



IPPG NEWSLETTER

march 2006

Editorial

Greetings,

Welcome IPPG supporters to the 11th issue of our newsletter.

The main focus of our efforts over the last 24 months has been the Machermo Porter Shelter and Rescue Post in the Everest region of Nepal. Thanks to a joint effort with Community Action Nepal, the local Sherpa community and the support of sponsors we have been able to get this ready for October 2006.

We have new representatives including Dr Nick and Emma Mason in the UK, Anindya Mukherjee "Raja" in India and Peter Ling in Tanzania. A major new initiative is underway spearheaded by Ian Wall (UK rep) to build a porter shelter at the inhospitable Gorak Shep at 5000m just below Everest Basecamp. We continue to work on behalf of mountain porters involved in the trekking industry throughout the world. Please remember you can keep up to date with IPPG news throughout the year via the website (www.ippg.net).

Dr Jim Duff

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR



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Machermo Porter Shelter and Rescue Post



At 4410m, Machermo is ideally situated to provide a much needed rescue service, and a dormitory and a kitchen for porters plying the upper reaches of the Gokyo valley and the passes leading into it (Renzo La 5600m and Cho La 5420m). The rescue service is also available to trekkers.

Since the spring season 2003 the post has opened each trekking season, based in a room at Namgyal's lodge in the village. We are now almost ready to move into our purpose built facility once it is plumbed and electrified. It is being fitted out by the IPPG, who will

over time repay CAN the cost of construction. From June 2006, CAN Nepal has undertaken responsibility for the Machermo accounts.

The Rescue Post is equipped with a Portable Altitude Chamber (donated by the manufacturer CE Bartlett, Australia), an oxygen generator (donated by IMEC, USA), oxygen cylinders (seasonal rental, donor sought), a pulse oximeter (donated by Bernhard Fassl, USA), a stretcher (donated by Skipton CRO, UK), rescue equipment (donated by the Furness Mountain Rescue team, UK), solar powered batteries (Jim's Kili sponsors), a satellite phone (donated by Island School, Hong Kong) and heaps of medication including Pentrox inhalers (donated by Medical Developments International, Australia).



May 2006



May 2006



May 2006



May 2006



July 2005

In no particular order, on behalf of the porters, grateful thanks to:

- The Kumbila Buffer Zone committee (KBZC) who have been instrumental in facilitating the project along with the National Park and Local User Committee Machermo.
- CAN-UK and all their donors who made the construction possible
- Sir Edmund Hillary, who signed Doug Scott's photos/ posters (of the Hillary step, Everest) raising most of the money needed to build the Porter Shelter/Rescue Post and the **generosity of the bidders**
- The Himalayan Trust (UK) for a large donation
- The Australian Himalayan Foundation
- The kitchen and dormitory fit-out is underway due to donations from various sources including Scotch College and Toorak College (Australia) and the Thomas Maren Foundation (USA)
- The enhance hybrid solar/wind electric generator system was funded by the British embassy (Nepal)
- Funds for a TV/DVD have been donated as a memorial to Simon Spencer-Jones.
- The Himalayan Fund (USA)
- Namgyal Sherpa who has supervised the construction and Ian Wall who, as IPPG-UK rep and CAN trustee, managed the construction project
- Thanks to Dr Nick Mason and Dr David Hillebrand for their efforts, which resulted in IPPG being the recipient of a fundraiser by Medical Expeditions (UK), and also to the Duddon and Furness Mountain Rescue team who donated safety equipment to the Machermo Rescue Post.
- Drs Louise Cook, Trish Batchelor and Nick and Emma Mason who manage the rescue post
- Chhewang Sherpa our Sherpa rescue manager who keeps the wheels oiled and successfully ran the Machermo post for a week on his own in October 2005.
- There is now a sign at Machermo (see photo) mentioning our supporters, which will be updated annually.



July 2005



Issues

The “super human” qualities of porters were highlighted in an academic article published in the journal Science in 2005. Authored by physiologist Norman Heglund and his colleagues from the Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium, the article provoked considerable interest in the media.

What follows is our response (summarized) to this article.

“As an NGO working for the benefit of mountain porters in the trekking industry worldwide, we would like to comment on the recent research by Belgian scientists that has sparked worldwide media interest.*

The researchers showed that Nepalese porters carrying for local merchants (mainly servicing the trekking industry) were very efficient compared to westerners at moving heavy weights up and down steep hills at high altitude on rough trails. The scientists were unable to elucidate any physiological mechanism that provided an advantage to their subjects, but pointed out that they carried the load slowly and for short distances.

When you think about carrying a load equal to your body mass or more then this makes sense. What these porters are performing is a serial weight lifting event demanding a high degree of strength, concentration and determination.

You cannot carry this kind of weight very far but you can carry it. You must not trip or stagger or you can tear a vital muscle, or even break your neck. You are breathing thinner air and take most of the weight on your back in a crouch with the load steadied by a tumpline round your forehead. It is backbreaking and grueling work.

The media have seized on the ‘superhuman’ qualities of porters, which belies the fact that none of them want to carry such mind boggling weights: they do it to survive.

The commercial porters studied carry more and are paid less than porters that work directly for trekkers.. While our efforts have been to improve the working conditions of trekking porters who carry lighter but to higher altitudes with a greater risk of death, it has been our hope that the gradual development of Nepal will improve the lot of all porters.

The reason these men and women resort to load carrying is the necessity of feeding themselves

and their family in one of the world's poorest nations. The reason why they carry these extreme loads is exploitation by their fellow nationals.

Our role as tourists purchasing their muscles, sweat and suffering is not to be party to this exploitation. Instead we should be lightening loads, thus increasing the number of jobs and improving safety. It is for this reason that the IPPG has been working for almost a decade to inform trekkers about the conditions that porters endure while facilitating their holiday. Our aim is to encourage people to go trekking, as it is by far and away the best form of aid, but trekkers must insist on ethical treatment for their porters.”

Underpaid. Under-trained.

Undervalued. The lot of a porter on Mt Kilimanjaro

Letter from Tanzania by Rick Crouch

Kilimanjaro is the highest free-standing mountain in the world. and each day thousands of local men seek employment as porters and each day a few are picked from the hopefuls hanging around the park gates. This situation allows unscrupulous employers to undercut attempts by porters to establish a minimum wage and for profits to be raised at the expense of proper porter clothing shelter and food.

In 2005 the press in the Industrialised World reported the deaths of three Americans on Kilimanjaro; this same free press failed to note that, in the same incident, one porter also died and another eleven were injured. One so badly as to require the amputation of a leg and the end to any hopes of employment on the mountain - this in a country without a Social Security System.

Some 250 years after Wilberforce and Macauley called for an end to African slavery it still seems that African porters are assumed to be of little value and to have less feelings. Within Tanzania the Kilimanjaro Porters Assistance Project is attempting to establish porters' rights and working conditions. From outside the country we can all help by trying to persuade potential visitors to use companies who comply with an ethical policy of decent clothing, shelter, food and wages. Anyone booking a trip with a travel agency should ask about the companies porter policy before booking.

Machermo Porter Shelter & Rescue Post: Autumn 2005 Report

In the autumn 2005, the post was staffed first by Dr Emma and Nick Mason (UK), then by Chhewang on his own, until Toby Savage (physician's assistant - USA) completed the season.

The extracts below are from their reports. Over 150 sick or injured people were seen, some of them with life threatening conditions. Many people came to the lectures and bought patches, T-shirts, books, or donated money.



Extracts from Dr Nick and Emma Mason's October 2005 Report



"It was impossible to know what would come through the door and the conditions seen ranged from the predictable acute mountain sickness, travellers' diarrhoea, coughs, sore throats and

colds, to rip roaring lobar pneumonias; pyomyositis and parotitis.

After lunch we would tour the lodges and campsites in the village to advertise the presence of the rescue post and the afternoon talks on altitude illness. Several hundred people turned up at the talks. Education is a central part of the work and is crucial to reducing the incidence of altitude related problems in the region. Once the new building is finished and with so many porters under one roof we will be able to provide mountain safety education to the porters including Altitude Illness, hypothermia and frostbite.



We treated a number of patients with severe high altitude pulmonary oedema who required helicopter evacuation. It was quite a challenge,

for somebody used to the endless supplies of piped oxygen on his university hospital intensive care unit, to juggle the limited supplies of bottled oxygen, the short battery life of the oxygen concentrator and time in the Portable Altitude Chamber. Especially in patients whose oxygen saturation stubbornly refused to climb out of the mid-40s! (note: normal at sea level is 98-100, ed).

A sick porter

Gopal, a porter, was abandoned by his trekking group when he fell ill at Gokyo after carrying a load from Namche to re-supply a Swiss group that had trekked in via the less direct and more technical Renjo La. We do not know how and why he was left to walk back down from Gokyo on his own having passed the previous night struggling to breathe**. He was found semi-conscious at the side of the trail by a group of British trekkers. Their Sherpa guide Furbar saved Gopal's life by carrying him several kilometers to our Rescue Post on his back. When he got to us, Gopal was very sick with high altitude pulmonary oedema complicated by cerebral oedema and on a couple of occasions during the night we thought he might die as he failed to respond to treatment... fortunately trekkers' donations paid for a helicopter rescue to Khunde Hospital the following morning where Gopal recovered rapidly.



**(Due to the expense, it is uncommon for porters to be helicoptered out and it is down to the generosity of all those trekkers at Machermo that night, especially the Brits, who donated the money to make Gopal's rescue possible, ed)"

Inka Porter Project No Longer Operational

by Louise Norton



The Inka Porter Project was established in 2002 and was dedicated to improving working conditions of all porters and animal drivers (arrieros) in Peru and the Andes. It campaigned to raise awareness of better environmental practice and their projects were based on porters' own input, which helped them

build a more powerful self-image through participating in practical health and environmental projects.

Louise reports that the situation in Peru had changed since IPP started and although many issues with porter welfares and environmental degradation still exist, central and local government are beginning to take portering issues far more seriously. There is a new Federation to represent porters and, along with the advent of local elections, the porter issue in Cusco has again become very politicized. The Inka Porter Project did not have the staff resources to deal with porter politics, and this is a key factor in our decision to close in July 2005.

Louise continues on as the IPPG rep for Peru and we are proud of her for all the achievements of the Inka Porter Project. Ed

Porters Progress Report

by Ben Ayres

Porters' Progress (PP) is continuing to grow and better serve the needs of porters across Nepal thanks in a large part to support from the IPPG. We are now quite busy establishing programs that address the needs of children working as porters in Nepal in coordination with the International Labour Organization. Our work includes the reconstruction and revitalization of 7 rural schools, and the formation of 23 women's savings groups in porter villages in Eastern Nepal, as well as providing non-formal education to hundreds of children actively working in Lukla.

We also teamed up with World Expeditions and ran a porter-focused trek to Everest base camp that simultaneously raised funds for our office and set an example for the trekking industry to follow. The trek integrated the skills and personalities of our porters into the very fabric of the journey. Many stories were shared, and many nights were spent dancing and drumming the Himalayas to sleep. This was a totally new concept and raised \$3,000 for PP. We are planning on running a similar trek next year. For more information about this or any of our programs please contact us via email at info@portersprogress.org

Photo: Deana Zabaldo



Porters Progress UK Report

by Dr Barbara C Holl

PhD., MSc., LLB C.Eng Chairman of PPUK

Porters Progress UK was set up as a charity at the end of December 2004 as the UK arm of Porters Progress USA to provide financial and volunteer support for Nepal and other countries using porters for the transportation of goods.

Fund raising events will take place at the Royal Geographical Society:

November 29 2006

Andy Kirkpatrick "Fly or Die"

January 31st 2007

Kendal Film Festival Event

March 7th 2007

Banff Film Festival Event

Supporting the clothing bank of PPN in Kathmandu and Lukla is a major part of the work PPUK undertakes.

**For more info on Porters Progress
visit their website
www.portersprogress.org**

From the reps around the world

UK Ian Wall

By the end of 2005 CAN (UK) had all but finished the building work at the Machermo Porter Shelter and Rescue Post while the IPPG was busy electrifying it with a wind and solar power hybrid system as well there are furnishings and equipment to be installed. We owe a debt to the many supporters of the project who are named on the website and on the signs at Machermo. Especial thanks to the energetic Ian Wall who has made his third visit to the site in his role as IPPG UK rep and CAN trustee (see Ian's report). Finally a big thank you to all our generous donors and the locals and volunteers of the IPPG who got the ball rolling.

NEPAL Prakash Adhikari

Prakash has been quietly supporting the efforts at Machermo while keeping on with porter advocacy. Country representatives met in Kathmandu in October, a rare event to get face to face. Present were Lyn Taylor, Wanda Vivequin, Rejane Belanger, Jim Duff. Elsie James nearly made it. First we met Ang Chokpa, manageress of Porter Progress Nepal and Barbara Holl (PP UK). We discussed directions and projects for IPPG in general and agreed the Machermo Project was consuming most energy right now but should be bedded down in a couple of years. Other projects discusses include the need for a new poster design, to be distributed in Nepal along the lines of the highly successful 'Tough Proud Vulnerable' poster. Prakash Adhikari plans to run further porter education/empowerment programs.



FRANCE Dr Nicolas Peschanski

I have been proud to work with the second biggest French Outdoor Travel Company "Allibert" on the improvement of the porter's situation.

We started the spring campaign with all the treks in the Nepal Himalayas and the clients. There has been good feedback and we have decided to continue with our efforts in this area.

CANADA Wanda Vivequin

Efforts this year focused on running slide shows and taking over great piles of boots and gortex for the porter clothing bank in Nepal. Thanks to the generosity of Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) and hiking groups in the Edmonton area..

In April 2006 MEC staff from throughout Canada collected hundreds of pairs of sunglasses, hats, gloves and mittens for the porter clothing banks in Namche and Kathmandu.

I also presented a lecture to a recreational ethics course at the University Alberta.

Special thanks to Neil Haggard whose slide shows raised donations.

My aim in the next 12 months is to get an international photo contest celebrating the mountain porter up and running.



Deana Zabaldo

AUSTRALIA Lyn Taylor

IPPG this year has had a wonderful response from Australian donors and a large part of this is due to Jim Duff's efforts in taking group of doctors on treks to Everest area and on the way visiting the Machermo Rescue Post.

Additional big thank you to Jemima Robertson of Paddy Pallin Australia for her effort in their boot exchange program. We now have hundreds of pairs of boots which we are slowly transporting to Nepal with the help of Peregrine, World Expeditions and Lyn Taylor's Adventure Travel and many independent travellers. These boots have been accepted gratefully by Porters Progress in Nepal.

Thanks to

Kathmandu Store and Kelly's camping for their generous donations of clothing, Scotch College and Toorak College in Victoria for their very generous donations from students, parents and teachers, Perks Accountants and their donation from 35 students, the money was raised from a Student Careers Fair. Special thanks to World Expeditions, DCXP Mountain Journeys and Australian Himalayan Foundation for their generous 3-year sponsorship donation.

Thanks also to Coralie Hicks and Ken Chamberlain for all of their assistance.

PAKISTAN Ken MacDonald

Ken MacDonald has been very active in the Karakorum holding talks with Balti porters and interested parties. He says:

"In short, porters face an increasing range of problems through their participation in the adventure tourism industry (health, inadequate equipment/shelter/food, overweighting of loads, underpayment, threats of blackballing, etc.). Foreign tour operators (or expedition members themselves) do not seem cognizant of these problems, or if they are seem willing to admit that they have a responsibility to address them.. Local tour operators ignore them, (in many cases, the competition between local tour operators creates some of the problems), largely because addressing them would reduce profits. The government has little interest in (or capacity to) addressing the problem. And porters themselves have inadequate means of effectively addressing the problems. They have little power relative to tour operators and government officials, and suffer the threat of sanction should they speak out or undertake some other form of direct action. This leaves outside agencies such as IPPG or IMEC as two of the few agencies who are concerned with, and able to effectively address the problems faced by mountaineering porters. If these remain unaddressed, the relative poverty and negative health effects of those who work as mountain porters in northern Pakistan will deepen".

(IPPG donated 1000 GB pounds to this dialogue, Ed)

There is now a Balti porter organization "Khurpa Care" which has been hard at work over the winter and has established an office, started a registration system, established logbooks for porters to file records of problems and complaints.

Welcome to our new representatives

We welcome to our IPPG family a new representative in India, **Anindya Mukherjee "Raja"**. In his own words:

"I was born and brought up in a Hindu Family, completed study in Botany Honors from the University of Calcutta in 1991. I also studied in Journalism. I am married to a great lady "Sangita" and we are proud parents of our son "Ananda".

I am a mountaineer and explorer based at Calcutta (now Kolkata). I am also a popular adventure writer in Bengali Travel Magazines and newspapers. Apart from regular feature writing I have written two books in Bengali.

Love of nature & adventure came naturally to me as my uncle Sujal Mukherjee was one of the pioneer mountaineers of West Bengal.

We would also like to welcome **Drs Nick and Emma Mason** who are our newest UK reps.

Peter Ling is our new representative in Tanzania.

Welcome aboard all of you

COUNTRY REPS NEEDED

In Norway, Holland and Papua New Guinea.

And also, in any country where there is none.

Please contact IPPG:

info@ippg.net



Financial Reports 2005

If a country does not appear in this report, it means that no financial activity occurred. Reports are in the country's own currency, unless otherwise specified.

AUSTRALIA

Account Balance at Dec. 31, 2004

A\$ 10608.45

INCOME

Donations

Warringah Shire Council	66.85
Karen Steele	50.00
Ben Jacobs	10.00
Perks Chartered Accountants	350.00
Sinich Pty Ltd	250.00
Scotch College	1500.00
Sally Browne	105.00
Andrew Booker	2100.00
3-year sponsorship program	
Toorak College	1500.00
DCXP Mountain Journeys	1391.00
World Expeditions	1315.00
Australian Himalayan Foundation	1283.00
C Priest	100.00
J & J Blackwood	300.00
I Tomaszewski	300.00
Carlisle Contemporary Health Practice	200.00

TOTAL INCOME

10820.85

EXPENSES

Website	817.76
expenses volunteer doctor	2036.21
Transfer IPPG-Nepal	11534
Admin	32.99

TOTAL EXPENSES

-14420.96

BALANCE ON HAND AT DEC 31, 2005

A\$ 7008.34

NEPAL

Account Balance at Dec. 31, 2004

NPR 503,192

INCOME

Through IPPG bank account

Donation from IPPG-Australia	140,000
Donation from IPPG-Canada	36,000
Machermo income	375,590
Interest bank	5,016

Directly through Machermo project

Machermo income	236,313
Donation from IPPG-Australia	100,000

TOTAL INCOME

892,919

EXPENSES

Through IPPG bank account

Machermo expenses spring season	115,237
Machermo expenses autumn season	87,000
Machermo solar power	115,347
Chhewang Sherpa salary (feb-aug)	70,520
Admin	12,000

Directly through Machermo project

Machermo expenses autumn season	291,263
Chhewang salary & allowances (sept-nov)	45,050

TOTAL EXPENSES

-736,417

BALANCE ON HAND AT DEC 31, 2005

NPR 659,694



CANADA

Account Balance at Dec. 31, 2004

C\$ 104.73

INCOME

Slide shows by W Vivequin and N Haggard \$584.95
bank interest 0.06

TOTAL INCOME

585.01

EXPENSES

bank charges 4
FUNDS TRANSFERRED TO IPPG – NEPAL 600

TOTAL EXPENSES

-604

BALANCE ON HAND AT DEC 31, 2005

C\$ 85.74

UK

Account Balance at Dec. 31, 2004

£ 2491.61

INCOME

Donations

Swiss Mountain Medicine Society 525.15
J & G Armitage 50
M Hammond 50
G Richards 50
M Wadham 20
N Triggs 10
J Finch 20
CT Eyles 50
S Spencer-Jones 530
P Hartley 50
donation from trekkers Machermo 1576.28

3-year sponsorship program

Classic Journeys 250.00
Himalayan Adventure Company
C Elsworth 600
DK Hillebrandt 180
Mountain Company 60

Fundraisers

Talk Leeds J Duff 60
Medical Expeditions (UK) 1068.50

Other income

photo sold 13.34

TOTAL INCOME

5163.27

EXPENSES

office expenses 10
website management program 116.33

Machermo expenses

Tools 75
Camera for Chhewang 110
Medications for rescue post 122.72
expenses doctor 126
miscellaneous 60.85
helicopter rescue porter Gopal 337.80
rescue blankets for Machermo 45.65
Chhewang Desai bonus 67

TOTAL EXPENSES

-1071.35

BALANCE ON HAND AT DEC 31, 2005

6583.53



How Do I Contact IPPG?

Anyone may contact IPPG representatives to obtain more information, send personal accounts of trekking porters' misadventures, make suggestions, send articles, or make a donation.

email info@ippg.net

web www.ippg.net

International Coordinator

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**IPPG ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO GO TREKKING
AND TO DO SO IN A NON-EXPLOITATIVE, SUSTAINABLE WAY**



Photo: Deana Zabaldo

How you can help

Here are ways you can help porters.

Become part of IPPG

IPPG has no membership. You join by donating time, effort, skills or cash! Contact your country representative or the secretary if you can help.

Make a donation or become a sponsor

One-off donations are always welcome, contact your country representative or the secretary. Or better still, join our sponsorship scheme. In some countries, donations are tax-deductible.

Should you wish to contribute in the form of supplies (eg. medical supplies, medical equipment, sleeping bags, stoves, mattresses, etc), this would also be appreciated!

Organise a fundraiser

Are you about to embark on some 'adventure of a lifetime'? Why not ask all your friends and family to sponsor you for it and raise a donation for IPPG? For example you could ask them to sponsor you for 1¢ / 1p a meter climbed if you're going up, or 10¢ / 10p a kilometer if going along!

Spread the word

Print off and disseminate any of the information on the website, www.ippg.net, in particular the guidelines for ethical trekking. Anyone can be an activist and lobby government and media. All we ask is that you check in with your country representative or the secretary before using IPPG's name.

Volunteering

Any doctors who are interested in working as volunteers at the Machermo Porter Shelter and Rescue Post, please contact Dr Jim Duff via info@ippg.net.



WWW.IPPG.NET

**More information on IPPG can be
found at www.ippg.net**

Thank you