



The KOHIMA Educational Trust

January 2006
Newsletter No. 2

Welcome to our second Newsletter. All who have supported the work of the Trust will be delighted to learn that our efforts to provide educational opportunities to the people of Kohima and Nagaland are beginning to bear fruit. The books for our first project to establish a school reference library in Kohima have been installed. Plans to provide practical and relevant educational opportunities for pupils and teachers in Nagaland are well in train. This year these include the first six three-year scholarships to secondary school pupils whose families would otherwise be unable to afford their education, as well as a seminar to support teacher training.

I am delighted to report that we have been able to recruit an additional trustee; Major General Robert Gordon recently commanded 2nd Division during which time he visited Kohima and paid tribute to those who fought and died there in 1944 when the Japanese advance into India was defeated. Robert Gordon is a man of very considerable ability and his appointment as a trustee is to be welcomed for the energy and experience it will bring to our deliberations.

At the same time I would report the retirement of Major John Jessop. John was our first treasurer, and did much to establish the trust in its infancy. We owe him a considerable debt.

My thanks go once again to all who have contributed so generously to the Trust's work. Without your support little could or would have been achieved.

Major General Murray Naylor, Chairman

Visit to the UK of Kohima school children

Pfelie Kesiezie, Headmaster of the Baptist High School in Kohima and Chairman of the Trust's Advisory Committee there, led six Kohima high school students on a visit to the UK last summer. Sylvia May and her husband Robert, who have visited Kohima several times, hosted the party in the tiny Oxfordshire village of East Hendred.

The visitors, wearing the national dress representing five different tribes (there are

up to twenty tribes in Nagaland), made a presentation to the East Hendred Primary School, singing songs and reciting poems in different tribal languages. This presentation was repeated on a visit to Fulford High School in York, where Dave Moores, Deputy Headmaster, gave a marvellous tour of the school, and his School Council gave a presentation to the visitors about life in York. Twinning Fulford High School with a school in Kohima was discussed.

In York the party also visited the Minster and, of course, the Kohima Museum,

where Nigel Magrane, Curator, captivated his audience with the story of the Battle of Kohima.

Sightseeing expeditions included a tour of London, a visit to the Isle of Wight, where the visitors saw the sea for the first time in their lives. Chris May, Robert's mother, laid on a fantastic beach picnic.

The expedition was not only an exciting adventure for the young people, but a first step in building a cultural bridge between Britain and Nagaland which is part of the Trust's mission.



Pfelie and his young charges in the garden at East Hendred.

My Visit to England

I saw many wonderful things when we went to England. We stayed at East Hendred with our hosts Robert and Sylvia. The village where we stayed was neat and clean, quiet and peaceful. It was beautiful too with flowers blooming everywhere. One of the things that impressed me was the Kohima Museum. I never expected to see such a museum in Great Britain named after Kohima! At the museum we saw a film which depicted scenes of how the Nagas fought with the British against the Japanese and the guns they had used during this war. We also saw the War Cemetery and a view of Kohima town. I even saw a Chakhesang shawl displayed on the wall. But the most memorable things that I noticed were, that the people are very polite and kind, and that the countryside and the cities are very clean! Venu Lohe, Grade 8, Baptist High School, Kohima

Inauguration of the Kohima Reference Library

Sylvia May, one of our Trustees, together with her husband Rob, visited Kohima once again last November, this time travelling with veteran Bob Allen and his son. Whilst the trip was in part a holiday and was thus self-funded, Sylvia and Rob spent most of their time on Trust business.

The Kohima Reference Library for schools is now well housed in the main reading room of the Central Kohima Public Library. The shelving has been donated by Shurhozelie, a member of the Kohima Advisory Committee, and current Minister for Education. The library will

stay there for a couple of years. The intention is to move it to its permanent home in the new Town Hall.

Sylvia also launched the essay competition on the same day. Junior competitors are asked to write about 'My knowledge about the battle of Kohima'. The senior subject is 'Naga contributions to the Battle of Kohima, their impact on Naga Society and the significance of this battle to WW2.'

The idea is to raise the awareness amongst students of the history of their own town. Rob May has donated a set of books on the war to the library, which the students are encouraged to use to get the information they need for their essays. Competition is keen. Rob gave a lecture at the High School to

around 150 students many of whom circled around him at the end to get extra info. All are entering and they have until mid February to get their entries in. The Trust's chairman, Murray Naylor will be in Kohima at the beginning of March and one of his duties will be to award the prizes.

The big part of the trip and vital to the Trust's program was a visit to Phek. Phele made this very difficult journey possible and the visitors were able to meet the man who rescued Ray Jackson when his plane crashed, leaving Ray alive but deep inside Japanese occupied territory. He walked out and was helped by the villagers of Phek. Ray, through the Trust would like to set up a scholarship to give something back to that village and it was with this in mind that the journey was made. We will update you on the progress of this project in the next Newsletter.



Both Shurhozelie and Tali gave speeches at the Library's inauguration

The annual Kohima Memorial Service, York

The next Kohima Memorial Service will be on Tuesday 25 April 2006, in York Minster with lunch at Imphal Barracks to follow. All supporters of the Kohima Educational Trust would be most welcome to attend. If you have

not yet received details, please call Major Hugh Young, one of our Trustees, on 0131 310 2507. Alternatively, please write to him at G1 Branch, HQ 2nd Division, Craigiehall, South Queensferry, West Lothian, EH30 9TN.

"The Trees are All Young on Garrison Hill"

The Trust is very pleased to have published Gordon Graham's moving account of his war experiences. A leaflet was sent to all KET supporters before publication. The book has been extremely well received. Copies can be obtained from the Treasurer, Robert Lyman, at Newstead, Park Lane, Charvil, RG10 9TR at the price of £18 including P&P. Gordon has generously attributed all the profits of the book, following the costs of publication, to the Trust. This should realise over £5,000 to the Trust in due course.

Treasurer's Report

We are extremely grateful to all those who have supported the Trust so far. The generosity of many hundreds of well-wishers has been truly humbling. Many help us by regular Direct Debit, which enables us to plan our charitable giving well into the future. Most also remember to sign the all-important 'Charity Aid' declaration as well, which allows us to claim back from the Inland Revenue twenty-eight pence in every pound given to us. In the period through to June 2005 the value of the Trust after all charitable and administrative expenditure was £58,177. Six months on this figure sits at £66,928, a sum which has allowed us to create a capital reserve to finance many years of priceless educational scholarships to needy children across Nagaland.

VJ Day

The Trust ran a well-attended stall at the VJ Day celebrations in the grounds of Blenheim Palace on 14th August 2005. Trustees and their families helped the organisers, Robert and Sylvia May, to sell books and handicrafts, raising £400 for the Trust.

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