

TRUSTEES OF THE SHILLONG RECREATION GROUND TRUST

13th August, 2025

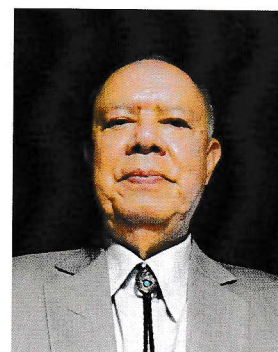


(L to R) : SHRI D.M. PARIAT, SHRI WALLAMPHANG ROY, DR. VIJAY KUMAR D, IAS (COMMISSIONER & SECRETARY URBAN AFFAIRS, GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA / EX-OFFICIO TRUSTEE), SHRIMATI ROSETTA MARY KURBAH, IAS (DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, EAST KHASI HILLS DISTRICT, MEGHALAYA / EX-OFFICIO TRUSTEE), SHRI J.M. PARIAT, SHRI DIKKI D SHIRA, MCS, (DIRECTOR, SPORTS AND YOUTH AFFAIRS, GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA / EX-OFFICIO TRUSTEE).



Secretary's Report for 2024-2025

The SRGT since its inception in 1901, had, in its 124 years, seen some minor ups and downs but had never had any major disagreements with any one especially with the government in power as most Chief Secretaries and the Heads of the police department were invited to be members of the Trust. The Deputy Commissioner was invited to be an ex officio Trustee in 1909. The Trust functioned quietly but effectively with most members of the public unaware of its existence.



However, in the recent past, the Trust had some misunderstandings with the state government which continued for about two years. In March 2024 the two sides came to a settlement which resulted in a supplementary Trust Deed whereby an additional two ex officio members were inducted into the Trust and these were the Commissioner and Secretary Urban Affairs Department and the Director of Sports and Youth Affairs, taking the number of Trustees to six.

The Trust continues to keep the 2nd ground under its control so that it could be leased out at a very low cost to some schools and young people who came from financially challenged backgrounds. It is also a useful place for church services and other sporting functions. The lease with the Shillong Sports Association for the 1st ground which was first signed in 1916 and with the Meghalaya Football Association for the 3rd ground which was signed in 2010 continue without interruption.

The renewal of the lease of the J.N. Stadium campus which was first signed in 1979 is under process. The government has requested for the lease of another three plots and these are the SRGT Park along the Umkhras River to be leased out to the Urban Affairs Department for riverside beautification, the plot at 4th furlong to be leased out to the State Sports Council for creation of another entry to the stadium and one acre of the top end of the parking lot to be leased out to the State Sports Council for construction of hostels for athletes and offices for sports bodies – efforts are in hand to conclude the lease formalities as soon as possible.

The parking lot continues to provide useful service especially when football games and other functions like shows and trade fairs are held. It also provides space for overnight parking of about fifty vehicles. The Trust also sponsors the 3rd Division Football Tournament which is conducted by the SSA on its behalf.



The old turf club campus also continues to be with the Trust and having been requisitioned by the government, has been providing accommodation to the CRPF for many years.

The Trust continues to support the village school situated at the top end of the parking lot and without the Trust's support, the school would find it very difficult to function.

A small plot at Mawpun continues to be with the Trust though a part of it has been given to the locality for a basket ball court and for vehicle parking.

Hand in hand with the Government, the Trust had recently taken up the development of the riverside SRGT Park which will have a fine walkway and other amenities for the benefit of the residents of Shillong. The work is in progress and should be completed in 2026.

The management of the Trust's financial affairs are in the very capable hands of a consultant, Ms. Ibahun Kharsapa who has made sure that all accounting requirements are adhered to. The accounts are also scrutinized and audited by the firm of M/s Dadhich and Associates, a very renowned chartered accountant firm.

The overall affairs of the Trust are managed by six Trustees who hold regular meetings to oversee the functions of the Trust. The day to day affairs are overseen by a Secretary and a Manager and his team.

The construction of the eye hospital by M/s Mission Trust is in hand – the hospital stands on a plot leased out to M/s Mission Trust, headed by Dr. P. Saikia and when ready, should provide useful service to the public.

The family members of the late Jhabulal, who was a very trusted employee of the Trust, continue to live in quarters built by the Trust and they pay rent regularly.

I would like to record the long service of 42 years provided to the Trust by Mr. J.M. Pariat and to Mr. W. Roy who has provided about 36 years of service.

The Trust is in a comfortable position financially and also has a dedicated set of Trustees who, I am sure, will continue to run the Trust in a way that will live up to the aspirations of the first six Trustees who had set up the Trust in 1901.

D. M. Pariat,
Secretary to the Trustees, SRGT,
Shillong.
27.10.2025.

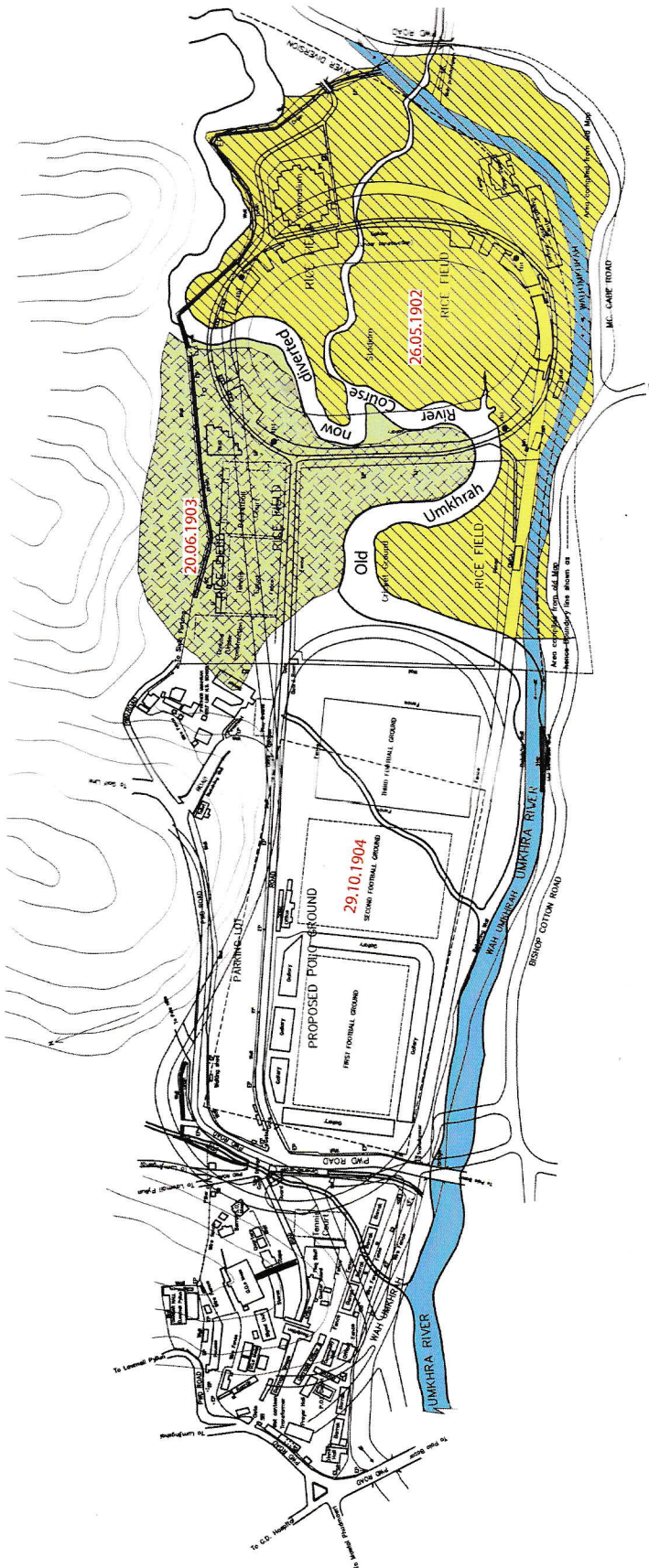


History

At a meeting of some residents of Shillong held on the 12th of November 1901, a Trust in the name of The Shillong Recreation Ground Trust was formed in order to take on the responsibility of bringing about great improvements of the unsightly appearance and unhealthy condition of a portion of the land commonly known as the 'Umkhras Valley' lying immediately to the north of the Shillong Station to provide a conducive site for polo, gymkhana, horse racing and other sports and games. The Trust was also given the responsibility of procuring enough land in the, 'Umkhras Valley', and also to take on the task of clearing and preparing the land for the above said sporting activities as might be from time to time determined for the benefit of the residents of Shillong. The Trust was duly registered at the Sub Registrar's office. To meet the aforesaid aims, the Trust subsequently purchased three plots of land situated at the 'Umkhras Valley' generally now known as the Polo grounds on which sporting and other recreational activities have been taking place for well over a hundred years.

At the meeting the following gentlemen were duly appointed as the first Trustees -

1. Phillip Richard Thronhagh Gordon - A Major in His Majesty's Indian Staff Corps and Superintendent of Ethnography in Assam residing in Shillong. (Author of the book titled 'The Khasis').





2. William McMurdo Sweet, gentleman of Shillong.
3. George Russel Row - A Major in his Majesty's 8th Gurkha Regiment.
4. Robert Herriot Henderson, gentleman of Dewan in Cachar.
5. Charles Howard Holder of Dacca.
6. George Loftus Garth, Dacca Solicitor.

A short time later, George Loftus Garth died on 16th June 1904 and this was followed by the resignation of George Russel Row. The Meeting of the remaining Trustees held on 12th July, 1904, appointed Arthur William Davis – Inspector General of Police, Assam, residing at Shillong and Malcolm Macgregor Hadow, of Dibrugarh, Assam, Solicitor in place of George Loftus Garth and George Russel Row.

To meet the expenditure for improvements and construction etc, the Trustees decide to raise money estimated at ₹ 35,000.00.

The first and immediate herculean task of the Trust at the time was to divert the course of the Umkhrah river which flowed through the paddy fields (now Football Ground No.2 and Football Ground No.3). The work was allotted to one Mulla Buksh for filling and levelling the old course of the Umkhrah River, and the earth was dug out from a neighbouring ground which in the process formed a tank which came to be known as 'Buksh's Tank' and to the Khasis as, 'Ka Nan U Bok' in its literal meaning. The work was completed in the latter part of 1906 while the improvement work and construction of the Race track and Polo field was going on.

From 1907, the Trustees of the S.R.G.T. appointed an agency i.e. the General Sports Committee, to start conducting regular races, gymkhana, football, hockey and other games on behalf of the Trust. On the other hand, the Shillong Polo Club used to conduct polo games during the games season. Polo players used to come with their ponies from Dacca and Calcutta to participate in the polo games. The conduct of the races was under the appointed body of stewards in the name of 'Shillong Races' which later, in 1936, came to be known as 'The Shillong Gymkhana Races'.

From the early days only people with social standing were appointed as Trustees. Some of the earlier Trustees were A.G. McCall, OBE, ICS, Deputy Commissioner, H.G. Bartley of the Indian Police, A.H.S. Fletcher, MBE, ICS, Deputy Commissioner, R.W.A. Ashe, Commissioner of Income Tax, U.C. Roy, IAS, K.C. Baruah, I.A.S Deputy Commissioners and a host of other senior officials. One of the Trustees was a gentleman who went on to become the President of India, (L) Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed who was then Advocate General of Assam. Thereafter there were other reputed citizens like (L) Mr.Maham Singh, MLA and solicitor, (L) Mr. Stanley



Nichols Roy, MLA, (L) Mr. L.K. Handique, Director of Agriculture, Govt. of undivided Assam, (L) Colonel O. Laloo, Indian Army, (L) Mr. Hector Roy, Chief Engineer/Secretary, PWD, (L) Mr. L. Jyrwa, a local resident who knew the Trust history well.

All Trustees are appointed as per the provisions of the law and by the power conferred upon the Trustees by the Trust Deed. All appointments are registered at the Sub Registrar's office. Hence a Trust cannot 'die' but can carry on indefinitely as long as Trustees are legally appointed.

The present Trustees are Shri J.M. Pariat, Shri D.M. Pariat, Shri Wallamphang Roy, Dr. Vijay Kumar D, IAS (Commissioner & Secretary Urban Affairs, Government Of Meghalaya / Ex-Officio Trustee), Shrimati Rosetta Mary Kurbah, IAS (Deputy Commissioner, East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya / Ex-Officio Trustee), Shri Dikki D Shira, MCS, (Director, Sports And Youth Affairs, Government of Meghalaya / Ex-Officio Trustee).

The SRGT's association with Sports bodies is recorded below :-

SRGT and Shillong Sports Association (SSA) - In the year 1916, the General Sports Committee, an agency representing the SRGT and with the knowledge and consent of the Trust, allowed the SSA, through mutual understanding, to make use of what is now the 1st Ground for sporting activities. While the SSA ran the tournaments on the 1st Ground, the G.S.C. took care of the maintenance of all the playing fields. The Trust continued running the horse races, polo, (hence the name Polo Ground for the area), horse riding, cricket etc. The arrangement with the G.S.C. lasted till August 1976 when the S.R.G.T. terminated the agency agreement with the General Sports Committee. Thereafter, in August 1976 and at the request of the SSA, the SRGT made a direct arrangement with the SSA for use of the 1st ground. Following many informal agreements in the intervening years, a 30 year lease agreement, effective from 1st January 2012, was agreed upon and signed on the 21st February 2017.

Over the years the Trust had always been very accommodating when it came to helping the SSA. The last instance was in 2014 when the SSA requested for a long strip of land measuring 2 meters wide for erecting the gallery at the 1st ground - this was given with no hesitation and had this not been given, the erection of the gallery in its present place would not have been possible. Extra land was also given along the road leading to the stadium, the bit lying between the gallery and the road was also leased out so that SSA could erect a proper wall.

Over the last 100 years except for a few minor ups and downs, cordial relations were maintained between the Trust and the SSA and efforts were always made to solve the problems amicably.



SRGT and State Sports Council (SSC) - Similarly, when the government wanted land for their Sports Directorate, it was the Trust that came forward and offered about 29 acres of land vide a lease agreement signed in 1979 at a nominal rent of ₹ 2000.00 per year – this is now the J.N. Complex. The signatories on behalf of the Trust were Mr. S.D.D. Nicols Roy, M.L.A., Mr. Maham Singh, M.L.A., Mr. Ramesh Chandra, Chief Secretary and Mr. H.W.T. Syiem, Deputy Commissioner who were all Trustees, while on behalf of the SSC, Mr. V.S. Jaffa I.A.S., Secretary Education and Mr. Wood Sohliya, Secretary, did the signing.

SRGT and Meghalaya Football Association (MFA) - In 2009, Meghalaya Football Association was looking for land to put up the State's first astro turf field and, again it was the S.R.G.T. that stepped in and offered land at the 3rd ground vide an agreement signed on the 10th July, 2010 at a nominal rent of ₹ 1000.00 per year for 30 years and this was done so as to encourage sports.

The rent received from the leased areas is a pittance as the Trust puts more importance on encouraging sports than on commercial activities. Over the 124 years of their existence, the Polo grounds have given a great deal of pleasure to the residents of Shillong.

The Trust also sponsors deserving sports activities and sports persons for training under certain conditions. Every year the Trust provides generous financial support to the Pynthorumkhrah Golflinks Higher Secondary School located on land given by the Trust.

Another aim of the Trust is to try and bring back the beauty of the Polo Grounds. Hundreds of saplings have been planted and anti social activities have been curtailed. An attempt will be made to clean up the adjacent portion of the river so that a river walk can be made where people can pass time and relax with musicians sauntering up and down. We wish to transform this area to its old glory and seek the co-operation of like minded people to join hands with us in making this dream a reality – a dream dreamt up by a group of far sighted citizens about 124 years ago, it will be a gift from the Trust to the people of Shillong, to people who reside in a town that is fast running out of clean, safe and green areas.



George Loftus Garth



P.R.T. Gordon

Two of the Founder Trustees of SRGT Early 1900's



Old picture of SRGT's Shillong Gymkhana Turf Club