



Nepal Schools Aid

Reg No 1119023

Educational support for the children of Nepal

Newsletter

Issue 4, April 2008

2008 Flying Start

Donations, Gift Aid tax relief for 2007, half-marathons and mountain treks have all contributed to a flying start to the year for us. We began the year with some welcome donations from people who had just heard of us and wanted to contribute to our efforts and this is always a nice surprise when you're not expecting it. This was swiftly followed by a cheque from the dear old Inland Revenue for £497 which was the cumulative claim for last years Gift Aided donations and just goes to show the value of filling in those forms!

Another nice surprise was soon to follow with three young people pictured here deciding to run in the Bath Half Marathon raising money for Nepal Schools Aid. Simon with his fiancée Lucy and his sister Emma did most of their fundraising via a web page and raised a staggering sum of just over £2000 in three weeks! They all had times around the two hour mark and said they would like their money to go towards paying for our two teacher's salaries and all five school's textbooks for 2009. They are now recovering before starting to think about what challenge they could take on for us next year! So, does anyone know of a few more people like them who would have some fun creating their own challenge and doing a lot of good at the same time?

Also by February we began to get people signing up for our Gable Girdle mountain trek in the Lake District in April. By the time the event took place we had 13 people taking part on what is probably the hardest 6 miles walk in Cumbria. You can read a fuller blow by blow account of the trek in the next article below and hopefully be stimulated to join us next time!



Lucy, Simon and Emma having just "won" in the 2008 Bath Half Marathon

By March it was time to transfer the necessary funding to Nepal to finance our 2008 programme. As you will know we have five schools in our core programme and with our funds from 2007 plus the registration fees from the Gable Girdle we have financed:

- ☐ Support for 585 children
- ☐ Printing and distribution of 21,300 exercise books
- ☐ Purchase and distribution of 1027 textbooks in the subjects maths, English, science, Nepali
- ☐ Purchase and distribution of 100 school bags as prizes
- ☐ Salaries of two teachers for a 6 months probationary period

To all our supporters
Thank you take a bow!

Contents

- ü 2008 Flying Start
- ü Gable Girdle Trek
- ü Nepal News
- ü Sustainability
- ü Fancy a challenge?

Key Facts

- ü £40 per month for a teacher's salary
- ü £5 per year for a child's exercise books
- ü £6.50 per year for a child's text books
- ü £2.50 for a child's school bag

A Walk In The Park

One hundred and twenty two years ago, 1886, a young man from Kent completed the first recorded climb on Napes Needle on Great Gable at the head of Wasdale. He was alone and used no rope or other aids. Walter Parry Haskett Smith was to become known as "the father of rock climbing" and on April 12th this year we paid homage to his achievement at the foot of the Needle itself. At 9.20am eleven hardy supporters left the car park at Wasdale Head and walked into the rain. Twenty minutes later we crossed Beck Bridge and looked up to see that the cloud had just lifted enough to reveal a covering of snow on Gable itself around our chosen path. This was going to be an epic in the Ben Fogle mould!

Our route took us up the steep slopes known as Gavel Neese and this is a lung busting beginning to the day. Within an hour we had reached Beck Head where the track levelled out to reveal a vista of snow covered boulders through the low lying cloud. Visibility was around 50-100 metres as we trekked through Stony Cove and up to Wind Gap where we took our first hot



drinks break and Charlie took the opportunity to tackle Gladys, our blow-up doll which was supplied by Glynis who could not be with us on the day and sent a reasonable likeness.

Next we slithered down the snow of Aaron Slack to Sty Head before turning the corner to begin "the business part" of scrambling across The Great Napes. This gave everyone the chance to go a little beyond basic walking and to touch some rock without too much risk of plunging over a precipice.

In summary this guided walk gave people a taste of basic winter mountaineering where navigation skills and the confidence to travel on rougher ground are vital. Who's up for another one next year?

Trek Facts

- ü Distance 11.5 km over very rough and rocky terrain
- ü Height gain 890 m in two large chunks
- ü Time taken 6.5 hrs
- ü Main climbs viewed Napes Needle, Tophet Wall, Kern Knotts and Gable Crag
- ü Napes Needle first climbed in 1886
- ü Weather: snow, rain, hail, cloud

Nepal News- from monarchy to Maoism.

On the evening of April 13th the people of Nepal went to bed living in a constitutional monarchy and woke up the next morning living in a Maoist Federal Republic. Elections had taken place on April 10th and now enough results had filtered through to show that the Maoists had a clear majority of seats in the new constituent assembly.

Two years ago the Maoists were an isolated terrorist group mostly confined to the remoter districts of the country. They had taken up arms some 10 years earlier showing their complete dissatisfaction with the corrupt and feudalistic way their country was being run. Then the turning point was when the King abolished the parliament three years ago and attempted to find a military solution to the Maoist problem using the loyal Nepali Army. During the next 12 months, instead of getting behind the King the politicians constantly undermined him with waves of strikes, demonstrations and general civil disobedience. The country became almost unrunnable as the Maoists crept closer to the capital, Kathmandu, both militarily and politically. Then, two years ago, street protests and riots all around Nepal led to the King stepping aside and an alliance being formed between the seven political parties and the Maoists to pave the way for elections and for the people to decide what sort of country they wanted. Initially elections were promised for late 2006, but they never materialised. Then they were twice postponed in 2007 and by now the Maoists had organised themselves into a strong political voice with demands for the conversion of Nepal into a federal republic, the abolition of the monarchy and proportional representation. However they had also created the YCL (Young Communists League) a group formed of mostly students and the unemployed which regularly took the law into its own hands and meted out large doses of intimidation and extortion to businessmen and opponent politicians.

The Maoist victory in the elections is probably as much a shock to themselves as it is to the previous majority party, The Nepali Congress, who have been all but wiped out. To an outsider this is undoubtedly deserved as the NC has had numerous chances to rid the country of corruption whilst developing the essential



Prachanda the Maoist leader at a pre election rally in Kathmandu

infrastructure of education, healthcare, employment, energy production, water supply, food supply and more. The world has poured financial resources to assist them but much of it seems to have vanished "into thin air"!

To take a selfish but necessary stance however we must now take stock of what this means for Nepal Schools Aid and the schools in our core programme. For example what will the Maoists view be of Western charities? Will their education policies make our programme either less needed or requiring a shift in focus? Quite frankly, we don't know, but we do have a loyal and effective operations team in Kathmandu who will see us through these changing times as well as looking to secure their own futures and businesses.



Growth And Sustainability

The headline says it all about the core issue facing any charity. Sustainability is concerned with maintaining the funding to continue the charity's work, in our case the provision of educational support materials. Growth on the other hand is about increasing the charity's income annually to at least cater for inflation never mind trying to INCREASE the charity programme.

As most of our supporters know, at one level our income is completely sustainable since it derives from the interest earned on an invested trust fund created by the original Mike's Appeal. This income pays for our annual core programme of exercise books and school bags to five schools in Kathmandu. However this year, thanks to your generosity, we have been able to add exercise books and the salaries for two teachers to the programme. But this raises the natural question of "how do we pay for these extras next year, and the next

year?" This therefore is our combined growth and sustainability issue which cannot be answered simply by saying "go out and get more donations". What we need is something that matches the £2400 annual income from the Trust Fund, by increasing the amount invested from large "capital donations", or by finding more supporters willing to make "regular gift aided donations", or by groups and individuals who offer to "annually adopt us or run an event of their own".

This therefore is a major goal for us for the next 12 months and why we constantly talk about supporters rather than donors as well as guaranteeing that every supporter has a say in how our money is spent. There are very few charities who offer this level of involvement in their decision making so we hope that this short article will encourage you to consider whether you can help us in this way or if you have any specific ideas which may contribute to solving the problem.

Fancy A Challenge?

Across the remainder of this year there are a few opportunities to get involved in some way to support us. This adds an extra dimension to the donations we receive where people have raised money just as much as putting their hands in their own pockets. Having just completed the Gable Girdle trek with a number of people who between them raised around £600 and seen three folks run in the Bath Half Marathon raising £2000 You know it makes sense!

Anyway, there are a few adventurous and one less adventurous ways you MIGHT want to have a go at something this year. At the extreme level is a trek to Everest Base Camp, not for the faint hearted but still that "trip of a lifetime" taking place in November. Almost as extreme there is **Challenge 08** which integrates two bike rides in Cumbria and the Tour Mont Blanc trek in the Alps. Each can be done separately as you wish, a couple in May and June with the trek either in July or September.

Then at the more sedate level there is Glynis's Big Car Boot Sale in which one of our supporters has offered to go to one of her local car boots in August and make as much as she can for us by selling off anything cleared out from her attic or donated from friends, colleagues and neighbours. All YOU have to do is replicate this at any car boot sale near you. There may be something here to suit you, but if not and you have an idea of your own then do get in contact with us. Of course, you can see all of the events listed here on our web site.



17 The Cursus, Lechlade, Glos., GL7 3SB
Tel: 01367 253227,
info@nepalschoolsaid.co.uk

Educational support for the children of Nepal