

## Pheriche Hospital, Nepal - 2005

Having just returned from the hospital a month ago I thought it appropriate, as so many people from the Wychwood villages have contributed so generously to this

charity in the last few years, to give an update of what has been happening over the last four years and what the parent organisation of the Everest Memorial Trust hopes to do in the future.

### Improved Facilities

The hospital is structurally complete and is providing a much more comfortable environment for the doctors to work in. The technical side, however, has been beset by many and various problems. In the early days our 2000 litre tank of imported anti-freeze was pierced by a rock, necessitating the importation of a further 1000 litres from India brought in by road, helicopter and on the backs of an army of Sherpas. The electrical side has acquitted itself well. It has, however, taken some time to convey the necessity to 'husband' power. One set of American doctors who brought both their coffee percolator and a hairdryer, promptly drained the battery bank and scared themselves witless, when, in the middle of an emergency, they ran out of power for the oxygen concentrator and spent a sleepless night caring for their patient in a pressure bag.

The water heating and associated central heating has not fared so well, though. So far six of the large 8 x 4 foot solar panels have sprung a leak and the manufacturers have now agreed to replace the whole of



the eight with a new range in copper. Despite these setbacks we seem to be getting there. Certainly the doctors and patients who we have met over the

last few years have been very appreciative of the facilities.

### Memorial

Two years ago in the grounds of the hospital we erected a memorial to all those who have died on Everest's flanks. Manufactured from stainless steel by the English sculptor Oliver Barrett, this conical structure is rapidly becoming a tourist attraction and a focal meeting point. Unfortunately new names are regularly added as the seasons pass. On our last trip our project engineer, John Bean and I were accompanied on the trail and at the hospital by an independent film crew making a documentary on the Trust and in particular the development and working of the Hospital. On the walk in, the views were spectacular and Everest was magnificent, with an 80 or 90 knot wind and snow plume, blowing from the top. At Pheriche, the weather closed in and we were subjected to an impressive blizzard. What is more, while the film crew were there, a critically ill unconscious trekker was brought in from higher up the mountain, resuscitated, stabilised through the night and flown out by rescue helicopter the next morning. Editing of the film is now taking place and we await with interest the finished product.

## Support from the Wychwoods

In 2003 two locals, Vic Last from Fordwells and Richard Holland trekked to Pheriche and spent 12 days working 12 hours a day with our Sherpas, during which time they decorated the entire inside of the hospital. Figures from last autumn season confirmed 17 helicopter evacuations of seriously ill patients, most of whom would

have died had Pheriche not been there. There is no doubt, therefore, that the time and effort that our engineer, John Bean from Fordwells, has put into this project over the last five years has proved extremely worthwhile and beneficial. Without the help of many in the Wychwoods, though, this project might well have remained only a dream.

## Educating the Future

As a 'thank you' for all the hard work he has done over the years, we have put one of our Sherpas through college. I am happy to report that he finished a two year course in electrical engineering with distinction and is now half way through an 18 month post-graduate course in hydro-electrical engineering, which is where I am sure part of the future of Nepal lies. We are also educating the children of our Sherpa Sirdar, Pemba. Both have now moved to Kathmandu, where after two years Phurkitar (aged 7) is top of his form, while his sister, Darfuti (aged 5) is fourth in hers. It will



Sandy with John Bean

be fascinating and very rewarding to follow their careers.

## What Next?

We have just purchased a standby oxygen concentrator and have plans to buy a portable concentrator, investigate a communication system linked to e-mail to reduce the isolation felt by doctors and look

into the supply of solar powered ozone water purifiers. A project for the future – a pilot in the Khumbu.

## Retirement – Oh No!

Finally, I intend to become the nation's oldest bobsleigh driver. Having witnessed the British Championships in Igls Austria last year with Gordon Bosworth, who runs the Physiotherapy Unit at Breakspeare Clinic and who is the chairman of the British Bobsleigh Association, I was fortunate enough to hitch a ride in a four man bob. As adrenaline rushes go, it takes a lot of beating, particularly the 6G it pulls on some of the curves. The aim now is to go to Bob school and then to take part in the two man bob event in January 2006. This is an early warning that sponsorship forms for the Everest Memorial Trust may once again appear in the Wychwoods but payment will only be on completion of the course – upright!

## Dr. Sandy Scott

*Editor's note Any volunteers as the second man on that bob?*