



Everest Trader Route

A picturesque ramble up a hill

By David Baker

The Team

Leader

Annie Farrar

Participants

Mr Herman Adolphus

Mr David Baker

Mr Colin Barratt

Mrs Elaine Barratt

Mr Tony Harbottle

Mrs Anne Harbottle

Miss Fiona Burnett

Mr Brendon O'Rourke

Mr Keith Terrell

Mr Clive Robinson

Mrs Lynn Keoyes

Mr John Currie

Mr Les Lowery

A Delayed Start

Day 1

Sunday 16th October

It was Sunday 16th October, I woke up first thing, at 5:15 am. My younger brother Paul arrived shortly after, all set to take my friend Herman and me to Heathrow airport. We had an early start, but the excitement of the trip kept us wide awake. After a smooth ride in Herman's trusty Volvo from our hometown of Hastings, we arrived at Heathrow Terminal 4 with plenty of time to spare.

Our eagerness to board the plane was soon met with a setback. We were told that our flight was delayed by two hours due to a computer breakdown. We felt disappointed, but there was nothing we could do except wait patiently.

Finally, after what felt like an eternity, we boarded the first aeroplane, a Tristar 757. As the plane took off, I couldn't help notice, that my cold that I had for the last week disappeared.

During the flight we made a brief stop at Kuwait, followed by Dubai and then Delhi. It was a long journey, but we made the most of it. We arrived in Delhi the early hours of the morning around 6:00 am. Exhausted, we sat around in the airport lounge, waiting for our next flight on to Kathmandu.

Arrival in Kathmandu

Day 2

Monday 17th October

Our journey from Delhi to Kathmandu was a short and sweet two-hour flight on a 737. As we landed at 11 am, the warm sun welcomed us to the city, with temperatures at a pleasant 75 degrees Celsius.

After arriving, we took a bus to our hotel, the Blue Star. Unfortunately, my suitcase had been broken in transit, but I didn't let that dampen my spirits. We were all in dire need of some rest, so we slept for a while before setting out to explore the city.

My first thought was to send some postcards back home to let Lynette and the rest of the family know I had arrived safely. Then, at around 4 pm, we walked to town to buy some iodine to purify the drinking water. Along the way, I couldn't help but notice the strong smell of sewerage mixed with the scent of joss sticks.

The city was busy with people everywhere, as it was the beginning of their ten-day-long festival. We for the carnival to arrive, but it never came. We continued our walk and eventually stumbled upon a Chinese restaurant. Hungry and unable to resist the smell, we got some food. I bought chicken cooked in soya sauce; it tasted awful.

I ate it anyway..

After dinner, we took a rickshaw back to the hotel, exhausted from our eventful day.



Monasteries and Mishaps

Day 3

Tuesday 18th October

After finishing up our postcards, we were picked up by a coach at 9:30 am for a tour of three monasteries - Pashupatinath, Boudhanath, and Swayambhunath.

Our first stop was at the Hindu monastery of Pashupatinath. As we arrived, we witnessed a holy man performing a goat sacrifice. Another holy man caught our attention as he was doing wonderful things with rocks. We stopped for a long time watching what they did for their beliefs.

The next two monasteries were Buddhist. At the first one, we saw a holy man in a small tent, singing and banging a drum, unfortunately, we were short of time, and we had to rush to the last monastery before it closed.

After our tour, we returned to the hotel for a trek briefing. We collected our trekking clothes and then enjoyed a much better dinner at the hotel - steak and chips!

Later, we went to the chemist to buy some more iodine for our drinking water. On the way back to the hotel, I had a mishap - I stepped into a muddy puddle due to the lack of streetlights. I had to wash my feet and plimsolls with the iodine we had just bought.

Despite the setbacks, our day had been filled with adventure and experiences that left us all feeling excited for the days ahead.



A Treacherous Journey

Day 4

Wednesday 19th October

Our journey began today, and despite a good start, our coach did not arrive until noon. The delay was due to a festival in the area, where every road vehicle had to have an animal sacrificed in front of it to ensure safe travels. We spent our time in the hotel lounge drinking tea while waiting for the coach.

Once the coach arrived, we loaded our bags and equipment and set off on our journey. Along the way, the driver seemed to pick up and drop off friends, making our journey longer than anticipated. After about two hours, the road went from bad to worse - it was the worst road I had ever been on. The road was just wide enough for the coach, and we encountered several landslides and sheer drops. To make matters worse, the driver had an assistant who wound the steering wheel on sharp bends.

As we wound our way by the river, we saw a massive black snake, roughly 6-8 feet long, swimming across. At around eight o'clock, we stopped at a village as we were running low on diesel oil. They pushed a five-gallon can through the window next to mine, but it was leaking, and oil spilled all over Brendan's camera and binoculars, breaking them for the rest of the trek.

On the last part of our journey, a local man took over the driving, and he drove like a maniac. As I hung on for dear life, I felt a warm, wet sensation running down my leg - it was my drinking water bottle, the top had come off!

Finally, at around midnight, we arrived at a small hotel in Jiri, where we thought we would sleep on soft beds. However, they turned out to be wooden benches covered with cloth. Anyway, we still managed to get some rest and recharge our batteries for the upcoming trek. Despite the treacherous journey, we were all excited to start our adventure and explore the stunning natural landscapes that awaited us.



The Pacemaker

Day 5

Thursday 20th October

We started our day early, waking up at around 7 am. After a hearty breakfast of porridge and omelette, we set off on our first day of trekking. We walked past the end of the road and climbed the first hill, where we were greeted with a sign that read "This Way to Everest." We crossed the first ridge at 7800ft, and everybody was covered in sweat.

I accidentally became the pacemaker for the day, setting the pace for the rest of the group. We crossed our first suspension bridge at Shiva Laya, where we were to make camp for the night. We had to wait for the porters to catch up with the tents and luggage, so some of us cooled our feet down in the river.

The tents, when they were put up, were smaller than I had expected. They were just enough room for two people to lie down, but only enough room for one person to move. The washing bowl was also very small, making it challenging to clean anything after a long day of trekking.

We had dinner in a larger tent, while we waited for our food to arrive; we watched some local people dancing to the beat of the drums. Herman joined in, and it felt like we were in Africa.

It was a challenge to sleep in the heat, and many of us struggled to get a good night's rest. Anyway, we were all excited to continue our trek and explore the breath-taking landscapes that lay ahead.



The woman in the basket

Day 6

Friday 21st October

We were woken up at around six in the morning with a choice of tea or coffee - although whatever you asked of just tasted of bonfire! We then had to make do with a small bowl of water for washing up; we could choose which body part to clean each day. After breakfast of porridge, eggs, and biscuits, we began our steep climb up to cross the Deorali Pass at 8900ft.

As we climbed, we saw a man carrying a woman in a wicker basket, followed by a young girl being carried on a stretcher. It was a humbling sight, and we were reminded of the challenges faced by the local people.

Later, we stopped for lunch, which consisted of either fried corned beef or hot pilchards, along with cheese and pangs (a crumpet-like things). If we were still hungry, we could have more pangs with jam.

After lunch, we made a steep descent to a small village called Bhanwar, where we set up our camp. In one of the fields, we

saw some locals ploughing with oxen pulling a wooden plough - a scene that felt like a step back in time.

After dinner, the Sherpas entertained us by singing and dancing to the beat of a drum until late into the night. Bhanwar seemed like a lovely place, and we were grateful for the chance to experience its charm and hospitality.



12 Pints a day

Day 7

Saturday 22nd October

We woke up at around 6:30 am to witness a beautiful sunrise, and it set the perfect tone for the day ahead. We began by descending through picturesque pastures, and just before reaching the Likhu Khola river, I saw a bright blue bird - I think it was a Roller.

After crossing the river on a suspension bridge, we faced a steep climb up to Sete at 8500ft. We camped on the side of the pass, and the views were spectacular.

During dinner, we were reminded of the importance of staying hydrated to prevent mountain sickness. We needed to drink at least 12 pints of liquid a day, which meant one or two trips out of the tent each night.

As the darkness fell, the clouds started to come in, creating an eerie and mystical atmosphere. We were all excited to continue our journey and explore the wonders that awaited us.

Climbing to the Top of the Lamjura Pass

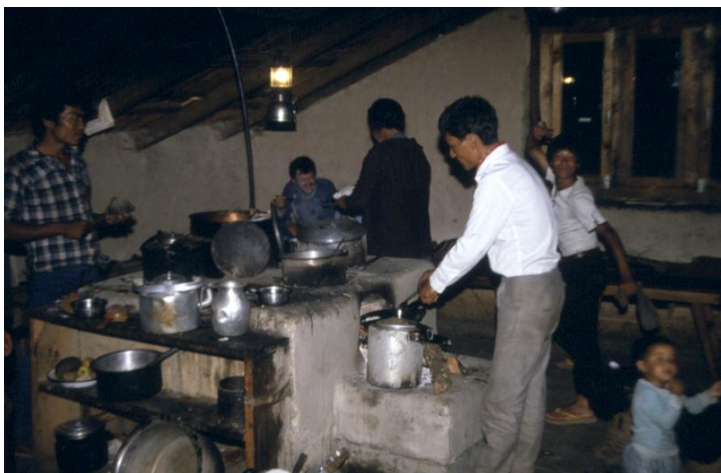
Day 8

Sunday 23rd October

We started the day early and faced a challenging climb to the top of the first pass, Lamjura, which was at a height of 11,580ft. The climb was exhausting, and the terrain was dotted with trees covered in moss and small bright blue flowers.

We stopped for dinner near the top, but I felt a bit strange, and my throat was sore. Despite this, I continued down the other side of the pass to Junbesi, which was home to Angomi - the leader of the Sherpas and our group.

We had dinner at Angomi's house, which was very smoky and only aggravated my sore throat. We then slept in a nearby hotel, but the beds were hard, and the toilet was a hut over a stream with a hole in the floor. It was not the most comfortable accommodation, but it was all part of the adventure.



Exploring Junbesi and a Challenging Climb to Sulung Ridge

Day 9

Monday 24th October

We woke up at daybreak and had breakfast back at Angomi's house. We then visited the local monastery, where we had to take off our shoes before going in. The floor was quite cold, but the visit was a fascinating experience.

Afterward, we set off down a narrow track, and Unbar - our Sherpa guide - appeared with my stick that I had left behind. We went through some lovely fir trees, and Junbesi felt like a very nice place to be.

We had lunch by the Solu River, where Clive (one of our party) lost a sock while washing them. This was a significant loss, as we were told only to carry two pairs of socks.

Then came a very hard climb to Sulung Ridge, which was made longer by our detour to see a cheese factory that was unfortunately closed. We were all soaked in sweat and had to put on our waterproofs as it started to rain. Then we descended over very rough terrain to camp at Manidingma, which was supposedly a school playing field.

It was another one of the parties birthday – Brendan, he produced a cake that disappeared very quickly. After dinner, we had another sponge cake that the sherpas had cooked. As we went to bed feeling very full, two girls found a leech on their tent. This discovery led to everyone inspecting themselves, and two people found leeches on them. The mountains looked very picturesque as the sun set, and we were all eager to continue our trek.



An encounter with Water Buffalo

Day 10

Tuesday 25th October

We woke up to the sight of two leeches crawling outside our inner tent - a reminder of the perils of camping in the wild. After breakfast, we headed down to cross the Dudh Kosi river, where a funeral was taking place.

On our way up to Kharikhola, Colin and Tony were knocked off the path by stampeding water buffalo. Colin flew about 10 feet through the air but luckily landed in some mud. Tony fell under the buffalo and hurt his leg, so he had to be helped to walk. It was a scary experience, and we were incredibly lucky that nobody was seriously hurt.

We arrived at our campsite quite early, so everyone took the opportunity to wash before heading into the village for a drink. While there, we saw some local people cutting up a cow that was all covered in mud.

Harsh Mountain Life

Day 11

Wednesday 26th October

We had a restless night due to the sound of jackals howling. Luckily, I had earplugs, so I did not hear them as much. In the morning, Tony's leg seemed to have improved, and he could walk with the aid of a stick. We stopped early for lunch and then faced a dangerous track over several landslips.

We passed the planned campsite and decided to camp near the Lukla Air Strip at Surya. We camped among large boulders close to a loud roaring river. After setting up camp, we took a dip in the river, but it was not very warm. We then had dinner, which turned out to be the cow we had seen the day before. Despite the initial shock of eating it, everyone was so hungry that they ate it anyway.

A close encounter

Day 12

Thursday 27th October

As I was the last to leave camp, I encountered a charging cow on a narrow track. I was lucky that it stopped when it saw me. I almost jumped back into the bushes! Anne and Angomi left the group to check on the flights for when we returned, while the rest of us continued for about an hour before stopping for an early lunch.

On the way, we encountered two young boys who had made model airplanes out of twigs. It was an unexpected encounter. At the top of a flight of steps made from rocks, we saw a painted arch and a new prayer wheel. As we were making good time, we decided to skip the planned campsite and continue to Phakding.

We crossed the best bridge yet and arrived at the campsite, where a yak was standing where the tents were supposed to go. When an old lady tried to move it, the yak tried to gore her and had to be chased off with lumps of wood. We had dinner in an upstairs room of a new house/hut, and Keith accidentally fell when he tried to step over a chair, making a

loud bang. The owner of the house rushed up to see what was wrong.

After dinner, we sat and clapped with the Sherpas as they sang and danced. Lots of local people appeared and joined in, making it an unforgettable evening. We went to bed before the festivities were over.



Sagarmatha National Park and Namche Bazaar

Day 13

Friday 28th October

Most days, after the early morning tea call, Herman would sort out his bag, and I would wait for him before we would leave. Despite sleeping well, my legs hurt a bit. We had breakfast and set off again, stopping for lunch early in a large, stoned wall enclosure that was very dusty.

Later, we entered the Sagarmatha National Park, and four of us had the wrong photo on our trekking permits, but it did not seem to matter. We crossed several bridges before facing a very hard climb. As we started up a narrow, steep track, some yaks going up met some coming down, making it very dangerous. We waited at the bottom to let them sort themselves out before starting a very hard ascent to Namche Bazaar, a Sherpa village at 11,500 feet.

We had dinner in a nice hotel with a good view out of the dining room. We camped out in the back garden, where I banged my head on a small doorway. It was quite cold at night, but it was an exhilarating experience being in such a unique environment.

First Glimpse of Everest

Day 14

Saturday 29th October

I woke up feeling unwell, but after breakfast I started feeling a bit better, so I went to the market in Namche Bazaar. After lunch, we left Namche Bazaar and began our trek up a very steep incline. Despite the challenging start, we were rewarded with some beautiful views, and we saw Mount Everest for the first time.

In the middle of nowhere, we came upon a stall selling jewellery, which was unexpected. We then continued into a valley, crossed a river, and began a very long and steep climb to Thyangboche, located at 12,700 feet. When we arrived, we were wet through with sweat, and our tents and bags were still on their way. So, we waited in a very cold tea house, without any tea.

After about two hours, our tents and dinner were ready. As we ate dinner, our breath froze on the inside of the tent, and we realized how cold it was going to be at night. It was a challenging experience.



A Trek to a Small Peak

Day 15

Sunday 30th October

The morning started with heavy frost both inside and outside the tent, with temperatures dropping to -6 degrees Celsius. We were surrounded by mountain peaks, and the scenery was breath-taking. After breakfast, we embarked on a 2000ft climb to a small peak. The climb was challenging, but the views from the top were worth it, with a light dusting of snow adding to the beauty of the landscape.

Upon our return, we had lunch, and Fiona, the youngest member of our group, started feeling sick and had to stay in her tent. In the warm afternoon sun, we had a wash before heading out to visit the nearby monastery.

In the evening, after dinner, we played cards inside the tent, but we noticed that the tent was covered in ice. It was very cold going to the bathroom before bed, but the incredible views and experiences of the day made it all worth it.



From Pangboche to Dingboche

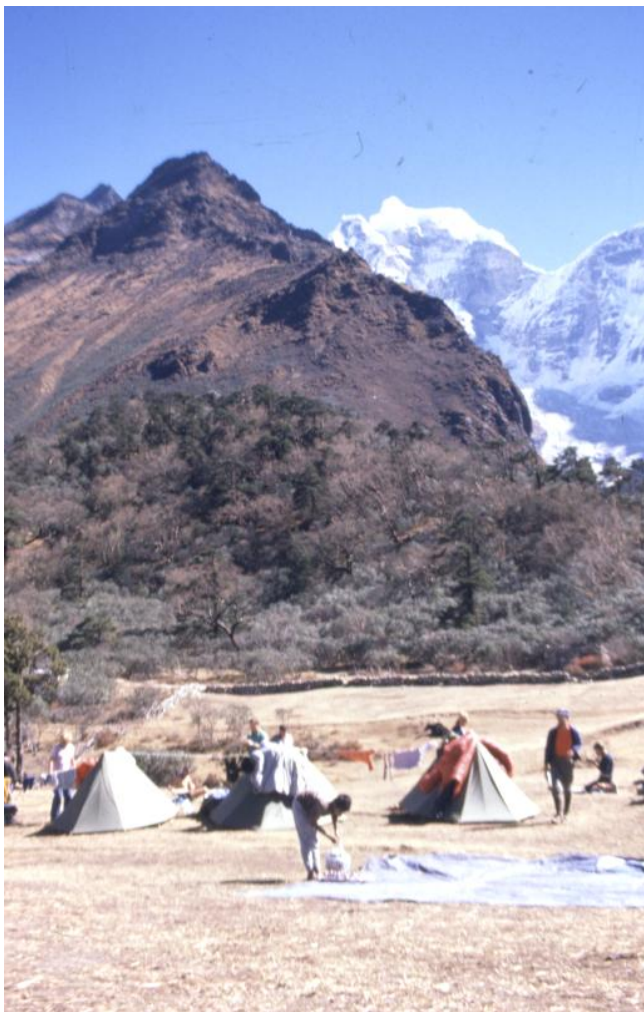
Day 16

Monday 31st October

We set off from our campsite feeling a bit under the weather. As we descended, we crossed the Imja Khola and then started the ascent towards Pangboche, the highest permanent village in the region at 12,800 feet. Despite feeling a bit off, I managed to keep up with the rest of the group.

When we arrived in Pangboche, we saw the scalp of the abominable snowman, which was being kept in a small museum. Clive, one of our group members, tried to put his hat on it as a joke, but the woman who was keeping the museum went crazy and shouted at him. It cost 30 pence to enter the museum, which included horns, drums, and incense.

We stopped for lunch at a place where there had been a big avalanche that had wiped out half of a village. After lunch, we continued our trek towards Dingboche. When we arrived, we set up camp and had dinner. I still had a headache, so I went to bed early that night.



A Headache at High Altitude

Day 17

Tuesday 1st November

I woke up in the middle of the night with a pounding headache and flashing lights in my vision. My nose was bleeding a little, and I worried that I might have to abandon the climb and head back down in the morning. When I mentioned my symptoms to the leader over breakfast, he suggested that it might be a sinus issue rather than mountain sickness. Despite feeling poorly, I decided to stay in camp while the rest of the group went up a small peak to acclimatize.

Around 11 o'clock, I began to feel much better. I chatted with Angomi and showed a small local boy how to make paper boats and draw stars. In the evening, while the rest of the group lounged around camp, I joined a Sherpa on a climb up the small peak. As we ascended, a thick cloud came in, obscuring everything except for the tops of the mountains, leaving us feeling like we were on top of the world. I was surprised at how easy the climb felt.

Despite the initial setback of my headache, I was relieved to discover that it was not mountain sickness and that I could continue with the climb. The view from the top of the peak was worth the temporary discomfort.



Onwards to Gorak Shep and the Small Peak

Day 19

Thursday 3rd November

After a restless night with another headache, I woke up feeling groggy and weak. As it turned out, many of us felt the same way. Even two Sherpas were struggling with their health. Despite our physical challenges, we pushed forward towards Gorak Shep. The terrain was difficult, with rocky and steep paths and the altitude was noticeable. However, the stunning views of the mountain peaks around us kept us motivated.

Upon arriving at Gorak Shep just before dark, we were faced with a difficult decision. Many of us had headaches and the two Sherpas were still unwell, so it was decided that we should not camp any higher. We had two options: walk to base camp or Kala Patthar. Five of our group decided to go to base camp, while the rest of us decided to climb up the small peak of Kala Patthar.

The climb to Kala Patthar was steep and challenging, and the three of us who continued onwards were running out of time as we reached 500ft from the top. Unfortunately, we couldn't go any further, and we had to turn back. Upon returning to Gorak Shep, the five from the base camp had not yet returned. We had some boiled eggs and crumpets, and the

leader sent us back to camp with the cooks, leaving behind torches for the other group.

When we arrived back at camp, we had tea and took a much-needed rest. However, our rest was short-lived as the base camp group returned, two of them seriously ill with mountain sickness. One of them had lost control of his legs, and the other was sick upon arrival back at camp. We helped both of them to bed and provided them with the necessary medical care.

It was a challenging day for us all, but we persevered through the difficult terrain and health challenges. Despite the setbacks, we were still able to appreciate the breathtaking views of the mountains and the camaraderie of our group.

Battling the Elements

Day 20

Friday 4th November

The morning brought a fresh wave of snow as we set off from camp, determined to reach Thyangboche. As we crossed a stream, one of the Sherpas put his foot through the ice, reminding us of the harsh conditions we were facing.

Despite the snow, we pushed on and stopped for lunch at the trekkers aid post. The crossing of a rickety bridge was made all the more dangerous by the heavy snowfall. The walking was becoming increasingly difficult as the snow got heavier.

Finally, after hours of trudging through the snow, we arrived at our campsite, a small back garden just below Thyangboche. As we huddled together for warmth, we had dinner in a nearby house and then crawled into our tents for the night, surrounded by the relentless snowfall.

The treacherous weather had made the day's trekking a gruelling ordeal, but we were determined to push on towards our goal of reaching Everest Base Camp.



A Slippery Descent

Day 21

Saturday 5th November

After a warm and comfortable night's sleep, the group woke up to find that a heavy snowfall had occurred overnight. Despite the treacherous conditions, they set out for Thyangboche, climbing up a slippery hill covered in fresh snow. The views were still stunning, however, and the group stopped for a memorable photo session with the snow-covered mountains in the background.

As they were taking photos, a helicopter landed nearby, adding to the excitement of the moment. The group continued their descent to Namche Bazara, arriving in the early afternoon. They were greeted with a warm welcome from the locals and a special dinner was arranged in their honor. The evening was filled with singing and celebration, with many curious villagers coming out to see what all the noise was about.

Unfortunately, the celebration was slightly marred when Herman was hit on the head on a hatch. Despite this incident, the group felt grateful for the warm welcome and hospitality they received in Namche Bazara.



Taking it Easy in Namche Bazara

Day 22

Sunday 6th November

After several days of challenging trekking, the group decided to take a well-deserved break in Namche Bazara. The day began with a leisurely walk-up a nearby hill to visit the local museum, which provided fascinating insights into the history and culture of the Sherpa people.

After the museum visit, the group enjoyed a relaxed lunch before taking a stroll around the village to soak up the local atmosphere. The colourful market stalls and friendly locals made for a pleasant and memorable experience.

With no set agenda for the day, everyone was able to enjoy the opportunity to unwind and recharge their batteries. As the day drew to a close, the group retired to their tents feeling refreshed and ready for the next leg of their journey.

A Long Walk to Lukla

Day 23

Monday 7th November

We set out from our campsite at 8:30 in the morning, anticipating a long journey to Manidingma. Even our Sherpas were feeling tired as we made our way through the rocky terrain, with mountain peaks towering over us on all sides. The scorching sun beat down on us, making the wind feel even colder as we trudged along.

Finally, at 1:30 in the afternoon, we reached our destination and stopped for lunch. The area was very dusty, and we all had to cover our faces to avoid inhaling the dirt. We rested for a while before continuing our journey, and the Sherpas played a little prank on Herman by secretly adding some stones to his rucksack to slow him down.

The next leg of the journey took us to Lukla Air strip, and it was another gruelling trek. Our toes began to rub from the steep inclines, but we persevered, determined to reach our destination. As we approached the hotel, there was a mix-up with our accommodations, and we ended up camping once again. However, we were grateful to have dinner in the warmth of the main hall, even though it was still very cold.

Farewells and Failed Flights

Day 24

Tuesday 8th November

The group woke up to a crystal-clear day, with a plan to catch a flight back to Kathmandu. After breakfast, they lounged in the hotel garden, soaking up the sun and watching planes come and go. The leader and doc made an unsuccessful attempt to secure a flight, and after lunch, one member ventured into the village in search of film but came back empty-handed.

As the day wore on, it was time to say goodbye to the Sherpas. Some would continue to other treks, while others headed back home. In the evening, the group passed the time playing cards before retiring for the night. However, their sleeping arrangements were not ideal, as they had to share a cramped dormitory with eight people.

From the Mountains to the City

Day 25

Wednesday 9th November

After spending weeks in the rugged and unforgiving terrain of the Himalayas, we finally returned to civilization in Kathmandu. The morning started early with a trip to the airport to catch a flight, which provided breath-taking views of the mountains during take-off.

Upon landing in Kathmandu, we were relieved to be back in a more comfortable environment. We checked into their hotel and immediately headed for the shower, washing off the grime and dirt from their trek.

Later in the day, we ventured into town to buy some gifts and souvenirs and were amazed at the vibrant energy and chaotic pace of Kathmandu, a stark contrast to the peaceful mountains we had just left behind.

In the evening, we went to a well-known restaurant in Thamel and enjoyed a meal. The rump steak, apple pie, and beer were a welcome change from the dehydrated meals and tea we had been consuming for weeks. After dinner, we took

a leisurely walk back to the hotel through the brightly lit streets of the city, grateful for the opportunity to experience the unique and vibrant culture of Kathmandu.



Exploring the Streets of Bukpool

Day 26

Thursday 10th November

We woke up at a early and enjoyed breakfast before taking a taxi to Bukpool. The 12-mile ride only cost us £2, and we spent the morning wandering through narrow streets and bartering for gifts. During our exploration, we stumbled upon a group of local women holding a religious ceremony, which was an unexpected experience.

Around noon, we headed back to the hotel via a tempos ride on a three-wheel scooter. We enjoyed another steak dinner at the Thamel restaurant before heading back to the hotel. On the way back, we stumbled upon a toothache shrine with hundreds of nails in it, which was quite an interesting sight.

After lounging around in the hotel lobby for a few hours, we headed to the airport for our flight to Delhi. While looking out the window during the flight, we saw lots of little flashing lights, which turned out to be fireworks as part of the Delaware Celebration.

We arrived in Delhi and took a 12-mile coach ride to a luxurious hotel that cost £60 per night. It was a late arrival, so we grabbed a pizza sandwich before heading to bed.



A Day of Sights and Sounds in Agra

Day 27

Friday 11th November

The day began early with a coach ride to the railway station and a comfortable train ride to Agra, with breakfast served on board. Upon arrival, we checked into the Clarks Shiraz Hotel, where we were greeted by a snake charmer outside the gate. The hotel was old but being renovated, and the gardens and swimming pool were stunning.

After coffee, we hopped on a rickshaw for a tour around town. Although we were taken to local carpet and pottery factories, we didn't succumb to pressure selling. We returned to the hotel for a swim in the pool, where parakeets flew around, making it feel like paradise. For lunch, we had fish and chips before setting off to see the Taj Mahal. The iconic landmark was impressive, and we even went inside the top tomb, despite the stifling heat.

Next, we visited the red fort, where the sight of vultures sitting on the towers caught our attention. A quick tour was all we could manage as time was running out. In the evening, we had a reservation for 14 at an Indian restaurant, but upon arrival, we were told that no tables were available. We had to stand and wait for people to leave before we could sit

down for dinner. Although it wasn't a bad meal, it wasn't the best experience.

We took a rickshaw back to the hotel and had the fan on in our hotel room to keep cool. It was a day of sights and sounds, with both good and not-so-good experiences.



Exploring the Deserted City

Day 28

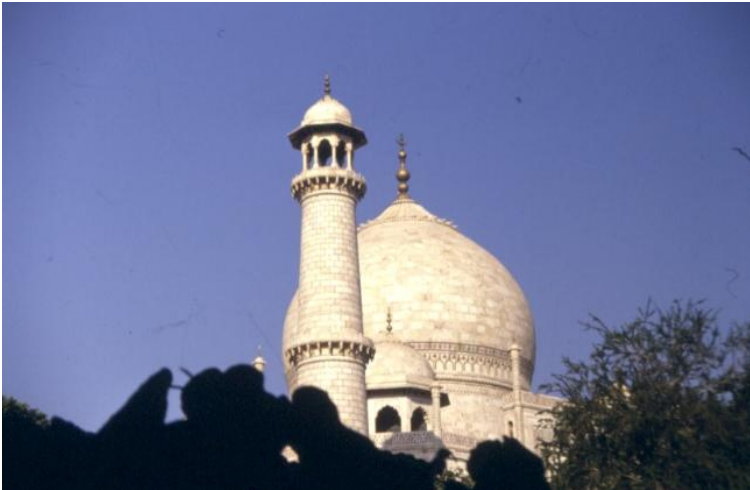
Saturday 12th November

We woke up early in the morning, had breakfast, and waited for the coach to take us to the deserted city. Unfortunately, our guide didn't show up, and some members of our group were feeling ill. Anne and the Doc decided to stay behind while we went on our way. Along the way, we saw the real Indian life, with open sewers and people sleeping amidst heaps of rubbish.

Finally, we arrived at the deserted city and hired a guide. Although we were running late, the guide managed to give us a quick but enjoyable tour of the city. After an hour, we had to leave for lunch, which was at a very exclusive hotel called the Sheridan. The hotel was posh and grand, with red carpets under a long terrace, waterfalls on either side, and the biggest chandelier I've ever seen. The lunch was delicious and left us feeling stuffed with chicken, veal, beef meatballs, vegetables, noodles, salads, two types of trifles, apple pies, Indian sweets, coffee, and beer.

After lunch, we rode a rickshaw back to the hotel, and spent the rest of the day relaxing by the pool, waiting for our flight to Delhi. As usual, the flight was late by two hours, but we eventually set off at 6 pm by coach and then a small jet plane to Delhi. Finally, we arrived at Hotel Vasant Continental

around 9 pm, where we took a shower, and Herman and I ate a food package he found on the plane since we were out of rupees.



The Journey Home

Day 33

Sunday 13th November

It was time to leave India, but not without one last adventure. The day began early with a 0345-alarm call, and after putting our bags out at 0400, we boarded a coach to the airport. However, our plane was delayed yet again, this time by 2.5 hours. While waiting, we were supplied with sandwiches to stave off hunger.

Finally, at 0945, we boarded a Jumbo and took off for Heathrow. Our route took us over Afghanistan and snowy Russia, providing us with stunning views and good food. We landed in London at 1330 and took the tube, train, bus, and car - finally arriving home at 1820hrs.

Reflecting on our time in India, I couldn't help but think of the chaos on the roads. It seemed like if it could fit, they'd do it - four on a scooter, three on a pushbike, and even a husband riding with his wife sitting on the carrier. And don't forget about the cows - they were just as likely to be on the roads as people!



David Keith Baker

More photos can be found on www.davidkbaker.co.uk