

## FAMILIES IN HAMPSHIRE TO REMEMBER SACRIFICES OF THEIR FOREFATHERS



The Gurkha and Nepalese community outside the Gurkha Museum in Winchester

# Retired Gurkhas honour the lost lives of soldiers

**THEY laid wreaths and fell silent to remember their forefathers' sacrifice.**

About 500 retired Gurkhas and Nepalese families from across the south came to Hampshire to pay respect to the soldiers who lost their lives fighting for the British Army since 1815.

But the annual outing, starting in Winchester, carried extra meaning this year because it fell on the 200th anniversary year of Gurkha service to Britain - and comes just weeks after two devastating earthquakes struck their homeland of Nepal.

Crowds complete in uniform or national dress were joined by 10 Eastleigh firefighters who dispatched to the ravaged capital city, Kathmandu, to deliver aid and help the victims.

Kamal Bahadur Purja, co-founder of Hampshire charity Nepalese Help, said: "They have done so much for Nepal in the recent earthquake. They went out to the Gurkhas and helped many, many people. We're giving thanks to what they have done for us back in Nepal. Hampshire is such a lovely place and Hampshire

By Duncan Geddes



people always welcome Gurkhas and Nepalese families."

The ex-Gurkhas and Nepalese relatives started the day by visiting Winchester's Gurkha Museum - many for the first time.

Museum curator Gavin Edgerley Harris said: "I think some retired Gurkhas have not had the opportunity to learn about the history of their regiment, and visiting the museum gives them an excellent insight to what their forefathers did."

"It's a pleasure to welcome Gurkha communities from across the South of England to see the history of Gurkhas over 200 years."

Saturday's event then moved to Sir Harold Hillier Gardens near Romsey, well-known for preserving the Nepalese national flower, the rhododendron, to lay poppy wreaths at a Chautara, which is a typical feature found in the foothills of Nepal.

Here it serves in memory of Gurkha soldiers who laid down their lives in service to the British Army.

As is Nepalese tradition, there was music, song and dance. Food was shared as part of a big picnic.

Councillor Roy Perry, leader of Hampshire County Council which is the sole trustee of the gardens, attended the event, accompanied by representatives from Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service. In support of all those affected by the earthquake, Cllr Perry also presented an award of £20,000 to The Gurkha Welfare Trust on behalf of the county council and the people of Hampshire.

He said: "All those affected by the terrible earthquakes in Nepal are in our thoughts and prayers, including the families of those who lost their lives in such tragic circumstances, or who have been injured or homeless."

"I was honoured to be invited once again to this event at Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, which this year had even more significance."

"There are 30,000 military personnel based in Hampshire, the largest contingent in the country, and we are immensely proud of our strong connection with the armed forces, including the Gurkhas - many of whom have made their home in the north of Hampshire."



Roy Perry, Kamal Purja and Dave Curry lay wreaths



Glynn Davies-Deer and Ekraj Nembang

## Development plan work set to get started

WORK on a new plan for development in Eastleigh is getting under way.

The Eastleigh Local plan, a blueprint for development up to 2029, was halted earlier this year by a government inspector who said more housing was needed.

Now Eastleigh Borough Council is looking at drawing up a new plan which will instead extend to 2036.

It has published a Statement of Community Involvement setting out how the community is to be involved in preparing planning policies, as well as influencing decisions on planning applications.

The council says the current one needs updating to reflect changes in practices. Cabinet members agreed the consultation go out to the public for six weeks from June.

## Charity music night for Nepal

THE sounds of Bollywood are coming to a Southampton Hindu temple in aid of a poverty-stricken country ripped apart by an earthquake.

The Vedic Hindu Society Temple in Radcliffe Road is holding a charity concert on Friday, May 29, for the Nepal Earthquake Relief.

Singers Jayant and Gunjan Shukla, Puja Angra and Karan Rana will be performing a selection of classic and modern Bollywood songs.

Organised by the temple in conjunction with Southampton Council of Faiths, the event will also feature a dinner from 6.30pm to 8pm. For tickets and prices contact the temple on 023 8063 2275 or email secretary@vedicsociety.com.

## March against austerity

AN ANTI-AUSTERITY march will take place in Southampton on Wednesday.

The march has been organised by union Unite to coincide with the Queen's Speech being delivered in parliament.

Its organisers say campaigners at the march will call for a halt to public spending and welfare cuts, the raising of the minimum wage to £10 and the end of zero-hour contracts. They also want to raise tuition fees and call for the right to vote to be lowered to 16.

The march through the city centre will start at 5pm at the Bargate and is expected to last an hour.