

**LYDD TOWN COUNCIL CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

**To be performed by The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas**

**Join Lydd Town Council for an evening of incredible music from the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas to be held in All Saints' Church at 7pm on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023.**

We are excited to announce the world-renowned Gurkha Band will be putting on another fantastic performance for us this December. With previous concerts being described as "a night at the proms - Gurkha style!", the evening looks set to be an epic one.

Capt Esther Hayes has the honour to be Director of Music of the Brigade of Gurkha Band based in Folkstone, Kent and will be the band master for the concert.

To compress the history of the Band into a short space is difficult, for it is a long and glorious one and still in the making.

The Band was raised in November 1859 as part of an Indian Army Gurkha Regiment called the Sirmoor Rifle Regiment. It had 16 Bandsmen and one Naik (a leader) and soon became a part of Regimental life, playing for parades, polo matches, dinners and troop entertainment at the Regimental base at Dehra Dun, North East of Dehli. In the early days the Band travelled with the Regiment to other areas of India, Malta, Cyprus and Afghanistan. 1886 saw the raising of a 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion which allowed for a further 16 Bandsmen and Naik and whenever possible these joined the already trained Band, effectively forming one large Band. As the two Battalions were often co-located this worked well enough but when separated the Band would support each Battalion with a smaller group both musically and as stretcher bearers on operational duties.

When India was partitioned in 1947 Gurkha Regiments chose their new affiliations to either Britain or India. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Goorkhas, as the Regiment was now called, chose Britain and sailed for Sungei Patani in Malaya with the Band Instruments. Sadly, there were no Bandsmen to play them as they had all elected to remain in India!

In 1949 sanction was given to raise the Band again, with some 56 recruits commencing training. Ad-hoc musical instruction from co-located British Regimental Bandmasters was given until May 1951 when Captain J P C Bailey MBE was appointed as the first Director of Music. From that day forward they have delighted crowds with their fast and slick marching displays, lively concert music, ethnic Nepali folk tunes and colourful traditional dances.

In 1950 the decision was made to raise a Staff Band for the Brigade and by 1958 there were two flourishing Gurkha Bands. This happy state continued for some twelve years when, because of financial stringencies, the two Bands were amalgamated. Hong Kong and the United Kingdom provided dual bases for the Band in support of the two Battalions of 2<sup>nd</sup> Goorkhas and other units of the Brigade of Gurkhas. Then in 1994 as a result of the withdrawal from Hong Kong the Band moved back to the United Kingdom permanently.

The Band has travelled extensively throughout the world. Australia, Brunei, Canada, South Korea and Malaya were visited in the 70's and more recently Solomon Islands, the Falkland Islands, France, Canada, Korea, Germany, Cyprus, Belgium and Australia again in 1995.

Today, musicians are recruited into the Band after their Basic military training. Initial musical instruction then commences, first under the supervision of the Director of Music then after approximately four years, at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall in London.

The operational role of the musicians is in support of Field Medical Units employed in Chemical Decontamination Areas.

Operational tours include Op Palatine (Bosnia) in 2000 and 2001; and Op Fingal (Afghanistan) in 2002. In November to December 2003 and 2005 the Band have toured Nepal performing concerts and marching displays in Kathmandu, Pokhara, Dharan and at the prestigious World Elephant Polo championships in the Royal National Park Chitwan. In May to August 2004 the Band toured Germany. The highlights of the tour were the 46<sup>th</sup> International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes; QBPs at the Ambassador's residences in Luxembourg, Brussels and Dusseldorf; the 23<sup>rd</sup> NATO Festival of Music; service at the Battle of Somme memorial, Theival, France; the Nijmegen Marches and a brief but very enjoyable visit to Berlin.

Tours have included Nice, the USA for the International Military Tattoo, Cyprus, India, Afghanistan, Germany and Nepal.

**The Lydd Town Council Band Concert will be held at 7pm on Friday 8th December 2023 in All Saints' Church, Lydd. Tickets will be available from the Town Clerk, Angela, at the Guild Hall on Monday and Wednesday mornings from 9am until 12.30pm**

**There is not a fixed ticket price and donations are respectfully requested as are raffle prizes and all the proceeds will be donated by Lydd Town Council to the Gurkha Welfare Trust.**

#### **About The Gurkha Welfare Trust**

The Gurkha Welfare Trust provides vital support to Gurkha veterans, their families and communities in Nepal. They enable people to live with dignity by delivering essential financial and medical aid and work with local communities to provide access to clean water and education.



Councillor Clive Goddard presenting the donation cheque for the money raised at the concert in December 2022 to Capt. Esther Hayes at Shorncliffe.

**Please contact the Town Clerk, Angela, for tickets and donations of raffle prizes**

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