

Nepali street names in England

A small parish town southwest of London gives its streets Nepali names



Pics: Kunda Dixit

JOHNNY GURKHAS: Retired Major Lal Bahadur Gurung and Captain Raju Gurung at the statue of a Gurkha at Church Crookham where both lived for five years when based in this English town.

For 30 years between 1970-2000, more than 12,000 Nepali soldiers from the [British Gurkha regiments](#) and their families lived in this small parish town 65km southwest of London. It was from here that they were deployed to Hong Kong, the first Gulf War, or the Falklands. But after the British Army scaled back and the Gurkha barracks were shifted to Kent, part of the former base

was sold to a real-estate developer. The buildings have been redesigned in this now-upscale neighbourhood.



But Church Crookham hasn't forgotten the Gurkhas. It has given many of its streets Nepali names: Nepal Gardens, Thapa Close, Gurkha Way, or Kukri Gardens. And in the centre of the township, next to the Sirmoor Orchard (named after the first Gurkha regiment established in 1816) is an imposing bronze statue of a smiling Gurkha soldier standing at ease, which was inaugurated last year by retired captain Ram Bahadur Limbu who was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry in Borneo in 1965.



"The time we lived here with our families were some of the best in our lives," recalls retired Major Lal Bahadur Gurung.

Parish Councillor Pat Lowe said in her speech last year that the Gurkhas will be missed in her town. "We remember the smart gentlemen in their green jackets, always polite and smiling as they walked around the village," she said.



Sculptor Jemma Pearson said she tried to portray the Gurkha reputation for “cheerfulness and pride”.