



Expedition Newsletter

Welcome to the twelfth of our regular news letters. As I always say and few of you respond to, If you discover anything of interest and want to share it (links, articles etc), let us know and we'll include it.

Future Meetings

The Dates for our next few Expedition meetings are as follows:

21st December - Day hike to Dorking via north downs. Meet at Shalford Scout HQ at 9:30. We should be back at 17:03. You will need £4.20 for the train fare back (U15's slightly less)

25th January - Open night. Parents are welcome to join us as we will be distributing permission forms health forms etc. Hopefully doctor Piper will be joining us again to answer any health questions and talk about Nepal.

20th February - Normal meeting.

20th March - Open night - Our Last minute rush meeting. Parents welcome

Visas

We need Visas to enter Nepal and the cost of these is built into the overall price of the trip. The Nepal Visa office is only open for 2 hours a day. And you have to leave passports overnight. As I only work 1/2 mile from the Embassy I intend collecting the Visa forms and passports at our February meeting (Tuesday) drop them into the Visa office on the Wednesday and collect them on the Thursday/Friday and get your passports back to you that weekend. If this is going to cause anyone a problem please get in touch and we can make alternate arrangements.

Service Project

Hillary has been out in Nepal this month and has found a school we can use for lodging to save us having to drive back and forth each day. Facilities are basic but then that's what the locals have to put up with all year so it won't hurt us for a few days.

We will aid the construction of 4 protected water sources serving three schools in the area and the surrounding community, pipelines to water delivery points, schools and water points will serve mostly the scheduled castes and Tamang community, both groups are severely disadvantaged in access to water as higher status castes refuse them access to theirs.

Attached to this Newsletter

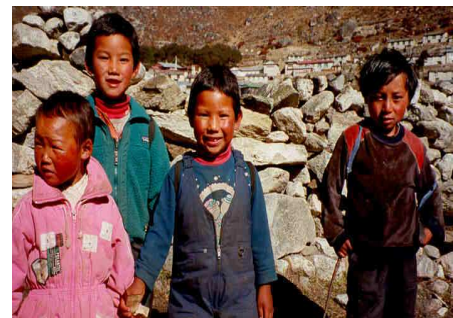
You will find a personal information sheet. These are things we might need to have to hand when sorting the final details out of the trip. If you could get parents to complete this and return it to me ASAP it would be appreciated.

112 days to go and counting

In Brief

Polo shirts - thanks to those of you who responded promptly, however a large number (including leaders) haven't yet responded. Please do so.

Jabs - If you haven't been and had your injections do so soon. Get them out of the way. You need to have Tetanus, Polio, Typhoid and Hepatitis A. According to Dr Piper, Diphtheria and Meningitis, depending on your age, are possibilities



News Spotlight

The Next Expedition team meeting will be the day hike to Dorking on the 21st December



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What to expect in a trekking lodge

A typical trekking lodge in the hills has a central dining room with wooden tables and plank seats or, in some lodges, chairs. The kitchen is either at one end of the dining room or in a separate adjacent room. In either case smoke from a wood fire or the roar of a kerosene stove often permeates the eating area. The kitchen doubles as the lodge owner's family room, so meals for the elders and kids of the house are prepared and often served alongside yours.

If you opt for dormitory facilities you'll usually get a narrow wooden cot and share the room with other trekkers and, in some places, local porters. The porters may 'entertain' you with their drinking, card playing or radios. If the hotel has private rooms, they will usually be the minimum size to accommodate two beds. The walls and door will be wood or, in more rustic lodges, bamboo mats or even curtains. Some places provide a cotton quilt and hard pillow, but don't count on finding these everywhere. There may be a table, and you can always ask the lodge owner for a candle, but that's usually the extent of the amenities. Some up-market facilities feature double beds and private toilets, but these are not common. Beds are wooden bench-like structures with either a cotton or foam mattress, usually covered with a sheet that in the better establishments will be freshly laundered. The common toilet is usually in a shed outside; usually it will be a squat toilet, with a tin for used toilet paper, which the lodge keeper will burn rather than risk clogging up the loo. There will also be a bucket of water or a tap (faucet) should you choose to clean up in the local manner — using your left hand. Most hotels keep their toilets surprisingly clean.

Trekkers seem to thrive on hot showers, so almost all lodges offer this facility, usually in a small shed with rustic plumbing that allows the one bucket of warm water you have been allocated to dribble over you. You should avoid those shower facilities that use wood fires to heat the water since this is a flagrant waste of a scarce resource. There are a growing number of solar-heated showers in the hills, and some lodges have a piping system that runs through the kitchen stove, automatically heating water at the same time food is cooked. Try to schedule your showers around these 'green' facilities.

Remember that all trekking lodges are family operations with the owners trying their best to make you comfortable. Some lodge owners have had a bit of training from ACAP or the hotel training centre in Kathmandu but most are operating from instinct and trying to manage with limited supplies and in somewhat primitive conditions. The reason so many lodges have copycat facilities and menus is because everyone imitates the most successful operation they have seen. Try to be gentle, helpful and understanding as you deal with hotel-keepers. Your assistance and advice can help them improve their facilities and service, and thereby earn more money to support their families.

Other Information

- Don't dispose of garbage of any kind in the cooking fire.
- If there is a religious statue or altar in the room you are sleeping in, arrange the bed so that your feet do not point in its direction when you sleep.
- Beware of low doorways when you enter a house. It is said that a low doorway teaches humility, but more often it can result in a nasty bang on the head!
- High altitude can make people uncomfortable, sleepless, crabby and strange - No change there then!

(Source: Lonely Planet Guide: Trekking in the Nepal Himalaya)