



QGE
1998.
Magazine

THE QUEEN'S GURKHA ENGINEERS' ASSOCIATION

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EDITORIAL

Colonel (Retd) HE Vialou Clark



Much has happened this year in the "Regiment" and in the QGEA - so read on! In our 50th year we can look forward to looking back during our celebrations in Kathmandu and Pokhara in November. A good turnout from home and abroad seems assured.

General John Bowring's death and Brigadier Hank Bowen's soon-to-be-published history of the Regiment together bring bitter-sweet emotions. The committee's decision to highlight in the Magazine the life of one of its famous sons Amarbahadur Gurung is singularly appropriate so soon after General John's departure. He and General John worked in perfect harmony as GM and CO of the Regiment in its formative years (see "Obituaries").

Nostalgia is all very well and has its place but the present and future must be given due attention. The first half of the Magazine is full of

vibrancy, enthusiasm and derring-do. For me the most startling article is Hombahadur Saheb's revelation of the way our soldiers are filling with distinction, and in increasing numbers, the most technically demanding soldier posts in the Corps - clerks of works - civil, mechanical and electrical.

"Family News" has a slightly different look to it, perhaps. I hope the idea of including mug shots catches on thus limiting confusion at re-unions!

Some contributors will notice that not all their fine words have been included. I have, for reasons of space cut, even slashed, some letters. I hope I have your approval.

This year's Magazine, as 1997's, would have been less of a pleasure to produce but for the help of Alison, my wife. She has done much typing for us so I thought she deserved a mug shot too. (For those who may be interested in trivia, the photo was taken at our son Max's wedding in 1996. 24 hours ago Rachel made us grandparents!)

Finally, our thanks go to all contributors who make this year's Magazine one of the most interesting I can remember.

Enjoy!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Major General A D Pigott CBE



Our Editor asked for a Message to put in this year's Magazine. 'Keep it short' he said. So I thought a few personal reflections of the regimental year would suffice - and might even inform.

Last spring I was in Nepal. It was more informative and memorable than anything I could have anticipated. The Gurkha Major had arranged a cracking programme. In 2 weeks we visited Khatmandu, Pokhara, and Dharan and were able to trek in the surrounding areas and much else. Who too has visited the MFO store in Damak?

The hospitality everywhere - in the hills, the villages and in the various facilities that make up Brignepal today - was both immense and humbling. It was particularly nice to be introduced to so many regimental personalities and it was kind of them to answer my queries with

such generous enthusiasm. It was clear that the prospect of the regimental reunion, Pokhara 98, was already on many people's agenda.

In May at Sandhurst we all enjoyed a very agreeable QGE table at the annual Gurkha Brigade Association lunch in the Old College dining room. Lunch follows a short but moving service in the Memorial Chapel. For those who live within striking distance, it is a gathering well worth considering. Over lunch one of our number suggested a target of 2 regimental tables over time. Just a thought.

At Minley in the early summer I found myself taking the salute at this year's intake into the Regiment. Though the numbers are obviously less than in the past, the quality struck me as extraordinarily high. It was very good to see so many officers who had recently served with the Regiment also in attendance. I am sure this support means a lot to the soldiers.

In July The Regiment bade a final farewell to Judbahadur Saheb with Beating Retreat at Maidstone. Such occasions are part of our military way of life - sad though they are.

In last year's magazine I thanked Judbahadur for all that he had done for the Regiment over an outstanding career.

And this year it is very fitting to congratulate Tshering Saheb on his assumption as Gurkha Major and to wish him well for his tour in this prestigious post.

In late summer the Association held its annual reunion over lunch at Maidstone. No doubt the Chairman will be commenting separately.

But it was a splendid occasion and very good to link this event so closely with those currently serving - at least periodically when the 36 Engineer Regiment programme allows. In the autumn I was invited to take the cadre pass off for 36 Engineer Regiment at Maidstone and it was very rewarding to see 69 Gurkha Field Squadron featuring so prominently in it. As has become customary the Bowring Trophy was awarded to the best soldier.

We were all so saddened to learn of General John Bowring's death very recently. But it is good to know that his immense contribution to so much that The Queen's Gurkha Engineers stands for can be remembered too in this way.

In November it was time for the regimental farewell to the Commandant. It was very good to do this with Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas, Lieutenant General Sir Sam Cowan, as the principal guest. Here I should record our thanks to Lieutenant Colonel Bob Hendicott for his unstinting efforts on the Regiment's behalf during his time in command at Maidstone - it has been such a formative time. We wish him well in his new appointment on promotion as CRE 3(UK) DIVISION.

And I welcome warmly, on everyone's behalf, the new CO and

Commandant - Lieutenant Colonel Mike Carter. In the winter months I was involved in two Brigade of Gurkha events on behalf of the Regiment.

Firstly the unveiling of the statue 'Gurkha Soldier' by Her Majesty. It is strategically placed outside the Ministry of Defence - and none can miss it. And The Gurkha Memorial at the Hillier Memorial Garden near Winchester, to which Tom Spring Smythe has played such a part, is a must for anyone passing by.

Running through the year the very significant efforts by all concerned on two important landmarks in The Regiment's life have continued apace.

Hank Bowen's volume on the Regimental history will be a multiple must for everyone. And the Pokhara 98 celebrations promise much. Both combine to help us celebrate the 50th Anniversary in very proper manner.



COMMANDANT'S REPORT

*Lieutenant Colonel
R C Hendicott MBE RE*

I am writing this report during my last week as Commandant and, naturally, have spent a few moments in the past month reflecting on my time in the Regiment. Most of what follows covers what has happened in the past year, but I would also like to take the chance to share some thoughts as my time comes to an end. Additionally, I have invited my successor, Lieutenant Colonel Mike Carter, to add his first impressions as Commandant when he has been here for a few weeks.

After the pain and trauma of our final round of Drawdown and Redundancy last year, 1997 has been a year of consolidation and looking forward for The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, and it has been a good year. The Regiment now numbers just 239 Gurkhas, of which 188 are in 69 Gurkha Field Squadron, part of 36 Engineer Regiment, 26 are Nepal Leave Increment and the remainder are at Extra Regimental Employment (ERE) both within the Brigade of Gurkhas and in training and technical posts elsewhere in the Army.

At the beginning of the year 69 Gurkha Field Squadron comprised the two remaining halves of the former squadrons, 67 and 69, led by an almost totally new command structure: it was a completely new start for an almost wholly new organisation. In the first 3 months of the year Major David Caulfield and his team were faced with building a new squadron from scratch, albeit with Gurkhas who all knew one

another well. It was no mean task, and it is to the enormous credit of all involved that, by Easter time, only just after the Squadron had regained the many men who had been on Nepal leave following 67 Squadron's disbandment and 69's Bosnia tour, a viable operational unit had been recreated. The new 69 Squadron was put to the test immediately on an exacting Regimental combat engineer exercise, alongside the other Royal Engineers squadrons, and demonstrated its new capability beyond any doubt.

Throughout the summer, once the new structure was firmly embedded, the Squadron's pace of work increased considerably with troop level exercises, construction tasks, section competitions, a khud race in Scotland, and adventurous training as well as full involvement with supporting 5 Airborne Brigade as part of a one year trial with the remainder of 36 Engineer Regiment.

Throughout all this time the squadron continued to double role H Troop to provide engineer support to the AMF(L), which saw the troop in Norway twice, once in the winter for arctic training and again in the summer on a construction project.

The autumn began for the Squadron with a significant level of support being provided to 1st Battalion The Royal Green Jackets, a mechanised battalion, on a Tactical Engagement Simulation exercise on Salisbury Plain. One of the troops provided engineer support, another became a rifle troop in A Company, and elements of Squadron Headquarters provided control at Brigade Headquarters level. As soon as this had finished, a sizeable proportion of the Squadron moved

directly to become the engineer part of the Staff College Demonstration, again on Salisbury Plain. As always, the men acquitted themselves extremely well in this very high profile event, and won over many who had no previous experience of The Queen's Gurkha Engineers.

As the year closes, the majority of the Squadron is now focused on its imminent deployment to the South Atlantic to become Falkland Islands Field Squadron. At the same time H Troop is preparing itself for Norway once more, and a team, led by the OC, is currently in Nepal competing in the Everest Marathon.

For the Squadron next year looks as busy as this has been, and it is already clear that, after the Falklands, 69 will cover for the remainder of 36 Engineer Regiment in supporting 5 Airborne Brigade while everyone else trains for and deploys back to Bosnia once more.

Beyond the Squadron, activity continues apace within Regimental Headquarters. In March I was delighted to be able to gather together a considerable number of senior commanders and staff from across the Royal Engineers at Minley to brief them on the new-style Regiment. The briefing was very well received and did much to dispel a number of misunderstandings about Gurkha Sappers held throughout the Corps. It also provided a chance to highlight some of the key areas of concern for future years to those who will be directly involved in decision making. At the end of May we farewelled Major (QGO) Judbahadur Gurung as Gurkha Major, sending him on pension with well earned honorary rank of Lieutenant (GCO) after two

years dedicated service at a critical time in the implementation of the new structure for the Regiment. His successor, Major (QGO) Tshering Lama is now firmly in the chair.

On 4 October, the Annual Reunion of the Regimental Association was held at Maidstone for the first time, thus underlining Invicta Park as the new Regimental home. The day began with the commissioning of Lieutenant (QGO) Dudhprasad Gurung by The Colonel of The Regiment, witnessed by current Squadron members and many guests.

Dudh Saheb is now on Nepal Leave prior to becoming Gurkha Quartermaster in British Gurkhas Pokhara. Proceedings continued with an excellent bhat, much enjoyed by the many ex-members of the Regiment, who all took great pleasure in a day out amongst today's Gurkhas with the chance to reminisce over the Regimental silver and other finery.

On 4 November I was honoured to be invited to take the salute at a Beating Retreat performed by both The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and The Pipes and Drums of 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles to mark my imminent departure as Commandant. It was a splendid occasion with light swirling mist, floodlit from above, adding a sense of drama to an outstanding programme of music. The evening continued with the first Queen's Gurkha Engineers Regimental Guest Night since the Regiment returned from the Far East. Lieutenant General Sir Sam Cowan was Guest of Honour, and he was joined by a large number of other serving Sappers, all with strong connections with the

Regiment. Finally, just a week ago I attended the Pass Out Parade of this year's recruit intake at Gurkha Training Wing and was able to cap badge 17 new Sappers and welcome them into the Regiment. It was an excellent day, and their standards are as high as ever.

At ERE a small number of Gurkha officers and soldiers continue to make a disproportionately large contribution wherever they serve: in the Gurkha Training Wing, in the Demonstration Companies, as combat engineer and trade instructors, and in other units of the Royal Engineers. At the same time, Gurkha Sappers still manage to achieve remarkable results on all courses they attend across the Army, thus spreading the word widely about their considerable talent.

We welcomed the first batch of 13 families to UK on 1 July and 2 days later they were the centre of much media attention when, on behalf of the Brigade, we held a publicity day here in Maidstone. QGE families now total 28, 24 in Maidstone and 4 elsewhere and in all respects their arrival and integration into Regimental and wider UK life has been a great success.

In summary, from a new start at the beginning of the year, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers has consolidated in its latest form and is now firmly established in its new roles. It has been another excellent year in every respect, very different from the last, and with much new

ground broken. Above all, none of the progress made has undermined that important distinction that makes our soldiers Gurkhas, with all that that brings with it. From a reflective stand point after two immensely fulfilling years as Commandant, I still find it difficult to grasp just how much change has occurred and how well our Gurkhas have coped with it. I genuinely believe that the Regiment is very strongly placed and can look forward with relish to 1998.

There are undoubtedly a number of challenges still to face in the coming months and years, but the all-important foundations are firmly in place, and radical change is hopefully behind us for a while. It has been a privilege and a great honour to have been Commandant and I leave feeling in every respect a fully fledged member of a family that accepted me most warmly as an outsider two years ago, and gave me all the support I could possibly have wished for. Thank you all for making it so. Jai QGE.

Our warm congratulations to Bob Hendicott on his promotion to Colonel.



PROFILE NEW COMMANDANT



*Lt Col M P Carter RE
Commandant
The Queen's Gurkha Engineers
(From December 1997)*

Lieutenant Colonel Mike Carter was born in 1957 and commissioned into the Corps of Royal Engineers in 1979 after gaining an Honours degree at University College, London. He is the third generation in his family to be commissioned into the Corps.

Following troop commanders tours in Germany and with 3 Commando Brigade he became Adjutant 28 Amphibious Engineer Regiment. On completion of this tour he was posted as a platoon instructor at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

After attending the Army Command and Staff Course in

1989 he was appointed to HQ BF Hong Kong as an SO2 J3. In 1992 he assumed command of 59 Independent Commando Squadron RE, and undertook amphibious and arctic training exercises and a deployment to Belize.

Following command he was appointed to the Directorate of Military Operations as a desk officer before being selected to attend the Joint Services Defence College in 1995. On completion of this course he was posted to Cyprus as SO2 J8 Plans in HQ BF Cyprus.

He was promoted to his current rank in 1996 and was appointed to the Permanent Joint Headquarters UK as the liaison officer to the United States Atlantic Command. He assumed Command of 36 Engineer Regiment and the Queen's Gurkha Engineers in December 1997.

Lieutenant Colonel Carter is married to Cathy, and they have three young sons. His family's main interest is sport, with any spare time devoted to the family dog.



PROFILE THE NEW GURKHA MAJOR



Major (QGO) Tshering Lama

Tshering Saheb has written a detailed and amusing profile of his life in the Regiment. Sadly space does not allow inclusion of it all. He describes his recruit training days in TDBC, Sek Kong in 1973 in sufficient detail to make today's Recruit Corporal wince at the political incorrectness of it all; his Combat Engineering at Perowne Barracks; being always hungry and his delight on "whole chicken" days and Fridays being curried egg day.

In 1976 he completed a Design Assistant Course in England, then a diving course, a Junior Leaders course (JLC) and was promoted LCpl. In 1979 his dream of becoming a draughtsman came true when he passed a Class 2 course, again in England, and practised his trade for a mere one year before returning to a field troop and promotion to Cpl.

A stint with the Training Wing and then a period as Section Commander on "the mother of all projects - Lantau Bridge". About this time he was spotted as a potential clerk of works and was sent on the much sought-after course in Chatham which necessitated his temporary absence from regimental football.

He writes "the sapper of today completes his trade course before his first Nepal leave. Promotion to LCpl is achievable at the 4 year point after JLC. Some of the recent promotions to Cpl were at the six year point. Soldiers qualify for promotion by virtue of passing mandatory command courses with their British counterparts in the Corps.

My only worry is perhaps they are not as experienced as the corporals of the old QGE. Those aspiring to be C of W must attend the course at the 10 year point but as there are no C of W posts within the QGE they must be capable of being employed by the RE in wider Corps posts".

In 1988 SSgt Tshering Lama completed his C of W course and for 3½ years much enjoyed the challenges of recce-ing, planning and controlling numerous construction projects in Hong Kong and Sabah.

Somewhat to his surprise he was commissioned in 1992 and appointed as a Tp QGO of 67 Sqn during which time he became Project Officer on Ex HOLDFAST in Nepal and was promoted Captain (QGO). After Nepal leave he moved to 69 Sqn as Gurkha Captain/Plant Troop Commander and, on promotion to Gurkha Major in June 1997, had medals for service in Bosnia (IFOR) and Cyprus (UN).

He completes his article with the following interesting observations - "So what challenges do I personally and we as QGE face? First of all, for us as QGE, it was a blessing in disguise that we became part of 36 Engineer Regiment at the end of 1994.

Yes, we lost our independent status and a certain freedom associated with it but it enabled our talent as Gurkha sappers to be recognised by a wider Corps and it enabled us to prove the sceptics wrong, those who had harked that Gurkhas will be a problem within British units.

We are now fully assimilated within the 36 Engineer Regiment Orbat and both the British and Gurkhas enjoy learning from each others strengths rather than criticising the weaknesses.

Our backbone now is 69 Sqn and after the last redundancy it is a young Squadron. As I mentioned earlier Cpls are being made at the 6 years service point and we have a young SNCO population too.

It is NCOs for this first level and middle management level that we must now direct our effort at identifying, selecting and improving for the next two years as they will now be called upon, more than ever, to guide and influence the rest of the younger QGE and also be the QGE ambassadors.

It is up to us QGOs and BOs to identify, not necessarily a good English speaker but a fit and robust true Gurkha, militarily able -and then impart on him the necessary

military English required by means of active BO participation in running TEWTS and Orders in English. How often we have quickly concluded that when a good English speaker presents himself to us, he will make a good NCO but only later to realize that he does not make the military grade.

The QGE Gurkha Trained Adult Male (GURTAM) is now 240 strong and including ERE. This critical mass as it is called is just sustainable. We fervently hope it does not go down below this number.

We must ensure those in ERE appointments in Corps units are of the highest standard lest someone has an excuse to do away with them. Our men, with the right leadership, guidance and training, as so far they have proved, are more than capable of fulfilling other roles in the Corps and our hope in the future is to see QGE expand, perhaps into another Squadron, but not necessarily within the same British Regiment."

Jai QGE



69 GURKHA FIELD SQUADRON'S NEWSLETTER

The start of 1997 hastened in a complete change to the hierarchy of the Squadron with the arrival of a new OC, Maj David Caulfield, 2IC, Capt Richard Wardlaw, Gurkha Capt, Capt (QGO) Damar Ghale and Chief Clerk, Sgt Nagendra Shrestha. The early part of 1997 saw the return to Nepal of the last of the soldiers affected by Phase 5 Redundancy.

With characteristic determination and enthusiasm, the men made little of the disruption and applied themselves to what has been (as ever) a busy year.

The commitment of H Tp to the AMF(L) role has resulted in the Sqn establishing a pool of over 50 men who are arctic warfare trained and competent skiers. Deployment to Norway occurs every year in early January until the end of March and this year, under the command of Capt Tomlinson, was no exception, the men demonstrating their flexibility and adaptability to the unusual warfighting environment. The men particularly appreciated the chance to try some Alpine skiing and were seen screaming down the hillside in various states of control. In the summer the Troop deployed to Norway for a construction project on Ex NORTHERN QUEST 97.

The Troop successfully completed a Range Hut and supporting facilities to an impressive standard and made the most of the long hours of daylight to play football. Lt Dal Limbu, the Troop QGO, proved to be particularly attractive to the local press which ran a double page centre spread on

the work of the Troop. The special feature on Lt Dal Limbu is rumoured to be something of a Pin-up in the local girls college !

The deployment of the Regiment on Exercise in late March marked the return of the Squadron to its warfighting role after the months spent in Bosnia honing trade and construction skills. The Exercise was phased in two parts with the first week spent at Wyke Regis revising basic combat engineering skills in preparation for the exercise on Stanford Training Area in week 2. All went smoothly despite OC 69 doing his level best to remove himself from the Exercise with an RTA on the M3.

The QM, Capt Coles, took the lessons on Surveillance and Target Acquisition to heart and made use of some slack time in Support Troop to dig in the Squadron cook tent - the first nuclear bomb proof canteen.

On return from the Exercise the Squadron immediately found itself in the throws of organising Bosnia Collective Training for 600 soldiers from over 15 different units. It turned out to be the first time that a Gurkha unit had been tasked with providing the unusual mix of administrative and instructional support.

Benefiting from their recent experiences of Bosnia the men put on a splendid effort and were praised by both the permanent staff and the trainees for their professionalism and enthusiasm. In fact the different stands gave the men the opportunity to demonstrate some early talent for Dashain with a number of the younger soldiers having to act as dubious Serb/Croats/Bosnians in various states of

inebriation! Throughout the above period the Squadron provided the Royal Engineer Detachment to the United Nations Forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP). The Detachment returned at the end of June following a highly successful tour, the Det, under the command of Capt (QGO) Tshering Lama, earning a formidable reputation both at work and on the sports field.

The highlight of the year for many was the Squadron deployment to Scotland on Ex FAMOUS GROUSE. G Troop, commanded by Capt (QGO) Hombahadur Rana, was tasked with

local communities, although the pigs in the area weren't so sure.

In their spare time the men entertained the locals with Nepali dancing whilst picking up some useful skills doing various village classics.

The last two weeks in Scotland were spent on adventure training and R+R and included the first Khud race to be run by QGE in the UK. Teams from the rest of the Brigade and the local area were invited. A number of civilian hill running teams entered and one from GTW. The race attracted a lot of public and media



Re-detachment UNICYP - December 1996 to June 1997

building a Scout Hut at the village of Tannadice, near Forfar whilst Support Troop, commanded by SSgt Sukraj Limbu, took on the job of reinforcing the shoreline of Ross Priory, a residential retreat for the University of Strathclyde on Loch Lomond.

Both projects brought immense trade training value for the soldiers concerned and the opportunity to develop sound friendships with the

attention and was won by a Gurkha recruit from GTW (who has since been recruited for QGE !). The Gurkha Welfare Trust Scotland which sponsored the event, donated a Kotimora Kukri and this was presented to the winning civilian team. The local whisky distillery was extremely generous and donated a number of malt whiskies as prizes; the winning Gurkha from 69

Squadron, Spr Dilip Rai, received a bottle two years older than himself!

The return to Maidstone at the end of July proved to be only a brief respite for G Troop who were given the immediate task of mounting the SPEARHEAD Troop as part of the Squadron's recently revised commitment to 5 Airborne Brigade.

On returning from leave the Squadron was immediately occupied with preparations for the support to TESEX 5 on Salisbury Plain, an excellent opportunity to exercise using laser simulators. Elements of the Squadron formed 2 troops, one in the engineer role and one in the infantry role and all worked extremely hard and made the most of a very demanding and highly rewarding training environment in support of 1RGJ.

Throughout that period, Capt Hom Rana and a merry band of 5 soldiers were baptised in the art of armoured warfare when they took off for Canada to take part in training on the Canadian prairie in support of 1QRL. 1 Tp and other elements of the Squadron moved straight from TESEX to provide support to the Staff College Demonstration also on Salisbury Plain.

The OC combined his Nepal trek with the Everest Marathon and took with him a team of 5 Sprs for the event. They all performed extremely well despite a deluge of snow the night before the race which made the course even more treacherous for the first 14 miles. Spr Dilip Rai was the best placed coming 6th.

On the back of such a busy Squadron programme there has been no shortage of socialising. There were sad farewells to Capts Pierce,

Tomlinson and Coles with a memorable party at Pierce saheb's farm.

The Squadron was out in force at the end of May to say farewell to the old GM, Maj (QGO) Judbahadur Gurung, as he moved onto a more relaxed way of life on retirement in Nepal. The Pipes and Drums of the Brigade conducted a Beating Retreat in his honour and the event was enjoyed by all.

As officers have moved on new ones have arrived and the Sqn has welcomed the new QM, Capt Berrill and his wife Angie and Lts Brown (H Tp) and Fisher. Lt Fisher has made the most of his exchange from the New Zealand Army on Ex LONG LOOK whilst rumour has it that the Ops Officer Capt Smyth conducted an extensive reconnaissance of New Zealand.

The year has of course witnessed farewell to a number of pension wallahs and the Squadron wishes them every success on their return to Nepal. The highlight of the year has got to be the arrival of the first wives and children to be granted family permission in the UK. There is now a bustling and active community in Invicta Park which has introduced a degree of colour and vibrancy to all Squadron gatherings.

The first of these was in October when the Squadron hosted the annual QGEA Reunion and this, of course, was quickly followed by Dashain. Both events were felt to be a great success and it represented a return to the days of Hong Kong to have the wives at Kalaratri and the children doing their very best to disrupt proceedings!

The Squadron was honoured by the presence of the Commandant

Brigade of Gurkhas in November when he visited the Regiment as it bade farewell to the Commandant at a Beating Retreat. He joined officers of the Regiment and many others still serving in the wider British Army for Dinner afterwards at an inaugural QGE Regimental Dinner.

The Squadron's piping traditions have recently been resurrected and the two young soldiers gave their first public performance under the watchful eye of their Pipe instructor and their rather more intrigued numberees who were waiting on. They did not disappoint.

Certain individuals are worthy of mention for achieving notable success in the last period. WO2 Dudhprasad Gurung was promoted to Lt (QGO) with the traditional promotion ceremony conducted by the Colonel of the Regiment, Maj Gen Pigott, in front of the Officers Mess and a number of QGEA members on Sat 4 Oct 97. SSgt Sukraj Limbu was awarded a Commendation by GOC Scotland for his Troops' project at Ross Priory in Scotland.

As this was his swansong before retirement it was a fitting end to a fine career. Finally LCpl Kamal Kapung Limbu was awarded the Bowring Trophy 1997 for his outstanding performance as a LCpl over the last 12 months. Shyabas to all !!

In January the Squadron deploys with 120 men for 4 months in the South Atlantic whilst H Tp take 40 men to Norway. That only leaves a small Rear Party to keep things ticking over for our return. 1997 has been a busy and demanding year in the lives of the men of 69; a year that the only remaining Squadron of QGE

can be extremely proud of. As always, the soldiers of QGE have committed themselves to the task at hand with an unrivalled thoroughness and determination to set the very highest standards.

Success at work, socially and in sport remains the hallmark of the Unit.
Jai 69 !

QGE TRAINING TROOP - MINLEY

Lt (QGO) Dilparsad Limbu

Various Combat Engineer Training is conducted at Minley by QGE Training Troop which is commanded by Lt (QGO) Dilparsad Limbu. In addition, Lt (QGO) Dil also commands one other British Training Troop. He recently took over from Lt (QGO) Chitrabahadur Gurung, who is now serving with 69 Squadron in Maidstone. The Troop has been very busy throughout 1997 and has successfully completed the following courses:

- a. 50 Training Party
(Combat Engineer Class 3).
- b. Basic Assault Pioneer.
- c. All Arms Boat Operators' course.

The Troop has also been very busy with Regimental Duties such as Guard Commander, and was involved in running a stand for the University Officer Training Corps Royal Engineers weekend. In addition to its military tasks, the Troop was heavily involved in organizing Ex Himalayan Sapper, an expedition which climbed MERA Peak in the demanding mountainous regions of Nepal.

50 Training Party arrived at Minley straight from Recruit Training in late December 1996. First they spent almost five weeks in 28 AEC learning Technical Drawing, Maths and English, a package which Cpl Uttamkumar Sherchan (now a Sergeant in 69 Sqn) was responsible for. Then the 10 week Sapper Training course started, and once again the dedication, enthusiasm, robustness and typical Gurkha K AidAs was there in force. Overall the newly trained soldiers proved to be a lively Troop who certainly kept the Instructors on their toes.

The Troop also ran the Basic Assault Pioneers Course from the Gurkha Infantry Battalions, and an All Arms Basic Boat Operators' course for British Soldiers. The courses were as equally eventful as 50 Training Party with the Boat Operators course being the first course the QGE Training Troop have been asked to run for British soldiers. This was very good experience for the instructors who are soon to teach British B3 Recruits, and despite the language barrier all problems were overcome to run a successful course.

Exercise Himalayan Sapper was led by the Squadron Commander Maj C S E Thackway RE who headed a team consisting of 10 British soldiers and 2 Gurkhas. Initially Lt (QGO) Chitrabahadur Gurung and later on Lt (QGO) Dilparasad Limbu were kept very busy organizing the detailed planning, unfortunately neither of them could actually go on the exercise so Ssgt Prembahadur Ale and Cpl Deepak Joshi obligingly went in their place. The main aim of the expedition was to climb MERA Peak (6476m), which is the highest

trekking peak in the Himalayas and lies in the Everest Region of Nepal. The month long exercise in September and October of this year went exceptionally well which was a challenging and successful attempt to climb MERA Peak.

The expedition was physically and mentally demanding and all members were pushed to their limits. It was a superb challenge for novices and experienced mountaineers alike. The team also had the opportunity to try white water rafting on Kali Gandaki river which was exciting and very different to trekking. Anyone who is considering organizing an expedition should think about a trip like this and make the most of a once in a life time opportunity.

1998 will soon be here and it seems as though it will be even busier than 1997 for the QGE Training Troop. But they will have to perform equally if not better than other British Troops if they are to survive within the Training establishment. They are eager and looking forward to the challenge.

GURKHA SAPPERS IN ROYAL ENGINEER REGIMENTS

*Captain Hombahadur Limbu QGE
Garrison Engineer (Electrical)
39 Engineer Regiment*

A few years ago, I wrote an article for the PARBATE entitled 'Gurkha Sappers Join the Military Works Force'. At the time there were 3 Clerks of Works and a Garrison

Engineer serving full time in the specialist teams of the Military Works Force in Chilwell, Nottingham. It was early days and we were striving hard to establish ourselves alongside our British counterparts in our newly acquired technical posts.

Today, I am delighted to report that we have achieved that goal and the Royal Engineers are now happily employing QGE sappers in various units in those technical posts once deemed the exclusive domain of the RE sappers.

SSgt Chandrasing Gurung, now accompanied by his family, is on his second tour with the Military Works Force and is serving with 519 Specialist Team Royal Engineers as a Clerk of Works (Electrical). He has had the most amazing 3 years, engaging in tasks around the globe. He has completed Operational tours in Bosnia and Rwanda with IFOR and the UN respectively, served in Canada on Ex WATERLEAP, carried out detailed engineer reconnaissances in Gibraltar, Kenya, Cyprus and project management in Belize. He is now preparing for his second trip to Kenya to oversee the electrical installation within a newly built QM/Log Sp building in Kifaru Camp.

The first (and the only) QGE Military Plant Foreman (MPF) is WO2 Nirbahadur Rana. He is currently serving with 53 Field Squadron (Air Support) in 39 Engineer Regiment. This regiment is the only regular unit that supports the RAF and the items of plant holdings within the sub-units must be every plant foreman's dream come true. He was posted into 39 Engineer Regiment on completing

the MPF course at the Royal School of Military Engineering (RSME) Chatham in May 1995. He is one of the few Gurkhas to have served in Northern Ireland and be rewarded with the General Service Medal.

To him, serving with a British regiment and having the opportunity to manage British soldiers has been an exhilarating experience.

For 18 months he commanded the Support Troop of 50 men. In his own words 'Although I occasionally missed bhat, I quickly adapted to my new environment and rapidly gained confidence in dealing with the (British) soldiers'. Somewhat different to dealing with the Gurkhas, I may add.

For a short time, the other first, and to date the only, QGE Clerk of Works (Mechanical) - SSgt Narayanbahadur Gurung, accompanied by his wife and 4 delightful children, joined 39 Engineer Regiment.

The Squadron's management welcomed them to the unit with open arms and, as the 3 older children marched off to the local school in Waterbeach Village, SSgt Narayan got on with his business. He says of his first tour as a Clerk of Works and in a British regiment 'My main responsibility in 48 Field Squadron (Air Support) is to provide technical advice and assist the Field troops on all aspects of mechanical engineering. Additionally, as the HQ Troop Staff Sergeant, I have to manage the troop and ensure that high standards of discipline and turnout are maintained the environment is friendly and I receive considerable advice and support from everyone'. With considerably more experience under his belt, SSgt

Narayan is now serving with 61 Field Squadron in 36 Engineer Regiment.

Meanwhile, 48 Field Squadron will be receiving another Gurkha Clerk of Works (Electrical) in the form of Sgt Harisharan Adhikari who is due to finish his course in February this year.

The Clerk of Works and MPF courses are extremely intensive, mentally demanding and last between 18-22 months. Some of the courses are now awarded HND qualifications.

The failure rates on these courses are normally high. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that the QGE pass record on these courses is exceptionally good - one drop out compared to 13 successes! A further interesting fact is that 6 of these went on to become QGOs and for personal reasons, one declined a QGO commission.

Currently there are 2 more QGE sappers on the Clerk of Works courses at RSME Chatham. And 2 more have been put forward for future courses.

Hence, it appears that The Queen's Gurkha Engineers will continue to provide able Gurkha technician engineers, for employment within the Corps of Royal Engineers, for the foreseeable future.



SENIOR SERVING OFFICERS OF THE REGIMENT

- Brig J A Thorp CBE, MA, psc, reds
Brig Gen Staff HQ LAND
- Brig D R Bill BSc(Eng), psc
Comd Engr Land
- Brig D R Burns OBE, BSc(Eng), psc
Comdt RSME
- Col J D C Anderson BSc(Eng),
psc (n)
Col DDOR (Engrs&NBC)
- Col J G Baker MBE, BSc(Eng), psc, Q,I
Lands Trg CMETS
- Col C W Haskell BSc, psc, aic
ACOS G1 HQ UKSC(G)
- Col J R Durance BSc(Eng), I, psc
Col Engr Ops HQ LAND
- Col M D Reynolds BSc(Eng), CEng,
Eurling, FIPlantE, MICE, C, sq
Comd MWF
- Col P A Wall OBE, MA, I, psc
Col(W) PM Tracer DGLS
- Col M A C Hughes BSc(Eng), psc
Col QMG 2
- Col G C Kershaw BSc(Eng), DipEM,
CEng, MICE, C, sq(w)
DACOS G4 (Estates)
HQ LAND
- Col R J Little BSc(Eng), sq
Ch Mission Planning, UNHQ
New York
- Col R C Hendicott MBE, MA, psc
CRE 3(UK) Div

Lt Col J A Ris BSc(Eng), psc
 SO1 Manpower & Personnel
 SHAPE (BAE)

Lt Col A S Tuggey BSc (Eng), osc
 (MAL), sq
 SO1 Ch G4 Qtg HQ NI

Lt Col G J Whitty MBE, sq
 SO1 Engr HQ LAND

Lt Col A W H H MacLeod
 BSc(Eng), psc
 SO1 RE Sldr MCM Div

Lt Col A D Harking BSc(Eng), psc, I
 CO 21 Engr Regt

Lt Col J F Wheeley MBE, psc
 SO1 G4 Infrastructure HQ 1 (UK)
 Armd Div

Lt Col I M Caws OBE, BSc(Eng)(H),
 CEng, MICE, I, C, Q, psc
 CO 25 Engr Regt

Lt Col A P Burnside BSc(Eng), CEng,
 EurIng, MICE, C
 SO1 ACE Res SHAPE(BAE)

Lt Col P A H Poole BSc, psc
 SO1(Engr) DDOR
 (Engr & NBC)

Lt Col G K Gibbs psc
 CO 33 Engr Regt (EOD)

Lt Col A M Mills BSc(Eng), psc
 SO1 DS RMCS

Lt Col J W Shanahan psc
 SO1 RE Offr MCM Div

Lt Col L S I Inge For Retirement

OFFICERS OF THE REGIMENT

Lt Col M P Carter BSc, MBA, psc,
 jsdc Comdt

Maj D A Caulfield psc
 OC 69 Gurkha Fd Sqn QGE

Capt R Wardlaw B Eng (Hons)
 2IC 69 Sqn

Capt M D Berrill QM 69 Sqn

Capt P E Smyth B Eng (Hons)
 Ops Offr 69 Sqn

Lt G A R McCallum BSc (Hons)
 Fd Tp Comd 69 Sqn

Lt A N S Brown LLB
 AMF(L) Tp Comd 69 Sqn

ATTACHED OFFICERS

Lt A F Fisher RNZE
 2Lt R I Menzies

GURKHA

COMMISSIONED OFFICER

Capt(GCO) Mahendraprasad Gurung
 SO3 G1/G4 HQ RSME

QUEEN'S GURKHA OFFICERS

Maj(QGO) Tshering Lama
 Gurkha Major RHQ

Capt(QGO) Hombahadur Limbu
 39 Engineer Regiment (UKTAP)

Capt(QGO) Damar Ghale
 GCapt 69 Sqn

Capt(QGO) Hombahadur Rana
 Fd Tp Comd 69 Sqn

Lt(QGO) Dilprasad Limbu
 Trg Tp Comd 57 Trg Sqn RE

Lt(QGO) Dalbahadur Limbu
 AMF(L) Tp QGO 69 Sqn

Lt(QGO) Chitrabahadur Gurung
 Sp Tp Comd 69 Sqn

Lt(QGO) Dudhprasad Gurung
 QM/MTO/AO BG Pokhara

Lt(QGO) Dhanbahadur Chand
 PI Comd GTW (wef 1 May 98)

PROMOTEES

December 1996 to December 1997

PROMOTION TO MAJ(QGO)

Maj(QGO) Tshering Lama

PROMOTION TO LT(QGO)

Lt(QGO) Dudhprasad Gurung

PROMOTION TO WO1

21162596 WO1

Chutrabahadur Shrestha

PROMOTION TO WO2

21163220 WO2

Dhanbahadur Gurung

PROMOTION TO SSGT

21163684 SSgt Deepak Gurung

21165960 SSgt Bhishmaraj Gurung

21166747 SSgt Prembahadur Ale

21166753 SSgt

Krishnabahadur Gurung

PROMOTION TO SGT

21165327 Sgt

Harishcharan Adhikari

21165939 Sgt Yogprasad Thapa

21166966 Sgt Himad Pradhan

21166294 Sgt

Gangabahadur Gurung

21166505 Sgt Shalikram Gurung

21167305 Sgt Uttamkumar

Sherchan

21165982 Sgt Rastrakumar Rai

21168197 Sgt Ashokkumar Khanal

PROMOTION TO CPL

21166503 Cpl Keshar Pandey

21167356 Cpl Bishnubahadur Ghale

21168185 Cpl Suryabhadur Thapa

21168496 Cpl

Ranjankumar Badgami

21168498 Cpl

Budhibahadur Bhandari

21168221 Cpl Ashok Rai

21168266 Cpl Jitman Bura

21168490 Cpl Agnikumar Thapa

PROMOTION TO LCPL

21166970 LCpl

Purnaprasad Tumbahangphe

21167477 LCpl Gangaram Gurung

21167540 LCpl Binod Rai

PENSIONERS 1997/1998

RC 1/97 (25 - 30 May 97)

21161458 WO1 Yakub Limbu

RC 2/97 (20 - 25 Jul 97)

524832 Maj(QGO)

Judbahadur Gurung

RC 3/97 (24 - 29 Aug 97)

21163218 Sgt

Sureshkumar Gurung

RC 4/97 (21 - 26 Sep 97)

21163334 SSgt Sukraj Limbu

RC 7/97 (14 - 19 Dec 97)

21165777 Cpl Kantabahadur Rana

21165908 Cpl Milan Gurung

21165967 Cpl Angpassang Tamang

RC 9/97 (21 - 27 Feb 97)

21162596 WO1

Chutrabahadur Shrestha

QGEA CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Brigadier (Retd.) J H Edwards

Reunions

Last year's reunion, held on 4th October, took the form of a lunch rather than a dinner, and was held at 36 Engineer Regiment in Maidstone. The main reason was to give members an opportunity to see the Regimental property, which is now concentrated there, and the Mess cannot cope with the numbers involved for a dinner.

There was however a secondary reason; to see whether you would prefer a lunch as our normal reunion event. This still leaves that old chestnut of where to hold the event. I think your Committee knows all the arguments, and will try to find the best compromise to please at least some of you! Enclosed is (yet another) questionnaire designed to discover preferences.

This year the main event will be the 50th anniversary reunion in Nepal in November. I do hope there will be a good turnout to meet the many pensioners who will undoubtedly attend. There will also be a lunch in July. Details of both events are elsewhere in this publication.

Deaths

This issue contains obituaries to four Brigade of Gurkhas Officers who were closely associated with the Regiment, and who have sadly died during the year. In this connection, it is obviously important that the Association should react to the death of its members and friends, but it is all too easy for the

Committee to miss notices in the newspapers. If members come to know of the death of someone connected with the Association, would they please let the Chairman or Secretary know.

Crossbelts

The Regiment does not possess sufficient servicable crossbelts to equip all its serving officers. Would anyone who has a crossbelt which he no longer requires please consider giving, selling or loaning it to the Regiment. Offers to OC 69 Gurkha Field Squadron, 36 Engineer Regiment, Invicta Barracks, Maidstone, Kent ME14 2NA; telephone 01622 767228.

Property

The Regimental Trust is now responsible for all the Regimental property, and the Mess property is concentrated at 36 Engineer Regiment. During the hiatus between the closure of the Regimental Mess in Hong Kong and the concentration in Maidstone, there were suggestions that officers who had donated items could reclaim them, or perhaps have them on loan. It is now clear that this is not possible for two reasons. The Squadron requires all the property in the Mess for its own use, and there are legal objections to disposing of, or loaning out, items held by a Trust.

Gurkha Major

Judhbahadur Gurung was replaced as GM by Tshering Lama during the year. Many members will have known not only Judhbahadur himself, but his father Khusiman Sahib, one time GM 2/6 GR, and his brother Major Rambahadur, a GCO in 2GR. Judhbahadur Sahib had a most successful career in the

Regiment, and particularly distinguished himself as GM, in setting up the new and unfamiliar arrangement by which 69 Squadron has become part of 36 Regiment. We wish him the best of good

the Regiment at Maidstone. If you wish to take advantage of this offer, you should arrange it through the GM, whose telephone number is 01622 767236. I am sure you will be warmly welcomed, but may I suggest



L to R - Bimala Chesshyre, Philip Cook, Judbahadur Sahib, Phyllis Cook, Jim Stuart, Jane & John Edwards, Sue Stuart, Harry & Alison Vialou Clark, Bill Chesshyre.

fortune in retirement, and offer Tsering Sahib our best wishes and support during his tenure of office. Your Committee bade Judbahadur Sahib farewell at a restaurant appropriately called "The Gurkha Kitchen". - *See photo above.*

Tie

At the AGM I suggested that the Association might have its own tie. Stripes seem to be more popular than insignia these days, and I asked for ideas for a striped tie incorporating some or all of the Sapper and B of G colours and spacings. So far I have had no response - any ideas?

Visits to Maidstone

The Commandant has generously said that Association members are welcome to visit the new home of

that you insist on paying for any hospitality you receive.

Need in Nepal

Some people may have heard of a new charity called Need in Nepal. Elsewhere is a statement by the Trustees of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, explaining why the NIN cannot become part of the GWT.

Perowne Trust

As at July 1997, the Trust's assets totalled nearly £54,000. Currently it is supporting 4 students studying for the Intermediate Engineering qualification, one for his Bachelor of Engineering, and one for his Masters (at the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok). In addition there are 2 Perowne scholars re-taking their IE exams; if they pass they will be supported for their BEs.



*L to R - Capt. Dalbahadur Gurung, Capt. Manilal Thapa, Capt. Jogindrasing Gurung, Capt. Milanchandra Gurung, Lieut. Surjabahadur Thapa.
(All ranks are current GRU ranks)*

THE REGIMENTAL SPIRIT LIVES IN BRUNEI!

(Ex-Capt (QGO) Jogindrasing Gurung MBE sent your Editor a Christmas letter with photo of the QGO Birthday party. An extract of this letter is reproduced below):

"On 28th September 1997 all the ex QGE officers organised a QGE birthday party in a grand manner and invited all the very senior Gurkha Reserve Unit (GRU) officers.

I gave a short speech on our Regimental history and then all the QGE officers jointly cut the birthday cake. One of our ex SSgt Pipers played the Regimental march past. This was followed by a grand buffet. It was the first time we have celebrated the QGE birthday but with so many QGE officers in the

GRU it seemed the right time, specially as this is my last year with the unit."

THE IMPERIAL INDIAN SERVICES FINAL TAMASHA

*at The Guildhall, Portsmouth,
18th July 1997*

TOM SPRING-SMYTH

With acknowledgements to The Newsletter of the Indian Army Association and The Final Tamasha Programme.

This was a day to be enjoyed without the hassle of city navigation, parking and the breathalyser so Jennifer and I hired a car with chauffeur who delivered us to the Guildhall in the morning and took us home at the end of the day.

As the words of the Indian Army Association April 1997 newsletter said: "It has been decided to keep 'Tamasha' in the title of this event so that it has a distinctly Indian 'flavour'. the event is designed not only to bring all the covenanted services together for the first and last time since 1939, but also to commemorate all those from these Isles who have served in India, and in many cases died there.

It is estimated that there may be well up to two million British graves in the sub-continent. The Tamasha is not to mark independence - that is for the newly independent countries to do - but to mark the 50th Anniversary of the cessation of British rule in those countries."

In all, the British were represented in India for nearly 350 years until we officially left in 1947. Some millions of people from these Isles lived, worked and often died there.

Few families in the United Kingdom are without some personal connection with India in the past. Our driver's father served there with the Royal Corps of Signals in World War II. On arrival at 1100 hours we joined some 960 people attending the Tamasha in Guildhall Square, where there was seating provided in front of the Guildhall steps while the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas played. It was a perfect summer day and there was a strong atmosphere of cheerful anticipation, with old friends greeting each other and much laughter. The spirit of the Indian Services was very much alive and well-just a touch older, perhaps, though you would not know it.

Just before 1200 hours the Lord Mayor, Councillor Tony Golds, a

former Serviceman and his guests arrived, followed by our excellent Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Mary Fagan and the clergy who took post by the altar on Guildhall Square. Then The Very Reverend Michael Yorke, Provost of Portsmouth, conducted the service.

A good old unreconstructed service it was. The hymns included 'All People That on Earth Do Dwell' and 'God of our Fathers, Known of Old, Lord of our Far Flung Battle Line', which we do not often hear these days, followed by two verses of the National Anthem.

The address was given by Lieutenant Colonel the Reverend Guy Armstrong OBE, 14 Punjab Regiment. Five wreaths were laid at the Cenotaph followed by the Last Post, a Pipe Lament and Reveille, after which Colonel the Viscount Slim recited the Kohima Epitaph:

*WHEN YOU GO HOME, TELL
THEM OF US, AND SAY
"FOR YOUR TOMORROW, WE
GAVE OUR TODAY".*

This was a poignant moment for the assembled former Troop/Platoon and Squadron/Company Commanders of the XIVth Army, among whom we were glad to see the former Speaker, Captain the Lord Weatherill, 19th Lancers and Lady Weatherill.

Then at 1245 hours it was time for drinks before lunch based on our regimental tables, each stocked with bottles of gin, red and white wine in generous measure, tonic water, etc.

When one remembers that officers and families from some 36 Regiments and Corps from the Indian Army alone had to be seated at their designated tables without

difficulty and fuss an immaculate seating plan was called for. It was. The KGV's Own Bengal Sappers and Miners fielded 32 officers and wives, the QV's Own Madras Sappers and Miners with some Bengal Sappers and Miners overflow 14 and the Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners 15. Although all Royal Engineers, the three Sappers and Miners groups still prefer their separate tables!

The lunch itself was of a very high order and matched by the excellence of the waiters and waitresses who served us with speed and skill and whose cheerful countenances fully matched the occasion. In another good move there were three toasts, but no speeches.

After lunch at 1445 hours everyone moved around tables meeting old friends before going to Victoria Park adjacent to the Guildhall to listen to the Gurkha Band and then join the Reunion Garden Party where a wide choice of cakes and sandwiches was served in large quantities. I actually conversed with two Bombay Sappers, such was the mood!

At 1745 hours we returned to the Guildhall for Beating Retreat and sat down on the hard stone steps - ouch!

Discomfort went out of the window when, precisely at 1800, with a crash of drum and bugle, the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and the Pipes and Drums of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles marched onto Guildhall Square at 140 to the minute and to a huge cheer.

Sounding Retreat began at 1801 - and what a brilliant performance it was. We were spell-bound with excitement, nostalgia, memories of occasions long ago and, above all, pride in seeing Indian Army

standards inherited with such confidence and verve. In all too short a time it was over. The final line in the Day's programme reads: 1835 Sounding Retreat concludes and guests disperse - freewheel.

There had been great difficulty finding a venue for The Final Tamasha until, thanks to the RIN President, Portsmouth Town Council offered suitable facilities. Also, by a stroke of good fortune the Chief Executive Officer: Special Events is a retired army officer whose father served in the Rajputana Rifles. (There used to be a quip about the Raj Banana Trifles, but forget it!) The Chief Executive Officer offered the use of the Guildhall, the Guildhall Square, the Cenotaph and Victoria Park. The organisation was outstanding and it was a great test as never before had the Guildhall accommodated such a large party for lunch.

In a final comment, it was sad that it was not possible to persuade any member of the Royal Family to attend and meet some of those who helped to produce what is so often described as "The Jewel in the Crown".

Our driver (with the Indian Army connection!) met us at the bottom of the steps. He had come early and was full of praise for the Gurkha Band. The Square was already almost empty as he drove us away, and so ended The Final Tamasha of the Imperial Indian Services, one of the great occasions of our lives, with music in our ears and all those evocative names - Hodsons Horse; Probyn's Horse; 7th Light Cavalry; The Jat Regiment; Bombay Grenadiers; Rajputana Rifles; Punjab Frontier Force; Baluch

Regiment; Dogra Regiment; 1st, 2nd, 8th, 14th, 15th and 16th Punjab Regiments; The Gurkha Brigade; Kumaon Regiment; The Sappers and Miners; and ... and ... and ...

"QUEEN'S GURKHA SAPPER"

*(An Extract from the forthcoming
History)*

EXPANSION and CONSOLIDATION 1958-62

"No-one in their right mind goes to Kluang"

The most momentous event in 1958 was the raising of the Gurkha "ceiling". It was now possible to recruit for both the Gurkha field park squadron and the third field squadron. These events did not occur without pain and effort and a certain amount of guile. For some years the trained manpower, Despite the official ceiling, had been increasing both in terms of numbers, variety and quality of tradesmen. This was to provide the reserves that enabled the Regiment to build up to four squadrons so quickly after clearance was given.

The cadre of 70 Field Park Squadron was raised in January 1959. One hundred and sixty were recruited in 1958 and, having completed their year at Sungei Patani and their combat engineer training at the Gurkha Squadron ETC, joined 67 and 68 Squadrons in 1960.

This allowed for the transfer of more experienced tradesmen to 70 Squadron. 70 Squadron was established in April 1962. The cadre of 69 Squadron was raised in December 1961.

On 2 April 1960 50 Gurkha Field Engineer Regiment disbanded and HQ The Gurkha Engineers, to include HQRE 17 Gurkha Division, formed up. On the same day Lieutenant Colonel WGF Jackson handed over command to Lieutenant Colonel LGS Thomas who became, in the tradition of the Indian sappers, the Commandant as opposed to the Commanding Officer.

Historically the era of Bowring-Jackson-Thomas must be viewed as one continuing period of evolution during which the Regiment blossomed from an incomplete and inexperienced component of the Divisional Engineers into a self contained Corps in miniature, similar to those of the Indian Sappers and Miners.

In February 1961 a major shift in policy was announced, under which there was to be substituted for the existing Gurkha divisional organisation one of three independent brigade groups. 48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade was to be based in Hong Kong, 99 Gurkha Infantry Brigade was to be based in Malaya, and a third in the United Kingdom. 63 Gurkha Inf Bde was selected to move to England but on arrival in Tidworth, with 1/6 GR and 68 Gurkha Ind Fd Sqn under command, it became 51 Inf Bde.

This change in grouping marks a turning point in the history of the Gurkha Engineers for it spelled the end of the "Regimental" concept and reinforced that of a Corps comprising a central headquarters, depot and training establishment supporting an indefinite number of independent squadrons in the field. The eighteen months from April 1961, when the first step towards

reorganization could be taken, until September the following year when the changes were effectively complete, constitute, perhaps, one of the greatest periods of turbulence in the entire lifetime of the Regiment.

Throughout this period of growth the two Gurkha field squadrons were involved in the largest engineering projects the Regiment had undertaken to date. The Kota Belud Training Area project allowed the squadrons to build up a sense of achievement and self confidence.

The squadrons showed themselves to be competent and reliable in independence and the variety and number of tasks on which they were deployed gave the Gurkha Officers ample opportunity to demonstrate their ability, versatility and capacity to take control of engineer projects.

67 Squadron were responsible for the initial reconnaissance and, after a suitable site was identified, in 1969 were given the task of opening up a route to the area. In November it was relieved by 68 Squadron supported by the plant troop of 74 Fd Park Squadron.

By the end of May 1960 the Training Area was a going concern. One major and one minor unit camp together with a Medical Reception Centre had been laid out and a gabion causeway, the Countess Mountbatten Causeway, had been constructed over the Sugei Tempasuk. 67 Squadron then returned during 1961 to complete the 1,500 yard airstrip at Kota Belud, extend Jesselton Airfield, replace bashas with Godolphin shelters, improve the metalled highway to Jesselton and improve all tracks and

roads within the training area. This work involved the building of over seven miles of thirty foot wide roadway and the construction of six Bailey bridges, twenty three concrete culverts and a concrete cattle grid. 67 Squadron returned to Kluang after building the last of the Bailey bridges in January 1962. 69 Squadron moved to the Kota Belud Training Area in November 1962.

On 13 November 1961 with a simple ceremony the ETC Kluang disappeared and its function formally transferred to the Gurkha Engineers. The organisation of the Gurkha Engineers, effective on 1 January 1962, as defined by its new establishment, was :-

Regimental Headquarters

Headquarters Squadron

67 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron

68 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron

69 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron

70 Gurkha Park Training Squadron

The total manpower allocation now reached its peak of 1,445 all ranks. Of these the field squadrons, at 285 each, absorbed 855, 300 were provided for the HQ and Training Establishment and 300 were to cover training and leave.

The main body of 68 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron, accompanied by seventeen Gurkha families, arrived at Mooltan Barracks, Tidworth on 26 May 1962 on the coldest spring day for many years. The squadron of 243 all ranks was now an integral part of the divisional engineers of 3 Division and was allocated in support of 51 Infantry Brigade, of which 1/6 GR was one of the infantry battalions. On 11 October 1962 the main body

of 67 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron left Singapore in the troopship Oxfordshire bound for Hong Kong to join 48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade. Between the 12 and 16 November 1962, 69 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron was transported in three lifts to Kota Belud in North Borneo.

The year 1962, which opened with a unique assembly of all the component elements of the new-style Gurkha Engineers for the first time in one place, ended with the three independent field squadrons spanning half the world, leaving the Headquarters and the Training Establishment on its own as "the nucleus at the Centre".

The quinquennium 1962-66 saw the Gurkha Engineers at the zenith of their fortunes; a golden age of peak strength and world wide dispersion, of professional maturity and of diverse achievement in the role for which they were cast. The first faltering steps of the infant Gurkha Training Squadron RE, through the adolescent years in Hong Kong, the growing technical experience and competence which followed the return to Malaya, led the way inexorably back to the Regiment's birthplace at Kluang.

For the next nine years this was to be its home, more properly, perhaps, its base, for the story from now becomes dominated by those of the independent field squadrons serving in Hong Kong, Borneo and the United Kingdom and on exercises and operations all over the world. However, these squadrons depended on Kluang for their trained manpower, both in terms of quality and numbers. It was from Kluang that men would go on leave

and where they would return for training. Here the unaccompanied men of 68 Squadron would rejoin for family permission.

Here Regimental kaida and the Gurkha Major held sway and here careers would be planned and promotions agreed. It was truly the centre of the Regiment. Additionally, with the absorption of the functions of the ETC, from the beginning of 1962, the Gurkha Engineers became the largest and the most important of the permanent occupants of the cantonment and found themselves in an influential position in the township and its environs.

The Regiment was now made. At Kluang life proceeded on a relatively uneventful course, the comings and goings of recruit and trade courses ensured that the squadrons were brought up to their full establishments, to carry out their various roles in UK, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

In the political arena of South East Asia a short-lived harmony was shortly to be disturbed by a new diversion. The situation in Borneo had developed during the year. 1/6 GR was put on standby during January 1962 to fly out to help in the suppression of the Brunei Revolt.

At the end of the year the whole of 51 Brigade, in UK, was on standby. 68 Squadron went first, not by way of reinforcement, but to relieve 69 Squadron, which had now been in Brunei and Sarawak for over a year (November 1962 to November 1963).

Further developments of the Gurkha Engineers will be told in the next instalment in the QGE Magazine of 1999.

CITY RISES FROM THE WASTELAND

[Sungai Besi (Sungai Beastly to some) was the first home of the Regiment. The article below tells how things have changed. I can already hear the groans of the bhurro sahibs! - Ed]

The once abandoned wasteland of the largest open cast mine in the world in Sungai Besi is now one of the region's most extensive themed resort developments - The Mines Resort City.

Tagged The Seven Wonders of Malaysia, developer Country Heights, says all its seven components will have opened by the middle of this year (1997)

Three of these components - The Mines Shopping Fair, The Mines Resort and Golf Club and The Mines Wonderland - are already in operation. The Signature Hotel Group will operate the two hotel properties in the locality.

Of these, The Mines Beach Resort, a four-star property, opens next week. The 180-room beach resort will have 30 chalet units and will offer various water-based activities. Guests can take a water-taxi to reach other parts of the development.

The second hotel, called The Palace of the Golden Horses, is an upmarket five-star hotel which will open in July and play host to the G15 later in the year. It will have 426 rooms and 59 suites as well as 2,446 sq m of conference space, 12 meeting rooms and nine f&b outlets.

The development will also have a business park, called The Mines Waterfront Business Park with office space and a retail mall with gallery and exhibition areas.

The developer pumped in RM2 billion (US\$808 million) to transform the 378.4 ha former mining land into what it now markets as a world-class tourism destination. The completion of Phase 1 of the project by mid-1997 is timely as Malaysia will host the Apec 1997 meeting and Commonwealth Games in 1998, both expected to be a boom for the domestic tourism industry.

The Mines Resort City is also practically next door to the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport at Sepang which is scheduled to open in January 1998.

"NEED IN NEPAL"

*Statement by
The Gurkha Welfare Trust
(GWT) Trustees*

A new charity called Need in Nepal has been set up by a group of mainly, but not exclusively, 10 GR Association members. Its charitable objects are to relieve sickness, need, hardship or distress and to promote education in Nepal. As a first step it intends to build and operate a cottage hospital at Dharan and then to build seven more such facilities in other parts of the country over a seven year period. Some element of fee paying would be necessary to meet the goal of self sustainability.

At their 4th December 1997 meeting the GWT Trustees considered a request from General Sir Garry Johnson (a Trustee of both the GWT and Need in Nepal) that Need in Nepal should be permitted to operate as part of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS) in Nepal and should discuss how harmonisation of fundraising in the UK could be achieved. The GWT's Trustees

accept the honourable motives of those who have established Need in Nepal and wish the new charity well. However they were unanimous in rejecting both requests for a variety of reasons, among them the following: There is nothing in the objects of Need in Nepal that is not already included in the objects of the GWT. In particular, the GWS already runs an efficient and well focused medical scheme which provides free primary care to all ex-Gurkhas and their dependants and financial assistance for secondary care to those who cannot afford to pay. The scheme, like all the other individual and community aid schemes run by the GWS, is delivered free of charge and can be modified by the Trustees as and when necessary. Advice sought from all concerned in Nepal, including the British Ambassador, indicates that permitting Need in Nepal to operate as part of the GWS would jeopardise the unique and privileged status of our operation in Nepal. The GWS is allowed to operate, via the British Embassy in Kathmandu, direct to the Nepalese Government because it is perceived as a British Government organisation providing free aid to Gurkha ex-servicemen and their dependants and communities. The GWT's Fundraising Director believes that the establishment of this new charity with objects almost identical to those of the GWT will inevitably cause confusion in the UK fundraising arena. He is adamant that it would not be in the GWT's interest to enter into fundraising discussions with Need in Nepal because it will inevitably be a competing charity. In conclusion, the GWT's Trustees wish Need in Nepal every good fortune.

However they are unanimously of the opinion that they cannot accede to either of the proposals made by Need in Nepal.

THE GURKHA MUSEUM

Curator's Update March 1998
Brigadier (Retd) Christopher
Bullock

In my report late last year, I intimated that the Museum was to lose a large tranche of MOD funding in the new financial year. This has now come to pass and £18,500 has been taken from our budget. This is the biggest cut that has been made by MOD to any Military Museum that it supports.

The logic behind it is still difficult to comprehend, as we are the one Museum serving four living Regiments and ten defunct ones. We also represent the deeds of the Gurkha Military Police, Gurkha Independent Parachute Company and other such units. Be this as it may, we have now lost our Assistant Curator which will put a considerable strain on the day to day running of the Museum.

Fortunately she is to be spared the rigors of redundancy, since she has found another appointment as Senior Curatorial Officer at the Airborne Forces Museum in Aldershot.

As you will recall, late last year the Gurkha Memorial Garden at the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum at Ampfield was opened and with the onset of spring is now coming into its full glory. The Chautara inset with the memorial stones of each of our illustrious regiments is a magnificent reminder

of Gurkha deeds over so many years.

The setting is that of a Nepalese valley and one is surrounded by azaleas, rhododendrons, daphnis and a myriad of other plants indigenous to Nepal. For those of a more contemplative nature, it is a truly delightful place to visit and I am happy to report that a number of Regimental Associations have decided to hold small reunions there. The nearby Jermyn's House is a very pleasant venue for such a gathering.

Also late last year The Gurkha Statue in Whitehall was unveiled and we were particularly glad to have been able to play a small but important part in ensuring that all the details of dress and accoutrements were correct.

We have opened a Gurkha Museum exhibition at The Harlington Centre in the middle of Fleet near to Church Crookham. It is a splendid exhibition and it is being visited by approximately 100 people a day. For those of you who find it difficult to get to the Gurkha Museum in Winchester I do strongly recommend a visit to this smaller but still extremely interesting exhibition in the centre of Fleet.

As some of you are aware Winchester's Military Museums are endeavouring to get Heritage Lottery funding in order to be able to turn the Peninsula Barracks Guard Room into a Site Interpretation Centre for the whole of the barrack area. It is a truly historic site, dating back from AD 43 when Vespasian set his camp upon this hill, progressing through to Norman castle, Wren palace and finally Victorian Barracks. We have had enthusiastic support from both County Council and City Council and

we are now processing the bid which is a time consuming and complicated business.

We were heartened to receive full Phase 2 Registration from the Museums and Galleries Commission on our first application, and thus encouraged we have now applied for the status of 'Designated' Museum given the particular uniqueness of our collection. We await to hear whether we have been successful in this initiative.

On Friday 9 October 1998 we are planning another of our Military Theme Lunches which, since it is the 50th anniversary of the start of the Malayan emergency, will be a jungle theme. Rather as last year, we will start at 10 o'clock with coffee and biscuits followed by a talk and a video, a visit to the museum and then a proper Gurkha curry from Church Crookham. Numbers will be limited to 50 as that is all we can cope with and we will be sending details out nearer the time.

The outlook is one of continued MOD reduction in its support to military museums. We are hopeful that having taken such a huge cut so early in the process, we will be spared in the coming financial year, but inevitably further cuts will work their way through the system.

For this reason we are doing all we can to generate additional capital and for this our shop mail order and mobile shop programme, strongly assisted by the hire of our Gallery room for lunches and dinners, brings in much needed funds to take the place of lost MOD funding. As mentioned before, our Gallery room is fully licensed and we have had a steady stream of institutional lunches and dinners which have paid

us well and whose members have been very happy with the ambience and character of this marvellous room. We owe much to those far sighted Trustees who were determined to have the 'Gallery' room set up in such style because it has turned into a considerable income generator.

Finally and sadly as all of you will have heard, that illustrious warrior Brigadier Birdie Smith had gone on to the happy hunting ground. We gave him much assistance with his last book 'Valour' and as one of the very last things he did before he died he arranged a most generous donation of £1,000 from the profits of Valour to the Museum.

This typically generous gesture was so much appreciated by us and he will certainly remain alive in our memories for a long time to come.

FAMOUS SONS NO.1.

Your Committee thought readers would like to have a brief life history on some of our outstanding regimental sons. It is hoped one such history will appear in each annual edition of the QGE Magazine.

HONORARY CAPTAIN (GCO) AMARBAHADUR GURUNG MBE

Amarbahadur was born in 1912, in Deopur, No 4 West Nepal, the only child of a mother who died when he was 5-6 years old. His father, who had served in 5GR, remarried. Amarbahadur was brought up by his maternal grandfather in Garrung. He had no schooling before joining the Army. He enlisted on 5 January 1931 into 4GR at Kunraghat and

went to Bakloh for 10 months recruit training and then joined 1/4GR in Bakloh. Over the next two years he never did a point sentry duty.

On his first Quarter Guard he was selected as Stick Orderly and thereafter was always chosen for this duty. (The guard invariably consisted of a Cpl, LCpl and seven riflemen. The smartest rifleman was selected as stick orderly who then remained outside the CO's office, or accompanied the great man on tours of inspection).

Amarbahadur attended an NCOs' cadre in 1933 before his first leave and with under three years service. He was promoted Lance Naik (LCpl) in 1935, Naik in 1937 and Havildar (Sgt) in 1938. He was with 1/4GR at Razmak on the North West Frontier in 1938. On outbreak of war Amarbahadur was posted to 3/4GR as a Havildar major (CSM). He was commissioned as Jemadar (Lt) 3/4GR in 1940, with less than ten years service.

Following jungle training and training in air-landing operations 3/4GR were moved to Manipur and thence flown by glider and landed behind Japanese lines in the middle of the jungle in Inwai in South Burma, as part of the Chindit forces. Amarbahadur was in a group of 14 men and 3 mules.

The battalion crossed the Irrawaddy by bamboo raft, bumped the Japanese, was ordered by General Lentaigne to break off, dispose of their heavy weapons and make for the Mogaung, some 600 - 700 miles North. En route they were resupplied by air. Just outside Mogaung they bumped the Japanese

again and were involved in a set-piece attack. Amarbahadur commanded a flank attack platoon which killed many Japanese. He was recommended for an MC but his company commander was killed the next morning and the citation did not go forward. 3/4GR was ordered to withdraw towards Machina and finally to Manipur whence it was withdrawn by air, after 7 1/2 months in jungle with no change of clothes. 3/4GR moved to Dehra Dun and started training as a lorried infantry battalion. Amarbahadur was promoted Subedar (Capt) in 1943, with twelve years service.

In Nov/Dec 1944 3/4GR moved to Ranchi in preparation for the invasion of Malaya and in June 1945 moved to Rangoon, where it stayed for three months.

In September 1945 following the Japanese surrender, 3/4GR moved by sea to Singapore. On landing, Amarbahadur's company moved through Johore Bahru and occupied a large Japanese supply depot. The battalion went on to Kluang and set up a Japanese PoW camp on the airfield. Here it remained for three months.

The Japanese were separated into two groups, those who had mistreated prisoners of war and were to be tried as war criminals and those who had not and could return to Japan. The battalion was then ordered to Batavia, via Sumatra, where the Indonesians were continuing to fight against the return of the Dutch. Amarbahadur

put in a request for early retirement in 1946. His step-mother had died, his father was too old to manage the family land and there were no other sons to take over. His request was refused. The battalion returned to Malaya.

Amarbahadur put in another request for early retirement and after much discussion was allowed to retire on 1 June 1946.

In 1949, he was re-enlisted by Colonel RAN Davidson who sent a message up to Deopur "ordering" Amarbahadur to report as he was required to run the Gurkha Transit Camp at Barrackpore!

Amarbahadur had to set up a tented camp and deal with up to 3,600 men at one time including men going on pension, redundancy, going and returning leave parties, and with recruits and re-enlistments. He was told he was in line for selection for GCO and would be joining 6GR.

In 1952 Amarbahadur heard that there had been a problem at Dashain with the Gurkha Engineers in Hong Kong. He was interviewed by Lance Perowne, then Major General Brigade of Gurkhas and was asked to give up his chance of selection as GCO and to go to 50 Gurkha Field Engineer Regiment as Gurkha Major.

Major QGO Amarbahadru Gurung joined 50 Regiment in HK as Gurkha Major in 1953 and remained as GM for the next five years. He contributed immeasurably to the standards and

reputation of the Gurkha Engineers. He was indowed with great charm, dignity and presence and plenty of commonsense and, above all, was a wise man moulded in the old tradition. He was by any account a great man and in many respects a remarkable Gurkha. He understood that an engineer regiment could not operate in the same way as an infantry battalion but had the intelligence, adaptability and patience to establish himself in, and exert his authority in, what was to him a novel environment. His were the all important affairs of kaida, dicipline, family welfare and festivals. He was held in respect by all ranks, British and Gurkha alike. He was appointed MBE in 1955.

He and Lieutenant Colonel John Bowring complemented each other in every respect and made a formidable team. In June 1958 Major QGO Amarbahadur Gurung MBE left to become the Gurkha Major of the Depot Brigade of Gurkhas at Sungei Patani. He retired on pension in March 1961, and was granted the rank of Honorary Lieutenant GCO in recognition of his services.

His son Dambersing Gurung joined QGE and is well remembered as a Nepal Cup footballer in the Regiment. His other son Rajendra Gurung joined the 2nd Goorkhas' Band. Rajendra attended Kneller Hall. He is now a Sub Inspector in the

Royal Nepalese Police in charge of a Band of 250 which includes a Military Band, Pipes and Drums, an orchestra and traditional Nepali ensemble. Amarbahadur's eldest daughter is married to a retired Inspector from the Gurkha Contigent Singapore Police. His other daughter lives in Pokhara.

After retirement Amarbahadur farmed his lands in Deopur and hosted, over the years, a succession of British officers on trek in No4 West. He started a secondary school in Deopur, has funded the building of a mandir in the village of Deopur and, together with Dambersing and Rajendra, was the driving force and main financial contributor in providing a generator and electrical supply distribution system in Deopur. This provides electricity for three hours per night.



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF THE QUEEN'S GURKHA
ENGINEERS' ASSOCIATION HELD AT
INVICTA PARK BARRACKS,
MAIDSTONE ON SATURDAY 4TH
OCTOBER 1997

Present:

Major General A D Pigott
*President and Colonel
of the Regiment*

Brigadier J H Edwards
Chairman

Colonel H E Vialou Clark
Magazine Editor

Colonel W J Cheshyre
Nepal Affairs Member

Lieutenant Colonel R F Wilsher
Treasurer

Major D A Caulfield
OC 69 Squadron

Thirty-two Members of the
Association

Colonel J N B Stuart
Secretary

ITEM 1. OPENING REMARKS BY THE COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT

1. The Chairman opened the meeting by saying how pleased he was that so many members could attend this meeting, and recorded, in particular, the apologies of Major General Bowring and Brigadier Bowen.

2. The President stated that the highlight of his year had been his trek to Nepal: he had two marvellous weeks visiting and meeting people. He had been to both Pokhara and Dharan, and had met many ex members of the Regiment. He briefly spoke about the Defence Review which was underway; he said it is too early to give any idea of what direction review would take but that he would be well placed to monitor it. Lastly he mentioned the Gurkha Welfare Trust; he was now on the management committee for the trust and he was very impressed with the work that was done by it; its strategy, its fund-raising, and its work in Nepal.

ITEM 2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

3. The Minutes of the previous AGM were passed as a true record:
a. Proposed: Col Vialou Clark
b. Seconded: Lt Col MacLeod.

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING

4. Membership. The Chairman stated that Membership was now 305, but that some members who had been dormant were re-emerging. An address list would be published

with the 1998 Magazine. Lt. Col Tomlinson stated that the Association should consider those Royal Engineers who had served or were serving in Nepal on DCRE staff. Lt Col Tuggey proposed, seconded by Maj Spottiswood, that they be considered for full Membership. The Chairman stated this would be considered by the Committee.

Action: Committee

5. Rules. The Secretary had circulated copies of the amended Rules: OC 69 Squadron stated that there were two NCOs with the Squadron who might wish to join the Association. This was referred to the Committee. Action: Committee

6. Asian Members. The President mentioned that the Pacific rim members were keen to establish a loose association of their own. Some were planning to go to Nepal for the reunion in 1998: that occasion could be used to establish that group.

7. Perowne Trust. The Chairman stated that he had asked for annual letters from the students on their progress; it was early days but he hoped the quality would improve. There were currently four students on Intermediate Engineering courses, three on the Bachelor's course and one reading for Master of Engineering at the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok.

Other Matters Arising were to be dealt with during Agenda items.

ITEM 4. ACCOUNTS AND BUDGET

8. The Treasurer presented the audited accounts for the period 1

Mar 96 to 31 Dec 96; he drew attention to a number of points:

a. The sum of £50 was sent to each of the three centres Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Dharan to assist with expenses for the Regimental Birthday celebrations. It had been agreed at the Sep 97 Committee meeting that this figure should be increased to £100 pounds.

b. Postage. The £80 spent on postage covered the distribution of the magazine.

c. Printers. This covered part payment of printing the 1997 Magazine.

d. QGEA dinner. The deficit in the dinner account had accrued over the past two years and was the result of higher than forecast staffing charges. The Committee had directed that future dinners were to be self supporting.

e. Life subscriptions. The life subscription had been raised from £76 to £85 (150% day's pay of a lieutenant with three year's seniority).

9. The Treasurer presented the 1998 budget and the five year forecast. He made the following points:

a. Dividends. The annual yield was calculated at 4%.

b. Interest. Money with the stockbroker attracts 6.48 % interest gross and was free of tax. Money in the current CafCash account accrued interest at an average of 6.42%: the highest rate paid was 6.78%.

c. Magazine. The Squadron contribution to the Magazine was set at £200 pounds per annum.

d. Post. This mainly covered the dispatch of the Magazine.

e. Printers. This was the cost of

producing the Magazine. He pointed out that the cost of producing and distributing the Magazine was approximately £2000 at 1997 prices. Expenditure would therefore always exceed income and with the investments healthy, as at present, some capital might have to be used. If the investment situation changed a different policy would have to be adopted.

f. Computer buy. This covered the grant to buy computers for the Nepal Association.

g. Reunion subsidy. £1000 was earmarked to assist with transport for QGE soldiers within Nepal for the 50th birthday celebrations.

10. Maj Whitestone suggested that the Committee should produce a long term plan for the budget, covering the need to cover the shortfall in the income. The Treasurer stated that the budget gave the shortfall but that it was not possible at present to foresee where the markets were going.

11. The audited accounts were accepted by the meeting: proposed by Maj Caulfield, seconded by Col Harvey. Copies of the audited AF N1514 and the 1998 Budget are attached to these Minutes.

12. The Chairman thanked OC 69 Squadron for taking on the task of the annual audit.

ITEM 5. THE REGIMENTAL TRUST

13. The Chairman reminded members that the Regimental Trust consisted of three appointed

members, four ex-officio members, and a Secretary:

- a. Brig Kerr
- b. Col Baker
- c. Lt Col MacLeod

Appointed Members

- d. President
- e. Chairman
- f. Commandant
- g. OC 69 Squadron

Ex Officio Members

- h. M Adler Esq

Secretary

14. He explained that the Trust primarily looked ahead for the Regiment, it looked after the regimental property, it was involved with the History, and played its part in Brigade matters.

ITEM 6. THE REGIMENTAL HISTORY

15. Capt Westmeads reported that the text of the history was being proof read by Col Campbell and Major Francis; that Col Croft was producing maps, and that Col Baker was sorting out the photos. He said there would be a delay in the previous programme but that he planned to publish in time for the 50th anniversary. He said that his aims were to produce a high quality book which all members would want, and which collectors and museums would also buy. He spoke off his negotiations with Leo Cooper, Arrowhead, and MPG over the publishing: each offered different conditions and terms. He finished by exhorting members to sell at least two books each.

ITEM 7. THE MAGAZINE

16. The Chairman congratulated Col Vialou Clark on a successful first Magazine. The Editor outlined his plans for the 1998 Magazine saying it would be similar in appearance to this year's and that he would again concentrate on family news. He said that he would target a third of Association members in a Jan 98 flyer and he asked them to reply in time for him to produce the magazine in April. He would be away from 1 Nov 97 until 1 Mar 98 but he would like any articles, preferably on disk, to be with him by 28 Feb 98.

ITEM 8. NEPAL REUNION 1998

17. Col Verschoyle stated that the reunion had slipped because of Dashera dates. He considered the cost previously estimated (£1450) was optimistic; the GTR reunion had cost in the region of £2000 per head. At the latest count 58 members were interested, not including DCRE staff, many of whom had shown interest and were welcome to join. There was discussion about the Berlin Infantry Brigade fund; the Chairman stated this was available to serving soldiers only but covered any welfare type project. Serving members of the association might like to investigate.

18. The programme remained unchanged: to gather in Kathmandu and hold a mini reunion, travel to Pokara by air-conditioned bus, and then to have two days of functions there.

ITEM 9. NEPAL MATTERS

18. Col Chesshyre stated that the Regimental Association in Nepal was well advanced, rules were being drawn up and objectives agreed: it was to be a sister organisation which was self supporting. The President was to be Hon Capt Bhimbahadur Gurung, Vice President was to be Hon Lt Bharatsing Limbu, and three centres run by Hon Lt Hukumraj Thapa, Hon Lt Lakpa Bhotia, and Hon Lt Kharkabahadur Limbu at Kathmandu, Pokara, and Dharan respectively. It was still planned to have a data base for which the £2000 computer funding had been earmarked. The last GM was planning to spend some time sorting the organisation.

ITEM 10. GBA FUNCTIONS

19. The Secretary gave details of the forthcoming events:

a. Field of Remembrance and Annual Committee Meeting 1997 - Thu 6 Nov 97. He would attend.

b. Annual Reunion at RMA - Sat 6 Jun 98 (not 16 May as previously advertised).

c. Friends of the Gurkha Museum AGM and Tea - Sat 3 Oct 98.

d. Field of Remembrance and Annual Committee Meeting 1998 - Thu 5 Nov 98.

e. Annual Dinner - Thu 5 Nov 98.

ITEM 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

20. Maj Spring-Smyth spoke on a number of Matters:

a. He was sad that the Regimental reunion clashed with that of the Bengal Sappers and Miners, and he tendered apologies particularly from General Sir George Cooper.

b. He mentioned presentation property, in particular pipe banners; Col Malcolm Campbell had asked him to inquire whether pipe banners could be returned to the presenters as they were of particular significance. The Chairman stated that the Trustees had stipulated that, while The QGE existed, all property which had been presented to the Regiment belonged with the Squadron. Hence the banners must remain at Maidstone.

c. He described the work being undertaken at the Hillier Arboretum, Romsey to make a Gurkha Memorial Garden with a Chautara as the central feature. This would have all the Regimental cap badges of the Brigade of Gurkhas and would be surrounded by Nepali plants, many of them botanical treasures; the work being done was of a very high standard and the end result should be excellent. The Kadoorie had funded the project. The opening would be on 15 Nov 97. The chairman told the meeting that Tom Spring-Smyth had himself been instrumental in producing the very exciting project at Romsey; he

thanked him very much for that hard work.

21. QGEA tie. The Chairman suggested that there might be a case for a QGEA tie. He considered that one which incorporated RE and BG colours in stripes might be more in keeping with the 1990s. Members were asked to give the idea some thought.

Action: All members

22. Reunion Lunch and UK Reunion 1998. The Chairman explained the various reasons why there had been a change to the previous practice for the reunion which was being held as a lunch rather than a dinner and asked for members' reactions to the day; he thanked the Squadron for their hard work. He also asked for thoughts for 1998 as he thought that there would be demand for a UK reunion as well as the Nepal one.

Action: All members



FAMILY NEWS

IAIN ADAMSON 1993-95

Iain served with the Regiment in Hong Kong between August 1993 and July 1995, primarily as the newly formed Support Troop Commander with 67 Squadron. After a very happy and enjoyable 2 years he was sent on JCSC and then posted as 2IC of 65 Field Park Squadron in Hameln. Amongst the highlights of the posting were a 2 month exercise in Canada and a 6 month tour in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia, where he was able to practice his Nepali with soldiers from the rifle regiments. It was to Iain's surprise when he was offered the chance to serve with 69 Squadron for 4 months in the Falkland Islands, starting in January 1998. Sadly the offer fell through when he was extended in Hameln for 6 months to command 64 Headquarters Squadron. He is due to leave Germany in May 1998 when he will be posted to Hermitage.

JOHN AND MAUREEN ALLEN

1949-56, 1958-62, 1964-65

John and Maureen live a quiet life in Northumberland; Maureen is now back to full health after a knee replacement followed by an infection which lasted almost 18 months. They finally returned to Corbridge where they bought a dwelling on the outskirts of the village more suitable for retirement than the farm, but large enough to accommodate the whole family when necessary. John is involved in the game fishing environment, the Atlantic Salmon Trust etc and is on the committee of various fishing syndicates and the British Legion. Maureen, still a staunch supporter of the



Conservatives and the RNLI, is happy with only a small garden in which to 'potter'. Deidre has now lived in South Africa for 21 years, is unmarried, runs a flourishing promotions business based in Jo'burg and travels extensively. Recently she dined with Hon Lt (GCO) Hukumraj Thapa who was part of a Nepalese delegation in Durban. Patrick is a free lance Defence Correspondent. He goes to all the places from Bosnia to the Gulf, Falklands and at present is in the Arctic. He and his wife, Elly, live near Bridport. They have no children. Michael, his wife Dorothy and son Hugh (now 13) live in Toronto. He gave up his job flying with World Racehorse Transportation and now works for a big haulage company but with both feet on the ground. Corbridge is on the river Tyne 18 miles west of Newcastle and on the junction of the A68/69 so they are well placed for those travelling North or South and are always delighted to welcome visitors.

JOHN AND JUDY BAKER

1971-76, 1980-82, 1987-90

John and Judy Baker are still at Shrivensham, although John handed over as COS last September. Both are struggling to learn Korean, John

in London and Judy near Bath, as John takes up the DA's appointment in Seoul in October. A 3 year tour in Korea is an exciting if daunting prospect! The girls are growing rapidly. Alexandra is at Marlborough College and takes her GCSEs this year. Victoria is at



Walhampton, just outside Lymington, still not totally convinced that school is something to be taken seriously. She should follow Alexandra to Marlborough in September 1999, fingers crossed. Visitors to Korea will be most welcome; spring or autumn are the best times to go.

DAVID AND GAY BILL 1978-80, 1981-83

The Bills are very happily ensconced in Salisbury having moved there just before Christmas. Gay is now more than half way through her fine art degree course at Farnham and is producing some seriously avant garde stuff! Jamie takes GCSEs this summer and is thriving at Radley. Hopefully Edward will join him there

this September. Sophie is currently a day girl at Leaden Hall in The Close at Salisbury but is keen as mustard to board - much to Gay's chagrin. Widget, the Jack Russell, is a recent and very popular addition to the family.

HANK AND JULIET BOWEN

Hank and Juliet continue to live a full and active life in Wallingford without any paid employment. Juliet had a total knee replacement at the Nuffield in Oxford in May 1995. Nevertheless she plays golf and tennis and managed to skip up the hills of Nepal! They go sailing most years. Hank helped Tony Ricketts move his boat through France in June 1995, since when both of them have had two marvellous trips with Tony sailing on the West Coast of Scotland. They have been to Malta, where Juliet visited her birthplace which she had not seen since she was 8 months old! They have also been to the Costa del Sol. Hank won second prize in the Hungerford Golf Club draw which allowed them to stay in a luxury apartment in Estopona. They do not wish to see the Costa del Sol again! Their major trip of the last few years was a return to India and Nepal in October 1997. They went first to India to attend the 150th anniversary of Hank's old school in the Shimla Hills. More than 1,600 post-1947 pupils and some 30 pre-1947 old boys and girls, mainly from UK, attended with some from Australia and Canada. They then went on to Nepal for nearly four weeks staying first with Amarbahadur Gurung's family and then to Bhairawa to call on Deobahadur Thapa. Both were in very good fettle and are looking

forward to the 50th anniversary celebrations. They spent four days in Pokhara staying at the hotel run by ex-Sgt Gambahadur Gurung QGE and his wife. They visited Hukumraj Saheb's village of Yangchok and met his mother, the widow of Major (QGO) Narbahadur Thapa MVO. Hank had the honour of cutting the tape at the entrance to the school at Thulsowara being built by Tom Langridge's Pahar Trust. Tom, Chandrabahadur and Purnabahadur are doing a really magnificent job.

In Kathmandu they attended a memorable lunch with ex QGOs in the Mess at Jawalakhel with, inter alia, Milanchandra Gurung, Sunar Gurung, Bhimbahadur Gurung, Hukumraj Thapa, Chitrabahadur Thapa, Hombahadur Sen, Embahadur Gurung, Indrakamal Tamang, Bharatsing Limbu, Bhimbahadur Gharti, Judbahadur Gurung, Lakpatchshering Bhotia and Manikumar Pradhan. Major Lewis who had been the UEO in Hong Kong was also there.

Their three children are still unmarried and lead very full and independent lives. Clive continues with his expanding Middle East business. Claire became self-employed for a year in the video and computer games industry. She is now marketing manager for the children's charity Barnado's. She had a highly successful trip with Op Raleigh to Belise as project manager for a school building. Paul is becoming well established as a barrister and, together with girl friend, has bought a flat in Hammersmith. Hank's history of the Gurkha Engineers is nearly ready for the printers and should be published in time for the 50th anniversary.

ROBBIE AND MANDY BURNS 1994-95



"Firstly, I should say that I feel a bit of a fraud writing to the QGE Magazine with 'Family News', having never served in Hong Kong or in a Gurkha Squadron. But the Editor bullied me into it and besides, my brief period as Commandant in 1994-95 whilst commanding 36 Engineer Regiment was a real, unexpected, and very special highlight - pure joy. The tour was topped off with a short trek to Nepal with Mandy, accompanied by the then GM, Judbahadur Gurung who ensured that the trip was the most exhilarating and fascinating we had ever undertaken. It was a truly awesome experience and left us completely overwhelmed. Since then, we have returned to reality. Following Maidstone, Mandy, Sam, Jessie and I have spent 2 years in Herford, including another tour to Bosnia for me. The children are now well established at Dean Close Junior School, Cheltenham during the term time. A move to Chatham before Christmas has given the family a little more opportunity to be

together. Who knows, one day I might see Sam on a sports pitch! It was a pleasure to discover Mahendra Gurung working hard in an office below me when I arrived. With 69 Squadron firmly in the Garrison boundaries, we hope to keep in touch with QGE news. Talking of which, great news about Tom Langridge's MBE. Never more deserved."

BRIAN CAMERON
1956-61



"Since retiring my living seems to have taken three routes, but all linked by my former service. First, the memories and interests are evident in the association of my Batch, No 14. We keep in touch and meet once a year for lunch. All our members are traceable, even the Malaysian officers, one Selvarajah retired as a major general and lives in Kuala Lumpur, and the other Kim Kong, son of our regimental tailor in KL, is a hotelier tycoon resident in British Columbia. From my Batch no less than five QGE officers served in the Regiment, the Johns - Getley, Petty and Speight, Chris Thompson and myself. Alongside us was Peter Spinks with plant support. Later,

Roger Eagle was DCRE Dharan. Is this a record, I ask? Secondly is sailing, learnt and practised as a soldier, with the Royal Engineer Yacht Club. Most of my time, apart from business, is now spent yachtracing on the Medway and Thames estuary, under the burgee of the RYC or Medway Yacht Club. This often brings me into contact with QGEA members as the two disciplines seem to be complementary. And thirdly, there is family, which started with a regimental marriage in Kluang, and ended some years later leaving two children Claire-Louise and Angus, now almost in middle life. Both seem to have an academic bent. Angus is fighting hard to get a PhD in Industrial Biology at the South Bank University. He also seems obsessed by motor-cycle racing, in the pits, thank goodness, rather than on the machines. Claire-Louise took her degree in Sociology and works as a researcher at Cambridge. She has also experienced the practical side and, with her partner, Ed Booth, with whom she was at school in Galloway, has produced one son(3) and last December, identical twin girls. He also produces, in his case TV serials, such as Coltranes recent Channel 4 series on engines."

DAVE AND ANNE COLES
1983-85, 1992-97

After four and a half years of continuous service with the Regiment, firstly as the Resources Officer in 70 Sqn and more recently as the QM of 69 Sqn, Dave moved on in June 97 to become the QM/Res Offr of 62 (Cyprus) Sp Sqn. He is not sure if the sunshine posting is to see if he can get it right the second

time around or if it is rest and recuperation. Anne, as always, stepped immediately into a job and is busy at Dhekelia Primary School where she loves every minute of it. During her spare time she looks after Dave and two dogs Rommel and Monty. She also finds time to jet about in their speedboat. The three children have all flown the nest and happily settled in North Yorkshire. Jane is married with their only grandchild Matthew, who is just three and who is his grandma's pride and joy. Jane has continued her secretarial career. Andrew is a Training Officer working for the Royal Mail in Leeds and Stephen, also married, is a Sales Manager in Harrogate, following his 7 years service in the RMP. Dave is still swimming and playing water polo and unbelievably was the leading goal scorer for Dhekelia Garrison this season! Just prior to leaving Maidstone Dave and Anne managed a 3-week holiday in Nepal, trekking on the Annapurna trail. They were extremely pleased to see so many old friends but special mention must go to Hon Lt (GCO) Hukumraj and Capt Damar Ghale (who happened to be on leave at the same time), for their hospitality. One of the main reasons for going to Nepal was to visit Dave's official trek guide from Feb 84, his very good friend Capt Hom Sen. Although they managed to talk on the phone they did not get to see each other. (Next time Hom!)

PHILIP AND PHYLLIS COOK

1966-71, 1977-79, 1985-87

Late February found Phil and Phyl Cook skiing with friends in Colorado. Anyone who likes skiing in powder

snow on un-crowded and challenging slopes but hasn't been over there yet, really should try it - the scenery is superb, the food (apart from breakfasts) and wine are excellent and the natives are friendly, polite and understandable. Back home in Tunbridge Wells, their Georgian house is just about finished after 4 years of renovation work. Phil is kept far too busy with the chairmanship of 3 companies and his duties as a magistrate whilst Phyl, having cut down on her work as a director of the family firm, Ashton Wingate Ltd, now finds herself



inundated with upholstery and soft furnishing commissions. Stewart (28), having left QGE, read an MBA at City University and has now started his own business in the leisure industry. Sasha (27) joined the family firm a couple of years ago when it acquired a Maidstone company and she has turned it into the group's most rapidly expanding office. She now plans on going back to university part-time to take a masters degree and qualify for RICS membership. Finally, Simon (22) will, it is hoped, graduate this summer and then start earning a living.

PAT AND TASH COXEN
1992-94

Having both completed a two year tour in Northern Ireland, Pat and Tash returned to sunny Chatham in February 1997, Pat as SO2 G2/G3 pending departure from the Army in late 1998 and Tash as a member of the rapidly growing 1st (UK) Civilian Division. Life is treating them both fairly well; Tash is thoroughly enjoying her new life as a Human Resource Manager with News International (free copies of The Sun for all) and Pat is currently attempting to break the Army record for taking time off to play sport (currently held by full time sailor and part time soldier, Andrew Mills). They still have no children but have an extremely fat cat.

JOHN AND SUE CROFT
1961-64

"We continue to enjoy living in our cottage in the Hampshire Hangers at East Meon. We have become involved with the usual village activities including Parochial Church Council, Garden Club, Village Fete and an annual trekking event in the hills around us called "Hooves, Heel's and Wheel's" which takes place in the Autumn and is open to the public. The desk top mapping continues steadily with sailing guide production extending this year from the East Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. The field work has certainly become more exotic. Sue continues nursing when we are not sailing. This involves her in a couple of clinics at a number of hospitals in the Portsmouth area. Contrary to expectations both of our sons joined the 9/12 Lancers and are currently serving as troop leaders in Bosnia

but wisely in different Squadrons. They are due home in June, then off to Canada later in the year for several months. We note that, co-incidentally, they follow the sons of other Officers of our Regiment who have served in the 9/12 Lancers."

ROB AND MARGARET CROSS
1986-88

Having left the Regiment in 1988 Rob was lucky enough to find himself, 2 years later, in Canada with 69 Squadron



on a construction project. It was like coming home! Later, a posting to Kathmandu was requested and granted. They then spent 3 wonderful years in Nepal from 1991-94 with Rob running the Garrison Works Office and Margaret the Royal Nepalese Household Cavalry! No joking! Her work opened all sorts of doors and added significantly to their enjoyment of the tour. She received a CBF Hong Kong's Commendation on the recommendation of the Ambassador! They returned in 1996 for a trek with friends and are planning to return again this year. Since retirement Rob has spent a while with a local authority and has become a civil servant with the Defence Estates Organisation, while Margaret is giving talks, illustrated with Rob's slides, to groups about their experiences. They spent

Christmas visiting their elder daughter, Alison, and son-in-law, in Botswana/Namibia. Carolyn is working on a farm in the southwest. They hope to see many friends in Nepal later this year.

LT GEN SIR HUGH AND LADY CUNNINGHAM

"It is with some hesitation that I put pen to paper. I was never a line Gurkha; Indian Army and in a Brigade with two Gurkha battalions, 3 Div with a Gurkha Squadron under



command and lastly to my great delight Colonel, Queen's Gurkha Engineers. It all adds up to the fact that not many of you know very much about my family. The most likely member is my youngest son, Richard, who served for some nine months with the QGE in Hong Kong and who loved every moment of his short tour. Now no longer a brash 19 year old he is a much married man and the father of a pigeon pair. He lives in an enchanting house in Leicestershire. Some five years ago he left the City and with a great friend started up an electronic business. By hard work the two have turned this business into a great success and I have every hope that Richard will shortly be in a

position to keep me in the comfort to which I have made him accustomed! As for myself life goes on and so do the years! My wife, who some will remember, died in early 1992. I married again some two and a bit years ago. Zoe has now been to two Minley Tea Parties so she too is being Royal Engineer (and to a small extent QGE) indoctrinated. We will both be at Minley in June and look forward to seeing a number of you then."

ROBIN AND EMMA EDWARDS 1981-84

Robin and Emma live in Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire with their two children, Alice (7) and Arthur (5). Robin is a Business and Finance Consultant and Emma a Therapeutic Massage and Reflexology Practitioner. Robin retains links with The East End of London, where he lived for eight years after leaving the Regiment and is Chairman of the Trustees of a Community Watersports Centre in Shadwell and Treasurer of (and dives with) The East London Branch of The British Sub Aqua Club.

ANTHONY AND SHARON FRANKLAND - 1987-89

Tony is now working for The Boots Company in Nottingham. He has been there since leaving the Army in 1990 and is currently employed as a Business Development Manager in the manufacturing division of the company. Tony is now married to Sharon and they have two children so far. Jack is two and Cassia was born just before Christmas 1997. The Franklands would be delighted to hear from any of their old contacts.

MARK AND JACQUI FREEMAN
1983-85

Mark left the Army in 1992 after Loan Service with the Royal Brunei Armed Forces. His final months in the Army were spent with the RE TA in Stafford whilst Jacqui set up home in Lincoln. Both Mark and Jacqui decided that they wanted to 'go it alone' and set up their own businesses. After much luck, and the Freeman ability to land upright, the two moved away from self employment and Jacqui became Chief Executive of County Life, a Lincoln based publishing company, and Mark became Project Manager for the Institute of Environmental Assessment. Jennifer (8) and Miles (7) settled into the local school and life in Lincoln. The family lived under three different roofs until finally buying a house in Lincoln close to the Cathedral. In the summer of 1996 the Freemans decided that they had made the transition, settled into 'civvy' life and it was time to look for new challenges so Mark applied for an environmental job with The British Standards Institution (BSI). Since joining BSI as Operations Manager Mark has been promoted to Manager Technical and Certification Services. In March 1997 they bought a house in Sunninghill and, after much building work, have settled into village life. Jacqui managed the building work and is now handling the PR and marketing and sales in the SE of an educational product for secondary schools. The Freemans stay in contact with Steve Evans who lives in Sussex. Some good friends and neighbours in Kwok Hing Villas, Mark and Christine Daniel, live nearby and generously provided

an operating base from which to select and purchase a house.

GRAHAM AND SHEILA GIBBS
1981-83

"Once again the magazine catches the Gibbs on the move. For the past 2 years I have been working (!) at PB7. I began working at Stanmore but in anticipation of the move to Glasgow we opted for a quarter in Warminster, close to Rebecca and Jamie at school. The last 2 years of weekly commuting has, frankly, been hell but at least we have seen the children most weekends and enjoyed their activities at school. We are now off to Wimbish and I am looking forward to the excitement and challenges of commanding 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD). Sheila hopes to continue nursing on a part-time basis and David (now 6) is looking forward to his new school. The quarter has eight bedrooms and so we have plenty of spare for friends to stay. Unfortunately you will have to run the gauntlet of the main gate and guardroom but please do not let that put you off!"

PETER AND JULIA HARVEY
1957-60

"Very good to see so many at the Maidstone lunch in September. I even managed to find a silver ring for Julia! I went on a tour of Rajasthan (the tourist circuit) with daughter Carrie last December. The highlight of our visit was a 3 day celebration with the Central India Home at Pathankot, a large Indian Army cantonment. 36 descendants of former British officers attended and were very warmly welcomed. Carrie enjoyed seeing her grandfather (my father's) picture hanging in the

Mess. Julia is flourishing. We both enjoy having 3 grandchildren and listening to son David producing the BBC's World at One occasionally."

ADRIAN AND DAWN HAYES
1986-87

Adrian left 7GR in 1993 after a 2 year loan service appointment in Oman and, following a full time MBA, went back to the Gulf in 1995 to work for BICC Cables in Dubai in the UAE. He is now the company sales manager for which he travels extensively throughout the Middle East and Asia. Apart from work he is still active in most sports, particularly triathlon and climbing, and is taking part in the Discovery Channel Eco-Challenge adventure race in Morocco this October as part of Team UAE. Adrian and Dawn married in 1989 and, having worked in Hong Kong and Oman, Dawn is now working as the marketing manager for IBC Conference in Dubai.



KEN AND CHRISTINE HAZARD
1986-89

Ken and Christine are now well settled in Weymouth, having been there for just over 5 years. The rest of the family are now firmly encamped in Bristol. Jeanette who

has now been married to Andy for 2 years is a Ground Controller at Bristol Airport. Susan, married to Paul, is a full time Mum to our three granddaughters Charlotte 8, Grace 7 and Madelaine 4. Adrian married Michelle Hall (daughter of Keith and Violet Hall, Keith was RQMS, QGE 85-88) 7 years ago and he is now a Police Officer in the Avon and Somerset Police whilst Michelle is working for a local Estate Agent on the Property Management side. Since retiring Ken has been Deputy Commandant, at the old RE Bridge Camp now renamed Wyke Regis Training Area. Membership of the local Rotary Club takes up a great deal of their time and in some ways replaces Mess life which Ken and Christine both missed. They have a lot of fun and in the process raise funds for charity to help others less fortunate. As President of the Melcombe Regis Club this year Ken has asked Tom Langridge to speak soon to the club about The Pahar Trust when it is hoped to make a donation to this charity from club funds. The house refurbishment is now about 85% complete with the kitchen as the last major project. They would welcome any old friends.

DAVID HOWIE 1970-72

"Following voluntary redundancy in 1994, I had a temporary job administering the evening classes at Farnborough Sixth Form College until being appointed as an RO3 at RMAS in June 1995. Since then I have been planning the Junior Term programme in Old College, organising the resources to support the programme and dealing with all aspects of adventurous training affecting the Junior Term.

Canoeing has developed at RMAS since my arrival and the RMAS Canoe Club regularly takes part in Land Command and Army competitions in all disciplines and usually supplies members for Army teams. As well as my commitments to the RMAS CC I was coach to the GB Junior Development Squad from 1993-97 and since 1996 have been coach to the Artists Rifles Canoe Club in their preparation for the annual Devises to Westminster Canoe Race. For the last few years I have also been winning medals at the National Championships Regatta over 500m and 1000m in the Veteran Class."

GENERAL SIR WILLIAM AND LADY JACKSON



"When we left Gibraltar in HMS Fearless in the autumn of 1982, everyone warned us that we would be busier than ever in retirement. This is still true, even though I am an octogenarian and Joan is not far off joining the 80s Club. Afraid the pundits might be wrong, I re-joined the Cabinet Office Historical Section; wrote shadow leaders, military book reviews and obituaries of senior military officers for the Times; and published eight new books, including The Chiefs. It was all change in 1995 when I had a stroke, followed two years later by Joan's, which was slightly less severe in that she can

still drive, but we both walk with sticks - her's in her right hand and mine in my left! Meanwhile, our family has been making us proud of them. Nigel left the Green Jackets and is now an aircraft Captain commanding Boeing 767s on the trans-Atlantic and Australian runs. Rosemary's two children are excelling. Grandson John goes up to Clare College, Cambridge, in September as a Music Scholar; and is filling in his gap year as the Organ Scholar at Salisbury Cathedral. He conducted the Girls' Choir at the Christmas Eve Midnight Mass shown live on BBC1. Granddaughter Kitty takes her 'O' levels this year and is expected to do well. She is an enthusiastic canoeist at Guildford High School for Girls."

ALWYN AND GAY JENNINGS-BRAMLY - 1976-78

Alwyn re-married just over 2 years ago so now has another 'family' consisting of Gay and her daughter, Katherine, who has a partner, Andrew, her own son, Adam, and their son Peter. Aren't families getting complicated! Gay was herself a Sapper wife for 10 years so has quite a few friends amongst us. Living in Bisley allows easy access to Gay's work at Chertsey hospital. Alwyn still works largely at home on computers. Thankfully all going well enough to allow holidays in the sun.

ROY AND JEAN JURY 1972-75

Roy and Jean returned to Jean's beloved Scotland for Roy's last posting before retirement. Jean's first choice was to go home to Fife but because of Roy's job they settled for Moodiesbiurn which is about twenty miles north of Glasgow. On

final retirement Roy stayed with the military by becoming the PSAO of 124 (L) Field Squadron at Coatbridge. Roy was finally eased out in 1989 after a total of 44 years military service. Since then Roy and Jean have managed to use their retirement to the best of advantage although in the past two years Jean has not been in good health and they have had to slow down a little. Gina has also retired to Scotland and with her husband and two children are living in Glenrothes. Matthew their grandson has had a few games of Rugby for the under 18 Scotland Squad, so perhaps Roy will be the proud grandfather of a Scotland prop one day. Roy had the opportunity to visit the Regiment before retirement. He took the 71 Regiment's Pipes and Drums on a visit to Hong Kong.

TONY AND LORNA KERR

Tony retired in January 1997 having been extended for a few months beyond his 55th birthday. He and Lorna are enjoying living in their own house which, although they built it in 1985, they have only managed to occupy for two brief periods of eight or nine months until recently. Their children, who will be 29 and 27 respectively this year, are both doctors. Sean is training to be a consultant anaesthetist and is working in Worthing. Nicola is a Senior House Officer in London (Chase Farm) and is also considering specialising in anaesthetics having completed her MRCP later this year. Lorna has retired and is enjoying golf (often), bridge (not often enough) and her garden. Tony has not been allowed to retire and is having fun as

an RO in the officer recruiting world. The enjoyment is in inverse proportion to the salary! He is the Army University Liaison Officer for universities in London and East Anglia.

JOHN AND FEE KNOWLES 1968-72

The Knowles have moved back towards the West (Wiltshire) after ten years in Sussex and are greatly appreciating the change. John is still Chairman of a small group of manufacturing companies involved in electro-optics and hoping to make some money out of it eventually. Fee is trying to get a rather ugly house in a stunning location into a fit state for visitors to stay. Once this is finished she hopes to get a job similar to the one she had as a manager in the Social Services. Hugh is in his third year at Edinburgh and Jessica is in her gap year. Both children have kept in touch with Nepal. Hugh worked for Water Aid based in Katmandu and then was project manager for the Scottish Universities HELP programme in Nepal where he raised the finance and then built an extension to a school in Thimi. John has just finished a stint as Secretary of the Gurkha Welfare Trust (South East Region) and is hoping to become involved in the South West Region in due course. Visitors are definitely welcome as the Knowles are close to Junction 17 of the M4.

MIKE AND JANE LAW

1981-84, 1986-88, QGEL0 1988-91
The Laws returned from the Sultanate of Oman in early 1997 having had an outstanding time. In addition to advising the Omani

Army, Mike was honoured to be invited to Dasheria each year held by the 80 Gurkhas (5 ex QGE) working for the Sultans Special Forces. Last year Mike returned to Hong Kong visiting 67 Sqn and tracked down Malcolm Peart!, then too Nepal where he spent a night of drinking and reminiscing with two former GMs; Kharakajang and Hukumraj in Pokhara.

Lakpatchering Bhotia also could not have been more welcoming and helpful in Kathmandu. Jane and the children Jenny (6) and Matthew (4) flew home and Mike drove home from Oman for a final adventure before coming down to earth with a bump as 2IC Engineer Regiment in Hohne.

RICHARD AND VAL MARRIOTT 1961-67

Richard Marriott, newly OBE'd, retired from BT, where he was on the Executive Committee, with unlikely title of Director, Office of the Chairman and Chief Executive, in December 97. He is doing a little light 'ambassadorial' work for the company in 1998, notably in India, where, as with Singapore, he has been 'godfather' to BT's ambitions.

The Singapore connection led to three enjoyable years on the Singapore - British Business Council.

He is Honorary Colonel of a specialist TA Signals Squadron. Val is much involved with music charities, being Chairman of the Chamber Concerts Association of Wimbledon and on the Board of the Dartington Summer Arts Foundation.

No 1 daughter Alison is a doctor (currently SHO) based in Bristol; James is an Editor with Virgin Publishing and Caroline is reading Biological Sciences at Edinburgh



University. Richard and Val plan to move from Wimbledon Bathwards this year, and also plan to spend more time at their Pays Basque farmhouse, *twixt mer et montagne*.

PS. Richard is now a more than happy member of Carl West-Meads' racehorse syndicate; there are still a couple of shares left so if anyone's interested please contact Richard or Carl direct. [No advertising please, Richard - Ed]

DENIS AND ANN O'KEEFE 1987-89

Denis and Ann left the Regiment in 1989 after a most enjoyable tour as the Paise Sahib of Perowne. They have spent the next nine years in Germany, shared equally between Osnabruck, Rheindahlen and latterly with the Headquarters of the 1st Armoured Division at Herford.

Denis has recently been promoted and as a result has changed employment completely. He is currently the Quartermaster for the Adjutant Generals Corps Centre at Worthy Down in Hampshire. He now wishes that he had taken more notice of the quartermongering story's that Ken Hazzard, his neighbour in Hong Kong, used to regale him with of an evening. Ann

continues her interest in child care and education and is presently immersed in teaching adults how to become more effective in their carers in the Kindergarten environment. The elder of their two sons, Lee, is studying computer engineering at Birmingham, whilst Scott is wintering in Val D'Isere. "Wintering" being the euphemism for maximum social activity and minimum work. The O'Keefe's have finished roaming the world at the government's expense and are now settled in Barton Stacey. Whilst the days of bier and brattys might be over, they are enjoying the delights of rural England to the full, not least understanding what the majority of people are saying, for a change.

DAVID OWENS 1958-62

"Since leaving the Army I have spent much of my time abroad on civil engineering projects, which have taken me to West and East Africa, the Arabian Peninsular, Pakistan, Nepal and now to India. For the 50th anniversary of Independence, if you saw R Dimbleby's television programme, you may recall corruption is very much alive, spelt large in \$s US, and even larger in Rs involving even the chief minister of the state I work in. I take local leave in India. The first took me from Delhi to Secunderabad (Akbar's Mausoleum), Agra with the Taj Mahal, a bird sanctuary at Bharatpore staying with a retired Colonel Bharatsingh who was a staff officer to Mountbatten and Jaipur. My wife accompanied me on the second trip which was to Amritsar and the Northern part of India. This trip took in Dalhousie, Chamba and Bakloh, all in Himachal Pradesh. I

was born in Bakloh and saw the house. Then we visited Dharamsalla, where my mother's aunt was killed in an earthquake and went on to an old hillstation called Sabathu. The first Gurkha units were raised there in 1815 when it was a British Barracks and Cantonment. Currently it is the training centre of the First and Fourth Gurkhas. 4/4 GR is now less than a mile from where I live. I also visited my father's battalion, 1/4 GR in Calcutta.

When I joined 50 Field Engineer Regiment my Landrover driver was ex 3/4 GR. Two corporals, a troop sergeant and many others in 68 Sqn were also of the Fourth at that time.

JOHN AND HEATHER PERFECT 1948-50

Between October 1997 and October 1998 there are three 50 year anniversaries for John and Heather. In 1947 John returned to UK after nearly 3 years service with the **Bengal Sappers** and Miners in



Roorkee. In 1997, John and a small party of Bengal Sappers revisited Roorkee at the invitation of the Commandant to attend the 194th Anniversary of the formation in 1803. They spent a very nostalgic and interesting week at Roorkee.

The second anniversary will be their Golden Wedding on 14 August 1998. They were married in the Garrison Church, York. The third anniversary will be John's flying out to Singapore in October 1948 to join the start-up team for the Gurkha Engineers. After a 3 month initiation with 1/6 GR (attached to Gil Hickey's Company) he travelled to Kluang to form up C Troop - Geoff Bennett having formed A Troop and Tony Cronk B Troop. Fifty years on the Parfects have four daughters, one son - all married - and ten grandchildren. John now has time to enjoy his retirement with Heather and the family - having finally withdrawn from County Council work as a member and from the local school as a Governor (1977-97). He continues to be retained as a consultant tutor by ICI to run some of their Pre-Retirement Courses on personal financial planning. Heather is PCC secretary for Coxwold Church and John the Covenants secretary. John continues to follow the Old Ampleforth Beagles. John reports they have been blessed by good fortune.

COLIN AND MONEENA PEEBLES 1977-80, 1983-85, 1990-92

Colin left the Army in July 1994 to take up the new appointment as Director of Corporate Services, Lothian and Borders Police, in Edinburgh. As a member of the Force's Executive of 5 Chief Officers, he has total responsibility for Finance (annual budget £132 million), Information Technology, Support and Administration. As the only civilian at this level in the Police Service in Scotland, the job is both

fascinating and enjoyable. Moneena completed her post graduate degree at Stirling University in 1993 and apart from running the house and family, has started a small business in function coordinating and Scottish products. Both girls are at Scottish universities. Kirsten (21) at St Andrews and Catriona (19) at Aberdeen (with a year in Vienna) and loving it. Callum (17) a 6'4" rugby playing piper, is in his final year at Dollar Academy and likely to go to university in September unless he takes a year out. Euan (12) and Malcolm (10) are following on, costing us a fortune but keeping us sane! We live in a big Victorian house in beautiful Bridge of Allan beside Stirling, play lots of golf and are forever watching rugby. Lots of room for visitors!

DAVID AND LESLEY PHILPOTT 1959-61, 1963, 1964-66

David retired from Hong Kong in 1996 for health reasons having had a busy and most enjoyable four years there. They are now enjoying life dividing their time between England and France- the majority in France. They have had a small cottage in the Dordogne for 25 years and are now happily bringing it into the 21st Century. Electricity and telephone arrived in 1997 replacing all gas appliances, including gas lamps. There are a few stories a la Peter Mayle (A Year in Provence) to be told. Anyone passing through the Dordogne would be most welcome to visit them - Tel/Fax 0033 (0) 5 53 31 14 38. Lesley retired from health visiting in 1994 at a "young 55 years" and hasn't missed it a bit. Far too busy doing other things. Andrew and his wife Karen have two children.

Helen, 3, and James, 1, who are a delight and pleasure. Alison, their daughter, is based in Hong Kong but is currently pursuing a qualification in law at Exeter University. They keep in regular touch with Mike and Alison Stephens, Denys and Mary White and Dom Verschoyle.

JOHN PREEDY 1962-68

John still lives at Patchway and, having relinquished his appointment as Secretary of his Club after 14 years, now spends his time looking after his house and garden, playing snooker at the Club and following Gloucestershire cricket. Five years ago John underwent major abdominal surgery which has left him with "mechanical functions". Although perfectly healthy and active, the necessary 8 hourly medical procedures mean that visits, holidays etc have to be carefully planned. Even so he had made two trips to South Africa without mishap. John says that, as he is now approaching 74, he has given up trying to find a wife!

RAY AND JOY PYE 1978-81

Ray and Joy continue to run Harbourside Hotel "The Best Guest House in Kent" (photo shows them receiving the award) and would welcome a visit from any of their QGE or Sapper friends. They keep very busy doing what they do for the fun of it and also making a good living. They are very proud of their three children's achievements which includes the production of four grandsons. Rob who was last to wed, with Sarah, has produced the latest addition to the family with Jonathan R Pye. Maria's two boys start and finish university this year while Maria continues to manage a local Abbey National Bank. Jacqueline, their eldest daughter works with the Tony



Blair team and her son is already at work. Harbourside is the only B&B Hotel in Folkestone with the distinction of being 'Highly Commended' by the England Tourist Board. Ray and Joy offer the perfect watering hole with free drinks and accommodation when available. All they ask is that you phone for the bed reservation in advance.

PAUL REEDMAN

1965-70, 1979-81

Paul, who is now retired and lives in Somerset West, South Africa writes: "I am extraordinarily lucky to be living in a most beautiful part of the world. I am now remarried to a fine young lady and I get visits from friends and relations from UK so we all stay in touch. Milanchandra Gurung and I swop letters every few months and we are hopeful he will come and stay with us, complete with wife, Margaret."

[Your Editor and wife stayed with Paul and Marcelle in December 1997 and can confirm Paul has fallen on his feet! He has become frighteningly good at bridge and she is about to have published a delightful children's book.]

SIMON RUGG 1960-65

The Editor's old friend and Squadron 2ic, Simon Rugg writes:

"Thank you for your letter, it is a long time since we were in contact, but life evolves. The best place to catch up on my news would be to have a look at my web site on www.projman.u-net.com. This is pretty comprehensive. Family news isn't much other than I am divorced and living with a lovely lady who is prepared to put up with me and all my idiosyncracies. I enjoy rugby and sailing so life has not changed there. I will be at Twickenham on Saturday as I am now a Debenture Seat Holder. Why do you not start an e.mail Register for members? That is a far easier way of communicating with each other than to circulate notices etc. If you are ever in this part of the world let me know. I know we are north of the M4 but life is quite normal and in fact possibly of a higher quality in many ways. *[Simon. I rarely go north of the M4 - am usually south of the Equator - Ed]*

IAN AND SALLY SLACK
1989, 1992-93

After leaving Hong Kong and completing JCSC, Ian and Sally served in Hameln where they had two sons, Tom and Ben. Following a sporting injury to Ian's eye, they then returned to Chatham (together, it seems, with most of the black Mafia) where they spent an enjoyable 18 months in three different jobs. Ian has now left the Corps and works in the city. They have a lovely house near Chelmsford and would be happy to see any old friends who may be passing by.

CHARLES & ROMA SPOTTISWOODE
1958-63, 1971-77

"Having taken early retirement in 1976, many people still associate me with the antiques business, but I have

to tell them that I left wheeling and dealing behind me in 1978! Since that time I have worked in the voluntary sector, including some years as Director of the cystic Fibrosis Research Trust and latterly fundraising for the British Home and Hospital for Incurables at Streatham. Since BHHI have a "retire at 65" policy I have launched myself as a consultant and am working from home on a part time basis. Taking the opportunity of this change in lifestyle, Roma and I made an extended trip to Australia with a nostalgic few days in Malaya (as we still call it). Both the smoke haze and the currency were weaker than



expected, so our time there was both very pleasant and very cheap. A month with Roma's brother and family in Sydney was followed by ten days in New Zealand. We returned via South Africa, where I have several cousins. Roma's left leg has been giving her considerable problems but it is gradually improving and we are hopeful that her disability will soon be a thing of the past. Otherwise we keep in good health and are looking forward to moving out of London soon to enjoy retirement in Shropshire. For those who remember our three daughters, Barbara is living and working in Stamford. Katherine is

very well looked after under the 'care in the community' programme in a specially built house locally and Anne, now divorced but happily newly housed with her long term partner, now lives near Newmarket. Our two granddaughters, Charlotte and Helen are, of course the apples of our eyes."

MARK AND DAVINA STEVENSON
1987-89, 1993-94

After a very rewarding 2 years in Hong Kong whilst Mark commanded 67 Squadron the Stevensons arrived in Chatham. This was a most enjoyable and sociable tour where many acquaintances were renewed with old friends from the QGE community. They are currently residing in Camberley where again there appear to be a large number of 'late QGE', notably the Jarret-Kerrs and the Henshaws. Mark is thoroughly enjoying his current post as member of the Directing Staff of the Army Junior Division, JSCSC. Rachel is now 8 and Chloe 5 and they are both settled in schools in the Camberley area. Davina is working as a Marketing Assistant for a company in Aldershot. The family is to move this Summer to their own home in Lancashire in order to allow the girls to be near family and settle into tertiary education.

BRIAN TAYLOR 1971-76

"Since retiring from the Army in early 1986 I have been employed as a Personnel Manager with the Ove Arup Partnership, one of the largest firms of consulting engineers in the UK with offices all over the world. Sue and I divorced several years ago. Our two daughters, both born in

BMH HK (1973 and 1975) during our time with the Regiment, are both living their own lives now. Joanna, the eldest, has been with Standard Chartered Bank since leaving school over 6 years ago and gets married in June. Amanda, born at the time Bill and Bimala Chesshyre were married, Bimala thereby avoiding being on duty at BMH at the time, is herself now a Staff Nurse at the Middlesex Hospital, part of the UCH Trust in Central London having graduated with a degree in Nursing. I am now living happily in Croydon with my partner of 3 years, Alison. I am still actively involved in target rifle shooting having recently handed over as Captain of the Army Target Rifle Club after 6 years in the post.

JACK THORNBUR 1947-49



Your Editor has received interesting news from Lt Col Jack Thornber. To those who know the history of Dharan Cantonment his name will be well known. He was one of those responsible for the original construction and was, when your Editor was DCRE, remembered with affection by a number of the Nepalese staff. He writes "My wife died three years ago and, as I have

no children, there is no family news!
As I am now 83 years of age and poor
in memory and physically not very fit,
I regret I am unable to attend the re-
unions".

COLIN AND SALLY TOMLINSON
1995-97

Colin and Sally moved to Waterbeach
in January 98 complete with new
arrival Kieran Michael, born on
February 3. Colin is now 2IC of 53
Fd Sqn (Air Sp) in 39 Engr Regt.

ANDREW AND CLARE TUGGEY
1969-70, 1975-78, 1982-84

Andrew is currently at HQNI until
June 98, when he returns after 3
years to start language training prior
to a DA appointment. He is also
studying for an OU MBA. Clare
moved back to Monmouth after 18
months in Province to run a training
company in Chepstow. She finds it
very stimulating, although frustrating
at times, and has learnt a great deal
about small businesses. Andrew is
back in GB on business frequently
and manages weekends at home
every 2-3 weeks. Clare returned to
NI in Sep 97 to support Andrew when
a Bde Gurkhas Band and P&D
Contingent went out on a highly
successful GWT fund-raising visit. It
was the first time that Gurkhas had
officially been in NI for well over 35
years. The soldiers were most
surprised to find a Nepali-speaking
memsaheb in Ulster. Piers (20) is in
his first year at Edinburgh,
contentedly reading Architectural
History - plus skiing, playing rugby
and hockey and party-ing. After 5
very happy and successful years at
Marlborough, he spent some of his
gap year in Nepal, working for Tom

Langridge on the Pahar Trust. He
had a wonderful time - learnt a lot,
worked with Purnabahadur and
Chandrabahadur, and renewed his
acquaintance with Hukumraj et al, all
of whom he had last met in 68 Sqn
when he was 5 years old. Piers now
speaks pretty good Nepali and is a
great supporter of the Pahar Trust.
Oliver (17) is in the L6 at
Marlborough, studying Biology,
Chemistry and Geography for A level,
with an aspiration to be a vet. Both
he and Henry (15) -in his second year
at Marlborough - are thoroughly
enjoying themselves. All three boys
play a lot of rugby, hockey and
cricket, which seem to necessitate
several (expensive) overseas tours.
They also flit backwards and forwards
across the Irish Sea in the Summer
holidays as they have acquired an
extensive social circle in Ireland.

SIMON AND SUE
VANDENNIRUWENHUYSEN
1988-91

"The Vandens landed in West
Wickham south of Bromley via the
process of throwing a dart at a map
of London on leaving the Army in
1994. Easy commuting to Victoria
for that all important first job was
the prime reason, but it has lost a bit
following the first civvy job move -
where was PB7 when I needed
them? However, all the family are
now settled, Emma is now 10 and
Robert 5; their school a mere hop,
skip and proverbial from the front
door. Sue is also now teaching
locally so it looks like we're here to
stay. Having started with PA
Consulting and moved on to JM
Management Services, our life
continues to be full of complex and

increasingly meaningless acronyms! Military life seems a long time ago, life with QGE even longer, but we still look back with fond memories."

ANTHONY AND KATE WAREHAM
1986-88

After leaving the Sappers in Feb 1994 Tony started work as Training and Development Manager with AlliedSignal, an American owned multinational. The Skelmersdale plant where he works makes turbochargers and employs 650 people. He is Training and Development Manager. He specialises in Total Quality and Leadership training and became the European Total Quality co-ordinator for Turbochargers Europe. He is also Factory Health, Safety and Environment Manager which brings much challenge and, happily, promotion to the senior management team. The factory won the Award for the most improved safety record in 1997. Tony went to Los Angeles to collect it. They live in the Forest of Bowland. Sarah, 12, and Emma, 10, (born BMH Hong Kong) have settled into school in the North West. Tony plays a bit of squash and skis. He is studying for an MBA. They would welcome old friends to their corner of Lancashire.

TERRY WHITE 1962-68

Terry still lives in Harpenden, where he settled down after he retired from the Army in 1970. He retired again after 18 years with George Wimpey plc in London and then became a partner in a management consultancy firm specialising in the construction industry. All that kept him busy until he retired for the third time three or four years ago. Now he is involved in

a number of charities, enjoys playing bridge and chasing salmon in Scotland and sometimes in Ireland. He continued over the years to pursue his hobby of recording bird song in many parts of the world but unfortunately increased deafness has put an end to this. It is why he is now not often seen at our reunion events.

MIKE AND MARGARET WRIGHT
1950-53, 1960-63

Mike and Margaret still live in Oxford, enjoying a very active third 'retirement', after 25 years in politics.

Over this period Mike stood three times for Parliament and was for 20 years a county or city councillor. Margaret was always the agent or organizer and so did all the work!



They had a short return to active politics in the General Election when they spent a week helping Martin Bell in Totton. Mike is vice-chairman of the National Lottery Charities Board for SE England and this takes a lot of his time. Both are very busy running a small charity which launches and supports small scale integrated village development projects in the third world. Project work recently has taken them to Guyana, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Bangladesh and the Pamirs. They will be spending a month in Tamil Nadu and Biha later this year.

OBITUARIES

MAJOR GENERAL JHS BOWRING CB OBE MC Kt St JOHN

General Bowring as Commanding Officer of 50 Gurkha Field Engineer Regiment was the prime architect in the building of the Gurkha Engineers. His steady hand and imaginative direction had led the Regiment through an explosive period of development. For his efforts he was awarded the OBE.

Providentially he was in two subsequent appointments of escalating rank to keep watch over the Regiment, first as the Chief Engineer FARELF and then as Engineer in Chief. As Chief Engineer FARELF he watched over the Regiment's growth into a mini-corps and its deployment into Borneo. In 1967 he became Colonel of the Gurkha Engineers and in that capacity resumed the guardianship of its quality, its custom and its traditions. He was Colonel during the troubled period of redundancy and retrenchment during 1986-71.

He was commissioned into the Royal Engineers in 1933 from the Royal Military Academy, passing out 2nd and served in Palestine with 6th Field Park Company, in 1936, before joining the Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners in 1937. He served with 17th Company in Quetta and Waziristan before joining as 2ic, 20 Field Company on the outbreak of the 2nd World War. In 1940 he went with the company to the Sudan. He was appointed OC of the squadron and promoted to Major. In 1941 his squadron took part in the Battle of Karen and follow-up operations to Asmara and Amba

Alanga in 1941. During clearance of a road demolition he was hit by a shell in the leg and ankle and was evacuated as a casualty. He was awarded an MC. After hospitalization in South Africa he returned to Suez and then back to GHQ India.

In 1945 he was posted to the Arakan on the staff of Chief Engineer 15 Indian Corps. During this tour he was promoted Lieutenant Colonel. He finished his time with the Indian Army in 1946 as Commandant (Colonel) of 4 Engineer Group in Sialkot. He reverted to the rank of Major on return to UK. In 1947 he went to Greece with the British Military Mission in the face of the Communist rebellion.

He was promoted Lieutenant Colonel while there. He returned to UK in 1949 and after a tour in the Cabinet Office went to the Joint Services Staff College, Latimer and thence to be Chief Instructor at the SME Chatham where he taught inter-alia Billy Brown, Peter Knowles, Hank Bowen, Peter Whitestone and Tim Yates. He was promoted Brevet Lieutenant Colonel in 1953.

On 25 July 1955, John Bowring became Commanding Officer of 50 Field Engineer Regiment consisting of 67 and 68 Gurkha Field Squadrons with 11 Independent Field Squadron Royal Engineers and 410 Plant Troop Royal Engineers under command. On 29 September 1955 Army Order 102/1955 was published, in which the Corps units were to be component parts of the Brigade of Gurkhas.

The Gurkha Engineers were born and the Regiment became 50 Gurkha Field Engineer Regiment. He

described the signing of the amendment as the most fundamental event of 1955;

"Now our Gurkhas are enlisted, and QGOs commissioned, into the Gurkha Engineers, it makes us more of a part of the family of the Brigade, it gives us the chance of establishing our own individual, regimental traditions, custom and spirit. The ball is at our feet."

John Bowring initiated debate and discussion and decided on a wide variety of Regimental matters including orders of dress, devices and badges of the new Regiment, the Regimental Day, approval by Dame Flora MacLeod of MacLeod and the War Office for the Pipes and Drums to wear the clan tartan, the establishment of a roster of Royal Engineers with Gurkha experience and formation of the Gurkha Engineer Association.

These decisions had to be taken against the background of continuing operations against the communist terrorists with all three squadrons and the plant troop deployed throughout Malaya on the construction of roads, airfields and landing zones. John Bowring managed to visit the many small detachments of engineers under his command by making use of a Tiger Moth of the Kuala Lumpur Flying Club. He had started his flying career while an undergraduate at Cambridge.

In 1957 the Regiment had to take up an increased number of extra regimentally employed (ERE) posts to absorb the surplus of manpower within the Gurkha Engineers. John Bowring saw this as a blessing in disguise as, by careful selection, under his personal direction, some

excellent men wearing the Gurkha Engineer capbadge were seen to be as good as, if not better than, their infantry opposite numbers, at the Depot Brigade of Gurkhas and in the Transit Camps. These men then provided the pool of trained manpower required to raise, first a Gurkha field park squadron and then a third field squadron.

By 1956 most people were convinced that the Gurkha sapper was well capable, within a reasonable training period, of acquiring all the standards and skills to carry out the work of a field sapper. The major limitation to the training of engineer tradesmen lay in education. John Bowring's solution was to lay down optimistic and strict individual standards for promotion that required combat engineer, trade and education qualifications for promotion, starting at LCpl and going through to Gurkha Officer. Many of the old and bold thought these to be unobtainable. It put the pressure on British Officers and Gurkhas alike but the men responded with enthusiasm and application. By the time he became Colonel of the Regiment, in 1967, the standards were being achieved and surpassed. His wisdom, prudence, foresight and insistence on the achievement of these standards, made possible the raising of 70 Gurkha Field Park Squadron and the raising of the third field squadron.

John Bowring always looked back at his time in command as the happiest and most rewarding time of his military service. He handed over as Commanding Officer in May 1958.

The Regiment was then well established and had progressed from:-

"a motley band from ten different regiments of infantry into a coherent, integral regiment of combat engineers and technicians." [Major General Lance Perowne in "Gurkha Sapper"]

A few weeks later, in June, Major QGO Amarbahadur Gurung MBE left to become the Gurkha Major of the Depot Brigade of Gurkhas at Sungei Patani. Amarbahadur had, during his five years in the Regiment, contributed immeasurably to the standards and reputation of the Gurkha Engineers. He and Lieutenant Colonel John Bowring complemented each other in every respect and made a formidable team. They continued to correspond throughout the years.

John Bowring died on 14 February 1998 the day after his eighty-fifth birthday. Our love and thoughts are with Iona, whom he married when he was Commanding Officer and who became very much part of the Regiment, and their children Charles, Caroline, Michael and Camilla.

BRIGADIER GIL HICKEY

Gil Hickey was an important influence on the Regiment in many ways. When the Regiment was first raised, new British Officers completed an attachment with 6 GR to acclimatise them to jungle warfare. Whenever the 'old and bold' speak of those days the name they all mention is Gil Hickey. It is clear that he had a major and beneficial influence on those officers in early days. Later he influenced the fortunes of the Regiment by his wise counsel and inspired leadership, first as Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas and later as Commander 48 Brigade

when the Regiment concentrated in Hong Kong in 1971. Apart from his military qualities, people will remember him for his skill as a raconteur and for his faultless Gurkhali. Our sympathy goes to his wife Helen and his family.

COLONEL GEORGE BOLTON

George Bolton was Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas in the 1950s when General Lance Perowne, the father of the Regiment, was Major General Brigade of Gurkhas. Like Gil Hickey he had a great deal of influence on the development of the Regiment at a time when many changes were taking place. His connection with the Regiment was cemented by his marriage to Iris, General Lance's daughter. Those who knew him will remember him for his impeccable manners and quiet but very well-developed sense of humour. Our sympathy goes to Iris.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEOFF WALSH

Those of us who knew Geoff will be very sad to hear of his death - he had been ill for some time with cancer.

In 1957 the Regiment was settling down in Tamuri Camp after some reorganisation but with only a scant knowledge of the Gurkha soldier. Management Services, our life continues to be full of complex andHQ Brigade of Gurkhas therefore sent Geoff, a 6th Gurkha, to indoctrinate us, and what a good influence he was! His father had been a 6th Gurkha and Geoff had grown up in a Gurkha environment - he spoke the language just like a western Gurkha. He quickly fitted in to the Regiment and was very well liked and respected by British and Gurkha alike. He was appointed adjutant but spent much of his time

taking language classes, talking with BOs and KGOs and generally spreading the Gurkha ethic.

We were very sorry to see him go when his regiment wanted him back. Through his efforts we had become much better informed on Gurkha matters and better able to understand and lead our soldiers. The Regiment owes Geoff a considerable debt.

**LIEUTENANT COLONEL
GUY PEARSON**

Guy Pearson ended his career as a Retired Officer in Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas. Amongst his tasks was that of Secretary of the GBA and in this capacity he gave great assistance to our Secretary.

Nothing was ever too much trouble and his early warnings and reminders prevented a number of potential errors by the Association! He was probably the same with every Regiment but we always felt that we had some sort of special relationship with him.



DATES

**GBA ANNUAL REUNION
6 JUNE 1998 - RMAS**

The GBA annual reunion will be held on Sat 6 Jun 98 at RMA Sandhurst. Drinks in the Indian Army Room and lunch follow the Memorial Service in the Chapel which starts at 1100 hours. The cost is £25 per person; applications, with cheques made payable to the GBA Trust should be sent to: Asst Regtl Sec, RHQ, The Brigade of Gurkhas, Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Church Crookham, Hants, GU13 0RL. Tel:01252 355757. Members attending will be asked whether they wish to sit by capbadge or by galla.

QGEA AGM AND REUNION 1998

The arrangements for a 1998 UK Reunion and AGM are not yet clear. However the Committee plans to hold the AGM and a lunch on 25 July 98 to coincide with 69 Squadron's parade exercising the Freedom of Rochester. Once the Squadron returns to the UK details will be sorted.

GBA ANNUAL DINNER 1998

The GBA annual Dinner will be held on 5 Nov 98 at the Army and Navy Club. Details are available from the Asst Regtl Sec, RHQ BG as above.

NOTICES

REGIMENTAL HISTORY "Queen's Gurkha Sapper"

The Regimental History was to be published last year but due to various difficulties, one of which was that the selected printer, in Rochester, was bought out and closed down!

A new printer has been found, in Woking, and the book will be published by September 1998. The book will cover the full period of the Regiment's history, from 1948 to 1996, from Royal Engineers (Gurkha) through the Gurkha Engineers to The Queen's Gurkha Engineers.

There will be approx 420 pages of text, colour maps, monochrome sketch maps, a section of colour photographs which will include all the portraits of the Colonels of the Regiment and the QGOOs and the Regimental pipe banner, and black and white photographs.

Cost externally will be £29.99. Members of the QGEA can buy it for £25.00 excluding postage. Cost of postage and packing in UK is likely to be £4.50 per book, but arrangements can be made to collect from Chatham, Maidstone or from the Gurkha Welfare Trust in Baker Street, London. If you ordered last year cash in advance, a discount of 10% was offered thus bringing the price down to £22.50.

Previous Commandants may wish to purchase a copy of the history for their Gurkha Major and Squadron/Troop Commanders may

wish to do the same for their Gurkha Captains/Lieutenants.

We will ensure that there is no duplication of orders. Arrangements may be made through 69 Gurkha Field Squadron to take the books back to Nepal with men going on leave. If you have ordered a copy for yourself and wish to buy for a Gurkha officer (or Sergeant, NCO or sapper) you can buy additional copies at £22.50.

The book would make an excellent Christmas present. It costs less than the price of a good dinner!

THE ROYAL HOMES FOR OFFICERS' WIDOWS AND DAUGHTERS

Queen Alexandra's Court has 75 self-contained flats for the widows and unmarried daughters of deceased officers of the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. Vacancies occur periodically. The Royal Homes are Grade II listed buildings and set in delightful grounds.

As a rule 60 is the lower and 75 the upper age limit for entry. Applicants must be able to care for themselves and their flats. There is a resident Manager, an Assistant Manager and a visiting Nursing and Welfare Sister. For further information write to:

The Manager, Queen
Alexandra's Court, St Mary's Road,
Wimbledon, London SW19 7DE

