



**BRITISH GURKHAS
NEPAL**

PRE ARRIVAL PACK – BOOKLET

JUNE 2019

ASSIGNED TO NEPAL

A GUIDE TO PREPARATION AND ARRIVAL FOREWORD

As with any posting abroad, Nepal is what you make of it. An open mind and a willingness to learn about a different culture will certainly be assets in the months ahead. Life in Nepal will be different to anything you are likely to have experienced before in army life. Nepal is a developing country and poor by any western standard; as such it is important that you are as prepared as possible for life here before you arrive. This guide is produced to assist you and your family, if accompanied, in your forthcoming move to British Gurkhas Nepal.

Much additional information specific to your job, accommodation and lifestyle can be provided by your predecessor and his/her spouse. You are encouraged to enter into as much correspondence as is practicable with them as they will be your most important source of information. The purchase of a good tourist guidebook on Nepal is also highly recommended. It can provide a wealth of interesting background information on Nepal, its geography, climate, people and history. Also recommended is "Culture Shock Nepal" by John Burbank (published by Kuperard ISBN 1-85733-025-0).

You may receive much advice from people who have previously served in Nepal or visited the country. Although well meaning, some of this advice can be misleading. Nepal is a rapidly changing country and advice from people who lived in Nepal only a few years ago can be out of date, particularly concerning the current political situation, social mores and BGN's role in Nepal.

There are community welfare facilities at both Kathmandu and Pokhara. Both are small camps and thrive on the contributions made by all personnel. A positive attitude towards living in a small community is required. Finally, you are reminded that, despite the rapidly improving facilities, posts with British Gurkhas Nepal still entail living in relatively isolated conditions, lacking in amenities, i.e. maternity support. It is therefore important that personnel posted to Nepal should be sufficiently robust and self-reliant and that they and their families should be of stable temperament and good health to cope with this exciting yet challenging environment. Please seek advice from your current unit, if you feel that you cannot meet these requirements.

I look forward to seeing you on arrival.

(Original Signed)

R T Goodman
Colonel
Commander British Gurkhas Nepal

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CHAPTER 1 - LIFE IN NEPAL

Introduction

1. This chapter is designed to give you as much information as you would need to have a basic understanding of the conditions you, and your family if accompanied, will face whilst in Nepal. It is not exhaustive but should prepare you for your posting and see you through the first few weeks and months until you become accustomed to life here. This document is designed to be read on DII but also has links which will work on any normal internet computer.

2. There are simple flow diagrams and checklists in Chapter 4 – Moving. If you are short of time or are struggling to take in this document then please feel free to go direct to this chapter. It will give you the basics you need to arrange your deployment. Early engagement with your predecessor is normally considered the most effective way to start preparing.

3. If you need anything further then please direct your query to HQ BGN via DII at:

[BGN-0-Group Mailbox](#) or by any other email system on BGN-0-Group Mailbox@mod.uk

Environment

4. Nepal is a third world country and many aspects of life will be extremely different to anything you will have experienced elsewhere. It is a land of great contrasts, in people, geography, climate, development and outlook. In the hills and far west, little has changed over the years, whereas in the cities popular music, videos, chips, pizza and other aspects of western life have arrived with a vengeance.

5. Nepal lies in a high-risk earthquake zone and, by virtue of the fact that there has been a major earthquake in April 2015, there is an expectation that the region may suffer a significant earthquake in the future. Preparations for an earthquake are a daily part of life in Nepal. British Gurkhas Nepal and the British Embassy are well prepared. The camps at Kathmandu and Pokhara are built to UK specifications and the buildings are earthquake resistant. All quarters and hirings in Kathmandu are fitted with earthquake alarms.

6. There are high levels of air pollution in Kathmandu for most of the year and in other areas of Nepal, pollution is noticeable. Whilst the type and level of air pollution in Nepal are not thought to carry any long-term risks, there is no comprehensive, reliable data available in Nepal to analyse and monitor air pollution.

Your Status in Nepal

7. Prior to your arrival in Nepal, you and your wife and family (if accompanied) will be granted a form of Official Status. The application forms and exchange of passports/visas will be completed within the first 2 weeks of your arrival by the RAWO BGK. BGN personnel belong to a series of small yet easily recognisable garrisons in Nepal. All soldiers and their families must remain aware that their actions and conduct whilst in country can have significant implications. You are representatives of BGN where ever you go and will be held accountable for your behaviour.

8. Official status in Nepal gives you and your family immunity from prosecution under Nepalese law. It does not, however, give you the right to break the law or ignore the requirements of the police or army, if dealing with them directly. BGN personnel abide by Nepalese laws as a matter of routine. In essence, official status would allow BGN to secure your release from the Nepali legal system, if you were, for any reason, apprehended or detained by the local authorities.

The Crime Threat in Nepal

9. Policing in Nepal is not carried out in the same manner or to the standard associated with policing in the UK. The local police force is largely focused on dealing with the poor security situation rather than domestic crime. High levels of poverty and population displacement has resulted in increased levels of crime in many parts of Nepal including Kathmandu and Pokhara. Daily life is not affected to any great extent by crime but petty crime does occur and occasionally a general strike or a political demonstration will restrict normal routine business. An informed and common sense approach by all BGN staff will reduce their risk of being targeted. All personnel should consult the FCO travel advice for Nepal before travelling and will be required to attend a Security brief on arrival.
10. All quarters and hirings have 24 hour security guards which offer some peace of mind.

Language Training

11. You can manage a complete tour in Nepal without speaking any Nepali but a few common phrases will open doors for you and make you appear friendlier. The 3 weeks basic Nepali course (SLP1(N)) run by Learning Development Wing, Catterick, is recommended for all military personnel. Bookings should be made early to avoid disappointment. Dependants are sometimes offered places as well. There are also 3 day introductory courses run on an occasional basis at HQ BGN. Private language instructors can also be hired at very reasonable rates once in post.

Transport

12. **Driving In Nepal.** The standard of driving in Nepal is extremely poor. Under Nepali law, you are almost invariably liable for any accident you are involved in, whatever the circumstances. Nepali driving licences can be obtained via the MT office after arrival in Nepal. No test is required, but there is a small fee. The MT staff will also advise you on driving in Nepal and accident procedures when you arrive.

a. Public Transport

(1) Local buses are usually extremely crowded and would invariably be considered un-roadworthy in the UK. You are encouraged to avoid using them.

(2) Local taxis are plentiful during the day but rare after dark. They are cheap and a useful way of getting around town, be warned that very few taxis have working seatbelts. Rickshaw bicycles are most commonly found in the tourist districts, such as Thamel.

b. **Private Vehicles.** British soldiers are entitled to buy one "blue plate" (diplomatic) vehicle during the first 6 months of your posting, and to last you the duration of your tour. Many people purchase the vehicle direct from their predecessor. Vehicles can also be purchased locally, but the market is limited and availability can be sporadic. Locally purchased motorcycles, motor scooters and bicycles are inexpensive and a good way of getting around town. You must hold a full UK licence for any vehicle type you wish to have whilst in Nepal, and can only begin driving once you receive your Nepali Driving license. .

c. **Recreational Transport.** Not everybody will wish to purchase a vehicle during their tour, and military transport is available for recreational use. Regardless of whether you have your own vehicle or not, BGN personnel are entitled to book 6 return journeys in accordance with out Isolated Unit Status letter (Dated July 18). There is also one PRI vehicle at either BGK or BGP which can be booked in either location dependent on availability. All personnel wishing to use this vehicle should go through familiarisation training coordinated by the MT SNCO.

Holidays/Travel

13. Whilst in Nepal the travel possibilities are fantastic! Holidays which would normally cost a fortune are cheap and easy to organise provided you stay within Nepal. Domestic air travel costs vary depending upon whether you are Nepali or foreign, with a major discount normally being available after 6 months in residence. All personnel are to be mindful of overseas travel to High Risk Countries and to Countries where Specific Security Regulations Apply (CASSRA) and to seek guidance from the SO3 G236 if travelling to any of these destinations. JSP 440 Leaflet 14 gives detailed direction and guidance.

14. There is only one international airport – at Kathmandu. Travel by air to other countries can be expensive. There is no “leave scheme” in Nepal and most people tend to spend holidays in-country.

15. BGN personnel are entitled to one return Get You Home (Overseas) (GYH (O)) flight per year provided that the flight is booked between Nepal and the UK. This entitlement is for each serving soldier and their resident dependants.

16. **Kakani Bungalow.** British Gurkhas has its own welfare bungalow on the rim of the Kathmandu valley, approximately one and a half hours drive from Kathmandu. Use of the bungalow is available to members of British Gurkhas Nepal. The bungalow has superb views of the panorama of the Himalayas, especially the Langtang Himal, which are nearby. It is an excellent location to escape for a quiet weekend, picnic or barbecue.

Accommodation

17. **Married Quarters and Hirings.** In Kathmandu there are 8 Married Quarters on camp and a further 4 in a compound just outside the camp. All hirings are within a short (maximum 1Km) walk from camp. In Pokhara all Married Quarters are on camp. Due to limitations on the number available in Kathmandu most people are allocated a hiring for their tour. Regardless of where you are posted to you are to forward Hard Copy of MOD **Form 1132 to QM HQ BGN**, ASAP so that the accommodation best suited to your needs is allocated. Families will not be called forward until authority is granted from BGN to Families Section, Defence Passenger Reservation Centre (DPRC). Due to the lack of married quarters available; there is also a risk of mid-tour quarter moves.

18. **Visitors.** Visitors are welcome to come to Nepal and may stay in Married Quarters or Hirings. In accordance with BGN Standing Instructions all visitors present overnight are required to be registered with HQ BGN.

19. **Accommodation Services Unit (ASU).** Quarters and hirings are supplied fully furnished and your predecessor will be able to send you a copy of the inventory for information. There are no facilities for wharfing, but there is a limited facility to adjust the holdings to suit personal preferences. Some personnel make other arrangements for furniture, such as local purchase. Your predecessor may be able to sell on furniture they have purchased to you.

20. **Child Safety Equipment.** The normal range of child safety equipment such as stair gates and fire guards can be provided through the ASU, on request. If you require these items, please annotate on your MOD Form 1132.

21. Electric and Gas

a. The electrical grid in Nepal is unreliable and unable to meet demand. Most areas are on “load sharing” schedules, meaning that power may only be supplied for 12 or 14 hours a day. There are generators provided to all BGN accommodation which will run for any period of electrical power cuts. Fluctuations in voltage levels mean that sensitive equipment (computers, stereo systems, TVs, etc.) should be protected by surge protectors. These can

be purchased from your predecessor, locally, or by mail order from the UK. All electrical sockets are UK specification.

b. Gas is provided by the camp for your accommodation in bottles. In the winter there is an additional supply available for portable gas heaters.

22. **Water.** Treated water will be provided by the camp to whatever type of accommodation you are allocated. This will include a UV filter for drinking water where necessary.

Pets

23. Some houses already have a resident guard dog or family pet. There is no obligation to take these on, but a guard dog may be useful. You should liaise with your predecessor over this, as soon as possible, to give him time to find an alternative home for the dog should you not wish to take it on.

24. It is possible to bring pet dogs to British Gurkhas Pokhara (BGP) but you should discuss this with your predecessor since there is a constant presence of military dogs on camp. Personnel posted to Kathmandu may import pets at their own expense and under their own arrangements. Exercise for larger, more energetic dogs can be an issue due to the prevalence of rabies in Nepal and general lack of space, but plenty of personnel have brought their dogs into Nepal with no major issues.

Domestic Staff

25. Many people employ domestic staff due to the increase in laundry required in this environment as well as the slightly more complicated processes involved in food preparation. This is done entirely at an individual's own expense, but to employ staff you must complete documentation through BUWO to ensure a proper, legally sound contract exists between you and the staff. Most people employ a "didi" (elder sister – employed as a house keeper) whilst some also employ a gardener and / or chef.

26. The employer must pay domestic staff at least the minimum remuneration as fixed by the Government of Nepal which has published in the Nepal Gazette dated August 16, 2018. An amount equal to one month basic salary shall be paid to the domestic staff as festival allowance at the time of Dashain Festival, or any other festival requested by the domestic staff in lieu of Dashain. The Domestic Staff shall be provided a gratuity from the first day of employment at a rate of 8.33% of Basic Remuneration. BGN will not get involved in any disputes between you and your staff and they will remain your own financial liability.

27. The Employer must arrange and pay for medical insurance (min Rs. 100,000) and accident insurance (min Rs. 700,000) cover for domestic staff as required under Nepali employment law. Insurance must be renewed on an annual basis and records are to be held by the BUWO. The regimental accountant is able to procure suitable insurance if asked.

28. In Kathmandu night and day watchmen (guards) are necessary and are in situ. It is paid for by the MOD. This is because of the potential security situation and also because expatriates' houses are potential targets for burglars. In Pokhara all the married quarters are within the camp therefore 24 hour security is provided by the camp guard.

Laundry

29. Most families in BGN own a twin-tub, top-loading washing machine which are common place in Nepal. Your predecessor may offer to sell their washing machine and you should negotiate with them over this.

30. Should you wish to bring your own washing machine, UK automatic machines will work but can be difficult to repair if they break down. Due to the erratic electricity supply they are also more susceptible to faults.

31. Tumble dryers are very seldom used or even seen in Nepal.

Food and Drink

32. The majority of foodstuffs and drink are purchased locally from approved sources for use in the messes. There are no NAAFI facilities. Meat, of all kinds, fish and local cheese is available, together with seasonal vegetables. Branded items are available but can be expensive and the supply is sporadic.

33. There are some reasonable local supermarkets and they are improving all the time. The range of goods available in Kathmandu is surprisingly large and there are few foodstuffs, or their substitutes, that cannot be purchased.

Clothing

34. Although local tailors can make clothes extremely cheaply, it is advisable to bring an adequate supply of clothing with you. Most local tailors are excellent at copying an item of clothing but you may find it hard to find something you like in a local shop. Items such as pseudo Gortex jackets and walking boots are relatively cheap, but it is advisable to shop around for the best bargains.

35. Nepal's dress code is more conservative than that of the west. Revealing/short dresses or skimpy shorts/tops are not acceptable public wear for women. Lycra shorts are not acceptable attire for men or women. Generally, ladies dresses and shorts should be of knee length. Locals are fascinated by westerners, their mannerisms and attire. Some ladies as well as young children may find long stares somewhat intimidating. Blonde children are often particularly admired.

36. Although Nepal is very warm in the summer you should be prepared for a long and incredibly wet monsoon season! Winter can become very cold indeed, with little housing insulation and less effective heating than you would be used to in the UK.

37. The intense sunshine, chlorinated water and poorer quality washing powder means that clothing does not last as long as it would in the UK.

38. **Working Dress.** All BGN locations wear military uniform unless you are required to leave camp during the working day. When working in civilian attire you will be required to wear either a jacket and BGN tie or suit (In the summer there is no requirement to wear a jacket!). Uniform is not permitted outside of camp except for transiting between camp and home. You should bring the following uniforms with you:

- Working dress (MTP or PCS) – 3 sets
- No 2 Dresses / Service Dress
- No 4 Dress (Officers) (to be obtained through losing unit QMs)
- No 6 and 7 Dress (WOs/SNCOs) (to be obtained through losing unit QMs)
- Mess Kit (Tropical, which can be made locally but bring extra chevrons/badges etc., and Temperate)

39. **Military Equipment.** You should bring with you the following items of military issue equipment for your tour. Many of these items are included because they may be of use during a disaster relief operation. Personnel should also consider whether or not they are likely to be deployed on operations after their tour in Nepal. If so then they may experience difficulties in retrieving and issued kit which has been placed in storage:

- Combat Helmet
- Respirator
- Military Day sack / Bergen
- Gloves
- Torch

- Issued First Aid items

40. **Other clothing items**

- a. Quality undergarments, including tights and stockings, are almost impossible to obtain

in Nepal. You should bring with you a good supply of men's and ladies underclothes and/or arrange to purchase them via mail order.

- b. Adult swimwear is also not widely available, especially in larger sizes.
- c. A good supply of shoes should be brought. Whilst reasonable sandals and some casual shoes can be purchased, quality shoes in western sizes are difficult to find.

Media

41. There are number of service providers for cable TVs and internet services in Nepal with competitive prices. It broadcasts large number of news, sports and entertainment channels in English, Hindi and Nepali languages. Televisions bought in UK can have difficulties receiving transmissions in Nepal. However, if you have a TV that has worked in Germany or on the Continent, it will probably work in Nepal.

42. BFBS Nepal provides a receiver for BFBS TV Service in Service Family Accommodations for free of charge. It broadcasts recorded programmes of BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Forces TV and few sporting channels. BFBS Nepal also transmits BFBS Nepali Service for 24 hrs a day.

43. All consumer electronics vary considerably in quality and can be surprisingly expensive due to Nepali customs import charges. You are advised therefore to bring whatever you need with you.

Compassionate Cases

44. For non-Gurkha personnel and their dependants based abroad, the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) should be contacted on 44 (0) 1452 519951. This number is continually manned 24 hours a day, including weekends and Bank Holidays. Please pass this number to your relatives and friends in the UK and advise them the following procedures:

- a. You must provide the JCCC with Service Number, Rank, Name, Home Unit and current location of the Service person, together with full details of the relative concerned, their location and name of Doctor, Hospital and/or any other organisation involved in the case.
- b. Please be aware that any information will be verified with the appropriate organisations before Compassionate Travel may be authorised.
- c. You must contact the JCCC as soon as possible as your relative's parent unit cannot authorise Compassionate Travel from overseas.
- d. For further information about Welfare and Community Support services available to Service families, visit www.army.mod.uk/servingsoldier

Spiritual Welfare

45. There is no military chaplain in Nepal, although we have an Officiating Chaplain who works in Kathmandu. There are a number of local churches of different denominations, including several in English, should you wish to attend them.

46. Nepal is a Hindu kingdom and does not observe the same degree of religious tolerance as western nations. Freedom of religion and open worship are relatively new concepts and proselytising for religions other than Hinduism is illegal. There is an officiating Pundit in BGN and BGP.

Schools

47. Educational Clearance for Areas Where There is No SCE School

a. Nepal is one of the overseas areas where no SCE school exists. However, the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) will assist families in determining what steps need to be taken to ensure that suitable educational provision can be made in the intended overseas location. Families should contact CEAS in the first instance via:

Children's Education Advisory Service
Trenchard Lines, Upavon, Pewsey, Wiltshire. SN9 6BE
Telephone: 01980 618 244 (Military 94 344 8244)
Email: enquiries@ceas.uk.com

Contact with DCOS BGN is also essential in order to get the up to date information on schooling required and to get advice on the process for applying to schools for entry. Contact DCOS on BGN-DCOS@mod.uk

b. All parents need to complete a Parental Declaration Form for areas with no SCE School before proceeding with a move overseas, which CEAS will provide on request via contact details above. This is to ensure that all children can be supported educationally, once posted overseas. Prior to confirming travel arrangements for families in these circumstances, the Families Section will require families to have completed and submitted this Parental Declaration Form.

c. Schooling available within Kathmandu and Pokhara differ considerably from each other and so it will depend on your intended location as to the schooling provision available. Please see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 for detailed information on each location.

d. Further details on schooling overseas can be found in JSP 342 Part 1 and Part 2, Volume 3. For children with additional needs, please see JSP 820 and speak to CEAS for guidance on schooling available.

NB If you have children at Boarding School and need to bring them to Nepal on a School Children's Visit flight (SCV) within 2 months of your arrival, you should ensure that the SCV flights are booked through your previous unit before you depart. Particularly during the Christmas and Easter holiday period, seats on flights to Kathmandu can be limited and bookings need to be made well in advance.

Financial

48. **Allowances.** Nepal is defined as a Main Station for Local Overseas Allowance (LOA) purposes. Current rates can be obtained from your unit administration office but are normally much lower than in theatres such as Germany. The clothing grant for Nepal is now Climatic Clothing Grant for Hot Posts (CCG (HP)); the current rates can be obtained from your unit administration office.

49. **Personal Finances.** The unit of currency in Nepal is the Nepali Rupee (NCR). It is not recommended that you open a local bank account. Up to four cheques can be cashed per month at the Forces Fixed Rate (FFR) in the pay offices in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Kathmandu also has a "fast cash" facility in the BFPO. You will not be able to purchase Nepali Rupees before arriving in Nepal. Cheques can also be cashed at the local Standard Chartered Bank at the local rate and the bank allows cash withdrawals with many UK debit cards. It is advisable to have an internet banking facility set up prior to arrival.

50. **Child Benefit.** Child benefit for service families overseas should be paid through the Newcastle office of the DSS, direct into your UK bank account. If you do not already receive your Child Benefit in this manner, you should contact your current Child Benefit office, or Post Office, for the relevant forms in the pay offices in Kathmandu and Pokhara.

51. **Tax**

- a. Whilst resident in Nepal you are classed as "ordinarily resident in UK for tax purposes" and your main pay will continue to be taxed as normal.
- b. During your first 6 months in Nepal, you are exempt import tax on electrical items. If there are any electrical items you require, but have not brought with you, you will need to import them in this period. After 6 months, you will be required to pay Nepali import taxes, which are extremely high on electrical items.
- c. Throughout your tour, you should be able to import, by post, other items tax-free and less UK VAT. The responsibility for claiming the UK VAT and/or proving your entitlement is an individual issue and advice should be taken from your local VAT office before departure.

52. **Employment for Spouses.** Employment opportunities for spouses are limited, but do exist. As with employment anywhere else, it depends on qualifications, perseverance and luck. A number of foreign aid organisations, the British Embassy, tour operators and businesses employ foreign nationals. However, many of them only pay Nepali rates of pay. Both part time and full time work can be found. For those with the inclination and time to offer there are many opportunities for varied and rewarding voluntary work.

Communications

53. **Telephone**

- a. All quarters and hirings can be provided with a civilian telephone with international direct dial access (through Nepal Telecommunication) if requested. If you wish to use this facility then your phone bill is paid approximately two months in arrears through your mess bill. There are a number of companies worldwide who provide cut-price international calls. It is currently cheaper to use the local telephone company (NTC) with a separate prefix for international calls. Calling a UK landline from a Nepali mobile is also reasonably cheap (around 4 or 5 pence per minute).
- b. Whilst there is no direct threat to British personnel, the current security climate in Nepal is changeable and you are strongly recommended to have a mobile telephone. Nepal has an expanding mobile telephone network which operates in the main urban centres including both Kathmandu and Pokhara. If you wish to have a mobile telephone whilst in Nepal this can be arranged on arrival. If you currently use your own mobile telephone you are advised to bring this to Nepal. It is likely you will only need a replacement SIM card rather than having to buy a whole new telephone, and most people use a "pay as you go" type system.

54. **Internet.** Nepal is developing rapidly in IT sectors and there are number of companies providing fast internet services in a very competitive prices. They also provide Net TV as a package. You are advised to use a surge protector/UPS with your computer equipment.

55. **Postal**

- a. Mail is despatched twice a week from Kathmandu, via the British Forces Postal system. Letters and small packets can arrive in the UK in as little as 3 working days, however 5-7 working days is the standard time which should be allowed for these items to reach their destination. Parcels can take from 10 -14 days to reach their destination. Mail is

despatched weekly to Pokhara after sorting in the post office in Kathmandu, which usually adds one or two days to the journey time but for parcels it may add a couple of days extra. For the month of December packets and parcels may take an extra week to reach their destination; this applies to both incoming and outgoing mail.

b. Normal BFPO counter services are available in Kathmandu, but not in Pokhara. The correct postal address for BGN is as per the example below:

Full name including rank
Appointment
BG Nepal
BFPO 4

(Ensure you DO NOT put NEPAL as the last line on the address, this will make your item enter the Nepali postal system).

c. All forces mail (including surface parcels) comes by air due to the difficulties in arranging surface shipment to Nepal. BFPO now has a normal format UK post code for each BFPO worldwide due to the difficulties service personnel were facing in getting various items of mail or registering with civilian organisations. BFPO 4 is replaced by "BF1 3AD" should you need to use this facility.

d. The civilian postal system is expensive, unreliable and extremely slow.

e. Use of mail order services, either by post or over the internet, is common. A number of companies do accept BFPO addresses for orders, but there are a large number that do not.

f. Charitable donations are not to be sent through the BFPO system.

g. The use of the Chip and Pin facility is extremely common, service personnel and their families are NOT to use the Chip and Pin for personal gain by exploiting the MOD currency exchange rates.

CHAPTER 2 – LIFE IN KATHMANDU

56. Kathmandu is a busy capital city not dissimilar to others around Asia. Nepalis are attracted to Kathmandu by its facilities such as schools, electricity, hospitals and the prospect of employment. It is now somewhat overcrowded. There are few high rise buildings and most houses have their own plot of land, so the population density is not as high as western cities. The city is surrounded by a ring road, which is approximately 27 kilometres long. Since traditional cooking methods using wood fire are still popular, as well as extremely poor routine maintenance on most motor vehicles and a lot of traffic congestion, air pollution is a problem in Kathmandu.

57. The British Gurkhas Camp and associated accommodation are situated south of the Bagmati River in the Jawalakhel area of Patan. It is a small camp and is home to HQ BGN, British Gurkhas Kathmandu (BGK) and Defence Infrastructure Organisation (Nepal) (DIO (N)). Patan was a separate city in its own right, but is now effectively a suburb of Kathmandu. The journey into the centre of Kathmandu takes approximately 20 minutes by vehicle. All accommodation is either on camp or very close to camp, and all external accommodation sits within walled compounds.

Sports and Fitness Training

58. The camp has a multi-purpose hard court, a badminton court and a squash court. The camp also has a gym consisting of a fairly standard set of good quality CV equipment as well as free weights.

59. Bikes (and helmets) are available to hire from the PRI. There are local running routes with organised runs during PT always taking place during the early morning to avoid traffic and pollution.

60. The camp has a 16m swimming pool which is suitable for children. Members of British Gurkhas Nepal are also able to use the swimming pool at the British Embassy and pools at two local hotels (at a small cost).

61. **Golf.** Nepal currently has five golf courses, three in Kathmandu, one in Pokhara and one in Dharan.

Social/ Leisure

62. There is a large choice of social venues in Kathmandu. The many good quality hotels and the Thamel district, during the tourist season, provide plenty of excellent restaurants to choose from and a few night-clubs. Night life is improving all the time, but personnel would do well to remain aware of the prevalence of illegal drugs in Kathmandu.

63. Apart from the tourist locations, there are also many clubs and facilities available to the resident ex-patriot communities. The British, American and Australian Embassies all have clubs with recreational facilities, which members of BGN may join. There is also an International Club and some members-only clubs within the major hotels. BGN has negotiated preferential rates at some hotels. Most clubs have swimming pools, bars and some sporting facilities.

64. British Gurkhas Nepal holds regular social events just like any other military establishment. There is lively a combined Officers' and SNCOs' Mess in the camp.

65. The camp has a children's play park.

Library Facilities

66. British Gurkhas Nepal has its own library in the camp at Kathmandu. The library has a selection of books, CDs and UK videos, all of which are changed regularly. There is an increasing selection of childrens' videos and books.

67. The library receives weekly DVD boxes of popular UK television programmes recorded by BFBS. The British Council also has a library, though there is a fee for joining. Kathmandu also has a large number of bookshops, where you can buy fiction and non-fiction titles, quite cheaply.

Schooling

68. The British School (TBS) is located approximately two kilometres from the British Gurkhas Nepal (BGN) HQ. It is a fee-paying, independent, international school delivering the English National Curriculum. TBS accommodates students from 3 years through to 18 years. Cambridge International Examinations syllabi are followed for IGCSE and A Level examinations (CIE is part of the UCLES Examinations Board). The school currently serves 42 nationalities all sharing English as the teaching medium. The standard of education is generally considered to be excellent with all BGN parents giving extremely positive feedback on their children's progress. There are no boarding facilities at the school. The British School website gives further details at <http://www.tbskathmandu.org/>. Details on payment of fees are detailed in JSP 752, Chapter 9 Section 7.

69. Any parents with children who have additional needs will need to contact the school to ensure they are able to cater for their child's needs. Contacting CEAS is also advised so that families can get full support.

70. There is no UK-style childcare provision in Kathmandu for children under the age of 3 years. Although there are Montessori Schools available locally, no assurance of their quality can be given.

71. Kathmandu International Study Centre

- a. In addition to TBS, Kathmandu International Study Centre (KISC) offers quality education based on the sovereignty of Christ and Christian values based on the English National Curriculum. It is an international school employing internationally qualified teaching staff with a British trained principle.
- b. There are approximately 300 children from age 4 through to 18, all taught in year bands who complete 4 terms each year. All fees and costs are borne by the MOD.
- c. Personnel considering enrolling their children with KISC are advised to contact the school at an early stage, either directly or through the ETS clerk or RAO in Kathmandu.
- d. Kathmandu International Study Centre website is www.kisc.edu.np and they can be contacted by e mail at admin@kisc.edu.np.

72. **The Lincoln School.** The Lincoln School follows an American based curriculum and is generally considered to be a very good school. Where places do not exist in TBS children may be placed at Lincoln. The disadvantage is that it is geographically dislocated from HQ BGN being in the Northern part of the city. It follows the International Bachelorette system rather than GCSE / A Level.

Miscellaneous

73. There are competent ladies hairdressers and men's barbers in most of the major hotels as well as in many street-side shops.

74. One or two of the major hotels have good dry cleaning facilities. There are some local dry cleaners that are competent enough for work clothes, but not for special occasion clothing or uniforms.

75. Using the local knowledge from personnel already here will be a key to helping you navigate the maze of amenities available!

CHAPTER 3 - LIFE IN POKHARA

76. Pokhara is the second city of Nepal, although not the second largest. It is the major tourist destination and is generally better suited to holidays and travel than Kathmandu. It is particularly known as being a base for trekking in the nearby Annapurna region.

77. Although it initially looks and feels similar to Kathmandu, visitors quickly comment on how much less busy it is. There is also much less noticeable air pollution although litter is still a significant problem. Pokhara is linked by road to Kathmandu but due to the quality, many people elect to take the 30 minute flight over the 5 hour drive. After 6 months in residency a flight will cost you around £50.

78. The camp is located at Tallo Deep on the northern outskirts of Pokhara and is 10 minute drive from the centre of Pokhara. The tourist area of Lakeside, with its restaurants and shops is a 15-minute drive from camp, next to the Phewa Lake. The camp at Pokhara is much larger than that at Kathmandu owing to its role as the centre for Gurkha recruiting in Nepal.

79. BGP is home to the Gurkha Welfare Scheme (GWS) and as such the Combined Mess is open to HQ GWS as well as BGP personnel.

Sport

80. The camp has basketball, volleyball, badminton and tennis courts, a football pitch and a full size snooker table. There is also a small gym with a good range of equipment. Running can be carried out on camp and in the local area, and the camp has its own swimming pool. The Himalayan Golf Course is a 35 minute drive away. Mountain bikes are available for hire from the PRI. Pokhara is also one of the major paragliding centres in the world and there are a number of foreign and local run paragliding centres in Lakeside.

Food and Drink

81. Pokhara has a far more limited range of shops than Kathmandu and the few western style supermarkets are not nearly as well stocked as those in Kathmandu. This said, most items are still available and the situation is always improving.

Accommodation

82. There are 17 Married Quarters within the camp. Should the number of married personnel exceed the number of quarters available, local hirings will be arranged on your behalf.

83. The combined Officers' and SNCOs' Mess is a small, informal Mess and is called the Kali Khola Mess. It provides accommodation for the few single officers based in Pokhara as well as the many visitors. If there are surplus married quarters the Sandhurst Lodge also functions as a Mess Annex. The Mess is very busy during the bi-annual language courses and during recruiting. The Mess has all the normal facilities of bar, laundry and TV.

84. **Services.** The camp at Pokhara has its own standby generators for use during power cuts. The camp has a regular supply of water that is filtered and chlorinated and is one of the few places in Nepal where it is safe to drink the water from the tap.

85. **Social.** The small number of British personnel based in Pokhara means that the social life can be limited. However, there is a very active social and sporting life based around the Kali Khola Mess. The regular stream of official visitors to Pokhara adds to the social life of the camp. The hotels and the tourist facilities in Lakeside offer numerous opportunities to eat out for a relatively modest sum. Members of BGP also regularly travel to Kathmandu for official visits and these are often combined with a shopping trip and social functions.

86. **Schooling**

- a. Although there was primary schooling available at the International Nepal Fellowship Primary Study Centre, the school is now closed for the foreseeable future. There is therefore no longer an English curriculum based primary school in Pokhara.
- b. Fulbari Montessori is a local school which caters for pupils aged 2 to 8 years. The school is firmly committed to Montessori principles but interpreted in Nepali fashion and tapered into Nepali curriculum requirements. Instruction is intended to be mainly in English, but the curriculum content is tailored to the demands of Nepali schooling. Safeguarding does not follow UK practices, although links with BGN-P are good. Due to there being no assurance of their quality, if parents wish to consider sending their children to Fulbari Montessori, they would need to approach CEAS for guidance.
- c. Pokhara has no primary school provision for children over 8 years of age and no secondary school provision. Therefore families with children over 8 years (or due to turn 8 while in country) would not be able to be assigned to Pokhara unless they take advantage of Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA).
- d. Any parents with children who have additional needs will need to contact the school to ensure they are able to cater for their child's needs. The school is not able to support all needs. Contacting CEAS is essential so that families can get full support and guidance.
- e. There is no UK-style childcare provision in Kathmandu for children. Although there are Montessori Schools available locally, no assurance of their quality can be given.

Miscellaneous

87. **Television/Video.** The Mess and quarters are equipped for cable television, which has a number of English speaking channels. You will need a VHF television to receive cable channels. TVs and videos can be purchased in Pokhara for a reasonable price. However, there are frequent interruptions to the cable service, as it is dependent on the external power supply.
88. **Internet.** All Married Quarters have internet facilities for a fixed monthly subscription.
89. **Library Facilities.** BGP has its own small library in the camp, with books, videos and cassettes. In addition, a weekly DVD box of popular UK television programmes recorded by BFBS comes out from UK, which is sent on to Kathmandu after 2 weeks.
90. **Finance.** UK cheques can be cashed on camp in the Pay Office. There are ATMs in town.
91. **Mail.** There is no Forces Post Office (FPO) in Pokhara, but stamps can be purchased through the Orderly Room. All mail is routed via BFPO Kathmandu and Pokhara based staff receive mail addressed to BFPO 4.
92. **Laundry.** There is a camp laundry facility which can be used by all personnel. However, those with families may find it easier to bring/buy a washing machine.
93. **Telephone.** The quarters on camp are provided with landline telephones on a repayment basis from Nepal Telecom.
94. **Work for Dependants.** There are very few organisations in the Pokhara area that would employ British staff, but voluntary work can be found by those interested.

95. **Medical.** BGP has a part-time local doctor, who works in the Medical Centre. The Medical Centre provides primary care with Primary care is also available in Kathmandu, if appropriate. For secondary care emergencies provided by the nearby Manipal Teaching Hospital. It offers a good range of specialisations. However, in cases of critical illness or planned operations, evacuation to UK or Singapore would be arranged via Kathmandu. Further information on medical and dental arrangements can be found in Chapter 5 – Medical.

CHAPTER 4 – MOVING TO NEPAL

This Chapter is divided into 4 parts and aims to cover all aspects of administration required for your move:

Part 1: The Move

Part 2: Packing & Preparation Checklists

Part 3: Flow Diagrams

Part 4: Contact Information

Part 1 – The Move

96. Failure to comply with the instructions contained in this section could delay the arrival of you and your removals into Nepal. In particular, the instructions on unaccompanied baggage must be adhered to. The Nepali customs can delay unaccompanied baggage for long periods of time over the most minor irregularities in paperwork.

97. The first and most important document to complete is the Medical Screening Questionnaire which will be sent to you by Families Section, Defence Passenger Reservation Centre when you initiate your flight booking. This must be filled in and sent off to DPRC and MO BGN the earliest opportunity as if you, or any member of your family, have a medical condition which cannot be treated effectively within the available facilities in Nepal your entire posting is likely to be cancelled.

Applications to Travel

98. Travel applications to Nepal for single personnel must be completed and forwarded to losing Unit Movement Cell or through to the offline Defence Travel (DT) Booking portal on +44 2036682210. Family travel is to be booked through Families Section, Movement Support Services Division.

99. A completed F/MOV/562 must be forwarded to the losing unit HR Administrator or Movement staff. All segments of the outbound journey must be paid for by the losing unit and are responsible for arranging the journey.

100. Family flight shall be booked through the Families Section, Movement Support Services Division, Cedar 3A, Mail Point 3338, MOD Abbey Wood, Bristol BS34 8JH. The Families Section will issue a Family Pack upon receipt of your application and you will not receive any flight confirmation until all the annexes requested in the Family Pack are completed and returned.

Routes

101. Routes from UK

a. There are two major routes originating from London Heathrow and Manchester with (Qatar Airways, Etihad Airlines and Omani Airways via the Middle East (ME)) and (Air India and Jet Airways via India).. Flights are daily and preferably in the evening to arrive in Kathmandu at mid-afternoon the next day. The journey has two flights totalling up to 20 hours via the ME and up to 16 hours via India respectively.

b. The MCC HQ BGN or your unit Movement staff should convey a detailed flight information for personnel using these facilitators.

c. DPRC will advise families with flight details upon receipt of a confirmed suitable accommodation by HQBGN.

102. **Routes from Brunei.** Non UK passport holders travelling from Brunei usually travel via

Bangkok to Kathmandu due to visa restrictions and MCC Brunei Garrison are responsible for all applications. However, families' applications must be submitted to DPRC for further scrutiny.

103. **Passports and Visas.**

a. Non-Nepalese passport holders will require an entry visa prior to arrival into Nepal. Official visa is the preferred visa for newly posted personnel and this must be obtained via the Visa Section London within 6 weeks prior to your intended travel date. The telephone numbers and address of the Visa Section London are in Chapter 4 Part 4. DPRC should send the necessary forms along with your family package upon receipt of your flight application.

b. The OFFICIAL visa will be converted to a 12 Month residence visa by the RAO Department as part of the Arrival and Induction process. Families should note that collective visas are not recognised by the Nepal immigration authorities and therefore every individual should be in possession of a passport.

104. **Arrival Procedures**

a. A dedicated team of Crown Servants from the Movement Cell will meet you upon arrival and prior to the immigration process to navigate individuals through the corridors of Nepalese bureaucracy. These Movement staffs wear prescribed uniform with BGN tie and always should display an airport security pass. The incumbent personnel might meet you within the baggage hall to assist with your arrival and to ensure you are settled in and welcomed.

b. You may be taken to Kathmandu Mess accommodation for the first night before taking over your quarter/ hiring, or onward move to Pokhara. Hotel accommodation could be an option when availability within the Mess is not possible whilst every effort is made to ensure that your permanent accommodation in the shortest possible period. The Mess has a number of family rooms, with additional room in order to accommodate families. Staying in the Mess allows access to the camp facilities which means that basic arrival administration (such as briefings, booking into the Med Centre etc.) can be carried out more easily.

105. **Onward Movement to Pokhara**

a. Movements staff in HQ BGN will make the necessary arrangements for your onward travel to Pokhara. Onward travel to Pokhara is normally by internal flight and excess baggage will have been arranged for you. A member of the MCC will brief you on your onward flight details on arrival and during the mandatory arrival G4 brief.

b. It is normal to spend one or two days in Kathmandu prior to moving to Pokhara. This allows time to meet Commander British Gurkhas Nepal and personnel based in Kathmandu, as well as receive a briefing on British Gurkhas Nepal and other introductory briefings.

106. **Accompanied Baggage**

a. Accompanied baggage allowance on posting for all personnel will be 45 Kg or 2 pieces at 23 Kg each and 23 Kg per dependant as per the Vol. 2 of JSP800. Ensure these required allowance of 45 Kg is clearly stated on the flight application or you are likely to get the default baggage allowance of about 30 Kg.

b. British personnel should not, under any circumstances, accept packages from Gurkha servicemen, either in your accompanied or unaccompanied baggage. Because Gurkha servicemen remain Nepalese citizens their effects are subject to more stringent customs

regulations than those of British personnel.

107. **Unaccompanied Baggage - Removals**

- a. All unaccompanied baggage is air freighted through Agility Logistics and handled by their local agents on arrival in Kathmandu. The Freight section of the MCC is responsible for the Customs clearing of the UB as Duty Exempt Import as the MOU with the Nepal Government.
- b. Confirm unaccompanied baggage allowance with unit QM department and iaw JSP 752.
- c. Personnel can safe pack UB using standard MFO boxes to be addressed to BRITISH GURKHAS NEPAL KATHMANDU, BFPO 4 and with NUMBER, RANK, NAME
- d. Personnel are not to import unnecessary goods into Nepal or items on behalf of any Nepal resident or citizen.

108. **Restricted Items.** Restricted items are those items that are subject to restrictions by Nepali customs. This includes electrical items of an attractive nature such as televisions; stereo systems etc. however items such as kettles, irons etc. are not generally restricted. There are no hard and fast rules, but if an electrical item has a serial number it should be treated as restricted. It is forbidden to sell restricted items in Nepal and they must be exported at the end of your tour. A declaration to this effect is on the bottom of the [packing list](#) included in this Chapter. The serial numbers of restricted items should be included after the item description on the packing list.

109. **Prohibited Items.** Prohibited items are those items that are not to be included in unaccompanied baggage. A full list is at Annex C to the Joint Services Unaccompanied Baggage Guide, which you complete to book your move. No batteries or battery packs of any nature should be sent as unaccompanied baggage. You should note also that aerosols are prohibited, which includes items such as hairspray.

110. **Packing Lists**

- a. Electronic typed packing lists are required for each box with a legible format, complete with a declaration for Nepalese Customs is at the end of this section.
- b. A completed form must be enclosed in each box and scanned copies of each packing list, with original signatures required by Customs emailed to Agility and the International Desk of the MCC (BGN-MOVCLKINTFRT@MOD.UK).
- c. The serial numbers of the restricted electrical items in each box must be included on the relevant packing list. You should also list the value of each box. Failure to complete these forms, in detail, and forward them to Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal will result in your boxes being delayed for an indeterminate length of time on arrival in country.

111. **Customs Forms.** The Import Duty Exemption application for Nepal, mentioned as Customs forms in Annex D of the Joint Services Unaccompanied Baggage Guide, are prepared by MCC HQ BGN on receipt of the packing lists.

112. **Importation of Vehicles.** Contact the MCC and the SO3 G4 prior any thoughts of a vehicle import as to the latest update to such regulation. Personnel can import entitled Duty Exempt vehicle only during the first 6 months and must return or ownership to another entitled Duty Exempt personnel in the last 6 months of tour. No vehicle over 3 years old at the time of import can be imported into Nepal; therefore considering the case of any delays in transit, it is recommended not to

import vehicles over 2½ years old from the UK. Private vehicle import is not as daunting as presumed; it is as simple as following the guidance.

Part 2 - Packing and Preparation Checklists

The following lists are by no means exhaustive. The preparation checklist summarises some of the major tasks that need to be carried out before coming to Nepal. The packing list is a list of items that are difficult to obtain in Nepal or are particularly useful to life here. The list has been compiled with the assistance of people living here. Obviously, it is not exhaustive and depends much on personal preferences; check with your predecessor what is currently available.

Preparation Checklist

- Apply to DPRC, via your Unit Movement clerk for air passages for yourself and family.
- Confirm you receive a Family Information Pack from Families Section, Defence Passenger Reservation Centre (DPRC).
- Complete and return the health questionnaires to Family Section, DPRC.
- Contact SO3 G4 HQ BGN/ MCC when posted to Nepal from Germany.
- Contact your predecessor. E-mail is the easiest method – Contact Information.
- Contact G1 HQ BGN if you wish to enter your children into a school in Nepal.
- Complete Parental Declaration Form, once signed, a copy to Family Section (Abbey Wood) and a copy to CEAS at the address given in the form.
- Contact SO3 G4, HQ BGN/ MCC when considering importing a private vehicle.
- Contact your Medical Centre/ GP and begin vaccination programme. You are advised to keep your own record of the vaccination to prevent duplication after arrival in Nepal.
- Order your warm weather uniforms through your QM's Clothing Store.
- Apply for SLP1 (Nepali) course at Gurkha Language Wing, 2nd Bn ITC, Catterick if applicable.
- Complete application for Married Quarter (MOD F 1132) manually and forward to QM HQ BGN.
- Write a letter of introduction to Commander BGN/ COS.
- Apply for Nepal Visas using forms supplied by DPRC.
- Complete Joint Services Unaccompanied Baggage Guide.
- Complete AF P9729, Request for the Service of a Storage Contractor.
- Prepare packing lists, in accordance with the instructions in this chapter.
- Send 4 copies of packing lists to Movements Branch Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal.

Packing Checklist

KITCHEN/FOOD ITEMS	HOUSEHOLD ITEMS	CLOTHING & TOILETRIES
Dinner service Cutlery Wine glasses Kitchen utensils Specialist pots/pans Baking trays Mugs Cool box Cool bag Fly nets for covering food Microwave Toaster Food Processor Yoghurt maker Bread maker J Cloths Cookery books	Television DVD player Games console Stereo system Short wave radio Extension leads Multi sockets Surge protectors Voltage regulators/UPS Good torch Picture hooks Pictures / prints Tools	Oral contraceptives Skin care products Favourite toiletries Hair dryer Feminine Hygiene Products Anti-bacterial hand wash/gel Anti-bacterial wipes Plenty of shoes Underwear Swimwear Sun hats Wellington/walking boots Trekking kit
Food Items: Brown flour Long life UHT cream Instant coffee Readymade icing Easy blend yeast Good chocolate Good quality breakfast cereals	FOR CHILDREN Fluoride drops Children's toys Children's books and videos Children's clothes Children's Shoes W wellington Boots Child safety equipment 15 Child friendly toiletries	MISCELLANEOUS Hot water bottles Sunglasses Requisites for hobbies Mail order catalogues Umbrellas Wrapping paper Christmas decorations Artificial Christmas tree Magazine subscriptions Head torches

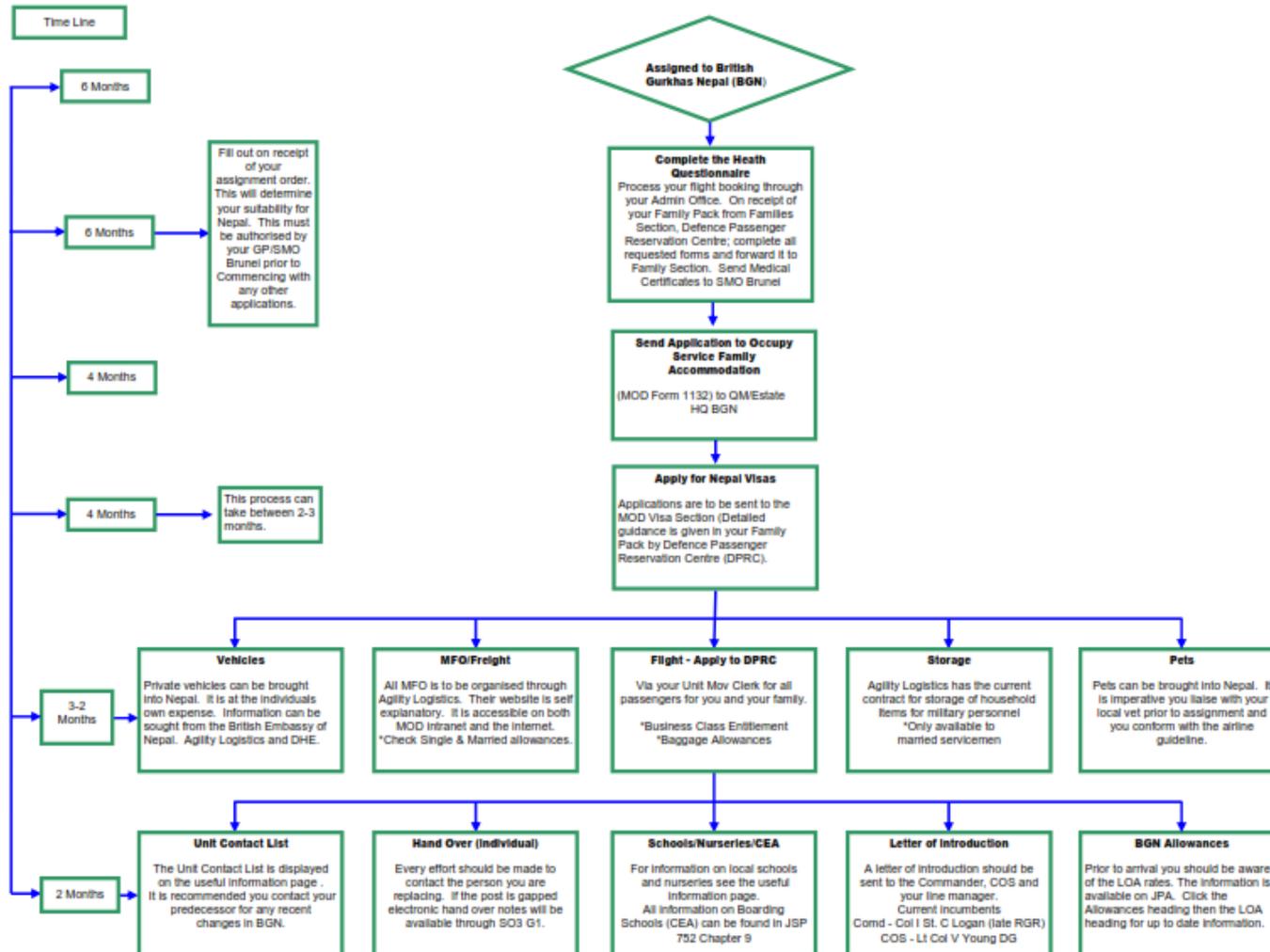
The items you bring are entirely up to you. Some of these items may seem unnecessary or even strange, but local supply of certain things can be sporadic. Please be aware that it normally takes 3 weeks for your unaccompanied baggage to be released by Nepali customs to you.

As a basic guide you should bring whatever non-perishable items you need to last you the first couple of months and remember that contacting your predecessor may give you the best source of advice.

A wide range of household items are supplied by the Accommodation Stores Unit (ASU) and will be present in your accommodation when you take it over. However you may prefer to bring your own appliances and other items. The kitchen utensils provided are very basic and whilst they will enable you to get by to start with most people find that they need much more than is already in place.

The ASU list is embedded below for your information. It may be the case that not every item on the list is in your accommodation when you arrive but it does serve as a good indicator.

Part 3 - Flow Diagrams



Part 4 – Contact Information

Useful Telephone Numbers

Telephone Exchanges

Kathmandu Camp Service Desk:
00977 1 4235203

Fax Numbers

Kathmandu Camp: 00977 1 4235307
Pokhara Camp: 00977 61 567474/567485/567484

Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal

Email BGN-0-Group-Mailbox@mod.uk

Military Phone Code for Nepal: 94191 6 (+ EXT)

Useful Extensions:

Appointment	Extension
DCOS	237
ADJT	233
SO3 G4	220
QM/Estate	224
SNCO I/C MCC	239
BUWO/ABUWO	229/245

ADDRESSES

Defence Passenger Reservation Centre

5th Floor
St Georges Court
2-12 Bloomsbury Way
London
SE1A 25H
Tel: 00443067894800

Headquarters Brigade of Gurkhas

FASC Camberley
Surrey
GU15 4PQ

Defence Visa Section London

Ground Floor, Zone - N
MOD Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2 HB
Tel: 00442072184366

CHAPTER 5 - MEDICAL AND HEALTH

Introduction

113. MSS will not book your flight until your GP has completed the medical screening form sent to you with the initial movements pack. This is because medical treatment to NHS standards may be limited in Nepal and we need to be sure that you and your family can be cared for adequately.

Medical Support in Nepal

114. **Primary Medical Care.** Medical Officer (MO), nurses and medical assistants provide primary care in Kathmandu and Pokhara in DPHC run Medical Centres. The MO in Kathmandu works full-time and is a UK Army GP.

115. Second Line Medical Support

a. There are accident and emergency facilities at local hospitals, close to both Camps and easily accessible. These hospitals have the equipment and the trained staff to deal with medical emergencies. Service from these hospitals is purchased on behalf of entitled patients and referral to these institutions is dependent on each individual case. Where the needs of the patient cannot be adequately met in Nepal, the patient will be moved to another location suited to the treatment of the condition. If deemed medically appropriate patients can be flown to the UK for their medical care. If a requirement to return to the UK becomes more frequent than annually then a recommendation to return the family to the UK will be made.

b. If hospital treatment in Nepal is required, the MO and the Medical Centre staff will monitor the treatment given. A package of care is organised, dependent on the medical problem, hospital used and type of treatment required. Visually, the standard of hygiene and medical/nursing care may not seem as high as seen in the UK. BGN medical staff will provide support for entitled personnel as deemed appropriate and in conjunction with the Unit Welfare Officer.

116. Information on Inpatient/Outpatient Care in Local Hospitals

a. Nepalese hospitals are visually very different to those in UK and the western world. All of the hospitals have private rooms which we use whenever possible. Some aspects of care will be very different to that which you are used to in the UK and are related to the challenges of living in a developing country with poor infrastructure. We try to limit the effect this has on our patients and hope by keeping you informed any difficulties encountered will be minimised.

b. BGN only uses hospitals where we are satisfied with the level of medical care. The choice of hospital will depend on what type of medical problem you have and the opinion of the BGN Medical Team as to where is appropriate.

117. As a general guide we would aim to:

a. Have a medical representative visit daily – this could be the MO or medic/nurse who will come in to check on your progress.

b. Ensure that BGN welfare are aware of your admission to ensure you are fed, watered and emotionally supported.

c. Give you 24 hr access to the on call medical mobile – should anything occur that you are unhappy with or worried by, you always have a BGN medical representative at the end of the phone.

d. Request that Serving family members are given time off to be with you. If need be (e.g.

treatment in Kathmandu for those from Pokhara) we can arrange for your family to stay in the Mess or Transit accommodation here to facilitate this.

118. **Dental Support.** All personnel and their dependents posted to Nepal should aim to be dentally fit prior to arrival. All dental screening and treatment is carried out at a local Dental surgery, which has very high standards of service and care. All dependants (over 18 years) are subject to dental charges either local or MOD whichever is lower. All dental service providers are subject to assurance visits by the Defence Dental Services.

119. **Neonates and Pregnancy.** Families with children of under 5 yrs of age are not be posted to BGN due to the susceptibility of very young to illness and variable standards of Secondary Health Care (SHC) and Pre-Hospital Emergency Care (PHEC) in Nepal. In addition, wives or servicewomen who become pregnant must return to UK before the 24th week of pregnancy.

Preparation for Nepal

120. **Immunisations.** Service personnel are to arrive in Nepal with all military vaccinations in date. All immunisations for both SP and entitled dependants are to be in accordance with JSP 950 7-1-1. This directs the GP of dependants and SP to use the 'Green Book' and TRAVAX for pre-posting immunisation advice. Funding for vaccinations is through the RAO or using the claim form in the DPRC health advice pack. **All persons should be in date for the required vaccinations on arrival in Nepal**, paying particular attention to Rabies as Nepal is a High Risk rabies Country. Service personnel should use their local military medical centre for vaccinations. This also applies to dependents based overseas, who are registered with a Service practice.

121. **Malaria.** There is a low risk of malaria in Nepal below 1500m and bite avoidance (as opposed to anti-malarial tablets) is advised.

122. **Medicines.** Medicines are prescribed via the Medical Centres. If you are on long term medication, bring 6 months supply with you and tell the Medical Centre as soon as possible, so that further supplies can be obtained.

123. **Cervical Smears.** This screening is available at BGK Medical Centre. We return all smear samples to the UK for analysis and receive full printed results and follow up advice as per the UK. There are limited facilities for abnormal cervical smear follow up in Nepal and this will usually require a UK referral.

124. **Mammography.** Women over 50 years of age are offered mammography as part of the UK's screening programme. SP or dependents requiring a mammogram will be referred back to the UK.

125. **Prescription Glasses.** If you require prescription glasses, you should update your prescription before departing UK and bring at least one spare pair of glasses with you. You should bring a copy of your prescription with you. Glasses can be made locally, very cheaply, from existing prescriptions. This is limited to 1 pair per year.

126. **General Health Care Issues.** The living conditions for BGN personnel far exceed that of the local population. The camp and the local area are clean and well maintained. Sanitation in the camp, married quarters and hiring's is excellent and safe drinking water is available to all. Primary health care provision in the camps is of a high standard and emergency medical provision is available. Comprehensive immunisation prior to arrival and good hygiene should prevent any major illness. Sensible hygiene precautions are required at all times, particularly when outside the camp. In Nepal, it is essential to pay more attention to health and hygiene than you would in the west. This is especially true with children. However, by taking simple precautions you can reduce the chances of becoming ill. Hand washing is vital especially after handling anything dirty including shoes and money. Hand wash gel and sachets of 'wet wipes' or similar are available in Nepal. Small cuts and abrasions easily become infected in a hot climate and also at high altitude. Even trivial injuries should be washed and dressed because if they become septic they may take a long time to heal. It is useful to carry a tube of

antiseptic cream/spray with you.

127. **Water.** The water supplied in the Camps and Quarters (and some hiring's) is filtered and purified, and requires no further treatment. However there may be occasions (especially during the monsoon) when further treatment may be recommended. Such instances are published on routine orders. No other source of water should be considered safe. Some Quarters/hirings are fitted with a wall-mounted filter and ultra- violet treatment unit. These are highly effective and there is no need to treat the water any further.

128. **Food Safety**

a. A large range of western food products is available in Kathmandu and, to a lesser extent, in Pokhara. All sources of fresh produce, including vegetables and fruit, should be washed thoroughly in clean water before eating.

b. Fresh milk is generally not pasteurised and therefore you need to boil the milk first before drinking, but powdered milk and UHT milk are universally available and safe.

c. There are some butchers that operate to western standards in Kathmandu, from which the purchase of meat is recommended. Meat in restaurants should be ordered very well cooked, although most hotels and restaurants that cater for western tourists import their meat and it is generally of a high standard. As a general rule for food safety in the home: BOIL IT, PEEL IT, COOK IT, SHELL IT ...or forget it!

d. There are many good restaurants in Kathmandu and Pokhara but a few basic precautions should be followed. Choose busy restaurants rather than quiet ones. Reject cooked food that is not piping hot, and meat that is not thoroughly cooked. Leave your side salad where you found it. Reject drinks with ice cubes in. Reject uncovered food that may have been left in the open accessible to flies. Avoid buffet meals, unless you see the food put out and it is piping hot.

129. **Contact.** Queries regarding matters pertaining to healthcare should in the first instance be directed to the SMO BGK : BGN, Kathmandu, Nepal, BFPO 4. Mil: 94191 6292. Nepal Mob : (+977) 9851031863 | Dii(F): BGN-NepMedCen-MO@mod.uk

CHAPTER 6 - A WIFE'S PERSPECTIVE

This booklet has been recently written by a British BGN wife living in Nepal with two young children. Although this section may repeat information found elsewhere within this booklet it should enable wives and husbands of serving soldiers posted to Nepal to understand the issues from a partner's perspective. It does not necessarily reflect the views of all of the wives in BGN.

130. **The Moving Process**

- a. Moving to Nepal is more complicated than moving within the UK. Your spouse (the serving member) should be doing all the paperwork but if he/she is deployed then you will end up doing it all. Do not be afraid to be assertive about your family's needs.
- b. Your unaccompanied baggage (freight) allowance will depend on the size of your family and possibly also rank of the serving member. The agility website will tell you how much you are allowed. When the removals assessor comes round they can advise you on how much of your belongings that really is as it is hard to imagine things dived into square metres. It is worth having an idea of what you would like to bring before the assessor comes round, they are usually quite understanding and helpful. It takes about a week for the freight to travel from the UK to Nepal so there is no need to be without your belongings in the UK for long. It takes about a month for customs to release your freight in Nepal. You can arrange your packing and storage dates with your removals company. I chose to have the freight packed a week before the items for storage as I found it easier to get organised that way. You can have it all done in one go over a few days if you prefer that.

131. **Kitchen and Dining Room.** The kitchen is only equipped with very basic cooking equipment so bring as much as you can with you. It is possible to buy decent quality kitchen equipment at reasonable prices in Nepal so do not worry if you forget anything. However it obviously saves you money if you bring items you already own and you will not end up with duplicates once you return to the UK at the end of the posting.

132. **White Goods.** There is a gas oven, fridge freezer and large chest freezer provided. You will need to buy a washing machine once here or bring one with you, however the water quality can damage western washing machines and replacement parts are difficult to obtain. It is often possible to buy your predecessors washing machine. There is no space for a dishwasher. It is easy to manage without a tumble dryer for most of the year. Large families may find it useful during the monsoon.

133. **Bedrooms.** Standard size double and single beds provided with appropriate duvets, pillows and plain white & blue bed linen. Plain white towels are provided. Many people bring some of their own bed linen and towels to personalise the house. Many couples use two single beds pushed together to make a bigger bed. If you are considering this you may want to bring an appropriate sized duvet and bedding (super-king size fits two singles pushed together). Some people bring their own mattress toppers to make the beds more comfortable, especially useful if pushing two beds together to make one big bed. It gets very cold in the houses at winter; you may wish to consider bringing electric blankets.

134. **Clothing**

- a. Bring all your clothes. It is cold in the winter so you will need your warm clothing. It is hot the rest of the year so bring summer clothing. There are lots of events in the mess and others organised by the wives club so bring your party dresses too.
- b. There is a pool, gym, badminton court, basketball court and squash court on camp so bring your sports clothes if you enjoy those activities. If you anticipate trekking bring walking boots. Other trekking equipment can be brought much cheaper here so only bring items you

already own. There are tailors here that can copy clothing so you can have new clothes made to your existing designs. Many women also like to wear clothes in the local style. Bring all your shoes. It is difficult to find good quality shoes here or even to find any shoes in larger sizes. The ground is very rough around Kathmandu so sturdy shoes are worth having until you are used to it. Flip flops are also a popular choice for the majority of the year.

135. **Entertainment.** Most people bring their TV, DVD player and DVD collection. There are a few English language channels available if you pay for TV here. BFBS provide welfare DVDs each week with recordings of UK TV programs; these can be borrowed from the camp library. They are working on another solution to deliver UK programming straight to the homes, but it may be some time before this is delivered. DVDs are freely available at very low prices here in Nepal. There appears to be no copyright law. The quality of the copies varies. There is a small library on the camp which has books, internet access and the welfare DVDs. There are book shops locally which sell English books. Many people that enjoy reading chose to use an e-reader such as a kindle to download and read books. Music systems, musical instruments and children's toys are all worth bringing depending on your family and personal preferences.

136. **Housing**

a. There are a few married quarters but most of the housing is provided through hirings. All the houses are within a few minutes' walk of the camp. The houses vary greatly; the hirings tend to be bigger than the married quarters. Many of the houses are very big which means some rooms are left unfurnished, for example a six bedroom house may only have four furnished bedrooms. Some people chose to use these empty rooms as playrooms or storerooms. Some of the houses have open fires.

b. The houses are furnished with the same military issue furniture found in the UK. The specific furniture provided with your house will depend on the actual house. Some people supplement the furniture with local purchases. It is often possible to buy items from your predecessor in the house or others that are moving on.

c. The size and quality of the gardens also varies with some houses having large gardens with room for a vegetable patch and fruit trees and others so small that there is barely space to sit outside. You may be able to buy garden furniture from the last family living in the house you are allocated. To make your house feel more like home you may choose to bring rugs, pictures and ornaments. You could bring curtains but they may need to be altered to fit the windows. The curtains in the houses are similar to those in other quarters throughout the world (old, faded, various patterns) but they are serviceable. Material is not too expensive here in Nepal so you may want to wait until you arrive to get some made if you don't like the ones in your house. Some people have had sofa covers made to try and disguise the army furniture too.

137. **Bikes.** Many people find cycling to be an efficient way to get around the local area. Others enjoy recreational cycling around the Kathmandu valley. Many people consider the main roads too dangerous for young children to cycle on but residential streets are quiet enough so most people bring the children's bikes for use locally.

138. **Post/Online Ordering**

a. Our postal service is provided by the BFPO, there is no civilian post for us to use in Nepal. Post arrives twice a week. Post can also be sent out from the post office on camp. The postage costs are the same as within the UK.

b. Many people supplement local purchases with online shopping. There are many popular websites which deliver to BFPO including; Amazon, Next, Marks and Spencer, Boots, Sports Direct, British Corner Shop and many others.

139. **Suitcases.** As it takes about a month before your freight is released you need to make sure you have enough clothes, shoes, books, toys etc in your accompanied baggage (suitcases) to keep you going. Bring clothes & shoes suitable for wearing in the mess in your suitcases as you will probably have welcome drinks there which could occur before your baggage arrives. It is quite a busy mess with social events held there on a regular basis.

140. **Shopping.** There are various supermarkets available in Nepal. We have been able to eat very similar foods to at home in the UK. It is possible to buy many familiar brands here but availability varies. Once you arrive one of the other wives will show you the popular shops. Shopping generally requires going to a number of different shops to find the items you need. Fresh fruit and vegetable of good quality can be bought at a number of local markets. Familiar toiletries are also readily available.

141. **Staff.** Many families employ a Didi (housemaid) to help with the additional housework required in such a dusty country. Other popular staffs employed are chefs and gardeners. The wage is easily affordable for most Army families.

142. **Money.** The currency in Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee. There is no need to open a Nepali bank account. We can obtain cash from our UK accounts by either cashing a cheque at the pay office or by bank card at the post office (as within the UK).