

WHEN YOU GO HOME



The newsletter of the Kohima Educational Trust

NOVEMBER 2023 20th EDITION



Above: The Cross of Sacrifice at the Kohima War Cemetery 1954 ©Commonwealth War Graves Commission

CONTINUING TO SUPPORT NAGA EDUCATION

The Kohima Educational Society, our sister body in Nagaland, has still not received a renewed FCRA licence from the Indian government. 31st March 2024 is the new deadline and until the licence is renewed, we can't send money to KES. The good news is that the licence hasn't been rescinded and is still shown as 'under process' on the official website so we continue to wait. Matters became critical in March of this year when KES ran out of money. Organisationally, KES is slim enough to keep going on the small amounts raised in Nagaland. Members of the board are all unpaid volunteers. The manager is the only employee and is being stalwart.

This crisis has made us question the range of educational support we give to young Nagas. For nearly twenty years, our principal programme has been the provision of scholarships for worthy school students in years 8 to 12. I know that many of you have supported young Nagas in this way and some have exchanged letters. As soon as we can send money to Nagaland in sufficient amounts to restart the Scholarship Programme, we shall.

The other programmes currently on hold are Mind Your Health, which encourages good health and early diagnosis of diseases in rural villages, and the Gordon Graham Prize for Naga Literature. The GGPNL was launched in 2018 and, despite being hampered by the Covid epidemic, has established itself as a notable award in the busy Naga literary scene.

So, what to do? We know that many young Nagas travel abroad to attend vocational courses of less than a year's duration in such subjects as agriculture, tourism, hospitality, construction, and IT. We've tested the water to see whether we can offer students financial support to cover all or part of the cost of courses in Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and elsewhere and what interest there would be, especially among those who've graduated from school with KET/KES support. Initial soundings are positive. We'll continue to look at opportunities and, of course, the ramifications of following this path. More news soon. If you are interested to continue supporting a student in Nagaland, please do contact Sylvia May for further details.

Meanwhile, our work of remembering those who fought at Kohima in 1944 goes on. The Service of Remembrance in the Dean's Garden of York Minster in July was as heartfelt and beautiful as ever. Many of you were there and enjoyed lunch in Imphal Barracks afterwards. Many of you, too, will have attended Rob Lyman's brilliant talk based on his recent book *The Reconquest of Burma 1944-45* in the University the previous evening.

Next year, we shall mark the 80th anniversary of the battle with more events, more webinars and we hope to see as many of you as possible at the service in York. Full details of all our events next year can be found in the following pages.

Stephen White KET Chairman

EVENTS 2023

YORK SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

On 6th July 2023 we welcomed friends, supporters and families of veterans to Dean's Park, York Minster, for the commemoration of the 79th anniversary of the battles of Kohima and Imphal.

The Kohima Educational Trust is grateful to the Chapter of York for allowing this memorial service to be held in Dean's Park.

The Music was played by The Band of the Royal Yorkshire Regiment, by kind permission of Lt Col Hill, CO 4th Battalion Royal Yorkshire Regiment. The Piper was LCpl Wilson 214 Squadron.



The Memorial service was conducted by The Very Reverend Dominic Barrington, Dean of York (below left) The Address was given by The Rt Revd Hugh Nelson, Bishop of St Germans and Bishop to the Forces, (below centre) Bishop Hugh spoke movingly about his grandfather who had come to the Christian faith as a prisoner on the River Kwai.

The Prayers were led by The Rt Revd Nigel Stock (below right) who is a trustee of KET.



UK NAGA ASSOCIATION

The annual meet of the UK Naga Association was held over a very wet weekend in July, in Wales. KET were delighted to be invited along and it was a terrific opportunity to meet old friends as well as make new ones.

Despite the weather, undeterred, everyone made use of the outdoor activity centre, scaling climbing walls, and zipping down wires before returning back to the hotel where many of the group had prepared a huge selection of the most fantastic curries.

We were thoroughly spoiled and thank Temsuyanger Longkumer in particular for including us in this event, and allowing Sylvia May to say a few words about KET.



Wreaths were then laid:

Veteran Fusilier Richard Day (above left)

Rt Hon Lord Mayor Reverend Councillor Chris Cullwick (above centre)

Mr Stephen White, Chairman Kohima Educational Trust
Lt Col Matthew Jones, CO 2nd Signal Regiment and York Garrison Commander (above right)

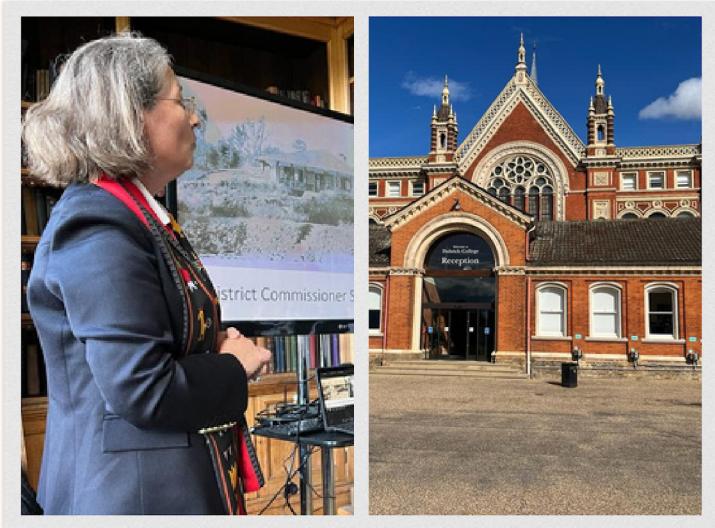
The Kohima Educational Trust would like to thank the soldiers of the 2nd Signal Regiment for their unstinting help and once again to the Chapter of York without whom this service would not be possible. We thank also the Civic Party of York and all those who joined us on the day for the service - thank you for your continued support.



Next year's service will take place on Thursday 4th July 2024
We look forward to welcoming you all to this 80th anniversary commemoration. Further details can be found on page 7 of this newsletter.



DULWICH COLLEGE



Charlotte Carty, one of the KET Trustees, has been researching her grandfather, Lt Col William Felix "Bruno" Brown who commanded the Assam Regiment in Kohima. He is an alumnus of Dulwich College and Charlotte was thrilled to be invited to speak to their History Society about the battle of Kohima and tell her grandfather's story. Lt Col Brown is commemorated with other alumni and his name is carved on the College war memorial.

We are keen to reach out to other schools and colleges and would be delighted to give talks or presentations about the battle, particularly in this forthcoming 80th anniversary year. Charlotte has also been invited to talk to Sherborne Prep School and will be giving a KET webinar presentation about the Old Shirburnians in January.



FORD RIDE LONDON

KET was delighted that two of our supporters raised money by cycling in the Ford RideLondon event on 28th May. This year our cyclists were serving personnel from 2nd Signal Regiment. Sgt Richard Taylor (below right) and Cpl Simon Hancock (left). It was a gruelling day and KET would like to thank Richie and Simon for their fantastic effort. Between them, they raised a splendid £425



FRIENDS OF MILLBANK

This is a wonderful organisation which was set up to celebrate the heritage and achievement of military medicine and to show its relevance for modern healthcare worldwide. They hold monthly talks at the fabulous Chelsea College of Arts, formerly the Royal Army Medical College (pictured below) where the lecture theatre still displays original panelling containing the names of alumni. Their website is well worth looking at www.friendsofmillbank.org

Each year they hold a special lecture in memory of Dr George Blair MBE who enlisted at the start of the Second World War at the RAMC. He was posted to 10th Indian Division as the Regimental Medical Officer to 5 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery. Originally posted to the north east of India, when the Japanese invaded they were sent down to Malaya. Captured by the Japanese in February 1942, Dr Blair spent the rest of the war as a POW of the Japanese. He received his MBE after the war for his services to the wounded.



In October 2023, Col S Jagdish and Mathew Roberts were invited by Friends of Millbank to give this annual lecture to talk about the medical support at the siege of Kohima. The talk was recorded and can be found on both their website and on the KET website www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net

We are very grateful to Col Jagdish who chose KET as the charity to support that evening and we were kindly presented with a very generous cheque for £200.

Friends of Millbank have a charity of the year every year and in 2023 it is the David Nott Foundation who work in Ukraine and other war zones training war doctors and surgeons. www.davidnottfoundation.com

BURMA KOHIMA LODGE



Sylvia May is presented with a cheque by The Burma Kohima Lodge

KET was delighted to be invited to the Burma Kohima Lodge's annual Empty Chair ceremony when the fallen are remembered from all wars. It was a very poignant service when all who attended were invited to lay a poppy in memory of those who did not come home.

The Lodge, founded and named by veterans of the Burma Campaign, raised £557 during the evening which they generously donated to KET.

WEBINARS

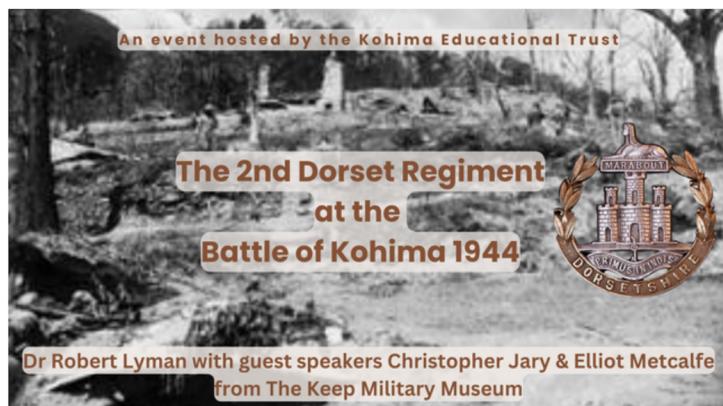
Our programme of webinars has continued this year with a wealth of interest and diversity. We started the year with a wonderful talk from George Wilton on the Chindits; followed in March with Steve Snelling taking us through the lesser known story about George Knowland and the events on Hill 170.



In the summer our old friend Harry Fecitt gave a terrific presentation on the East African regiments and Dr Chandar Sundaram talked about the Indian National Army.



Into the autumn, we continued our focus on individual regiments with a brilliant presentation on the Dorset Regiment, given by Christopher Jary and Elliot Metcalfe, Director of The Keep Military Museum in Dorchester. The year will conclude with a talk from Steve Rothwell on the Burma Rifles campaign. We will be building on this series next year with talks on the Durham Light Infantry, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders and more.

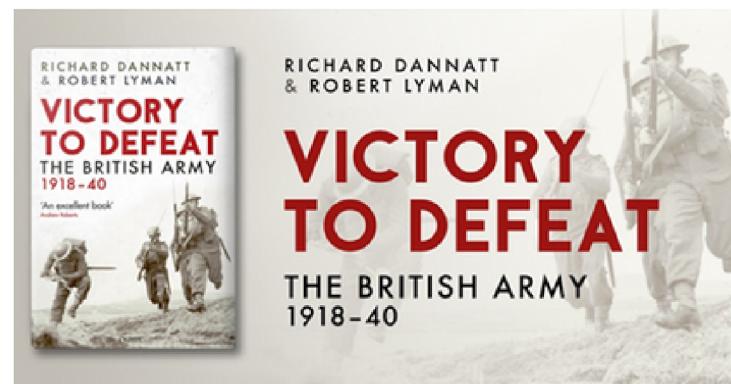


In October, we departed from our usual format as we were kindly invited by the Friends of Millbank to share with you all the George Blair Memorial Lecture when Col S Jagdish and Matthew Roberts gave a fascinating talk about Colonel John Young, Chief Medical Officer during the Siege of Kohima. The evening was organised by Col (retd) David Vasallo, Chairman of the Friends of Millbank who generously donated their proceeds to KET.

The image shows the front cover of the book 'A War of Empires' by Robert Lyman. The cover is red with a yellow and red geometric pattern at the bottom. The title 'A WAR OF EMPIRES' is in large, white, serif capital letters. Below it, in smaller white text, is 'JAPAN, INDIA, BURMA & BRITAIN 1941-45'. The author's name, 'ROBERT LYMAN', is at the top. A circular portrait of the author, Robert Lyman, is positioned to the right of the book cover. He is a middle-aged man with light hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie, smiling at the camera. The background of the entire image is a red gradient with a subtle geometric pattern.

Presiding over all of the webinars, and indeed the mastermind behind them, is the brilliant Dr Robert Lyman who also gave a webinar of his own when he talked about his excellent book *A War of Empires* which is now available in paperback from our online store www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net/shop

Dr Lyman has also co-authored with Lord Dannatt the excellent book *Victory to Defeat: The British Army 1918–40* which is out now, published by Osprey.



2024 WEBINAR PROGRAMME

14th December 2023 - Burma Rifles: The Unknown Army - historian Steve Rothwell introduced by Dr Robert Lyman

18th January 2024 - Sherborne School: The Battle of Kohima and Beyond to Burma - Charlotte Cartwright introduced by Dr Robert Lyman. This is the first webinar of a series about schools whose alumni fought in the Burma Campaign.

15th February 2024 - Dakota: Air Supply drops Kohima 1943-44
presented by Terence O'Halloran, curator of 31 Squadron Association

21st March 2024 - The Durham Light Infantry at Kohima - KET trustee Bishop Nigel Stock, whose uncle fought with the DLI at Kohima, introduced by Dr Robert Lyman

25th April 2024 - 39 Hours: Walking in my Grandfather's footsteps - Charlotte Carty

2nd May 2024 - The Royal Norfolks at Kohima - historian and author Steve Snelling, introduced by Dr Robert Lyman

13th June 2024 – The story of Mari – celebrated Naga author Dr Easterine Kire talks to Dr Robert Lyman about her family who lived through the battle of Kohima.

Full details will be on the [website](#) and registration will open approximately 2-3 weeks before each event date.

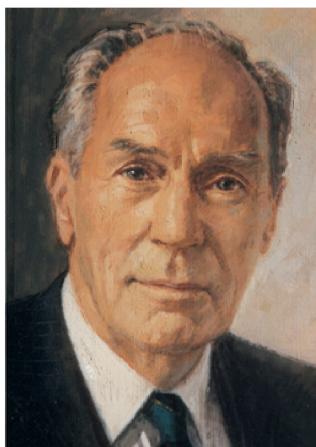
A LOOK BACK TO THE BEGINNING...

21 years ago, while in the midst of planning the 60th anniversary commemorations, veterans of the battle of Kohima first heard Gordon Graham's words: "Memory alone is not enough, it is what we do with it that matters." They realised that an annual remembrance was not enough to repay the debt of honour to the Naga people who had helped them in battle. Thus KET was founded, and 21 years later we are able to bring you the 20th edition of the newsletter 'When you go home'.

Without Gordon Graham, the Kohima Educational Trust would not exist. It would certainly not still be thriving nearly twenty years after its formation, and would not have raised over a million pounds and achieved the work in Nagaland that it has. Gordon was a man of vision, amongst many other attributes, and none more so than in his conception of KET. The idea had lain dormant in his mind for many years but it was not until planning the 60th anniversary that he was able to bring the idea to a receptive audience and was able to urge the other members of the committee, many veterans themselves, to commemorate the battle in a more permanent way.



Shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War, Gordon joined the 1st Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders and in 1942, along with thousands of others, was sent to Bombay. His war really started in April 1944, when the Japanese invaded India. Gordon was part of the 2nd Division, which was rushed to Kohima to aid the stricken garrison. The battle lasted for three months, in dense jungle, much of it in hand-to-hand combat. This was where Gordon was awarded the first of his two Military Crosses.



He went back to Kohima in 1954, a journey he described in an article subsequently published in The Times of London,* entitled "Return to a Battlefield". Latterly, Gordon revisited this article and condensed it into four verses, which he felt epitomised the past, the present and the future: war, memory and gratitude. Those who fought at Kohima always maintained that without the help of the Nagas, the British and Commonwealth soldiers could not have won that battle, and would certainly not have survived in the numbers that they did. For sixty years, Gordon thought about how to repay this debt of honour. When he approached a Naga friend with this idea, the immediate response was "you have not forgotten us". Together with fellow veterans, they made it happen.

*The full article as well as the condensed 'poem' can be found on our website www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net



Now, on the eve of the 80th Anniversary we look back at what KET and KES have achieved: over 800 Scholarships have been awarded in that time; 250 women from remote villages have been trained in basic health care (photo below); the Gordon Graham Prize for Naga Literature (GGPNL) has been successfully launched.



Numerous other projects have been achieved: we have built a hostel (photos below); built latrines and created a Reference Library. All with thanks to our wonderful team in Kohima and to you, our supporters who have so generously given over the years.



Now we seek to expand and create a new additional training programme for young Nagas. It will take some time to realise and finalise the details, but we hope you will be patient, stay with us and look forward to the next 20 years when we will be commemorating the centenary of the battle and educating great-great grandchildren of those brave Nagas who gave so much.



80TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR: UPCOMING EVENTS

2024 heralds the 80th anniversary year of the battles of Kohima and Imphal and with this in mind we are planning several events throughout the year.

KOHIMA

At the end of March, we are heading to Kohima to join Charlotte Carty, the granddaughter of Lt Col Bruno Brown, CO Assam Regiment, who will be following in her grandfather's footsteps and walking to Kohima in 39 hours – the time that it took Col Brown to make the same journey when withdrawing from Jessami, where fierce preliminary contact had been made with the invading Japanese.



This withdrawal, on foot, along paths and tracks, was over 70 miles. Whilst Jessami is only 27 miles to the north-east of Kohima, as the crow flies, the mountainous terrain extended the troops' march, made all the more difficult as it was now through enemy-held territory.

The Regiment achieved this in 39 hours, with some 260 men making it through to bolster the thin defences at Kohima. They started at midnight on 1st April and arrived at Kohima 39 hours later at 3pm on 3rd April 1944, literally moments ahead of the Japanese and the day before the siege of Kohima officially began.

KOHIMA CEMETERY



On 4th April 2024 we are hoping to gather in the War Cemetery at Kohima to commemorate the start of the siege and subsequent battle 80 years ago.



LONDON: Kohima 80th Anniversary Weekend

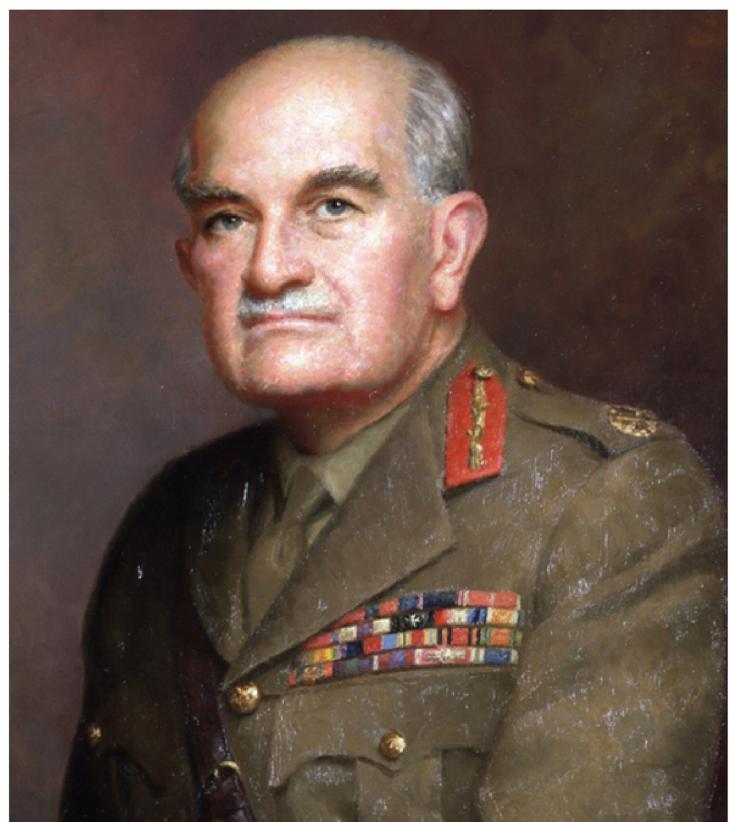
Over the weekend of 20th and 21st April 2024, KET has been invited by the National Army Museum in London to stage two days of events at the museum to mark the 80th anniversary of the battle of Kohima. We are busy assembling a stellar line-up of speakers for a weekend of talks that will offer a wide range of insights into the campaign and its participants.



The programme includes talks from Dr Robert Lyman, Fergal Keane and James Holland. Robert Palmer will also be there talking about Armoured Warfare in the campaign; Steve Snelling will be talking about the VCs at Kohima; George Wilton will speak on the Chindits and 23 Brigade; Col S Jagdish will talk about the Medical Support at Kohima.

Charlotte Carty will give an illustrated talk about her recent epic 39 Hour walk in Nagaland and on Saturday evening, Dr Robert Lyman will be in conversation with Lord Slim, discussing his grandfather Field Marshal William Joseph Slim, 1st Viscount Slim.

In support of both the Kohima Educational Trust and the Gurkha Welfare Trust we will be hosting a book launch with Hannah Watson, author of a new children's book called 'The Jungle War'.



Field Marshal William, Viscount Slim, in Service Dress, 1967
Oil on canvas by Leonard Boden ©National Army Museum
By agreement with Field Marshal Lord Slim this painting was commissioned to commemorate his 75th birthday.

Please see our website www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net which will have details of the full programme early in the new year.

YORK

On 3rd and 4th July KET is organising the annual Service of Commemoration in York. This will be a bigger event than ever so do book your places as soon as you can.



The service on Thursday 4th July will be held in the Dean's Garden at York Minster and the Address will be given by The Venerable Doctor (Air Vice-Marshal) Giles Legood, Chaplain-in-Chief and Archdeacon for the Royal Air Force. The service will be followed by lunch.



The evening prior to the service, KET is organising a Gala Dinner at the Merchant Adventurer's Hall in York when we will be delighted to welcome The Lord Dannatt GCB CBE MC as our principal guest and keynote speaker. Tickets are £75 each. We are limited to 160 people so again, please book early.



All details and the booking form will be available on our website and we will be in touch with you all to share more detail in the new year.

We are also planning individual regimental events both live and on our series of webinars throughout the year. For further updates, please do keep an eye on our website.
www.kohimaeducationaltrust.net

THE KOHIMA MUSEUM

Situated in Imphal Barracks in York, this unique museum continues to use artefacts that have been donated by veterans and their families and which help tell the story of the British 2nd Division - focussing on their part in the Burma Campaign and the battle of Kohima in particular.

There is now a new display showing the journey of the 2nd Division from the start of the war in France through to South Africa en-route to India, Burma and Japan, using a multitude of coins that have been tucked away in the many items of kit and clothing that have been donated to the museum. In addition, there is a new mounted display of Japanese Occupation Currency used by them to 'pay' for goods as they surged through south east Asia in 1942. British and Commonwealth soldiers collected them in their thousands during their advances in 1944-45.

Due to the advancing years of the current curatorial staff at the museum, a 'Curator-in-Waiting' has been appointed: Professor Bob White, FRSE FMedSci. His father was a tank driver in Burma who was wounded at the Battle of the Admin Box. Professor White will spend the next few months immersing himself in all of the stories and artefacts passed on from the veterans over the years.

After the dramatic cessation of visitors to the museum during the COVID pandemic, numbers are definitely beginning to pick up again and the museum is now enjoying the same footfall seen pre-COVID. The electronic visitor numbers continue to grow and the highlight of the visitor year continues to be the Kohima Memorial Day which next year will be on Thursday 4th July 2024.



BATTLEFIELD TOURS TO KOHIMA 2024

There are several battlefield tours taking place next year to commemorate the 80th Anniversary.

INDUS EXPERIENCES: A tour will run from 2 – 14th April 2024 and will cover Kohima & Imphal. To book a place contact either Bob Cook at kohimamuseum@yahoo.co.uk or Indus Experiences at yasin@indusexperiences.co.uk

SAMPAN TRAVEL 3 tours are planned:

- **Beyond the Chindwin – Burma WW2 tour with Dr Robert Lyman** who will guide visitors through the battlefields: 22 February–4 March 2024
- **Kolkata, Kohima and Shillong:** 5–16 April 2024.
- **Kolkata, Nagaland and Assam:** 8–21 November 2024

All details and itineraries can be found at Sampan Travel: www.sampantravel.com/journeys/specialised/forgotten-war-tour-2/

SHOP FOR CHRISTMAS!



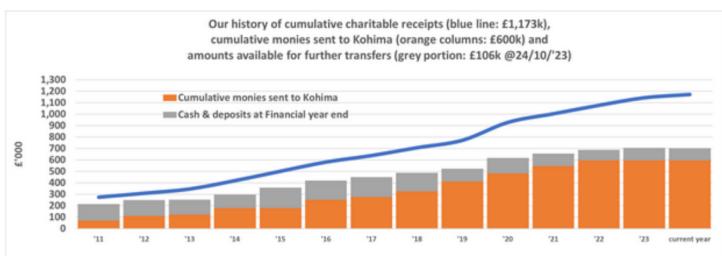
THE TREES ARE ALL YOUNG ON GARRISON HILL

In this memoir, Gordon Graham takes the reader on a journey from a quiet, respectable boyhood and adolescence in Scotland to the sudden brutality of jungle warfare in Assam and Burma, and afterwards through the twilight of empire in India to his later life as an international publishing executive doing business with his former Japanese enemies.

Drawing not only on personal sources, but on his extensive reading and on official records including war diaries of his battalion, the author blends an objective account of great events with a soldier's spontaneous and candid reactions to them. Episodes of drama and intense emotion are punctuated by moments of both poignancy and humour, leavened by mature reflection on the meaning and meaninglessness of war.

Hardcopies are still available or you can download the ebook from Audible, or purchase an audiobook from the KET store.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

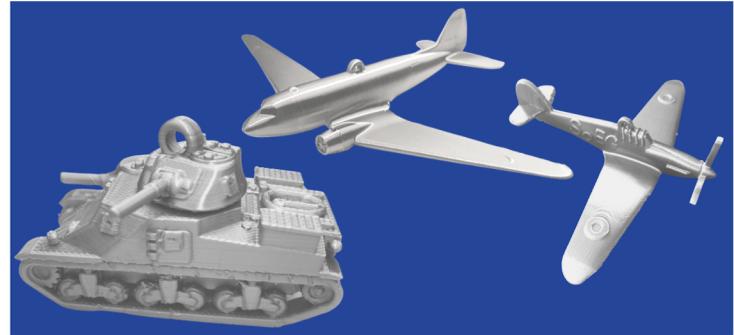


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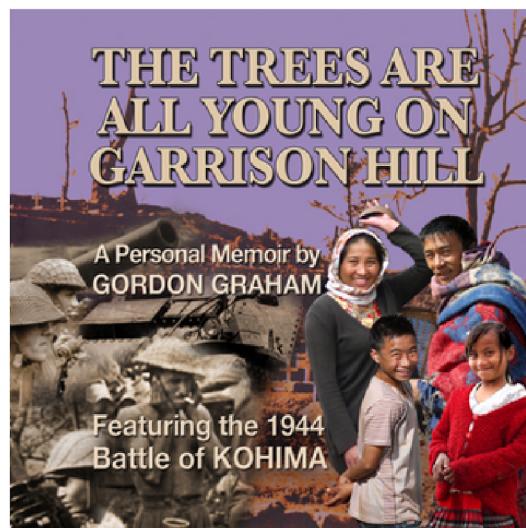
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Tel: 07990 887287
Email: sylvia@kohimaeducationaltrust.org

Our [online shop](#) has been restocked with Christmas cards - all handmade in Nagaland with new designs for this year. We have bags, shawls and gorgeous jewellery - earrings, necklaces and bracelets - as well as clothing including waistcoats and ties. We have many of Robert Lyman's books available, as well as James Holland's Burma 1944, Fergal Keane's Road of Bones and titles by our Naga friends and authors including winners of the Gordon Graham Prize for Naga Literature.



Christmas Tree Decorations: Hawker Hurricanes have been 3D printed especially for KET (above right). Each one bears the code letters EG-S - the personal aircraft of Flight Lieutenant Jimmy Whalen DFC. On 18 April 1944, Whalen was killed while leading a flight of Hurricanes from 34 Squadron RAF on an attack against Japanese troops at the Rifle Range at Kohima. We also have 3D-printed M3 Grant Tanks and Dakota aircraft. Our thanks to Wg Cdr Jim Furness for his time in producing these items for the Trust.



Our annual chart summarises our 20 year history: what we have received, what we have sent to Kohima and our current resources. Our detailed Statutory Accounts are drawn up to March each year and those to 31/3/23 are available on our website under 'About' & 'Our Finances'.

These accounts reflect the fact that we have been unable to transfer any money to Nagaland while we are awaiting the renewal of the necessary licence required. If you have any questions at all about Financial matters, please contact us via the 'Contact' button or email sylvia@kohimaeducationaltrust.org and we will be delighted to respond. Thank you for your support.

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
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Designed and edited by Melissa Furness
York Commemoration photos by Ravage Productions