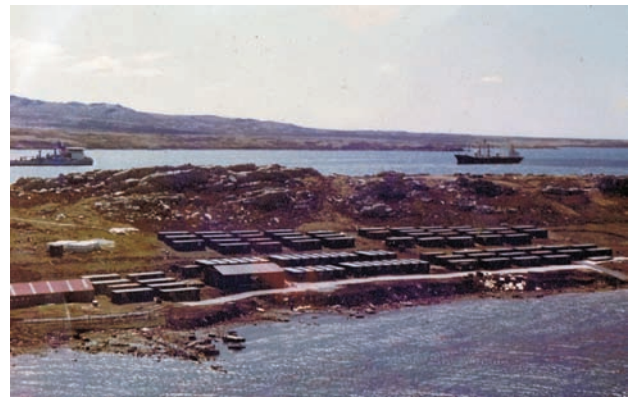


Search Team: 2121 Spr Gehendra, 2109 Spr Ganesh, 2107 Spr Ripu

Halfway through the tour G & I Troops were given the task of constructing a 300man camp at Navy Point. I tp concentrated on the accommodation whilst G Tp built the technical areas.



2Lt Charlesworth at the power station



The completed camp, known as Gurkha Camp resplendent with cross kukhris on the large building in the foreground



Capt Sunar inspecting an Argentinean arms dump on the racecourse; the restoration of which was another Sqn task



A particularly special visitor in January 1983



Celebrating Christmas with free beer and volleyball!



Ex QGE Deaths 2010-11 as at 11 May 12

Number	Rank	Name	Date of Death
	Lt Col	PH Blundell MBE	May 11
	Lt Col	D Quirke	Aug 11
	Lt Col	AM Mackenzie	Aug 11
	Lt Col	I Kinnear	Sep 11
	Lt Col	AA Taylor	Dec 11
	Maj	G Thompson	Apr 12
	Maj	EP Heaton	14 Nov 11
	Maj	J Parfect MBE	May 12
523196	Capt (QGO)	Dikumar Limbu (Dalhang)	28 Aug 11
		Micheal Botting	Oct 11
21162127	Cpl	Ranbahadur Pun	4 Jan 12
21131055	Sgt	Setuman Rai	14-Nov-11
21131837	WO2	Gunjabahadur Gurung	30-Jul-11
21132552	Spr	Gamberbahadur Gurung	19-May-11
21132581	Spr	Ramjit Rai	12-May-11
21132649	Spr	Asbahadur Tamang	23-May-11
21132805	Spr	Ranbir Thapa	04-Jan-12
21137264	Cpl	Emansing Ghale	08-Sep-11
21137267	LCpl	Dilbahadur Thapa	18-Jan-11
21137308	Cpl	Dhankaji Gurung	07-Sep-11
21137936	Spr	Karajang Limbu	14-Oct-11
21139343	SSgt	Bombahadur Gurung	13-Jul-11
21140760	Cpl	Kamansing Pun	06-Jan-12
21141458	Cpl	Dalbahadur Thapa	03-Jul-11
21141486	Sgt	Lilbahadur Chhetri	11-Oct-11
21142472	Cpl	Dalbahadur Thapa	13-Aug-11
21142972	Cpl	Balbahadur Thapa	24-Jan-11
21144102	WO2	Dhanraj Gurung	03-Nov-11
21145935	Sgt	Kharkabahadur Rana	28-Mar-11
21145947	Spr	Chitasing Gurung	05-Dec-11
21147923	Cpl	Chhabilal Thapa	14-Feb-12
21150085	Cpl	Ranbahadur Thapa	01-Jan-12
21150108	LCpl	Manbahadur Tamang	15-Jan-11
21151141	Spr	Sherbahadur Rana	07-Jan-11
21152456	Cpl	Durgaprasad Gurung	01-Aug-11
21152504	Spr	Dalbahadur Thapa	17-Jan-12
21152518	Spr	Dhanbahadur Thapa	01-Dec-11
21154362	Cpl	Mahanbir Limbu	30-Mar-11
21155311	LCpl	Bishanbahadur Bura	10-Jan-11
21157723	SSgt	Krishnabahadur Gurung	09-May-11
21158136	Spr	Rajbahadur Rai	09-Jun-11
21162127	Cpl	Ratnabahadur Pun	04-Jan-12

OBITUARIES

Major Eric Heaton

I am indeed very much saddened by the passing of Eric Heaton. Eric was one of the nicest, kindest and the most dedicated men I have ever met. He was always so humble and never would say anything bad about anyone, ever. He

always had smile on his face, and he always had time for everyone, no matter whether it was the Commandant or the most junior sapper. I don't think there was anyone in the Regiment who ever had anything untoward to say about Eric. He had a lovely and beautiful family in the form of Marion and the girls.

Not only I had the privilege of serving with him in the Regiment but also had the opportunity to play and coach the Nepal Cup



team with him as the Manager/Football Officer. Although we won the Nepal Cup for the first time in 1974 the solid foundation of the Nepal Cup success that was to follow was laid with Eric Heaton at the helm. In 1976, with him as the manager, the Regiment made a clean sweep in the colony winning in the coveted Nepal Cup, Major Units Knockout Cup, Major Units League Cup, Six-A-Side Competition and the Best Team Trophy. After that, the flood gates were open and the Regiment became the most feared team in the Brigade, winning the Nepal Cup numerous times in Hong Kong. (Very happily, the Regimental team has maintained that trend in the UK). As the team captain, with Eric as the football officer, I know the success we enjoyed was mainly due to Eric's detailed supervision and management of the team and his words of encouragement and support for the players. His warm and friendly relationship with the referees also helped the team in many ways. He himself was very fit and despite being many years older, always joined the squad on long runs.

Eric, although he himself was not a footballer loved the game so much that he had presented the Eric Heaton Cup, to be competed annually, amongst the Brigade of Gurkhas' clerks. Eric's last job in the Brigade was at BGMRO in Hong Kong. Very sadly though, after leaving Hong Kong, Eric seemed to lose contact with the Regiment. I did ask around but to no avail. He seemed to disappear from the radar totally. Whatever the reason, we have to respect that.

Despite being an RAPC, Eric had a tremendous success in the Brigade working first in QGE, then 1/2nd GR and finally the BGMRO. Because of his friendly and charming character, Eric was liked by everyone and was very popular wherever he served.

Eric, thank you for all that you did for QGE, at work and play, particularly for the Nepal Cup success. We could not have asked for a better person to be our paymaster sahib and the Nepal Cup Manager. I hope you had continued to enjoy your tippie of Gurkha rum in your retirement!

At this time of immense sadness, our thoughts are with Eric's lovely family. May god give them the strength to overcome the grief of losing such a wonderful, wonderful man. Eric may you rest in peace in the heavenly abode. We will remember you.

Milan and the rest of the Nepal Cup squad of 1976.

Captain Dilkumar Limbu (26 Nov 1948 - 28 Aug 2011)

Maj Milanachandra Gurung MBE

I was totally shocked and speechless when I received the news of Captain Dilkumar Limbu's passing away. Apparently and thankfully he suffered very little. He was admitted into BP Koirala Hospital in Dharan with a chest pain and sadly passed away the next day, on 28 August 2011.

His father, Major QGO Sherbahadur Limbu, who designed the famous "Sherbahadur Raft" (for the benefit of the new generation this used assault boats and metal rafters and carried small vehicles and personnel across rivers) also served in the Regiment. He was my Wing Commander, when I did my Basic Combat Engineer in Kluang in 1965.

His opening remarks, in a sharp and formidable voice, to the training party was, "all line boys, beware, I will be watching you very carefully! I have a rogue like you, my son!" I think one or two line boys listening nearly wet their pants. I knew he was talking about Dil because I had known him since we were kids and he was still in school.

Dil was born on 26 November 1948. He joined the Army rather late, in 1969, as a clerk. However, once posted

to the Regiment he reverted to GD and joined C Troop, 67 Squadron. Almost from day one it was noticed that Dil was an outstanding soldier and a sapper, who was highly educated, intelligent and supremely multi talented in numerous fields.

It was no surprise that he was soon picked up to do the Design Draughtsman Course in the UK. However, his combat engineering and military skills were soon realized and unsurprisingly he climbed the promotion ladder rapidly and soon became one of the best Troop Sergeants in the Regiment. He was always very dedicated to his work and his men and was highly thought of by the men and the officers in the regiment. He was also an all rounder sportsman, shining in football and hockey and was one of the best sprinters in the Brigade. Once, in the inter troop 100 meters dash in 1982, he just pipped Gen David Bill. General David, being a good sportsman that he was, accepted the defeat graciously!

Dil was famously renowned in the Brigade as "Jokkare" (Comedian). His famous act was to play the "Inspecting General" on a parade and speaking Nepali in a British accent. It was doubly funny for the Gurkha audience to watch high ranking officers in the audience thrown into stitches. Dil was a comedian par excellence. His sense of humour was so infectious, that he had the knack of saying something



Lt (now Col) A. Mills, SSgt D.K.Limbu, Sgt C.B Gurung & a Sapper from I Troop on top of Mount Kenya



funny and diffuse an awkward or frosty debate or a situation instantly.

He was always very modest about his outstanding educational qualities. He wrote English beautifully and quite often contributed to the Parbate. Once he wrote a poem about the huge culvert that C Troop had to construct when Tai Ling Range in Gallipoli Lines was being built in 1973. He titled the poem, very aptly, "A Slumbering Giant". Not only did he excel in work and sports, he was also one of the best artists in the Regiment. The Dashera stage and the gate was always adorned by Dil's fine art work- which I am sure was deserving of even Van Gogh's second look! He had so much potential and so much to give and Dil did give the Regiment his total dedication and level best in everything. His work ethics were exemplary. He was an icon in the Regiment.

He quickly got promoted to Lt QGO and then to Captain. His last appointment before retiring was Gurkha Captain 69 Squadron in the UK. He was also awarded the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal in 1977 and was, like his father, winner of the Durand Medal. He hailed from Taplejung but had settled in Dharan and lived there after retirement. He then went to Cambodia to work on the minefields before calling it a day and settling down in Nepal to do social work in the Dharan Community and his village in Taplejung. He had settled down to lead a very simple life, almost like a hermit but had continued to enjoy his tipples with friends.

On a personal note, I knew him from when we were young bhanjas (line boys) in Sungei Besi in the late fifties. I was so glad when he decided to join QGE because I knew he had so many exemplary talents and qualities in the offing. Apart from his impeccable military qualities, sporting feats, artistic talent in acting and painting, friendship, consideration for others and a great sense of humour, he was also a very caring father and a husband. A person cannot be more blessed than that.

Apart from knowing him as a friend from when we were young- he became special to me as one of the stalwarts of our successful Nepal Cup Team. In the final against QGS in 1981, as a full back he passed the ball back to the goalie (Cpl Mohan Gurung later Captain) but the goalie's view was blocked and dived the wrong way and lo and behold it was an "own goal". Later I asked Dil what went wrong and he replied "I was testing Mohan's reflex". We all laughed. He had that kind of wicked humour. Colonel Andrew Mills and I had the luxury and privilege of having him as Troop Staff in I Troop when we went to Kenya with 9 Para Squadron in 1985. Despite some apprehension about working alongside 9 Para, we had a very successful tour and I know Dil's character, leadership, social qualities and the ability to establish good communication with the Para SNCOs had much to do with that.

For me personally, it was an honour and great pleasure knowing, playing and working with Captain Dilkumar Limbu. My only regret is that I never got the opportunity to meet him after his retirement. I would have loved to have exchanged a few jokes with him.

There were numerous tributes paid to Dil sahib from QGE well wishers and some are attached below:

"One of the very best of a very good batch of QGE officers"- Brig Hank Bowen.

"Intelligent and very capable officer"- Lt Col Philip Cook.

"Man of all seasons"- Major Hom Limbu

"I was proud to be part of the Regiment that produced officers like Dilkumar"- Lt Col Hamish McLeod

"He always led from the front. He was a role model"- Captain Budhikumar Gurung

"Dilkumar sahib was indeed a man of immense talents who left a striking and lasting imprint in the hearts and minds of many who knew, met and worked with him"- Major Bhola Rai.

Our hearts go out to his beloved family, his wife and two sons, who must bear the pain of losing such a unique and special man. May his soul rest in peace in the heavenly abode. Dil, we salute you and will miss you. Rest in peace my friend.

Lieutenant Colonel Adrian Griffith RGR

(Ed. Whilst not a member of QGE many members of the Regiment and Association will have had dealings with Lt Col Adrian Griffith over the last 2 decades and the obituary below is taken from a signal sent by Col BG to all BG units on hearing the news his untimely death).



Lt Col Adrian Griffith joined the Army in 1978 and was commissioned into 6 QEO Gurkha Rifles in 1979. He held numerous appointments in RGR and spent the majority of his career serving in the Brigade especially in SE Asia. He had a lot of operational experience and had served in Northern Ireland, UNPROFOR, Kosovo and laterally in Afghanistan as the Camp Commandant at Camp Souter in Kabul. But, he is exceptionally well known in the Brigade for his time in Nepal and this will be his legacy.

He spent over 11 years on postings there including his time as 2IC Pokhara and then on promotion to Lt Col as Chief of Staff BGN for 4 years. This was followed after a brief stint away before returning as Field Director GWS for 5 years. He was a genuine expert on Nepali culture. He spoke the language fluently and could sing and write poetry in Nepali. The Brigade owes him a great debt of honour for his selfless devotion to Nepal, the welfare and benevolence of our Gurkha soldiers and recruiting. He was an absolute stalwart of the Gurkha Welfare Trust and cared passionately about it. He served in Nepal for most of the Maoist Insurgency and life was not easy. On one notable occasion he was detained by Maoists for 3 days while escorting Michael Palin during the filming of his BBC Programme "Himalaya".

Adrian was different to other officers – he was a unique talent. He was the last of the soldier adventures immersed in a different culture to his own but as close to becoming part of that culture despite not being born in to it. In times gone past



he would have been a political officer in the traditions of John Nicholson of Delhi fame – intrepid and fearless.

Adrian was a devoted family man and leaves behind his dear wife Anne and 2 lovely daughters, Hattie and Phoebe. He was warm, witty, highly intelligent and Guru to many of us. We will all miss him tremendously. We have lost one of our brothers, the man many of us would have liked to emulate. RIP hamro sathi.

Lieutenant Colonel DMA Quirke RE

Brigadier H Bowen

Desmond Quirke served with Gurkha Engineers for a total five years during which time he commanded three of the squadrons of the Regiment and was Regimental Second in Command.

After basic sapper training at 1 Training Regiment RE in Malvern he entered Sandhurst and was commissioned into The Royal Engineers on 1 August 1952. He was a member of 9 YO Batch which included four officers who were to serve with The Gurkha Engineers (Peter MacMaster, Peter Harvey, Charles Spottiswoode and Desmond). He was a troop commander in Germany before joining the Singapore Field Squadron as Plant Troop Commander in 1957. He returned to BAOR for a spell as Staff Captain with the Engineer Group in which Tony Rickets was the Brigade Major. He was a keen sailor and joined the Royal Ocean Racing Club in 1962. He married Marjorie in October 1957.

In 1962/63 he was Adjutant of 12 SME Regiment, based in Gordon Barracks, Gillingham. He commanded the Guard of Honour when HRH The Duke of Edinburgh visited and announced that Her Majesty the Queen had bestowed the title 'Royal' to the School of Military Engineering.

He joined 68 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron as Second in Command in August 1965 and went with the Squadron to Borneo on its third and final tour and he was with the Squadron when the Confrontation ended in August 1966. This was a very busy time for the Squadron as a great number of stores and equipment had to be returned. As second in command Desmond was at the centre of the activity. It was also evident at this time that the rundown of the Brigade of Gurkhas would be implemented and many heartbreaking decisions had to be taken which soldiers should go on redundancy and when. By 1967, in Malaya, 68 Squadron had run down to cadre strength. Desmond was moved from the Squadron to become OC 70 HQ and Park Squadron.

Although he had never served with Gurkha before he learnt Gurkhali and entered into all the activities of the Regiment with enthusiasm and great energy. He and Marjorie were very busy socially, in Kluang, both within the Garrison and with the local planters, taking part in Amateur Dramatics. He played the piano and could play almost anything by ear so was in great demand at parties.

He left Kluang in 1968, but returned to the Gurkha Engineers in 1970 as OC 67 Gurkha Field Squadron, which had just moved up to Hong Kong from Malaya. He was OC when

General John Bowring made a final visit as Colonel of the Regiment and Far East Farm was renamed as Bowring Camp. He was only with the squadron for a year when changes in the command structure meant that he had to move across to 68 Squadron for a month before taking over as Regimental Second in Command from April 1971 to April 1972.

After further spells on the staff in UK and BAOR he was promoted Lieutenant Colonel in June 1974 and joined NATO as GSO1 in AFCENT in Brunsum, Netherlands. In 1977 he joined HQ North East District as AQMG (Quartering). Marjorie was delighted as they were now back in Yorkshire, her home county. Desmond finished his service in York as Principal Housing Commandant NE District. He retired in 1983. After retirement he became a Justice of the Peace. Marjorie ran a very successful antique business.

He and Marjorie celebrated their Golden Wedding on 26 October 2007.

He was a kind, industrious and cheerful man who was always ready to help. He will be missed by his many friends and his devoted wife, Marjorie, and their children Matthew, Virginia and Nick.

Major George Thompson

Major George Thompson late Royal Engineers of Berwick on Tweed died peacefully aged 86 years young after a short illness on 7th April 2012. Much loved husband of Joan, father of Ian & George and their families. George was QM 68 Sqn and Regimental Quartermaster from 1972 to 1974. The photo was taken in Hong Kong in November 1973. In November 1973 during Bill Jackson's visit to the Regiment. Also in the photo are Roy Jury and schoolteacher Mrs Bista.



This year there has sadly been a number of members of the Association who have passed away and we have not been able to commemorate their life with a fitting obituary. If you would like to write a few words on any of our former colleagues I will be happy to publish them.



FAMILY NEWS

John Archibald (74-77)

Karen and I continue to enjoy life in Edinburgh. Since 2009 I have been a self-employed consultant, the major advantage of which is not having to commute to work every morning. I am currently establishing a distributor network in India for The Biofuel Partnership, an Australian company (biocubeco.com) and providing business management support to a website publishing business (check out elderjuice.com, 'the premium website for the over 50s') and a young company finance consultancy. I have also had two articles accepted by *Trout & Salmon* magazine and am about to e-publish my book *Gurkhas in the Mist* recounting my coast to coast walk across the highlands with six Gurkhas in aid of the GWT. Daughter Sophie graduated from Exeter Uni last summer with a First in Psychology and is now working for a design and branding agency in Edinburgh while looking for a position with one of the big branding agencies in London. Our other daughter Lucy is doing a part-time business degree at London College of Fashion while working in Harrods. Karen has her hands full making sure we are all moving in the right direction.

Mark & Sally Baker (00-02)

Mark has been with HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) since shortly after its move back from Rheindahlen to Innsworth, Gloucester in Summer 2010. The foray into the NATO environment has been an enlightening one requiring several attendances at the delightful NATO School in Oberammergau in the heart of Bavaria and enjoying the rich tapestry of working alongside 15 Partner Nation personnel from across NATO.

In July 2011 Mark deployed to Kabul as part of HQ ARRC's commitment to HQ ISAF Joint Command. During what was a professionally rewarding deployment, he worked on the assessment of Afghan provinces for security transition from Coalition to Government of Afghanistan control. The highlight of 2011 however was not Mark's deployment, but the arrival of Ella-Gale in May. Harry, now 2 years, has been very accommodating of her arrival so long as she dares not try to play with his diggers!

2011 was capped with more good news when Mark received notification that he had been selected to return to QGE as OC 70 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search). He will take over the squadron from Adam Rowson in July 2012, with Sally and the children moving to Maidstone in September.

Jai QGE!

Jane & John Edwards (57-63, 69-71, 73-75, 78-79, 82-83, 85-88)

We continue to live in Westerham in our beautiful Queen Anne house, and are both still involved in local affairs. Being so near London enables us to take advantage of all the

wonderful exhibitions, concerts and shows. At our ages, inevitably ailments become an issue, and we have not escaped. I have recently had a double by-pass and a new valve in my heart.

We decided last year that the time had come to give up sailing, and sold our Southerly 28, which turned out to be the right decision, in view of what has happened. We had owned her for 17 years, she had given us enormous pleasure, and it was very sad to see her go.

We both continue to play golf, and Tandridge Golf Club looms large in our lives. Apart from enjoying the course, the clubhouse and the membership, we have both done our bit. Jane was on the Ladies' Committee for three years, and I run the veterans' matches (26 fixtures).

Matthew lives fairly close, which means that we see a good deal of the granddaughter. He converts huge country houses for the very rich. Rebecca has now lived in California for 20 years or so, is married to an American, and owns a flourishing hair dressing salon and spa (45 people work there). She continues to compete at dressage to a reasonably high level.

We have a very congenial life, and are constantly grateful for the hand that fortune has dealt us. We could have popped up as refugees in some war-torn and destitute part of the world, or on a sink estate in a depressed part of the Country.

Robert & Meredyth Grant (06-09)

Having left QGE after three wonderful years, two as 1 Tp Comd and a further 12 months as the Project Engineer in Pokhara, Robert was posted to 59 Cdo Sqn as the Ops Offr which included tours to both Norway and the United States of America. Robert was then retained at 24 Cdo Engr Regt as the Adjutant and having returned from Op HERRICK 14 is due to remain in Chivenor until Dec 12.



Robert had the somewhat unique experience of deploying to Afghanistan alongside his wife who was employed as the Bde Media Ops Offr for 3 Cdo Bde also based in Lashka Ghar. Due mainly to patience of angelic proportions on Meredyth's behalf

the marriage has survived a tour of Afghanistan and their



first child is expected in July 2012. Meredyth continues to work in defence Media & PR whilst Robert awaits to find out what life holds in store after 24. Both are expecting a busy summer with their new arrival but all are very welcome in sunny Chivenor should you be passing through North Devon. Salaams. Robert & Meredyth.
robertdouglasgrant@gmail.com

Douglas and Margret Humphrey (66-71, 84-86)

Douglas and Margaret continue to thrive in Somerset. They are very fortunate in having Brett and Lara living very close. This means that Margaret spends a lot of her time babysitting their 4 grandchildren although there is light at the end of the tunnel as they grow older! Douglas is still managing his Educational Consultancy and Guardianship Company working chiefly to Russia but also to Uzbekistan and the Ukraine. Lara now works for Douglas as his General Manager which gives Douglas more time to swan off to Russia on recruiting trips and visiting students in the 24 schools he uses in the South and SW. Douglas is still seeking new Host Families for paid overnight stays and Exeat Weekends any offers? (01458-223703 or humphreydr@aol.com)

Baliyo rahanuhos

Giles, Annabel and Isobel McCallum (96-98, 06-08)



2010 and 2011 were eventful years for family McCallum. In 2010 Giles left the army after 16 very happy years of which his time as OC 70 was the happiest. He also managed

to entice Annabel to Nepal for a second time but regrettably a severe run in with cholera has probably put her off returning for a year or 2.

2011 saw the birth of Isobel (and a doted father) and with it the realisation that Giles would have to find a job having spent his time from leaving the Army as a full time builder turning his house into a home. (In true McCallum style the final coat of paint was applied to the final skirting board 2 days before Isobel was born!)

After a brief stint with the local company JCB, Giles started as a Management Consultant / Programme Manager in Oil and Gas at Wipro Technologies in Jan 2012. Annabel is still nursing but right now is a very happy mother. With a baby and work (and through living in the most land locked part of the country) Giles' love for sailing has not abated but has unfortunately taken a back seat. Annabel's love for sailing has not yet started since it has been blowing a gale every

time she has ventured near the sea.

Still Staffordshire based, it would be great to see anyone whose arm has been twisted by their children for a trip to Alton Towers, just a stone's throw away. Wishing you all a very happy and prosperous 2012, Jai QGE.

Si and Lynne Merret (04-06)

Having recently created a family to update everyone on, I thought I'd let the editor know the details. Having left QGE as G Tp Comd in 2006 and moving through infantry BGE'ing and EOD 2IC'ing, I returned to Chatham for professional engineer training to find my two G Tp staff sergeants and one of my recce sergeants commissioning into the same rank as me. I knew they were good operators but I certainly felt humbled that they had "caught me up"!



It was whilst on my civilian engineering attachment to help build the plant rooms at the massive Southmead Hospital in Bristol that I married Lynne, who is the occupational therapist clinical specialist for strokes in Somerset. We were born in the same hospital, 3 days apart in November 1979, and even went to school together but didn't notice each other until we met again at a friend's wedding in 2009. Our holiday to Pokhara in 2010 was a magical return trip for me and it was clear that Lynne loves many of the things which make QGE service so special for me (not just momo and chutney!).

Lynne is now 6 months pregnant so we'll have a month or two of our baby in Bristol before moving to Swindon in the summer for staff college. I'm treating the sleep deprivation as training for the course! Our location thereafter is a mystery at the moment but I remain as hopeful as ever that I'll get a chance to return to QGE at some point."

Colonel Andrew Mills (81, 82-84, 94, 09-13)

Still serving as DA Kathmandu, Andrew continues to enjoy life as is reported elsewhere in this magazine. He has hosted many QGE visitors to Nepal, and continues to meet old friends across the country, many of whom are now employed by the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS) or British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN). There is no hope of mentioning them all by name, but Maj Bhimbahadur Gurung, Maj Surja bahadur Thapa and Maj Hukumraj Thapa are certainly leaders of the QGE community and Capt Bakta Bahadur Rai and Maj Dal Bahadur Limbu play an important role in the GWS. He particularly enjoyed a visit from the Col Comdt, Gay, and son James, in September and looks forward to hosting CGS this autumn.



Mindful that this is his last tour before retirement, he's just bought a yacht, optimised for single and two – handed racing, and is currently struggling to buy a house in Alverstoke to be near it.



With Maj (Retd) Dalbdr Limbu AWO Phidim

He's very much looking forward to seeing many more Burdhos in the coming year.

Roger and Claire Morton (93-95)



I am now back at Sandhurst for a 3rd time. Having been a company commander from 2007-09 then spent 8 months attached to the FCO in Islamabad before returning to Sandhurst in late 2010 as the Station Commander and CO of the Sandhurst Support Unit. So after a 17 year gap I am commanding Gurkhas again: the 150 strong Gurkha Company (Sittang), which has all capbadges from the Brigade including 2 QGE wallahs. The language skills are, as you might imagine, a little rusty. But with practice and a little 'bagh ko dudh' it seems to be passable.

It is great to back in the Brigade of Gurkhas fold once more and later this year we will be hosting Brigade Week at RMAS including the Nepal Cup, and GC(S) has been given clear direction to succeed. My involvement with football continues and I am now Chairman of the RE AFC as we approach our

150th year and are applying to enter the FA Cup in order to emulate the success of 1875.

Claire has also been welcomed into the fold by the Gurkha ladies and little did she know that passing the NLQC in Hong Kong would come in so useful later on. She continues to follow the flag with house moves at an alarming rate, which combined with looking after Jasper (almost 3) make for a very busy life. Hamish(14) started at Wellington College last year and Angus (12) is soon to complete prep school at Port Regis in Shaftesbury

Graham and Rebecca Price (77-80, 81-83)

Graham and Rebecca are still in Hong Kong. Son David was commissioned from RMAS in April 2011 and is now training with the AAC. Hannah is a thriving two year old, and by the time this goes to press will have been joined by a little brother or sister.

I have continued to work on various projects – this week I am headhunting a Sales Director, working for Ian McEvoy part time, planning energy projects in China and Korea and may soon be developing applications for mobile phones.



We have been pleased to meet up with visitors and old friends – Ian McEvoy continues to pass through from time to time, In November / December Gilbert

Kendzior (now retired!) spent some time in Hong Kong and the three of us, all troop commanders together made a special visit to Perowne Barracks. Richard Beazley is also working in Hong Kong again and Malcolm Peart has been working here as well.

The development at Perowne continues, and Harrow International School opens in the autumn – built on the site of the new part of Perowne above the Tuen Mun Highway. Recently the sale of the officers married quarters and football field side of the site was announced and will soon be turned into housing – so expect to see more tower blocks there.

In November I took a short excursion to Kathmandu to meet up with Hamish MacLeod and we spent a thoroughly pleasant 3 days re acquainting ourselves with a city that is in many ways so familiar.



As always we are pleased to meet up with anyone visiting Hong Kong – even if only here for a short transit stop. Sad to say Mark Hughes has been twice but both times we were “out of town”. Maybe this year.....



STOP PRESS I please to announce that Rebecca safely gave birth to a son, Ethan Alexander Haigh Price on 17 April. I'm not sure if he will follow his Brother and Father into joining the England Regiment (which is about all there will be in 20 years time if the present rate of force reduction continues!)

Ian & Sally Slack (91-93, 98)

Ian and Sally are back in the UK (Essex) with their 3 sons Tom (17) Ben (16) George (13) after several years living abroad in Switzerland, Singapore and the US. Ian is still working in IT at UBS and Sally is re-establishing her Newborn Photography Business that she built up in Singapore. We



had a fantastic few years abroad but are loving being back in our own home in the UK and catching up with family and friends. Ian, continues to play rugby at every opportunity and is enjoying playing on the same team as Tom, despite being dwarfed and looking like Uncle

Fester! The boys are enjoying their schools, although would clearly benefit from working harder! Tom is planning to read Engineering and then join the Corps, Ben is currently weekly boarding in Ipswich and hopes to get into Welbeck this year and George is at Colchester High and loving the ACF. Sally, is suffering from an overload of testosterone in the house!

We have caught up with many ex QGE wallahs and have even been accosted by ex Sappers in Hong Kong and the US, severely testing Ian's failing Nepali skills. We would



love to catch up with anyone who knows us and can be contacted through facebook (search for slacky or sally slack photography - I have several QGE pictures on my page) or by mail at imslack@mac.com.

Jai QGE

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

Dermot and Mary Stack have moved from their long sojourn in Scotland. We have moved to Chapel End, Netherhay, Drimpton in Dorset, close to Crewkerne in Somerset.

Dermot retired as an RO at HQ 2 Div Edinburgh in Jan 10 and settled down to the sort of busy activities that define that state: shooting, hill walking, gardening etc. Mary was fully employed as a counsellor but also doing art courses at the Leith School of Art. Then we discussed the idea of moving south and encouraged by our daughters in the south, decided to bite the bullet. We narrowed the field to Gloucester, Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset and ended up in the latter, which was most familiar to us since my parents lived near Bridport. One of the reasons for moving was to be nearer the family: Finola, then in London and Camilla in Oxford. No sooner had we announced our intentions to move when our son Ed, based in Edinburgh, declared that he and his partner, Lianna, were expecting a baby in Dec 11!

Finola is married to John Colvin and they have a 14 month old called Tess, born November 2010. She is still working freelance as an illustrator and he is an architect. They have moved to Bath, even closer to us.

Camilla has qualified as a psychotherapist and counsellor and is working toward a doctorate. Meanwhile she continues her day job as an Administrator of a project in the Oxford University Said Business School.

Ed's day job is working for the Scottish NHS Blood Transfusion Centre in Edinburgh as an IT expert in managing blood products. Out of hours he is the music co-ordinator of a new venue with bar, café and gigs as well as other events. Their son Ruben was born on Christmas Eve - our third grandchild. Lianna is on maternity leave from nursing in the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow. Ed also has a 6 year old daughter, by a previous partner in Germany, whom we see from time to time.



We are gradually adjusting to a major life change after 25 years in Scotland. We have much to do to tame the cultivated jungle we have inherited. I have bought a Drascombe Lugger to sail up and down the Jurassic coast, I sing with the Beaminster Singers and I am a SSAFA-FH caseworker. Mary is continuing with her art and hoping to develop her counselling work, which is not proving so easy here.

We are enjoying being more accessible to QGEA functions and would welcome anyone passing nearby en route to 'staycations' in Devon or Cornwall!!

Peter Smyth (95-99)



The Smyths are still enjoying a busy life in Hong Kong. Peter changed companies in 2011 and is now Managing Director of Facilities Management for CBRE. Work sees him travelling throughout Asia frequently and his wife sees him travelling on holidays as much as is feasibly possible. They enjoy retreating to their villa in Thailand, which is located on the tranquil and un-spoilt Koh Lanta.

Peter continues to play hockey at the weekends. Having been slowly promoted from the E-Team to the B-Team, over the years, age has finally got the better of him as he now remains with the C-Team where he has been Captain for the last three years. Either he's jolly good at it, or no-one else wants to do it!

His hockey career took a step backwards last year, thanks to a fully ruptured Achilles tendon – his pride took a step backwards when the surgeon informed him "ah yes, we see many of those amongst middle aged men!" Peter has only just turned 40!

The two Smyth juniors continue to keep mum and dad busy 24/7. Both girls are thriving at school, getting involved in the usual activities that little girls like to partake in (gymnastics, piano, art classes, Brownies, etc). Being the polar opposites of one another, life is always interesting. They attend an international school where the IB curriculum is taught and they are learning Mandarin. They have both done some modeling of children's clothes for a catalogue distributed throughout China, as well as toy packaging. Look out for them in Toys R Us!

Tara, in the meantime, continues to keep the household together, being in charge of their hectic social lives, booking

holidays and managing the children's schedules. In her spare time she is a keen photographer and has done some design work for a local magazine.

Tim and Barbara St John Yates

Tim and Barbara are in great spirits, very much still enjoying retired life to the full north of the border, plenty of friends, family and consequently many gatherings and parties. We both play a lot of golf, our local course is three minutes from our house in Edzel, we feel very lucky that our bodies still allow us to do nearly everything that we want to, occasionally creaks! they keep on taking the tablets.

Our daughter, Amanda, (remembered as Louise by many, she changed her name!) has split from her husband, this happened 15 months ago, so this last year hasn't been easy, and we have had many visits down to her to be a support, her three girls have coped brilliantly and are now three very mature teenagers ready to take on the world! one hoping to study architecture, one medicine and one art, whether it all works out for them in these very troubled times remains to be seen. Happily, Amanda has recently met a super new chap and is very happy, which is a wonderful.

Our son, Andrew, continues working for one of the large estates nearby as the fishing gillie which he loves, although he works incredibly long hours during the fishing season. He married four and a half years ago, we thought that he never would! and they are both very happy and it is very nice to have them living reasonably close.

If any "old" Gurkha Engineer friends ever find themselves north of the border, do please get in touch. A warm welcome will await! Kind regards Tim & Barbara

Mike and Alison Stephens (62-67, 78-80 85-87)

Alison and Mike Stephens are fit and well. The process of cutting down on retirement chores continues, with Mike coming to the end of 10 years as Chairman of Oxfordshire SSAFA Forces Help. He is still – after 14 years - nominally Chairman of the South Midlands Branch of the Gurkha Welfare Trust and would love to find a successor, who could live in any one of the 11 post code areas which comprise the Branch,



OX being just one! Please don't hold back if you would like to help support the remaining 8,500 welfare pensioners who rely on the Trust to keep them from starvation's door in the hills of Nepal. (The photograph shows us receiving a cheque for GWT from dedicated wheelchair-bound fundraiser Judy Woolfenden MBE, recently back from a 250km dog-sledding expedition in northern Sweden!)

We look forward to meeting old friends each year at the QGEA Southern Area lunch. We also try and keep in touch with the Brigade through the Memorial Service and excellent bhat at Sandhurst. Much as we like the welcoming Logisticians, it would be wonderful if we could encourage other members of QGEA to fill two tables as we did not so long ago. In our travels we have called on Richard and Val Marriott, Lesley Philpott and Duncan Morris, and Dermot and Mary Stack have visited us in Eynsham. We keep in regular touch with Joan Ritchie, who lives close by, and plan to call on John and Tricia Getley in Scotland just before Easter. On the golf front, John Edwards and I flew the regimental flag at the annual Brigade golf day at Royal Ashdown Forest. The sport was officially deemed to be "extreme" with gale force winds and continuous rain throughout!

Our children and three grandchildren thrive. Robert and Cheryl live in Billingshurst. He still works in the field of bomb blast protection of buildings working with the Crown Service. The great news is that he is now flying his Zenair Zodiac two-seater aeroplane, which took 16 years to construct from scratch! (His 14 year-old daughter Charlotte thinks that the money might have been better spent on a pony!) The plane is based at Dunsfold, the home of the Top Gear team; parents spent several days there in 2010 helping build a poly-tunnel hangar. Wendy has given up trying to help MPs and is now church administrator of our old church, All Saints, in Dulwich. She is a National Trust volunteer at Chartwell and swims daily in Tooting Bec Lido – even when there is ice on the water!! She is also still a keen member of the St Pauls Knightsbridge Festival Choir and we are again this year accompanying her on their tour to Italy. Catriona is a GP working in Banbury with husband Mike a building surveyor. Granddaughter Beth (10) is an aspiring violinist and pianist, while younger brother Ed (9) has moved on from touch to contact Rugby and is a speedy right winger.

Last year we went on a walking holiday in Mallorca where we based ourselves on Stuart and Judy Rogers in Inca. Stuart will be known to many of our vintage as a helicopter pilot in Germany in the days of RE air troops. He is also an amateur aircraft builder and I was relieved to find that the helicopter constructed on his apartment balcony had only one seat!

We still reside in our friendly village of Eynsham just west of Oxford. We are very easy to find; if you are travelling along the A40 and need a break, satnavs will find us just a mile from the roundabout, or, if coming from Oxford on the back route, straight ahead at the roundabout after the Toll Bridge and you are almost there.

Ed and Emily Thompson (06-08, 10 –present)

Once again I have been extremely lucky to be posted to Maidstone to work with The Queens Gurkha Engineers. I took over as Second in Command of 69 Gurkha Field Squadron (Search) in November 2010 and both my wife Emily and I have enjoyed reacquainting ourselves with our Nepalese friends and their families.



Our family is growing at an alarming rate; Our first daughter Cordelia (15 months) now has a little sister Hermione (4 months) and Emily is getting very used to changing nappies and singing nursery rhymes. Sadly the hope of creating a 7 aside Thompson rugby team is quickly disappearing and rather worryingly Emily has already started looking into riding lessons and stables!

Having taken maternity leave from a fairly hectic job in London with Tufton Oceanic, Emily has for the time being decided to dedicate her time to our family. Although the children are certainly keeping her on her toes she continues to enjoy taking our rather lively Pharaoh Hound 'Fenix' to local and championship dog shows and judging at various SE England horse shows whenever she can; I don't know where she finds time to relax!

My job is as rewarding and challenging as ever. I am preparing the Sqn for their deployment to Afghanistan in September this year in their new search role. This will be an extremely challenging tour for our soldiers but I am confident the training they have received will equip them well for what they will encounter.

We will be with the Sqn until mid 2013 and our doors are always open to anyone that is passing through the South East.

cedemt@yahoo.co.uk



Andrew and Clare Tuggey (69-70, 75-78, 82-84)

Andrew and Clare Tuggey continue to live in Monmouthshire. Andrew commutes weekly to London where he runs international relations in both Houses of Parliament with a special focus on the Commonwealth. This involves whistle-stop tours through developing countries and capacity building programmes for partner Parliaments in developing democracies.

Clare has been busy designing and maintaining websites and occasionally painting pictures.

Both Andrew and Clare are doting grandparents to Piers' and Laura's children, George 5, Polly 3 and Beatrice 1. Piers having left RGJ/Rifles is now an underwriter in the City.

Oliver, soon to be married to Flora after a whirlwind eight year romance, continues to run his successful kitesurfing school and outdoor pursuits centre in Pembrokeshire. This morphs into a snowkiting school in the Swiss Alps in the winter months. <http://www.thebigblueexperience.com>

Henry left The Rifles in June 2011 and skillfully eased himself into the City broking insurance just next door to Piers.

David and Judy Walker (75-77, 86-88)

David retired in September 2010 and as soon as Judy retired in March 2011 we moved to a smaller house in Calne, Wiltshire, and then took to the canals of England on our narrow boat, Ophelia. We had a wonderful summer and autumn cruising 600 miles of waterways, the highlights of which were sailing up the Severn estuary from Bristol to Sharpness and crossing the Pontcysyllte viaduct on the Llangollen canal. It was interesting to bump into several Gurkhas on the canal towpaths, especially around Reading where there is now a large community. We broke off our travels for the winter and left the boat at Audlem, Cheshire, while we finally settled into the new house and caught up with the family. David soon resumed his family research on the computer, delighted to find his grandfather's World War I Army service records had survived and become easily accessible on the internet.

Eldest son James continues to run the Bathurst Arms (Inn of the Year 2011) in North Cerney, Gloucestershire. William and Poppy had a little boy, Henry Edward, in June 2011, named after Judy's father, Edward Henry, who sadly passed away in the previous February. Charlie gained a first class degree at Leeds University and then set off around the world spending over 9 months in Australia as well as visiting New Zealand and the US. He is now keen to pursue a career as an archivist.

After a short holiday in South Africa centred around a very moving visit to Rorke's Drift we are both looking forward to resuming our travels on the canals later this year when we hope to penetrate the unknown waters of the far north of England.



David and Ophelia take a rest on the canal bank to consider the meaning of life and everything

Peter and Sally Whitestone (53-59)

We left our rural home of 40 years, on the outskirts of Biddenden parish in the Weald of Kent, three years ago and moved to the nearby little town of Cranbrook for a couple of years before coming back to Biddenden, this time on the edge of the village itself where we are within a few minutes walk of the shop, church, hall, pub, bus stop etc. and can yet access the countryside almost immediately for a variety of lovely walks. We are only a dozen miles south of Maidstone, and two dozen south of Chatham, and are delighted that our spare room has already been useful for friends attending functions at the Regt/RSME (our new address is 5 Old Mill Court, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8DD; tel. 01580 292661; email summerhillkent@talktalk.net).

We enjoy being able to attend events at the Regiment, RSME, RGR at Shorncliffe, Britain-Nepal Society, ABF lectures/curry lunches/Beating Retreat etc., as well as the Summer Lunch and Dom's excellent Reunions in Nepal in 1998 and 2008.

We see quite a lot of our three daughters and their families. Philippa and Paul live furthest away, in Luxembourg where she works for the European Community; after several years teaching in the Maldives, Lucy now lives only 9 miles away; and Joanna lives near Hever Castle in a country cottage where her husband Peter makes picture frames, exhibition stands and honey.



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE QUEEN'S GURKHA ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION HELD AT ON SATURDAY 24th SEPTEMBER 2011

Present:

Brigadier AD Harking OBE
Lieutenant Colonel S J Hulme MBE
Major Ekbahadur Gurung
Major A Gooch
30 Members of the Association
Lieutenant Colonel J F Wheeley MBE

Chairman
Commandant
Gurkha Major
Magazine Editor

Secretary

Apologies were received from the President and 11 Members of the Association.

ITEM 1 – OPENING REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT

1. The Chairman opened the meeting by passing-on the President's apologies; the President and Lady Bill were in Nepal and would be attending the Regimental Birthday Celebrations there. The Chairman also welcomed members and thanked the Commandant and Gurkha Major for hosting the day's events.

ITEM 2 – PREVIOUS MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

2. The Minutes of the AGM for 2010 were passed as a true record.

Proposed: Lieutenant Colonel Inge

Seconded: Major Dhandahadur Chand

ITEM 3 – ACCOUNTS

3. The Chairman drew the Meeting's attention to a financial statement that had been prepared by the Treasurer covering the period up to 22 September 2011, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

4. The Treasurer sent his apologies and had commented on the accounts as follows: "the capital values are down a bit but generally income from investments is holding up well. I am tending to put just about all expenditure through the Regimental Trust Account (as it is that account that receives all the subscription income and the Gift Aid on subscriptions). Hence the Association account has quite a healthy balance. Given the current state of depression over the markets it may be appropriate, probably in October, to re-invest a small amount of QGEA cash, say £2,000, back in AFCIF income units. This will give us a 3% income return better than we get on deposit with the prospect, in the medium to long term, of some capital growth. It is seldom wrong to invest when others are scared and running for cover."

5. The Meeting agreed with the Treasurer's comments and recommendation to invest £2,000.00 of QGEA cash into AFCIF income units.

ITEM 4 – THE MAGAZINE

6. On behalf of the President the Chairman thanked Major Andy Gooch, the Magazine Editor for all his hard work over the past year and for the production of a really excellent Association Magazine. The Chairman also encouraged Members to continue provide the Editor with high quality articles.

7. The Magazine Editor then briefed the Meeting; a copy of his report is attached to these Minutes.

8. Major Stack raised the issue of encouraging Members to provide more contributions to the Families News section of the Magazine. Brigadier Edwards suggested that the Editor write to one third of the Members each year requesting that they contribute to the Families News; this the Editor agreed to do.

ITEM 6 – THE QGEA WEB SITE

9. The Secretary briefed the Meeting that the Committee had agreed to fund an Association web site and was seeking a volunteer to run it. Major Rowson offered his services.

ITEM 6 - UPDATE ON NEPAL

10. The Nepal Member sent his apologies and a written report that is attached to these minutes.



ITEM 7 – FUTURE TRUST STRUCTURAL CHANGES

11. The Chairman briefed the Meeting as follows:
- a. Progress has been hampered by changes within the Charity Commission. The Chairman has met with the Charity Commission who, due to their organisational changes will now only accept documents that are “fit for purpose”. They will no longer offer advice on any changes that may be required but will simply reject the document.
 - b. The overall management of the combined Trust would rest with a Regimental Council and a Management Committee.
12. The Chairman further briefed the Meeting that, due to a change in Gurkha Welfare Trust processes, students could be no longer sourced and their progress monitored using the Gurkha Welfare Service. Various options are under consideration and the Colonel of the Regiment is researching these during his current visit to Nepal.

ITEM 8 – MEMBERSHIP

13. The Secretary briefed the Meeting on the conclusions of the Membership Paper that had been circulated to members with in advance of the Meeting. After some discussion the Meeting agreed to the Papers’ proposals subject to the following changes; all of which are to take effect from this Meeting:
- a. The option to pay an annual membership subscription of £10 is to be withdrawn. In future all Full Members will pay £100; payments can be spread over a period of months.
 - b. Full Members who are presently paying the annual membership subscription of £10 will be invited to pay the balance between the amount they have already paid in annual subscriptions and the sum of £100; this can be paid in monthly instalments.

ITEM 9 – REGIMENTAL UPDATE

14. Commandant QGE briefed the meeting, a copy of his notes can be requested if required.

ITEM 10 – QGEA FUNCTIONS FOR 2012

15. The Social Member sent his apologies. His proposals for functions in 2012 are as follows:
- a. A Families Lunch at Minley on 2 June 2012.
 - b. Regimental Birthday celebrations, QGEA AGM and a black tie dinner in RE RHQ Officers’ Mess on 29 September 2012

ITEM 11 – FUTURE DATES AND EVENTS

16. The Secretary briefed the Meeting that other than the Field of Remembrance, GBA AGM and GBA Dinner on 9 Nov 2011 there are no other known for 2011. Dates for 2012 had yet to be decided and more details will be circulated in the Secretary’s New Year Flyer.

ITEM 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17. Major Rob Cross briefed the Meeting on the continuing efforts of the GWT that continued to support some 9000 pensioners and widows in Nepal at a cost £400,000 per month.
18. Major Cross also updated the meeting on the construction of the Gurkha Memorial at the National Arboretum. Due to the decision, for reasons of cost, to construct the chautara using volunteer labour, work is progressing more slowly than had been anticipated the opening ceremony has been delayed until Spring 2012.
19. There was a brief discussion on the requirement to write the next volume of the Regimental History. An author will have to be found and the historical records collected together in one place. It is thought that Lieutenant Colonel John McLennan may be holding many of the documents in his role as the Regimental Council’s Historical Member.
20. The Chairman closed the Meeting by thanking Commandant QGE on completion of his tenure for all his efforts to maintain the Regiment’s traditions at the highest standard.

J F Wheeley MBE
Lieutenant Colonel
Secretary

9 October 2011



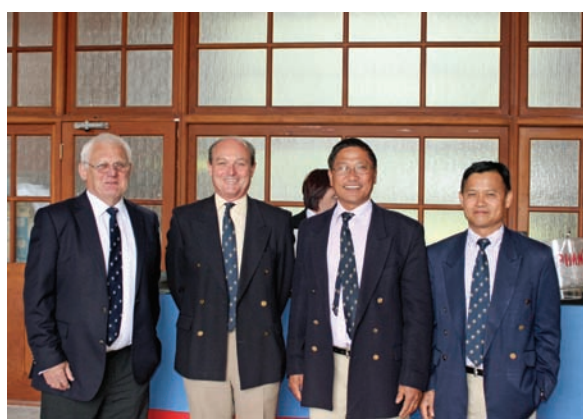


THE QUEEN'S GURKHA ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION FINANCIAL STATE AS AT 22 Sep 2011									
Current Financial year ends 28 Feb 12									
CAF CASH ACCOUNT							24675.48	units	AFCIF Income units Cost probably £1.00 per unit
							31/12/2007		£41,454.81
							21/08/2008		£36,273.00
							25/09/2008		£34,570.35
							31/12/2009		£35,162.56
							03/09/2010		£35,236.59
							23/05/2011		£38,370.37
							22/09/2011		£34,545.67
									CURRENT VALUE
THE QUEEN'S GURKHA ENGINEERS REGIMENTAL TRUST FINANCIAL STATE AS AT 22 Sep 11									
Current Financial year ends 28 Feb 12									
CAF CASH ACCOUNT								Investments at cost	M&G Charifund Income Units
RBS C/A					£1,076.29			1,838 units at £11.0204 per unit	£ 14,146.85
RBS D/A					£ 201.85			Market value as at	
					£ 500.00				
					£1,778.14			27/02/2004	£20,229.40
								19/01/2005	£22,747.82
								03/08/2005	£23,878.74
								31/08/2006	£26,954.82
								31/12/2007	£26,712.39
								25/09/2008	£20,989.96
								31/12/2009	£19,707.04
								03/09/2010	£19,723.21
								02/02/2011	£21,062.56
								23/05/2011	£21,470.23
								22/09/2011	£19,052.34
									CURRENT VALUE



QGEA Summer Lunch – Minley





The Association have once more agreed to hold the 2013 Summer Lunch in the Minley Manor Orangery (dates to follow). With the imminent closure of the Manor, 2013 will almost certainly be the last time we have the opportunity to use this fabulous location. So please support this if you can and let's make the 2013 Summer Lunch even more successful than the 2012 one.



Rear cover photos:

Comdt QGE, Lt Col S Hulme MBE is driven out of camp for the last time
GM QGE, Maj Prembahadur Ale MVO towed out of camp for the final time

QGEA WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE

The QGEA Website has recently been re-vamped and now contains a wealth of new information and is updated regularly with details on forthcoming events and Regimental news. It can be found at the following address: www.qgea.org

The QGEA have also made a foray into the world of Facebook. If you would like to join the group search for QGEA and ask to join.



GURKHAS IN THE MIST



**A coast to coast walk
across the Highlands**

JOHN ARCHIBALD

In 2008 John Archibald walked 200 miles in 8 days, coast to coast from Mallaig to Stonehaven across the Highlands, with six serving Gurkhas, including three from QGE, in the process raising over £40,000 for the Gurkha Welfare Trust. In his recently published ebook 'Gurkhas in the Mist - a coast to coast walk across the Highlands' John relates in sometimes hilarious fashion the story of the walk.

From Inverie on the Knoydart Peninsula the team trekked to Stonehaven on the east coast by way of the Rough Bounds of Knoydart, Loch Arkaig, the Spean Bridge Commando memorial, Corroir Station, Dalwhinnie, Braemar, Lochnagar, Glen Muick, Glen Esk and the Fetteresso Forest.

A separate chapter is given over to each day's trek and along the way John describes his Gurkha friends, the people they met and friendships made, interesting facts about the areas they passed through, a survival guide to midges, comments on the fish farming industry, the historical background to the Commando training centre at Achnacarry, the origins and history of the Gurkhas and how he came to be walking across Scotland with six of them.

The book will appeal to readers interested in Gurkhas, travelogues, hill walking, the Scottish highlands, Scottish history and military history, both Gurkha and Commando and midges.

The book is available on Amazon.co.uk for Kindle readers and on Smashwords.com for all other readers at a price of £5.80 / \$7.50, with the proceeds going to the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the permission of the Editor. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of individual contributors and do not reflect the official MoD policy.

Editorial matter and illustrations copyright QGE Association.

**The deadline for material to be with the Editor for 2013 edition
of the Magazine is 31 March 2013**

