

## The Pheriche Hospital Project, Nepal, 2001

**O**VER THE LAST TWO YEARS, many of you have contributed most generously to the Everest Memorial Trust and its project to rebuild, expand and refurbish the small high-altitude hospital at Pheriche at Everest's base in Nepal.

The Trust you may remember is a small charity set up by Shipton residents Peter Earl and myself to undertake small capital projects in the Everest region of Nepal, by way of a 'Thank You' to the country and, in particular, its wonderful mountain people who have given us so much pleasure and excitement in the various climbs and expeditions that we have enjoyed over the last decade.

Pheriche Hospital is the world's highest and probably smallest. Set at some 14,600 feet, in addition to the local population, it caters for climbers and trekkers alike, together with the large army of porters and minders, usually from the lowlands, who escort such expeditions.

I am delighted to inform you, by way of an update, that good progress has been made since last I wrote. Though problems and hiccups abound (I liken the process of organising this project to threading a needle while hanging upside down on the bottom of a bungee rope), the walls are up, the roof on, the windows almost in and the internal fixings in the new part nearly complete.

During this time, our doughty engineer and project manager, John Bean from Fordwells, spent nearly two months last autumn supervising the provision of water via a pipeline from a nearby spring, together with the installation of the septic tanks and their run-offs. Both these activities involve laying long pipelines a metre or so beneath the surface in trenches hewn by hand from almost solid rock.

This March sees his return to tackle the technical side of installing light, heat, water and sanitation, which given the altitude and climate,

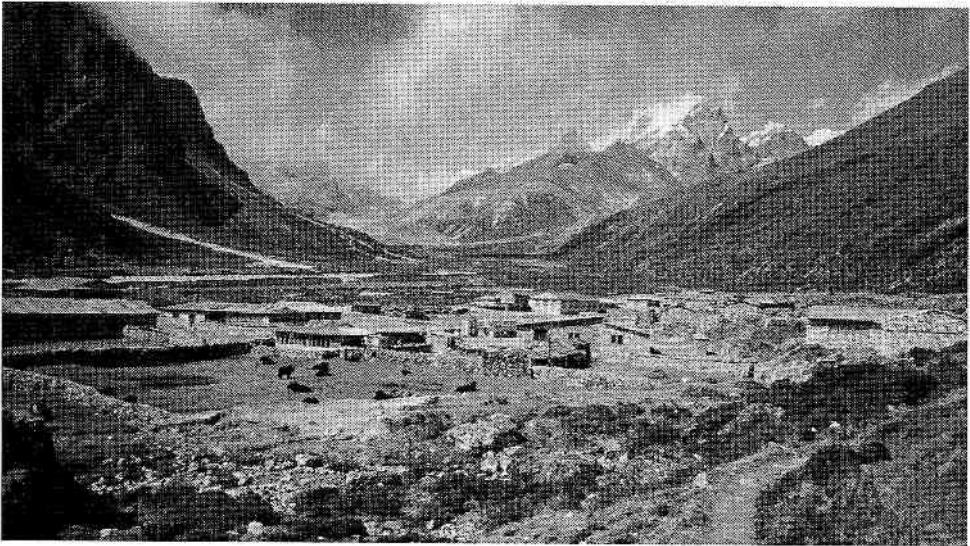


with temperatures down to -20C provides considerable technical problems.

Our main power source is from a large sixty foot wind turbine, the first in Nepal, together with eight solar panels mounted on the roof. This will provide power for lighting, radios, medical equipment and pumps. A large 2,000 litre tank has been hauled to the site, insulated and buried beneath the new bathroom floor. The fluid in this 'heat store' is heated by ten liquid solar panel arrays, behind the main building. Within this heat store, copper coils are run to heat the water in one circuit for the central heating and in the other water for washing, showers, etc.

activity required within, these coils have been run around the tanks and the water returning from the heat store to the solar arrays passes through these, thereby ensuring that the septic tank and its fermenting activity, remain active above freezing and therefore able to function – clever eh!

As I write this, the turbine is in a container on its way from Kuala Lumpur to Calcutta, and thence by road to Kathmandu and onward by helicopter to the site. Hopefully by the end of May this will be in place, leaving the refurbishment of the old part of the hospital for the autumn season.



In view of the low temperatures, some 900 litres of antifreeze will have to be carried by porters to the site from the road head twelve days walk from the hospital, to ensure that the fluid in the heat store, despite its insulation, never freezes.

Sewage is to be disposed of via two buried 2,000 litre septic tanks. In order to maintain the bacterial

All this costs money. The building supplies and all equipment have to be flown in by a huge Russian helicopter at a cost of \$3,500 (£2,400 sterling) a trip! There are four such loads expected this spring.

The residents of the Wychwoods and the immediate environs have been incredibly generous in their support of the project which, I would



like to believe, is fast becoming a "local" project. For your generosity, we are deeply grateful. From individual donations, from WIs, from raffles and jumble sales and lectures, the money has slowly flowed in.

As a result of some national publicity, we have also had some support from wonderful people around the country but to finish the project, we still need to raise funds for another year, some £20,000 to be precise.

To that end, this tired old fool, (incidentally and contrary to rumour I will not be retiring for at least another three years), much to my wife's disapproval, is next summer donning his flying helmet to take to the skies. Shipton fete on the 7th of July will hopefully be marked by a 'wing walk' fly-past during the afternoon, with your intrepid correspondent strapped to the top of the wing of an ancient biplane and all in the name of charity!

Forms for sponsorship will be readily available from many venues

before the event, when the opportunity to watch this death-defying event and for many see your wish possibly come true all for the sake of a few pounds, will be well worthwhile.

A last similar project of momentary madness in the early eighties raised over £8,000 to get the Surgery Transport Scheme off the ground. So put it in your diaries – July 7th, Shipton Village Hall and Football Pitch, between 2 and 4 pm, a mad fool atop an aeroplane at 200 miles per hour, no loops I am told thank God. Oh, and don't forget, bring your chequebook.

Further reports on progress at Pheriche will – if I am spared – continue to be published in the columns of this estimable magazine.

An illustrated lecture in the summer is in the planning.

Heartfelt thanks to you all for your continuing interest and support. See you on the 7 July.

Anon.