



Photo © SWNS.com

## Looking forward

### KET's 10th anniversary

This year, KET turns ten. With your support, we have achieved much in these years, and it is fitting that our major ongoing project, the children's hostel at Pangsha, was completed for the start of this year. Our other main area of focus, the scholarship programme, continues to grow, and in February 2014, KET awarded 77 scholarships in the annual ceremony held in Kohima, the highest number yet. If you are interested in sponsoring a child, please contact us for more information (see details below).

### Naga bibliography

In addition, work on the first ever Naga bibliography, compiled by Naga author Easterine Kire, a poet, novelist and writer of children's books and many articles, has been completed. This publication, which documents every known book by Nagas and on Nagas, can be downloaded free of charge from the KET website.

### Documentary success

David Percy's documentary, *Kohima: An Exploration of Memory, War and Gratitude*, has proved a powerful fundraiser in its own right, with over 1100 copies of the DVD sold to date. Successful premières in London, Edinburgh and York in 2013 were followed by an Inverness screening in May 2014, at the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders' reunion weekend, which attracted a full house of over 130 viewers. We hope to undertake similar events in 2015, and have been in contact with a number of associations of regiments which fought at Kohima, including the Royal Norfolks, the Dorsets and the Durham Light Infantry. If any other regiments would be interested in learning more, please contact the Managing Trustee (see details at right).

### Visit to our Patron

In January 2014, Trustees were invited to attend a meeting with The Duke of York, KET's Patron, at Buckingham Palace, where they were joined by two members of the KES Advisory Council, Dr Phyoem Ngully, its Chairman, and Mhasialie Solo, its Executive Manager. The Duke was keen to hear of the Trust's future activities and discussed ways in which he could help to further extend its reach.

### Key Words in 16 languages

KET and KES are undertaking a glossary, entitled *Key Words*, which brings together 16 Naga languages. After many years of research it is now nearing completion, with publication in hardback and ebook planned for early 2015. The Duke of York has agreed to contribute a Foreword, and we hope this work will prove a useful tool to promote communication between tribes of the area.

### Visitor Information Centre

In 2015, we hope to finalise plans for another major project – the building of a Visitor/Information Centre in Kohima, which will function as an office for KES and as an outreach office for visitors and locals alike. These plans are beginning to take shape, with the Government of Nagaland showing its support by seeking central government funding. KES is currently in discussions with the Government regarding the project.

### Spreading the word

KET is creating a short presentation which explains the events of the Battle of Kohima, as well as outlining the Trust's activities. It will be available for talks given by trustees and other parties, such as teachers, as it will be suitable for younger audiences. We hope it will prove to be another significant way to spread the word about KET activities.

### New Trustees

Stephen White has worked in various management roles in book and journals publishing. He is a non-executive director of Gorkana, a media monitoring company, and a director of the publishing companies Kogan Page, WARC and Infinite Ideas, as well as Chairman of the UK Media Monitoring Association.

Lieutenant Colonel Ian Hargreaves commands 2 Signal Regiment and, as such, is an ex-officio trustee of KET. He visited Nagaland in 2014 as part of the military delegation commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima.

### KET Christmas Cards 2014

KET will be selling Christmas cards again this year. These are handmade in Naga homes and all proceeds from their sale go to educating Naga children. The cards come in packs of five at £4.99 per pack, plus postage.

Please order from:  
The Managing Trustee,  
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# When you go home

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## Pangsha Hostel officially opens its doors

**ON 7 MARCH 2014, after nearly five years of planning and building, the children's hostel at Pangsha was officially opened. This project, identified as one of great importance by the Kohima Educational Society (KES), has been one of KET's key projects over the last few years.**

The villages of Old Pangsha, New Pangsha and Dan lie on the border of India and Burma, a remote area, described by KES as one of extreme poverty. Children in the area can travel up to 50 kilometres on foot to attend the school just outside Pangsha, and previously had nowhere to stay overnight.

It has not been an easy project, with Pangsha's location proving exceptionally challenging. The roads have been hewn from a formidable landscape of 2000-metre high mountains covered in thick jungle, only passable during the dry season, little more than 6 months of the year.

The building materials required for construction needed to be transported from Dimapur, 250 kilometres away, and it says much for the determination and perseverance of our KES friends that the project was completed at all.

Although the final work was completed in early 2014, the official opening was scheduled for March, just after the KET annual scholarship awards, so that trustees travelling from the UK might be able to attend. My wife, Anne, and I were KET's representatives at the ceremony. We left Kohima on 5 March, with Dr Ngully, the KES Chairman, and Salie Solo, KES's Executive Manager, with a 170-kilometre journey to Pangsha in front of us. Two days later, after overnight stops at Mokochung and Lang, we reached the Pangsha area.

We arrived at the hostel, and received a wonderful, unexpected welcome from some 220 school children, many of the village elders, several local pastors, a government official and all the teachers. The hostel, consisting of three buildings – a dormitory, kitchen and toilet block – was furnished with the essential wooden beds, tables and chairs, clean and, to the inexperienced eye, well constructed.

The inauguration ceremony included prayers from the village pastors, welcoming speeches from the leaders of the three village councils and the presentation of gifts to all in the KET/KES party. In return we presented framed and inscribed photographs of British Kohima veterans at York

Minster to the three villages, while Salie had ensured that a new hostel bell and a commemorative plaque were installed.

The ceremony culminated in the school children's recital of Psalm 23 ('The Lord is my Shepherd') and their singing of a hymn. Then it was on to the important matter of the inauguration feast of pork, chicken and fish caught in the local river, which is what I think the children had really been waiting for.

This was a truly wonderful and memorable occasion and we both felt very privileged to have been there on behalf of KET and to experience the excitement and gratitude of the local Nagas, young and old. I left Pangsha with the realisation that the hostel is not only a practical and well-received addition to the local community's Spartan facilities, but that the villagers would look after it for years to come. It has proved it to be a worthwhile venture by the supporters of KET.

*Afternote:* The Youngs made the return journey to Kohima and Scotland safely. Anne wants to go to Pangsha again!

By Hugh Young





# 70 years on. York remembers

By Sylvia May

Each of the 22 veterans who laid personal wreaths as part of the 70th Anniversary Memorial service was escorted by a soldier of the 2 Signals Regiment. Photo © Cpl R J Johnston, MOD 2014

**A HIGH POINT IN THE 70TH Anniversary Kohima Memorial Service on 10 July 2014 was the laying of wreaths by each of the 22 veterans who attended the service. Carefully escorted from their front-row seats by soldiers of 2 Signals Regiment, the 22 nonagenarians, some dapper stalwarts, others wheelchair philosophers, laid their individually inscribed wreaths on either side of the 2nd Division memorial plaque, while the 2 Sigs Band played softly 'The Road to Mandalay', and Garrison Sergeant Major Brian Kiernan called out their names and regiments as each went forward.**

The service had returned to its traditional venue, the Eden Garden in the grounds of the Minster, where, until 2004, the veterans and their families and friends formed the core of the congregation. It was here also, after the service, that the veterans had assembled by regiment for their march past the Minster, where a VIP took their salutes.

This year, alongside the veterans, there was a record attendance of 250, who were not only honouring the memory of the men who fought and died at the battle of Kohima, but were also supporting the Kohima Educational Trust's mission of gratitude to

descendants of the Nagas who fought alongside the British troops. The past is merging with the future.

Appropriately, for the first time, the service was organised by KET, who invited all their supporters, an increasingly diverse cross-section of generous people throughout Britain, to come to the service and to support a stylish subscription dinner on the preceding evening (95 attended), and for the lunch (hosted as usual by 2 Sigs) after the service, which 200 attended, with veterans invited as guests.

Touchingly, many who could not attend sent cheques, swelling KET funds. There were also several cheques presented at the lunch in Imphal barracks – £600 from the New Charter Academy whose young members, inspired by supporter Paul Lomas, had hosted a dinner of Naga cuisine; £800 from the Borneo and Malaya Veterans Association; and £600 from the indefatigable veteran John Skene, raised by raffling a fine bottle of malt whisky, which he provided.

Those who were unable to attend these events are invited to visit the KET website ([www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net](http://www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net)), which includes the inspiring address of the Dean of York Minster, the Very Reverend Vivienne Faull, another high point in the service.

*“We found it a very moving time, especially as the veterans went up to lay their wreaths – what incredibly brave men and how their wartime experiences must have changed their lives.”*

*“I felt very privileged and humble to be with the veterans on such a day and had great difficulty keeping my eyes dry.”*

*“The whole event was beautifully organised. We were very glad that we were there.”*

*“What a wonderful day we had in York and all thanks to KET for organising the event.”*

*“We very much enjoyed once again meeting up with previous acquaintances and making new friends.”*



# 70 years on. Nagaland remembers

By Charles Chasie



**SEVENTY YEARS AGO, few had heard of Kohima, a sleepy little town tucked in the hills of the lower Himalayas. By the end of WWII, however, it had earned a place in history books, with the conflict that took place here forever shattering the isolation of the Naga people.**

In April 2014, several British groups visited Nagaland to commemorate the battles and to pay their respects to the thousands on both sides who gave their lives in these terrible events. Before this anniversary year is out, we know that more will come.

The Kohima Educational Society (KES) played a role in planning the programmes for some of these groups. In doing so, we have built new friendships with our own people. This also became an opportunity for many of us here in Nagaland to learn more of our own history.

The visiting groups included an official delegation of serving officers, led by Brigadier Greville Bibby, CBE, Commander of 15 Brigade (the 'descendants' of 2nd Division); a number of British historians and writers, led by Bob Cook, the Curator of the Kohima Museum; and descendants of those who had fought at the Battle of Kohima. There was also a group associated with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, assisted by their own contacts in Kohima.

The official programme was hectic, with the groups sometimes splitting due to size, but there were a number of shared main occasions.

Foremost amongst these was the Service of Remembrance, conducted by Reverend I Tsanso, which took place on 17 April, and was planned by 15 Brigade in York, with support from the Assam Rifles and KES. Wreaths were laid by those representing a number of organisations, including Additional Chief Secretary, Mr CJ Ponraj, IAS, representing the Nagaland Government, and Brigadier Roy Choudhury, the Director of Rajya Sainik Board, on behalf of the veterans.

A function in the grounds of the Cemetery followed, where the Naga veterans were deservedly given pride of place. Havildar Sovehu Nienuh spoke on their behalf, and the veterans' participation lent additional dignity and meaning to the occasion, reminding the gathering of the inevitable truth that this vital generational link may soon be lost.

The inauguration of the Grover Memorial at Jotsoma (pictured above) was another key event. Its people aligned themselves closely with the British during the Japanese

invasion, and the village played a key strategic role in the Battle of Kohima, becoming the site of Major General Grover's Divisional HQ.

There is a strong desire, especially among the younger generations, to learn and lay claim to their history while their elders, as living witnesses, are still around. The people of Jotsoma therefore decided to build a memorial to General Grover and his men, at their own cost.

The village invited Brigadier Bibby to inaugurate the monument. His party included Mrs Celia Grover, General Grover's daughter-in-law. In addressing the huge audience gathered, Brigadier Bibby paid tribute to the bravery that the people of Nagaland demonstrated in assisting the British in the Battle.

The visitors broke into two groups, with the 15 Brigade contingent leaving for Kohima Cathedral, where the Rt. Rev. Bishop James Thoppil and his team were waiting to greet guests. Work on this impressive building began in 1986 and was completed in 1991. During construction, a reconciliation ceremony was held between surviving British and Japanese veterans, who donated to its costs, and it contains a memorial commemorating this occasion.

The groups as a whole were also able to make a number of other visits, including a courtesy call on Nagaland's Chief Minister, and the Nagaland Police Headquarters on the site of Jail Hill, a key feature during the Battle. This building is usually restricted, but when the Police realised its significance to our guests, they laid on a high tea and gave them access to the roof, which has a unique 360-degree view of the 1944 battlefield.

The State Government, the Assam Rifles and the Rajya Sainik Board gave full support to the visits, and this courtesy was matched by many instances of hospitality in the surrounding villages, such as Merema, Secü, Terhotsiese, Mezoma and Khonoma, which played significant roles during WWII.

How does one feel after such a programme? At every event, the warmth of our people was unmistakable, and a sense of history and occasion drove a high level of collaboration between organisations. KES/KET can only feel humble and grateful for the support from all quarters.

After reading the correspondence from our visitors, one felt a sense of satisfaction, too. All have written back to say how much they enjoyed their time, with some making plans to return. And when you hear such expressions, you tend to forget the efforts and look forward to the next event!

**Do join us for next year's service!**

For details please refer to [www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net](http://www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net) or contact [sylvia@kohimaeducationaltrust.org](mailto:sylvia@kohimaeducationaltrust.org)