

EVEREST MEMORIAL TRUST PHERICHE HOSPITAL PROJECT - NORTH EAST NEPAL

IN 1993 AN EXPEDITION organised by Shipton resident Peter Earl and myself saw Rebecca Stevens become the first British woman to summit Everest (and from there to fame and fortune). At the same time, Milton resident Harry Taylor also summited. This expedition was the peak of my career as a Doctor to climbing expeditions throughout the World.

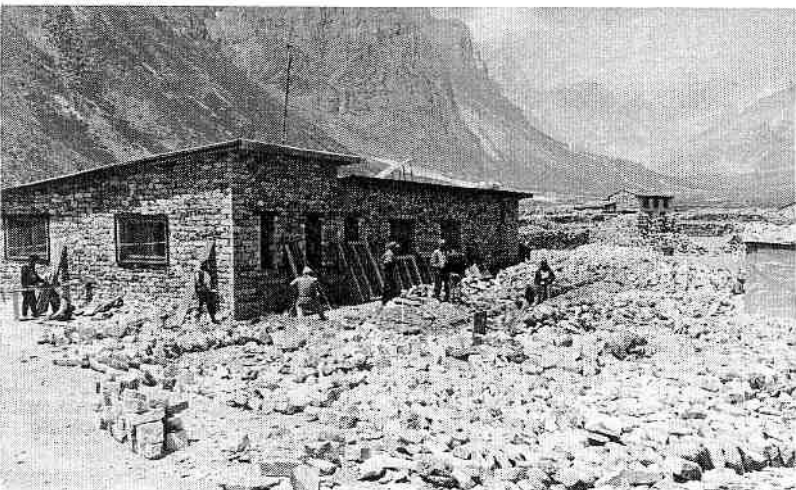
Through Peter's energies, \$150,000 was raised and donated to Sir Edmund Hillary's Himalayan Trust, which funds schools and hospitals in the wilderness of North East Nepal, around Everest's base.

In 1997, deciding that we wanted to be involved in ways other than simply fund-raising, we set up our own British registered charity, the Everest Memorial Trust, to undertake several small capital projects in the region for the benefit

of locals and visitors alike. The first project, which has been planned for some three years, is now about to reach fruition.

At 14,600 feet, two days from Everest and ten days from the nearest road-head, there is a small "hospital" catering for those, both sherpa and trekker alike, who suffer the affects of altitude and the hostile environment. Built in 1974 and run by a Nepali organisation, the building has fallen into disrepair. There is no heating, no running water or internal sanitation and the only light is provided by seven 10 watt light bulbs, powered by four solar panels.

We have in the course of climbing and trekking, visited this place many times in the last twelve years and seen its slow demise and decay; there is little money in the parent organisation to reverse this.



Staffed in the seasons before and after the monsoon entirely by volunteer doctors from all around the World, this unit, despite its privation and lack of facilities, continues to save lives and help many each year. It is believed that nearly 5,000 trekkers annually make the pilgrimage to Everest base camp, not including the climbers to the many peaks in the area. In April, during my last visit to the site, two patients were carried unconscious and dying to the unit, where they received the vital emergency treatment to save their lives, before they were evacuated from the mountains.

The Everest Memorial Trust is now in the process of extending, rebuilding and refurbishing this hospital to provide more space and facilities for the patients, more rooms

for staff and, in addition, areas where further research can be undertaken into the causes of altitude illness. The hospital is to have lighting and power from solar panels and a large wind turbine kindly and generously donated by Percy Mistry, himself a resident of Milton. Running water and central heating are to be added, the heat generated from liquid solar panels. The whole unit is to be insulated and double glazed, so that the temperature inside, usually below freezing, will be more conducive to care, research and general living.

As I write this, our project engineer, John Bean, himself from Fordwells, is in Kathmandu, sourcing supplies and technology and preparing for the great helicopter lifts required to get the equipment safely to the site.



The walls of the building are up, the roof on and the windows in, all achieved in April. This Autumn sees the fitting out of the new accommodation and the provision of power and water. Next Spring sees the refurbishment of the old building. This is admittedly a small, but we believe very exciting project, the "stand alone re-usable power utilisation" (wind and sun to you and me) is fascinating to develop, particularly with the problems of altitude but when it is completed, we will present the parent organisation, the Himalayan Rescue Association, with a building that we can all be proud of and that those who use it, be it either Doctor or patient, can be grateful for. This will be the first such project in Nepal.

There is only one slight problem which blights all charities – a dearth of money. This article is therefore not only hopefully of interest but also a shameless appeal. A small brochure is available, giving greater detail, plans and pictures of the project, available either from me or from the Surgery. A lecture is planned for the Autumn, before I return to help with the building work.

If having read this or the brochure any reader feels disposed to continuing the "Wychwood" support of this project by means of a donation, however big or small, it will be gratefully and very graciously received.

We have a target of £40,000! Not a huge sum for a life-saving unit.

Dr. 'Sandy' Scott.



John Bean

