



## THE ANNUAL DAY-OUT TO THE GURKHA MUSEUM, WINCHESTER AND THE SIR HAROLD HILLIER GARDENS, ROMSEY. 23<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2015.



This event has been organised each year since 1998 by Former British Army Gurkha Mr. Kamal Bahadur Purja of Eastleigh and in recent years with the assistance of Maddhat Shamuha and Eastleigh Gurkha Nepalese Association, Aldershot, Farnborough and Camberley. The event is timed to see the Gardens when the world famous collection of rhododendrons is at its' breathtaking best.

The rhododendron is the national flower of Nepal and, in recognition of this, the Gardens, a Department of Hampshire County Council, has created a Nepalese Garden within its' bounds. This feature is centred on a traditional resting place (Chautara) for porters on the mountain trails carrying goods on their backs in the typical conical wicker baskets (dhoka).



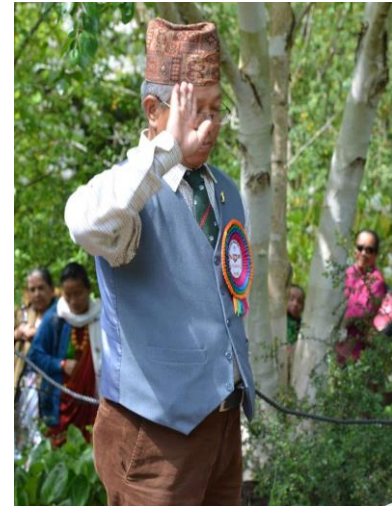
This year, the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gurkhas first enlisting in the service of the British Army, was marked by a full Remembrance Service at the Chautara with the laying of wreaths and all the traditional features of Remembrance Day.

The Service was of special significance for Kamal Bahadur Purja as he was commemorating the death on the Western Front WW1 of his honoured Great Uncle, Rfn. Surbir Bahadur Purja, all the more poignant as he died just when he was due to go on leave. Kamal, his wife Shanti



and her sister Parbati were also honouring the memory of Parbati's husband, Cpl Kumar Pun who died in action in Afghanistan 2009.

Anyone who has not yet visited The Gardens owes it to themselves to correct this omission. Quite apart from the rhododendrons and azaleas, the Gardens offer a beautiful display of so many plants, trees and flowers from all over the World with spectacular garden sculptures waiting to surprise and delight the visitor.



Under the skilled management of its' Director Wolfgang Bopp and well-served by his dedicated staff, the Gardens have developed out of all recognition over recent years. From the Visitors Centre and its' Education Wing to its' feature pieces throughout the walks, the Gardens are a work of supreme beauty and enlightenment for all.



The Gurkha Museum is sited in Peninsular Barracks, Romsey Road, Winchester where also you will find museums dedicated to The Hussars, The Green Jackets, Light Infantry, Army Air Corps and Royal Hampshire Regiment. This is a facility of immense interest to former Gurkhas and anyone interested in their priceless contribution to two hundred years of British military history. It was in 1815

that Nepal first sent its' Gurkhas to serve in the armies of Great Britain, the year of Waterloo, thus this year is a very special 200 year anniversary.



Visit the Museum to learn so much more of the vital contribution this tiny but so brave nation, nestled in the shadow of the mighty Himalaya has made to our nation's history, from the Indian Mutiny to the Falklands, Iraq and Afghanistan. You will see evidence of 26 Victoria Crosses awarded to the



Gurkha Regiments through these momentous years. Did you know that over 90,000 Gurkhas held the line in the trenches of the First World War and suffered over 20,000 casualties, killed and wounded and that over 120,000 served in WW2 and suffered over 23,000 killed and wounded?

This year, so momentous to both Nepal and to Great Britain, was marked by a Service of Remembrance at the Chautara in the Gardens conducted by the Mountbatten Branch of The Royal British Legion. Possibly as many as 600 Nepalese and their British friends joined the celebratory gathering. After the tour of the Museum, the Service at the Chautara and the more leisurely walk through the Gardens, the Day ended with a picnic. The guests enjoyed food provided by the ladies of Eastleigh Gurkha Nepalese Association.



Traditional Nepalese music and dance was rendered by Dhaulagiri Naumati Baza the renowned Nepalese Village Band; Ms Nita Pun Magar, the famous Nepalese singer and various organisations of dancers. Capt. Bir Bahadur Thapa gave us his very

popular repertoire of songs. Mr. Tanka Sherchan gave his DJ services at a fraction of his usual professional charges and also delighted us when he played Basuri Dhun on his flute.





The program was managed and presented most efficiently by Mr. Yog Kumar Phagami and Mr. Indra Bahadur Purja.

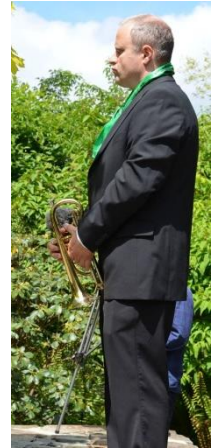
Kamal Bahadur Purja sends this message to all who contributed and attended.

“My sincere thanks go to Mr. Gavin Edgerley-Harris, Curator of the Gurkha Museum, Col Bridger and his staff for their kindness and unending courtesy and helpfulness and to Mr Wolfgang Bopp, Director and his staff, especially Tracy Randell at the Gardens for the most amazing co-operation and initiative without which the event could not have succeeded.





My gratitude to Cllr Roy Perry, Leader of Hampshire County Council and his daughter, Caroline Nokes MP for attending our Remembrance Service and celebration and the magnificent donation of £20,000 to the Gurkha Welfare Trust, handed to Capt. Gary Ghali. I thank Mr Gerry Musgrove, Chairman of the Lord Mountbatten Branch of the Royal British Legion, Romsey and his officers and Standard Bearers for conducting the Service; Norman Brown, President of Eastleigh



and Chandlers Ford Branch, Royal British Legion and Mrs. Brown for their generous support and attendance; Mr Nigel Woodhall, formerly of the Royal Green Jackets and The Light Infantry who served us as Bugler for the Last Post and Reveille and the Burma Veterans who graced us with their presence.



Especial thanks go to Mr. Dave Curry, Chief Fire Officer and his four heroic officers who recently returned from their rescue work in the Nepal earthquake disaster.

Mrs. Elspeth Watson of Dept of Work and Pensions and Mr. Colin Meadows of Job Centre Plus joined us and I thank them for their invariable kindness and support.



I personally invited Mr. Steven Dean who travelled all the way from Sheffield to be with us and Mrs. Jenny Fisher from London and I am deeply grateful that they joined us for our celebration. I do hope they enjoyed the Day as I barely had time to speak at any length with either of them. I apologise for this but hope they understand.

I thank the Area Representatives of Maddhat Shamuha for their great help. Four 53 seater buses brought members of the association and they handled the organisation, collected the donations and saw to the well-being of their charges. In this regard, I would especially thank Mr. Kesh Bahadur Pun, Mr Kamal Mala, Budhi Bahadur Gurung, Mr Dill Bahadur Thapa, Mr. Tek Bahadur Gurung and Capt Bir Bahadur Thapa. The Maddhat Shamuha members and ladies of Aldershot: Mrs Dhan Kumari Gurung, Mrs Damber Kumar Gurung, Mrs Parbati Gurung and Mrs Padmi Gurung and the ladies of Farnborough: Mrs Ram Kumari Thapa, Mrs Dil Maya Pun, Mrs Krishna Maya Gurung, Mrs Seti Maya Gurung and Mrs Krishna Gurung provided the traditional dance for the program.

Eastleigh Gurkha Nepalese Association gave us wonderful support in every way: our Chairman, Raman Sing Thapa and our Trustees were all there and willingly looked after our guests and pitched in to set up and clear away the reception area. Our Trustee Allan Cook does so much for us. He grows in importance to us with every day. Three of our young ladies danced beautifully for us: Miss Priya Purja, Miss Riya Purja and Miss Anjita Purja are gaining in grace and confidence with every performance. My thanks to our ladies who provided the food as they always do.



This year I made contact with Ex Gurkha Senior Citizens Nepali Samaj Swindon and I was so encouraged by their response and the numbers they sent to join us on Saturday. They will always be welcome to join us in any of our activities. I especially want to mention Mr. Bishnu Bahadur Gurung, their former Chairman and formerly of Maddhat Shamuha before moving to Swindon; Mr. Tika Bahadur Gurung, their present Chairman; and Co-ordinator Mr. L.S.Rai. Miss Ashmati Limbu gave us her beautiful dancing to add to our entertainment. I thank you all for coming to join us and look forward to a close relationship in future.



Miss Amanda Lee of Hampshire County Council and my co-founder of Maddhat Shamuha joined us late due to other commitments and was all the more welcome for that.

I thank the representatives of the Media who came to cover the event: ITV, Nepalese TV, Mr. Dhama Raj Adhikari. Hampshire Chronicle and The Southern Evening Echo. From the very full and kind report in the Echo, I should like to include this excerpt: *“But the annual outing, starting in Winchester, carried extra meaning this year because it fell on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary 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 fire-fighters who dispatched to the ravaged capital city, Kathmandu, to deliver aid and help the victims.”*

Kamal finished by saying:

This year was a special year but I very much hope that those who came this year will join us regularly in years to come. I am only too aware that, due to the Remembrance Service, there was little time left for many to properly explore the beauties of the Gardens. This is a delight that you will have much better opportunity to enjoy in future years, I promise you.

There were people who very much wished to join us but were prevented by other commitments. I missed you but thought of you through the day. I hope you, too can make it next year”.

For further pictures see below or go to this link: [www.egna.info](http://www.egna.info)  
<https://www.facebook.com/egnainfo>





## **MADDHAT SHAMUHA AND EASTLEIGH GURKHA NEPALESE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL VISIT TO THE GURKHA MUSEUM, WINCHESTER AND SIR HAROLD HILLIER GARDENS, ROMSEY, SATURDAY, 24TH MAY 2014.**



Our annual outing was a yet greater success this year as the numbers of attendees from all over the country increased yet again.

As organiser, I worried about the weather, about the numbers who might attend, about all the details of transport and organisation of the groups from so wide an area. But it does seem that when you honestly wish to do good things for your community, God bestows His blessing on your efforts.

On Saturday, while rain and even hail fell on much of the country, Winchester and Romsey enjoyed sunshine and warmth.



At the Museum, Col. A L Bridger OBE, a Trustee of the Museum Charity, and the Curator and his staff were kindness itself and handled the large numbers of visitors with expertise and friendliness so that everyone gained from the visit. A special word for Mr Megh Bahadur Rai who guided and led the transport from the Museum to the Gardens and undertook to collect the voluntary donations of our groups and saw to the distribution of visitor pass stickers. I was able to rely on him to keep our organisation running smoothly. Without his help my role would have been very difficult. He always helps us so much every year. Words cannot express my gratitude to him.

At the Museum, we were joined by Mr Gerry Musgrove, Chairman of the Mountbatten Branch of the Royal British Legion and by Mr

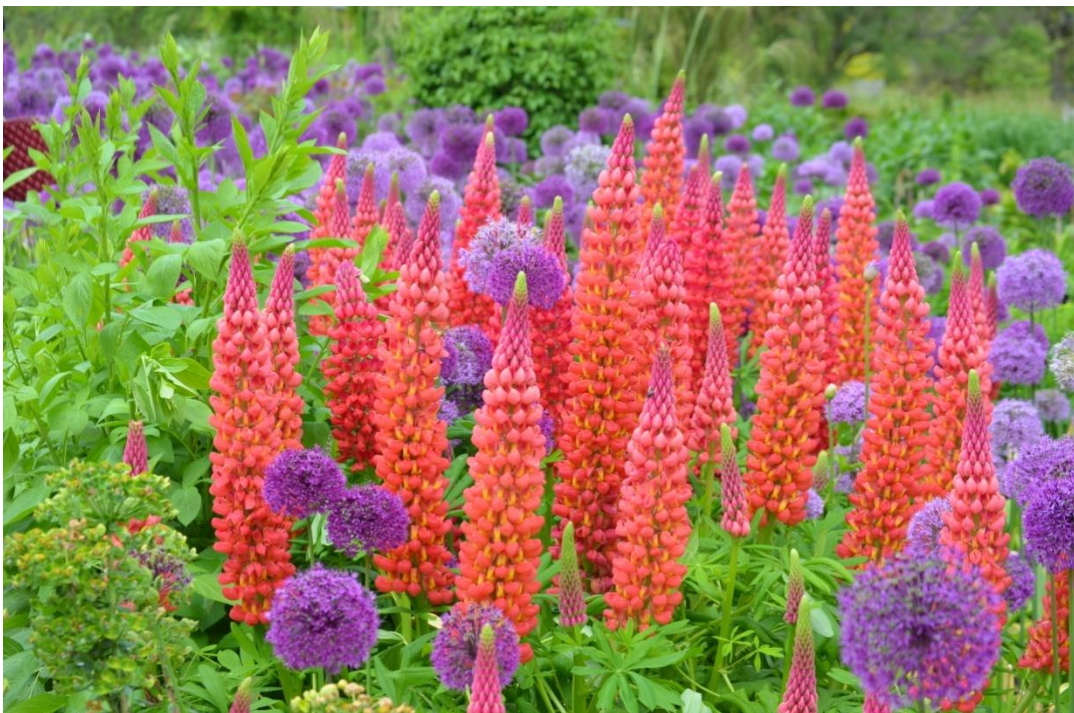


Mike Briggs, Chairman of the Farnborough Branch and his wife.



At the Gardens, Mr Wolfgang Bopp, the Director, and his staff excelled themselves in the warmth of their welcome, making everyone feel a privileged visitor. The Gardens were at their best for us with our national flower, the rhododendron in full

bloom and delighting us all. The Gardens are rightly famous for the wonderful and extensive world-wide collection of our beautiful flowering tree.





We were joined once again by the Naumati Baja, Nepalese traditional village Band, although they arrived after our tour had begun, thanks to a breakdown of their mini bus, but still in good time to lead our procession around the Gardens.



Cllr Roy Perry, Leader of Hampshire County Council also arrived after we had started out but it was a delight to welcome him when he joined us at the ornamental lake in the centre of the Gardens.

We somehow managed to not lose any of our party in the course of our tour and tired but enchanted by the beauty of the Gardens, we all gathered to end the Day with a picnic with song and dance.



Now my gratitude to those who were so very helpful to me in the organising of our day. I shudder to think how I would have managed without their contributions.

My thanks go to Capt. Umesh Pun MVO who organised our Colchester contingent; from Maddhat Shamuha, Aldershot, Farnborough and Camberly, Mr Budhi Bahadur Gurung and Mr Kamal Mala; Basingstoke's group was organised by Mrs Regina Subba; Warminster and Swindon contingent was organised by Mr Ek Pun; Winchester by Mr Ganga Bahadur Lama and Mr Megh Bahadur Rai and Eastleigh was organised by Mr Raman Sing Thapa, Chairman of Eastleigh Gurkha Nepalese Association, ably assisted by Mr Allan Cook and by Maj. Angela Burrow.



On behalf of all who enjoyed the Day, I thank the Gurkha Museum and the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens Trustee, Curator, Director and staffs for making our day so very enjoyable and a lasting memory.



Pleasant as it was, the Day, with its' activities, is so much more than a pleasure outing. Our aims as Maddat Shamuha, Eastleigh Gurkha Nepalese Association and all others organisations in the UK reach beyond self help and entertainment: we seek to educate ourselves, both young

and old; to work towards the closest and most beneficial integration with the society of the great country we have come to think of as home. We want to be regarded as citizens of the UK,

as interested as all others in the growth and development of our country. We want to contribute to our country and show our love and respect for the people with whom we now share our lives. Within our ranks, we have those who are beginning to need greater care: the old, the frail the mentally or physically ill. And, of course our young people growing up in a new world who might so easily lose the knowledge of our Nepalese heritage and Culture. Our Museum and Gardens Day answers all this.

We must all thank the Nepalese Band for their wonderful contribution to our procession round the Gardens and at the picnic afterwards.



As always, Mr Dharma Raj Adhikary of Nepalese Television was there to record the event and transmit our contribution to the Nepalese community to the World. He never lets us down and so gives us all great encouragement in what we try to achieve.



Last but certainly not least, let me thank everyone who turned up for the Day. Your attendance makes our work worthwhile.



Next year marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gurkha service with the British Army and is a year deserving of conspicuous commemoration. I want our Museum and Gardens Day to provide a special remembrance occasion to all Gurkhas who have given their lives in service to Great Britain.



By Kamal Bahadur Purja

Co-founder and co-chairman of Maddhat Shamuha