

WHEN YOU GO HOME



KOHIMA
EDUCATIONAL TRUST

The newsletter of The Kohima Educational Trust
Special 75th Anniversary Edition

NOVEMBER 2019 16TH EDITION



Singers and dancers combined traditional with modern during the opening ceremony



The Honourable Sir Dominic Asquith KCMG.
British High Commissioner



The Honourable Chief Minister of Nagaland,
Mr Neiphiu Rio

75th Anniversary Commemoration in Kohima April 2019

On 4 April 2019, exactly 75 years after the siege of Kohima began, the people of Nagaland gathered in the Great Hall in Jotsoma to remember the day when two warring foreign tribes – the armies of Great Britain and Japan – met in their village to fight each other.

The Honourable Chief Minister of Nagaland, Mr Neiphiu Rio and the Chief Secretary, Government of Nagaland, Mr Temjen Toy hosted a delegation of British and Japanese Embassy officials and together commemorated those who gave their lives.

The British High Commissioner, Sir Dominic Asquith, and the Japanese Ambassador, Mr Kenji Hiramatsu, both spoke of the sacrifices made by all nations, not just those who fought but those whose homes and lives were destroyed. The theme of the service was rebirth and reconciliation.

The head of Kohima Village Council, Mr Eno Medo Keretsu spoke passionately about the Nagas today and how the battle affected their lives.

Many thanks to our partners in Kohima, The Kohima Educational Society, who ensured that we were very much included in this event and made to feel such a part of the celebrations. CEO Sylvia May felt very honoured to be included in this high-profile occasion when she was invited to speak about her father Gordon Graham and the founding of the Kohima Educational Trust.

Present in the audience of over 300 people were Naga veterans of the battle, Village elders, serving soldiers of the Assam Rifles and many members of KET including families of veterans, and KET Trustees.

We were treated to a cultural presentation of song and dance combining traditional Naga music with the modern. It was a tremendous occasion.

The whole ceremony can be viewed on our website
www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net

The following day, 5th April, KET were all invited by the Inspector General of the Assam Rifles (North) to attend a very moving service held in the war cemetery. Together with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the Assam Rifles organised a wonderful service. 200 guests were seated overlooking the tennis court as Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence KVCO, CB, ADC gave a moving and informative address.

Over twenty Naga veterans of the battle were given pride of place on the stage and afterwards mingled with the UK visitors, amongst them Mr Richard Day, a veteran of the campaign who had travelled to Kohima at the age of 93.

Before the service, many wreaths were laid by local dignitaries and the visitors from UK and Japan, including the Ambassador of Japan, the British High Commissioner and Sir Timothy Laurence.

Mrs Akiko MacDonald was invited to lay a wreath in memory of her father, who fought in Kohima and Mrs Celia Grover, daughter-in-law of General Grover was invited to lay a wreath on behalf of the 2nd Division. Sylvia May, CEO of KET also laid a wreath in memory of all those who fought and died in the battle.

Most notably, representatives of antecedent regiments had been invited to attend the proceedings across both days and C/Sgt Ollie Hunter laid a wreath on behalf of 2PWRR who are the antecedent regiment of both the Royal West Kents and Queens Regiments.



C/Sgt Ollie Hunter of 2PWRR lays a wreath in Kohima remembering those who were killed in action from the Royal West Kent Regiment and the Queens Regiment



The Pipes and Drums Band (Assam Rifles)



Chairman Kohima Village Council,
Mr Eno Medo Keretsu

War | Memory | Gratitude

Scholarship Awards 2019

Over 360 scholarships were awarded on 6th April at The Heritage in Kohima. It was a wonderfully sunny day with the scholars and family members able to mingle with their sponsors and KET/KES Trustees.

Former Chairman of the Kohima Educational Society, Mr Pheluopfhelie Kesiezie, gave the invocation prayer and our current Chairman, Dr Phyoemo Ngully, gave the welcoming address.

Sylvia May spoke about the importance of education and the vision which had inspired KET originally. All KET sponsors in attendance were invited to present the awards to their sponsored students personally.

Mt Tomugha Awomi responded on behalf of the students. Awomi is just completing year 12 and the fifth year of the scholarship which he first received in 2015. He expressed their gratitude to the benefactors who, he said, had become a constant source of support. He thanked the late Gordon Graham, saying that his legacy would always be remembered.

The Scholarship programme was started in 2007 when just 3 scholarships were awarded. The programme was initially designed to be awarded to students entering year 8 and continuing through to year 10. Four years ago we extended the programme to cover years 11 and 12 as well so it is now possible to sponsor students for five years. With thanks to all our donors, we have now been able to award 800 students with a scholarship.

The programme will be extended next year when we are planning to create scholarships for tertiary education.



Tomugha Awomi year 12 student, speaking on behalf of the students. Behind him, the newly appointed Chair of KET, Mr Steve White, (left) and Mr Angus Barclay, (right) KET Trustee. In the background, KET supporters, Mr Julian Trott (back row left) and Dr Kevin Gallagher (back row right), Sylvia May (front row left)

We will have more news about this very soon.

Should you wish to donate a scholarship, the cost is £100 per year and we ask that you commit to a minimum of a three- year scholarship. Many of the scholarships are awarded in memory of a veteran or relative and you can decide whether you wish it awarded to a boy or girl.

For more information, please visit our website www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net to download a form or write to sylvia@kohimaeducationaltrust.org and we will arrange to send you the application form.

Students are encouraged to write to their sponsors each year and we take photographs at the annual ceremony which is held in March each year.



Students waiting to be called up with their parents in the background

HERE ARE A FEW EXCERPTS FROM STUDENTS WHO RECEIVED A KET SCHOLARSHIP



“This Trust has helped to open many ways for me and my family, I will be ever thankful for your help and will not let this support go in vain, I promise that I will become someone one day to achieve my goals, from the scholarship I got through this Trust. Thank you”
Lizeite Pame



“This KET scholarship has not only helped me financially but has also helped me open up my mind to the varied cultures and diversities Nagaland possesses. Every year since 2015 I have been attending this KET scholarship which has strengthened me.”
Lamthaiu K

“When I was a child I thought there is no-one to help me and I started praying. Finally through you I can accomplish much. Thank you”
Moses Phorygon

“ I imagine that if I didn’t get this scholarship then I wouldn’t get any education but in fact I’ve got a scholarship and an education. Education plays a very important role in our life. To be without education is a dangerous thing in this world.”
Musho L

“ I with honour and glory greet the KET members. Firstly I would like to express my happiness and thanksgiving love. I am thankful to the KET scholarship for helping me, for motivating me and building me both financially and mentally. The KET scholarship has help me in all walks of life. Even little steps to take, forging ahead towards my future is all because of the KET unconditional love”
Ate-U Thele



Students lining up to receive their award

York 75th Commemoration Service

July 3rd and 4th were both marvellous days , a combination of war, memory and gratitude. On the evening of July 3rd, Dr Rob Lyman and Mr James Holland treated over 150 people to a scintillating talk about events leading up to the battles of Kohima and Imphal. Interspersed with clips from the film made by James and Dan Snow, it made for a fascinating evening, leaving many in the audience clamouring for more. The demand for tickets was so great that we had to hire a second theatre with the event streamed. Unfortunately, the sound was not as good in the second theatre; our apologies to those who were affected. But we hope it did not spoil the overall evening, which culminated in a reception where the speakers were able to mingle with everyone after the main event.

Three veterans of the battle were able to join us for the evening, which made the event even more special.

The commemoration service on July 4th was attended by over 350 people, among them seven veterans of the campaign – something which really made the day for us. The day began in the Assembly Rooms when our Patron, The Duke of York, gave a wonderful speech before spending time with the veterans and their families. HRH visited Kohima in 2012 and was able to share his considerable knowledge of the history of the battle. His compassion for the veterans themselves was clear to see.

From The Assembly Rooms, it was a short walk to Dean's Park where the service was held, led by The Right Reverend Dr Jonathan Frost, Dean of York and The Reverend Canon Peter Moger, Precentor. The Address was given this year by the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Dr John Tucker Mugabi Sentamu, The Archbishop of York. Wreaths were laid by The Duke of York and all seven veterans attending. We enjoyed the band of the Parachute Regiment, who played 'The Road to Mandalay' as the wreaths were laid and who kindly gave of their time and helped make the day special.

We had a high quality line up of guest readers this year. Reverend Christopher Bull, cousin of Lance Corporal John Pennington Harman read Romans 8:31-39 and Robert Lowry, son of Michael Lowry, a veteran of the Battle of Kohima, read the excerpt from Pericles' Funeral Oration.

The younger generations were well represented with Louis Brennan, great grandson of Major Philip Pearse (see below) and Harriet Getley, great granddaughter of General John Grover both taking their turn to read "No Tears were shed at Kohima" and the Kohima epitaph respectively. "No Tears were shed at Kohima" was written by a sergeant in the Lancashire Fusiliers, with whom



Louis Brennan reads 'No Tears were Shed at Kohima'

Louis's great grandfather had served.

Everyone was excited and delighted when a Hurricane piloted by Squadron Leader Mark Discombe, the Officer Commanding Battle of Britain Memorial Flight flew overhead at the end of the service; it made for a wonderfully moving end to the formal part of the day.



Veteran Joseph Ogilvie lays a wreath

The plane is painted in the same colours as the Hurricane flown by Jimmy Whalen when he was shot down over Kohima on 18th April 1944 when he was leading six of the squadrons of Hurri-Bombers on a sortie to relieve the defenders of Kohima. He was awarded a DFC for his actions. He is buried in the Kohima War Cemetery.

Thank you all, so much, for the support you gave us throughout the two days. The shop sold over £2200 worth of crafts and books, and the raffle raised a magnificent £942.

Our thanks also go to the soldiers of 2PWRR and 2nd Signal Regiment who turned out in force on the day shaking buckets on the streets of York collecting just under £1200.



Veterans gather in Dean's Park to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima

We also extend our thanks to GSM Brian Kiernan and all those soldiers serving with the 2nd Signal Regiment for the vital manpower they provide to make the day so successful.

It is clear from the increasing numbers who attend and your wonderful letters afterwards that this event means a great deal to our supporters. For example, Margaret wrote to say, 'for all of us who have had relatives serve at Kohima, I just want to say how much it means to me and my family to be able to have a 'special day to remember'.

This is such an important point, and reminds us that very few other battles have their own day, a day for relatives to gather together and remember.

Another supporter Erik Pearse, who never knew his father, first attended the York service in 2010. His father, Philip Pearse was shipped to India as a Major with the Lancashire Fusiliers almost a month after Erik was born, and was killed leading his company in the battle to recapture Firs Hill on April 28th 1944. At York, Erik met a Lancashire Fusilier veteran, Andrew Watson, who was a Lieutenant in his father's Company and had been with him just days before he was killed.

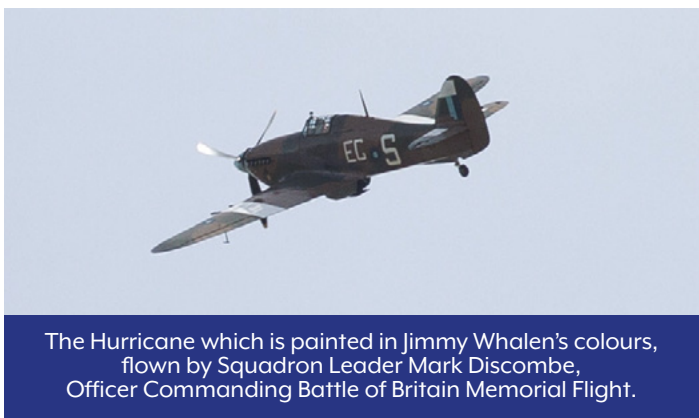
A few years later, again in York, Erik met Dick Channer, who was planning to go to Kohima in 2013. He suggested that Erik wrote a letter to his father. Dick said that he would take it to the cemetery and place it on Philip Pearse's grave.

It was a seminal moment, and encouraged Erik to write.

"Dear Dad," he wrote in his brief letter, "I never knew you, though you held me in your arms. I am so proud of you and look forward to seeing you where we will be together for ever."

It was Erik's grandson, Louis Brennan read 'No Tears Were Shed at Kohima'.

The date for next years' service is 2nd July 2020 which will again be held in Dean's Park, after which we will return to our spiritual home of Imphal Barracks for lunch.



The Hurricane which is painted in Jimmy Whalen's colours, flown by Squadron Leader Mark Discombe, Officer Commanding Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

Other events commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima included a series of lecture tours given by Tim Bean, a lecturer at Sandhurst. Venues ranged from Fort George in Inverness, Wellington College and Brooks's St James's and most recently at the Gurkha Museum at an event organised by the Defense Surveyors Association.

Meanwhile, **The Royal British Legion** sponsored an event on 11th July at the National Army Museum where Rob Lyman was invited to give a talk about the Burma campaign . Kohima was one of the three featured battles at this year's Festival of Remembrance and veterans were honoured on stage at the Albert Hall on 9th November.

Mind Your Health

In March 2018, our chairman Dr Phyoebemo Ngully held a three-day teaching seminar in the more remote villages of Nagaland. Women of the church are selected to attend this course where they learn basic healthcare. Subjects covered include the identification of common local and prevalent diseases; Understanding and learning the basic skills needed to address these common and prevalent diseases; Maternal Health; Child Health and the importance of immunisation; Ante-natal care. The course ends with an afternoon of learning how to use the equipment and handing out of the medical kits. These kits include a blood pressure check machine; aqua check for diabetes; thermometer and weighing machine.

To train one person costs £180.



Changes to the board

Our Chairman of the last four years and Trustee previously to that, Major General David Shaw has stepped down from the board after his tenure as Chairman was completed. David has brought a great deal the to the Trust, and leaves a highly organised and motivated group of Trustees as a legacy. Our thanks go to him for all his hard work and we wish him well with his work on another charity, The Veterans' Foundation which raises funds for other armed forces charities and charitable activities. By the end of this month it will have given away about £2.5M in just over 3 years operation to about 160 different organisations. They rely heavily on the support of the public playing the Veterans' Lottery or making donations to the Veterans' Foundation. The website is www.veteransfoundation.org.uk.



Steve White

David's successor is Mr Stephen White who has been a Trustee of KET for the past three years and Deputy Chairman for the past year. Steve's career included academic and professional publishing, and media intelligence. Now retired, Steve will bring a whole new dimension to KET as we seek to grow even further in the future.

Future Plans

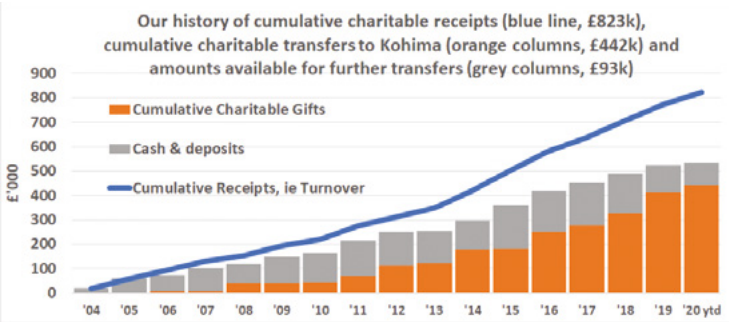
There are several new initiatives being planned at the moment. We are looking to extend our flagship scholarship programme into **tertiary education** and plan to award two such scholarships early in the new year. The scholarship will fund the admission fee to the college and pay for all the books needed to complete the course.

We are also planning to hold a **workshop** for new and

aspiring writers. Seven presenters/lecturers have been invited, two of whom are the winners of the Gordon Graham Prize for Naga Literature. Attendees will be taught writing techniques and discuss the challenges of publishing in Nagaland and the importance of writing and literature for Naga society.

We are also discussing sponsoring an **International Seminar** in conjunction with the Don Bosco College next March over a three-day period. The targeted group is research students, teaching faculties and students from more than twenty colleges under Nagaland University. The theme will be "Culture of the North East, India , in changing time". More information, as these projects are confirmed will be posted on our website www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net

Financial



Last year's newsletter contained an earlier version of the chart above and it is heartening to see how the charity's success has continued so healthily. Cumulative receipts (the blue line) now exceed £800,000 and transfers to the KES in Kohima (the orange right hand column) are now approaching £450,000. The continuing growth of the Scholarships programme, inter alia, is about to enlarge the latter figure materially. Of the £93,000 we currently hold here in the UK (the grey part of the column), this coming year's budgets from our Naga colleagues indicate that around one third of this can be used for detailed programmes, about which you will have read elsewhere in this newsletter. This will take cumulative transfers to Kohima towards the half million pound mark. Your continuing generosity to our Naga friends makes all this possible and is very much appreciated, and will help ensure that our work can continue for the foreseeable future."

The Gordon Graham Prize for Naga Literature

After several years of planning, this inaugural prize was launched last year. It was an idea which both Gordon Graham and Charles Chasie worked on together and was Gordon's last project before his death in 2015.

The prize was launched to promote good writing and to raise the profile of Naga writers. The award is for a published book, fiction or non-fiction, which recognises and rewards the knowledge-keepers and idea-givers of Naga society and to encourage reading and writing in the Naga community.

The winner of the fiction prize was Easterine Kire for her novel "When the River Sleeps " and the winner of the non-fiction prize was Kethoser Aniu Kevichusa for his work on "Politics and Forgiveness: A contemporary look at the theme of rebirth and reconciliation".

Speaking on behalf of the judges, Dr Akum Longchari said the shortlisted books represented a spectrum of issues with very different styles of writing and expression. Despite its diversity , he said the common thread running along all these books was their sense of attachment and belongingness to the Naga heart.

Stating that this award is a timely intervention and is creating the space and opportunity for new dreams and stories

to be shared and for the new to be born, he said "it is encouraging Nagas to write our own stories from our own perspectives and for our own purposes. This is essential for Nagas to nurture ourselves, to uplift new leaders with new visions and to harness a new consciousness with an imagination to create anew."

Chief Minister of Nagaland, Mr Neiphiu Rio, our honoured guest, commended The Kohima Educational Society for instituting the award which will helps promote good writing, and encouraging reading and writing generally within the Naga community.



Chief Minister of Nagaland, Mr Neiphiu Rio presents the award to the winner of the non-fiction category Mr Kethoser Aniu Kevichusa

The KET Website

We have fully revamped our website this year. With thanks to Rob Hogg and Gareth Parker, we have a wonderful new design and it is now updated with all our news. The shop is fully functional with plenty of Naga crafts and other items available for purchase, including books, DVDs and some gorgeous necklaces! You can now easily find information about our scholarship programme as well as download forms for gift aid, standing orders and legacies.

Please visit www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net

Enterprising fundraising from our supporters

Harriet Getley, the eighteen-year-old great granddaughter of General Grover spent her summer term designing a set of six postcards which she sold, raising enough money to fund a KET scholarship. Our youngest scholarship donor so far.

On 1st July, **Purcell UK** organised a wonderful event in Norwich Castle. Peter Horner introduced the evening and spoke about his father Sammy Horner, a great friend of Jack Randle. He spoke movingly about what it was like to be brought up in a family with such history and how important it is to pass this information on to the next generation.

Steve Snelling, a local historian, gave an account of the Battle of Kohima with a focus on the Royal Norfolk's, having interviewed many Royal Norfolk veterans over the years. £400 was raised during the evening and we look forward to setting up a Royal Norfolk Scholarship in 2020 with the money raised. The remaining £100 will go towards our Mind Your Health Programme.

At the beginning of August, **Tom Lloyd** cycled the 100 miles of the Prudential London-Surrey 100 race on behalf of KET. **Tom writes:-**

"Sundays are made for a good bike ride and a hearty lunch afterwards. Sunday the 4th of August was made for a monster 100 mile ride through the lanes and hills of Surrey and London with some monster flapjacks to fuel the way! To see thousands of bikes descend on Queen Elizabeth Park at 6am was akin to seeing ants summoned by the summertime delights of a melted ice lolly on the ground. All of this can only be for one reason - the Prudential Ride London. A phenomenal event with hundreds of worthy charities supported and without a car in sight! Few riders, I might add, sporting their own custom-designed jersey for race day! The key focus when designing the jersey was to capture the story of the Trust and one that would start conversation with others, spreading the good word of KET and to make more people aware."

KET are providing the youngsters and locals of Kohima with opportunities to broaden their horizons, strengthen their skills and meet some incredibly inspiring people in the process. Tom raised a massive £500 for KET so a huge thank you to all his supporters and to him for making this magnificent effort on our behalf.



Tom sporting his T shirt



Tom says 'Thank You'



Bob Cook, Curator of the Kohima Museum in York and KET Trustee; Cpl George Leader; Sylvia May

On 3rd May the **2PWRR Corporals Mess** commemorated the battle of Kohima and the courageous actions of LCpl JP Harman VC and the 4th battalion the Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment. 2PWRR, an antecedent regiment of the Royal West Kent Regiment, make an annual Kohima Corporal award which this year went to Cpl George Leader.

KET was invited along to make a presentation about the charity and the Corporals clubbed together and raised enough money for a scholarship. Bob Cook was also invited to give a talk about the battle. Our thanks to RSM Jon O'Neill for inviting us to take part in this special day.



Corporals attending the day which included a Battalion parade and delicious curry lunch

The Defense Surveyors Association organised a seminar on the Battle of Kohima. It was wonderful day with guest speakers, Tim Bean, the Senior Lecturer in War Studies at Sandhurst; Lt Col Mike Tickner, RLC The Land Warfare Centre and Stuart Wheeler, Archive Manager of the Tank Museum in Bovington each giving a fascinating and informative talk. At the end of the day, it was arranged to show our film, Kohima: An Exploration of War, Memory and Gratitude, after which, The President, Major General Roy Wood presented KET with a cheque for £100.

Travelling to Kohima?

If you are thinking about a trip to Kohima and need some advice there are two companies who can help. Indus Experiences are based in the UK and plan regular tours to Kohima and Imphal each year. The link below informs of their next trip in April 2020.

<https://www.indus experiences.co.uk/special-interest/battlefieldtours/britain-s-greatest-battle-tour-of-imphal-kohima-dimapur-kolkata>

Indus Experiences can help plan your trip to Kohima and Imphal and they have a range of North East India itineraries as well as tailor made trips for groups. Their telephone number is 020 8901 7320 e-mail: holidays@indus experiences.co.uk

Kohima Tours and Treks is a local company based in Kohima which specialises in tours of the battlefields of Kohima as well as the cultural history of Nagaland. Every tour is tailor made to the wishes of the client, and range from quick battlefield tours for those with limited time to a full experience of retracing historical footsteps of WW2 mingled with adventure and knowledge of survival skills. In addition, the cultural packages include Encounters with the Last Naga Head-hunters, including learning about herbal and medicinal healing, tracking and jungle survival skills.

If you would like to know more, please email linuslchase@gmail.com or write to sylvia@kohimaeducationaltrust.org for a leaflet.

Printed and published by the Kohima Educational Trust, a registered charity (No 1102045) devoted to helping the people of Nagaland through educational activities.

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The KET policy on Data Protection can be found on the website. For further information about the many KES/KET activities in Nagaland in operation and planned, please visit:

www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net
www.facebook.com/KohimaEducationalTrust
twitter.com/kohimaedtrust

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