

## A BOY IN THE ARMY

In 1939, Rifleman Judda Bahadur Rai was recruited to become a Gurkha and fight in World War II. At the time, he was just 14 years old.

*"Two officers came to our village and took four young boys, including me," Judda said. "I was 14 years old at that time, but I wrote 18 years and went to join the Army."*

Continues on p2-3

**"I worked honestly during my Army days. At that time, going to a war was like going to your death."**



# A word from our CEO



Welcome to the latest edition of Samachara.

We find ourselves on the cusp of this year's monsoon season in Nepal. However, thanks to your support over the years, our most vulnerable Gurkha veterans and their families are in a far better

position to avoid the dangers this may bring - such as flooding and landslides.

The new homes we've built for thousands will keep them safe as the rainfall begins.


Over the following pages you can read just a few of the amazing stories that show what your support is helping us to achieve in Nepal - be it new schools, fresh clean water or vital medical intervention.

You will also see some of the various initiatives being undertaken by supporters here in the UK to raise money for our cause. We couldn't be more grateful, especially during the

current economic climate.

Finally, a huge thank you to everyone who took part in our Spring Raffle. This year's raffle saw a staggering £13,460 raised through ticket sales and individual donations. These vital funds will go a long way in supporting our important work out in Nepal.

Dhanyabad!

  
Al Howard  
CEO, The Gurkha Welfare Trust



Judda's old home

## A STURDY NEW HOME

After returning to Nepal, Judda and his family were living in a dilapidated home in their village near Dharan. The poor condition of the house left them vulnerable to strong winds, monsoon floods, and earthquakes.

When our team learned of Judda's situation, we intervened to build him an earthquake-resilient home with a toilet block.

Constructed to a high safety standard and painted in vibrant colours, the new home will protect Judda and his family in the event of another earthquake striking Nepal.

"Before it was very difficult," Judda said. "The house was full of patch work. It was made of stones and mud. Water used to drip during the monsoon. It also used to come inside the house. In the winter season air would come inside and it was very cold. The house also didn't have any fences."

"Now, it is far better than what we used to live in. Now, when it rains, water doesn't enter the house. When we had heavy rainfall before, it used to flood, and it took four or five days for the water to dry up."

**"Now, the house has been elevated from the ground and we don't have to worry about water. It's warm as well. I am happy and relieved."**

## YOUR SUPPORT

Thanks to your support, we have been there for Judda in his times of greatest need - including when his youngest son suffered a tragic accident and lost his leg. We secured a prosthetic leg for Judda's son, so that he could lead a mobile and independent life.

At Judda's age, keeping in good health is of the utmost importance. That is why we visit the couple regularly to provide medical checks, along with Judda's pension.

"Doctors and nurses come to visit me," Judda said. "They check me up and give me medicines. They have also given my wife some medicines for high blood pressure and for her bones."

Judda is very grateful for the support he has received thanks to The GWT's donors. "I am happy with the services The GWT has provided us," he said.

"I worked honestly during my Army days. At that time, going to a war was like going to your death."

"The GWT, the British Government, and the donors have looked after us. I am happy. I get to live in this sturdy house."



"To all the supporters, I hope you get to live happily and healthily without having any problems. I hope you can live in a good way like the way I am living right now. Thank you for helping me. Thank you and God bless you."

Front page continued...

## LIFE AFTER THE WAR

The Army downsized following the end of the War, and Judda was released after three years of service. "I was made redundant from the Army. They told me to go home," he said.

When Judda returned to Nepal and received his pay from the Army, he used some of the funds to buy food and gave the rest to his mother and father.

"I gave them all the money I had," Judda said. "Everything at that time was not as expensive as it is now. You could get a Doko [wicker basket] full of food for just eight pennies."

Life after the Army wasn't easy. Judda worked hard harvesting crops in the fields for a while, before moving to India to work in road construction. Missing home, he eventually decided to return to Nepal with his wife.



# HARI BUDHA MAGAR BECOMES OUR FIRST AMBASSADOR

The Gurkha Welfare Trust is delighted to announce our first ambassador, Hari Budha Magar.

Hari is a Nepali record-breaking mountaineer. In 2017, Hari climbed Mera Peak, becoming the first double above knee amputee to summit a mountain taller than 6,000m.



His next goal is to climb Mount Everest in 2023, and he will be the first ever double above knee amputee to attempt the summit.

Over the course of his life, Hari has had to overcome immense hardship and adversity. He was born in a small, remote village in Western Nepal, and grew up in a civil war that killed more than 17,000 people. Hari joined the British Army at 19 years old and served 15 years with The Royal Gurkha Rifles. In 2010, he was injured while serving in Afghanistan and lost both of his legs above the knee.

Despite this adversity, Hari was determined to challenge himself and reach new heights. He trained hard to climb mountains across the globe, setting new world records. He has made major TV appearances and has shared his inspiring story with readers around the world via The Telegraph, CNN, Metro, and more.



“I have dedicated my life to raise awareness of disability and inspire others to conquer their dreams,” Hari said.

Our ambassadors work in partnership with us to help widen our appeal, reach new audiences, and promote our cause. We are incredibly proud to have Hari as our first ambassador and look forward to working closely with him to help raise awareness of our vital work in Nepal.

Read more about Hari’s record-breaking attempts at [www.gwt.org.uk/hari](http://www.gwt.org.uk/hari)

# GIVING THE GIFT OF WARMTH THIS WINTER

Winters in Nepal can be bitterly cold, with temperatures often plummeting to a chilly sub-zero. Our Winter Allowance is an annual gift to help Gurkha veterans and widows cope with the harsh winter weather in the mountains.

In the past we have distributed blankets, thermal flasks, and warm jackets.

This year we provided over 4,000 Gurkha veterans and widows with new hats, scarves and gloves.

These seasonal essentials help Gurkha veterans and widows stay warm during the cold winter nights in the Nepali hills.

A huge thank you to everyone who donated to our winter appeal - these happy faces show how delighted our pensioners are to receive their gifts!



# TRANSFORMING SHREE SARASWATI BALKALYAN SCHOOL



Nearly 1,000 children attending Shree Saraswati Balkalyan Secondary School now face a brighter future.

The secondary school, located in the Jhapa District of Nepal, has been completely rebuilt by our team. Students can now learn in 24 new and improved classrooms, fitted with desks, benches, and bookshelves.

As part of the building project, the Trust constructed gender-separate toilet blocks and an incinerator. Our team also refurbished the school’s library and canteen, and supplied new classroom furniture.

## LEARNING IN UNSAFE CONDITIONS

Before construction was carried out, the walls of the school were aged and cracked following damage during the devastating earthquake of 2015. The rooms were small and overcrowded, with up to 56 students crammed into one classroom at a time.

The roofs had given way and leaked during the monsoon, making it an unsafe environment for the children.



Premkumar Rai was one of the first students who attended Shree Saraswati Balkalyan when it was founded in 1980. Now, he teaches at the school.

“When the school was first established, the population was very minimal around the area,” he said.

“Our classroom walls were sheets made of bamboo...there was no roof. Whenever we saw thick dark clouds in the sky, the school would have to close.”

Although the school had made small improvements over the years, like installing CGI (corrugated iron) roofing, the infrastructure was worn down over time and by Nepal’s unpredictable weather.

## NEW SCHOOL, BRIGHTER FUTURE

The new school buildings constructed by The Gurkha Welfare Trust will give hundreds of students a safe place to learn, where they won’t have to worry about leaking roofs, dilapidated desks, or cracked walls.

“I cannot express how happy I am [with the school],” said Premkumar. “The new building will provide an excellent environment.”

“I am very happy that we will now be able to study in this new and high standard building”

Manisha Rai, student



“These classrooms will motivate students to attend classes and study. This will help the overall development of students: social, mental, cultural, and educational development. This will help them achieve it.”







# BRINGING WATER TO A VILLAGE IN DESPERATE NEED

**Bhukbhuke is an extremely remote and poor village in west Nepal, with subsistence farming and smallholdings the only livelihoods for villagers.**

The village was in desperate need of a new water system, with the old one in poor condition and with only five tap stands insufficient to provide water for the 27 households. Consequently, villagers had been using open water sources which were unreliable and, because they were unprotected, had a high risk of contamination and subsequent illness.

## GURKHA EXPERTISE

This was one of our most challenging water projects so far due to the remote location, the scattered nature of the settlement and the difficulty of transporting materials. But we had no hesitation in taking on the project - armed with local expertise, knowledge of the area and buy-in from the local community right from the start.

The first stage was to visit the village to collect data on water use and undertake detailed scoping and feasibility studies. We went through a consultation process with the community to inform them of the project and gain their agreement.



## A MONUMENTAL TASK

We provide experienced and qualified project managers and engineers to oversee projects. We are able to source local materials, and make use of local labour to dig the trenches and holes for latrines outside each household.

The biggest challenge posed by this particular project was the transportation of equipment and supplies, as there is no road at all to the village.



Materials which are not locally available are delivered to the nearest town of Nishi. From there they are transported by tractor and trailer to Kunte Pani, on a poor quality track only navigable in the dry season. From then on, it is up to a two-hour journey by foot.

Everything, from pipes to taps to building supplies, is taken to the site on foot, carried in a traditional doko basket.

**In total 16,000kg of materials will have to be transported in order to complete the project.**

## ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY

An essential part of every project is the formation of a village Water Users Committee. This empowers the whole community to take responsibility for the project, ensuring its sustainability.

Village maintenance workers are also involved in the construction and are trained to carry out minor repairs and provide upkeep. We continue to monitor the impact of a project for two years after handover.

## LIFE-CHANGING BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY

It is an incredible undertaking, but when the project is complete, it will transform this rural community.

With access to water right on their doorsteps, women and children will no longer have to spend hours collecting water every day. Villagers will be able to grow vegetables and maintain livestock even in the dry season.

The provision of clean water and education on hygiene practices including management of waste water will help prevent disease and lead to lasting improvements in health.

**None of this would be possible without your support.**



## THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION



**A successful water project is not just about pipes and taps.**

At another water project in the village of Gaduwa we interviewed Asha Waiba, a member of the Water Users Committee.

Asha has a vital role in supporting the project by working with the local community to ensure it is sustainable for years to come.

Asha received training from The GWT and now educates others about the importance of clean water, sanitation, and hand hygiene. She also learned how to help maintain the water system and works with others to routinely test the water quality and equipment.

## REDUCING THE BURDEN ON WOMEN

Before our intervention, Asha and other women in her community had to walk for hours to collect drinking water. Because this took so much time out of her day, Asha found it difficult to balance other responsibilities at work and at home.

*“It was very hard before,” Asha said. “We used to collect water from the well or river. It used to take a long time. Most of the women and children had to spend their time fetching the water.”*

By drinking water from unsafe sources, villagers also risked catching water-borne diseases. During the monsoon period, rats, insects, and dirt would wash into the community’s sources of water, causing further risk to health.

## A ROLE MODEL IN THE COMMUNITY

It is important that women are well represented on the village committees, and their involvement is encouraged. Asha is incredibly proud of what she has achieved:



*“We all share the feeling of ownership that we need to manage and sustain this project. After all the experience and training, I have earned respect from the community. Now, women in my community perceive me as a role model and they have been inspired by my work.*

*“We have overcome many conflicts, coordinated with local authorities, and empowered communities,” said Asha.*

***“We have come a long way and we will continue to work more effectively to sustain this project. Thank you to The GWT for bringing clean water to my community.”***

## SAFE WATER

**We are immensely grateful to everyone who donated in response to our last appeal, helping us to bring clean water to some of the most remote villages in Nepal.**

Most of us take it for granted, but for elderly Gurkha veterans and widows having easy access to safe water is a lifeline. Without it, many face travelling long distances to collect water that may be polluted and endanger their lives.

Our water projects pipe clean water to villages, install tap stands and latrines, and provide education on sanitation and hygiene thus improving long-term health.







Kalu Gurung with his brother Nandas Rai

FROM BEDRIDDEN TO INDEPENDENT

Kalu Gurung is the son of late Rifleman Padam Bahadur Gurung of 4/2 Gurkha Rifles. He lives in the small village of Bansar in Lamjung. Kalu’s father was recruited into the British Army in 1940 and discharged six years later without a pension. He subsequently received a monthly pension from The Gurkha Welfare Trust, which enabled him to support his wife and seven children.

After Padam’s death in 2001, the pension was transferred to his widow, but she sadly passed away in 2006. Kalu has been unable to



Kalu was unable to walk

hear or speak since birth and as he was unable to earn a living on his own, GWT continued to support him by providing him with a monthly Disability Support Grant.

A LIFELINE FOR KALU AND HIS FAMILY

Kalu is looked after by his elder brother, Nanda Ras who is dependent on subsistence farming for an income.

“Both Kalu and my youngest brother, Aita Sing were born deaf. Our father had registered Kalu and Aita Sing with The GWT as ‘disabled’ so I put forward an application for Disability Support Grant which was duly approved.

“This is a lifeline for Kalu and the whole family too. He is not able to earn a living and we, being poor, would find it very difficult to provide him with continuous support.

“I do not have a stable source of income so supporting Kalu and Aita Sing would be very difficult. Whatever GWT provides lessens the burden on me too.

“Kalu used to live in a small shed made of wood and CGI sheet. His health condition started deteriorating about two years back. He became weak and was unable to walk. We had to carry him to the toilet. The mobile nurse at the GWT Welfare Centre in

Lamjung recommended that he be checked upon by a physiotherapist. When the physiotherapist came to visit him here, it was discussed that he should be taken to Pokhara for further treatment.”

LEARNING TO WALK AGAIN

In April 2021, 71-year-old Kalu was admitted to our Residential Home in Kaski for rehabilitation.



During his stay at the home we provided continuous care and support, focusing on nutrition, hygiene, exercise and therapy. Kalu loved getting involved in social activities with other residents at the home. His health improved, he was able to move around with the help of a walker, eat by himself, and regained his bowel and bladder control.

It was a long journey, but after eleven months of rehabilitation, Kalu was fit enough to return home. His family members and the whole village were stunned by the improvement in his health.

“I had thought it was very unlikely that he would recover, I had thought he was not coming back when the GWT team came to pick him up. But, on the day when he returned and I saw him walk, I was very happy! I was amazed to see the recovery and transformation that the team was able to make.”

KALU IS DELIGHTED WITH HIS NEW HOME

While Kalu was in care we commenced construction of a new earthquake-resilient home for him. The design was adapted to take into account his disability, with railings around the house and in the rooms so that he can easily walk around. When the house was ready, Kalu was able to return to his village and his new home.



The whole village welcomed Kalu home

Nandas Rai expressed his thanks for the life-changing support his brother received from The GWT.

“I would like to thank the British people and everyone involved for helping out my brother who is physically challenged. My family and the whole village is very happy and are appreciative of the help given to us. On behalf of my family and me personally too, many many ‘Dhanyabad’ (thanks!)”



LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL - HOW LEGACIES HELP OUR WORK

You may be surprised to learn that gifts in Wills contributed 25% of our total income in the last financial year. They are a vital component of our funding, helping us deliver essential financial and medical aid to Gurkha veterans and their families, and providing local communities with access to clean water and education.

Rifleman Kharka Bahadur Sarki served in in Malaya, Singapore, Borneo, Hong Kong and the UK. Sadly, after eight years of service, Kharka was made redundant from the British Army and returned to his village in Nepal in 1973. He had not served long enough to qualify for a British Army pension.

Thanks to our supporters and gifts in Wills, we are able to pay a monthly pension to Kharka. We also built an earthquake-resilient home for him and his wife Manmaya in 2021, and both receive regular medical care from the Trust. “We like our home very much. Dhanyabad (Thank you) to all involved in building this house for us!”

You can help support us by leaving a gift in your Will to The Gurkha Welfare Trust. If you would like to find out more, or receive our free Wills guide, our Legacy Officer, Carolyn Derryman, will be delighted to assist you: 01722 343110 or carolynderryman@gwt.org.uk



We share an unbreakable bond.



WELCOME & THANK YOU TO OUR NEW CORPORATE PARTNERS

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## David Jones prepares for the race of a lifetime

**Supporter David Jones is taking on the Marathon des Sables – one of the toughest footraces in the world.**

Set in the Sahara Desert, the marathon spans six days and 156 miles across sand dunes, salt plains, and rocky jebels. David will be running in sweltering heat, carrying all his food, water, and essentials.

**“Working with Gurkha soldiers was a great privilege and an honour”**

Inspired by his time serving in the Queen's Gurkha Engineers (QGE), David decided to use this incredibly tough challenge as an opportunity to raise funds for The Gurkha Welfare Trust.



As a young officer in the British Army, David was selected to serve with the QGE. During his five years with the regiment, he developed a respect and admiration for the soldiers, the people and the country.

He was fortunate to be able to spend time in Nepal, learning the language while designing gravity-fed water systems for several villages high in the Himalayan mountains.

*“Working with Gurkha soldiers was a great privilege and an honour. It is a time of my life that I remember with great fondness.*

*“Living in the villages was really eye-opening, but also inspirational for me,” David said.*

**They have so little but are always willing to share**

*“Nepal was beautiful, but you could also feel the daily challenges and the hardship that affected the people.*

*“As military engineers, when we went on treks we would design gravity-fed water systems. The first thing you had to do was to walk to the ‘local’ source of water that the village used, to measure the quantity it produced and start surveying. Sometimes these fresh water springs could be a two hour walk away.*

*“Just try to imagine that – walking two hours there and two hours back just to collect water for your basic needs every single day. In [the UK] we open a tap and it's there.*

*“One thing that struck me during my time in Nepal was the generosity and kindness of the Nepali people. They often have very little, but they're always willing to share and to give.”*



### A fundraising inspiration

Years later, while attending a reunion, David reconnected with Martin Gillott, a colleague who served as a Troop Commander whilst David was an Adjutant.

When Martin sadly passed away shortly after, a number of his friends, family and former Army colleagues cycled from Land's End to John O'Groats to fundraise for The GWT and help build a school in Martin's honour.



Inspired by their efforts, David decided that he would use his challenge as a means to raise funds for The Gurkha Welfare Trust.

### A mental and physical challenge

*“The Marathon des Sables is going to be the biggest challenge mentally and physically that I've ever undertaken,” David said. “But, when you look at how Gurkha soldiers, families and communities have to live their lives, especially in Nepal, they're being challenged on a daily basis. I couldn't think of a better cause to support.*

*“I'll be 60 years of age when I take this challenge and one of the oldest people taking on the race so I'm under no illusions how hard this is going to be. At this stage in life my aim is to complete rather than compete.*

*“You've got to carry all your food, equipment and sleeping bag – everything you need to survive for a week... It is arduous but I'm hopeful that the things I learned in the Army and a military mentality will help make the difference.*

***“It's my personal challenge, but if it raises awareness, does some good, raises some money and helps Gurkhas, their families and communities, then to me this will all be worth it.”***

You can support David and follow his progress on his fundraising page: [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/my-sahara-run](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/my-sahara-run)

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND CHALLENGES

### LAKE DISTRICT CHALLENGE

**11-12 June 2022**

Take on the Lake District Challenge and walk, jog or run through some of England's finest countryside.

### THE DOKO CHALLENGE SOUTH

**12 June 2022**

Your chance to don a Doko basket and run with the Gurkhas – spaces are limited so sign up now!

### GURKHA GOLF DAY

**16 June 2022**

This popular event returns at Bristol & Clifton Golf Club's 18-hole course. Try out our golfing challenges, followed by a delicious curry lunch, prize-giving, raffle, and auction.

### COTSWOLD WAY CHALLENGE

**25-26 June 2022**

Walk, jog, or run along the magical Cotswold Way, taking in the rolling hills, villages and fantastic views en route.

### GREAT NORTH RUN

**11 September 2022**

Join the world's biggest and best half marathon – famous for its warm North East welcome, unbeatable atmosphere, and millions raised for charity.

### TRAILWALKER

**23-25 September 2022**

With a team of four, take on an unforgettable 100km journey across the stunning South Downs.

For more details on these events visit [www.gwt.org.uk/challenges](http://www.gwt.org.uk/challenges)



If you have shares which are uneconomical to sell, you may wish to consider donating them to ShareGift, the share donation charity.

ShareGift is an independent UK registered charity (No. 1052686) which specialises in releasing money locked up in small shareholdings, but which can accept donations of any size. ShareGift works by collecting together small lots of shares until there are enough to sell and then donating the resulting proceeds to a wide range of charities. To date ShareGift has donated over £40 million to more than 3,300 charities, selected based upon research and suggestions from donors.

You can help support The Gurkha Welfare Trust by donating shares to ShareGift, and **nominating The Gurkha Welfare Trust as your chosen charity**. ShareGift has already made donations totalling over £100k to The Gurkha Welfare Trust.

For more information on ShareGift go to [www.sharegift.org](http://www.sharegift.org)



## News from the Brigade

### GWT Chairman welcomes new Gurkhas at Attestation Parade.

This year's intake of British Army Gurkhas have been selected in Nepal. Two hundred and eighteen recruits



have joined the British Army's Brigade of Gurkhas from an application pool of over 12,000.

Held at British Gurkhas Pokhara (the same location as GWT Nepal headquarters), the Attestation Parade saw the new soldiers take an oath and swear allegiance to the Queen.

Our Chairman, Lieutenant General Richard Wardlaw OBE (Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas) attended along with Director of The Gurkha Welfare Trust Nepal, Colonel Paul Smith (Commander of BGN). Also present were Her Majesty's Ambassador to Nepal Her Excellency Nicola Pollitt, Brigadier The Rt Hon Lord Lancaster TD VR (Deputy Colonel Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas) and Colonel David Robinson (Colonel Brigade of Gurkhas).

The parade marks the end of a long selection process for the recruits.



## THE GWT SHOP

Show your support for Gurkha veterans with a classic GWT hoodie, T- shirt or cap embroidered with the famous crossed kukri logo. Our online shop has a huge range of quality clothing and gifts - shop now while stocks last!

[shop.gwt.org.uk](http://shop.gwt.org.uk)



The Gurkha Welfare Trust  
**GARDEN GALA**

**19- 26 June 2022**

## HOST A GARDEN GALA THIS SUMMER

Spring has officially sprung and we are excited to announce that this year's Garden Gala will return in June. We are kindly asking our wonderful supporters to open their gardens and host a Gala to help Gurkha veterans and communities in Nepal.

Last year our supporters had great fun hosting Garden Galas at homes and workplaces across the UK. They held curry lunches, cream teas, children's picnics and created table-top displays to show their support for the Gurkhas.

Registration is now open - sign up or find out more at [www.gwt.org.uk/gala22](http://www.gwt.org.uk/gala22) or call 01722 323955



## THE DOKO CHALLENGE

**Run in the footsteps of "the Bravest of the Brave"!**

The Doko challenge is based on the traditional race faced by Gurkha Army recruits in Nepal - a 5km uphill run carrying a weighted Doko basket. You can experience this for yourself at Doko South, following a countryside course in the beautiful surrounds of Wimbledon Common.

Choose your weight from 5kg, 10kg or 15kg, aim for the target finish time of 46 minutes, or put a team together and have fun running with your friends. Either way you will deserve the medal and cheers awaiting you at the finish line!

Register now at [www.gwt.org.uk/doko](http://www.gwt.org.uk/doko)

**The Doko Challenge South  
Wimbledon Common, London - 12 June 2022**

