



## **Medex Newsletter, November 2009.**

### **Annual Dinner January 16th 2010**

We will be having our annual dinner at Old Dungeon Ghyll on Saturday the 16th January. It will be great to see as many of you as possible. For those not familiar with the format, we usually arrive on Friday evening, have a day out on the hills on Saturday and meet for the dinner on Saturday evening. The meal must be booked direct with Medex so that we can organise the numbers for the hotel. Accommodation is available at the Old Dungeon Ghyll and there is a camp site nearby for the hardy and B&B's in the area if the Old Dungeon Ghyll is full. For directions and information on how to book visit <http://medex.org.uk/membership/social-events.php>

### **Medex and PPUK Survey of medical events amongst Nepalese trekking staff and porters.**

Following our experiences during the Hidden Valley expedition in 2008 where we were involved in several medical incidents with Nepalese staff we have set up a research project to look at the prevalence of medical events amongst the staff and porters who look after expeditions and treks in Nepal.

We debated long and hard what response we should have to the incidents that we became involved in during the 2008 expedition. Whilst in the Hidden Valley we were asked to assist another expedition whose cook was unwell. It transpired, when we went to investigate, that he had HAPE and that the expedition was very ill prepared and equipped to deal with any kind of medical incident. In addition they had very little appreciation of their responsibility to look after their staff. Some of you may remember our debate at the Old Dungeon Ghyll meet last year.

The aim of the research project is to raise the awareness of treks and expeditions who are going to the less travelled areas of Nepal of the need for them to be equipped to look after not only themselves but also the Nepalese that work for them. Mary Morrell who came on our 2003 expedition and who is a director of Porters' Progress UK and an academic at the Royal Brompton Hospital is assisting with the development of this project. We have enlisted the assistance of three medical students who will be conducting the survey on the ground in Nepal in March/April next year as part of their elective. We are still seeking a fourth person to join them

so if anyone is interested, please do get in touch. This is not limited to medics but does require a commitment of about five weeks. If all goes well and we get some reasonable data we will continue the project over future trekking seasons.

Mary, with assistance from Annabel McKeown has already obtained ethics approval for the project from Oxford University and has made a submission to the Nepal Health Research Council for Nepalese ethics approval. We are holding a discussion/training afternoon in London on Saturday 21st November and if you are interested in taking part it would be great if you could come along.

[Full details](#) by clicking [here](#).

**From the Ben to the Himalaya - British-style Climbing with Ian Parnell** at the Royal Geographic Society Tuesday 24th November.

[Porters' Progress UK](#) is proud to present an evening with one of Britain's most accomplished mountaineers and photographers, Ian Parnell. Ian is perhaps best known for accompanying Sir Ranulph Fiennes on his successful ascent of the North Face of the Eiger but his own climbs have drawn similar plaudits, including four nominations for the world's most coveted mountaineering award, the Piolet d'Or (the golden ice axe). Medex will be represented to promote our booklet *Travel at High Altitude* and the project we are running jointly with Porters Progress on the survey of medical incidents amongst Nepalese Staff and Porters. Do come along!

### **Travel at High Altitude Booklet**

The response to the booklet continues to be very positive. Medical Expeditions sponsored the printing of another 5,000 booklets to be used at conferences and events to promote the availability of the booklet online. It is now also available in German, Nepali, Serbian, Greek and shortly should be available in Dutch and Spanish.

**Diploma in Mountain Medicine** continues to go from strength to strength and there are now 80 holders of the Diploma. [A full list of those that hold the Diploma is updated every 6 months.](#)

**VIII World Congress on Altitude Medicine** will be held in Arequipa, Perú 8 through 12 August 2010. For further information please visit the [Congress website](#). We hope to be able to present the preliminary results of our Nepalese staff and Porter project survey at this congress.

**BMRES Altitude conference**, 4th December 2009 for details go to <http://www.bmres.org/>

**Rick Allen** and Sandy Allan climbed Nanga Parbat by the Kinshofer route, summiting on 10th July.

**Jim Milledge**. We are very pleased to be able to report that Jim Milledge is making a good recovery following heart surgery in August with an aortic valve replacement plus a triple CABG and pacemaker, having been well looked after by Pat.

**BMEME 15 years on**. Most of the climbing team managed to make their way to the West Coast of Scotland at the beginning of July, the date being set by the presence of Roddy Kirkwood in the UK on holiday with his family from New Zealand. However, the most intrepid journey had to go to Ronnie Robb who is currently working in Nigeria. He arrived in the midst of a real West Coast storm drenching from head to toe but covered in leathers and sporting an

enormous motor bike which tended to control him more than he controlled it! This was his first practice for a planned motorcycle journey through Africa



**Greg Harris's** paper from the 2003 Hongu Expedition has made it to print  
Cognitive Assessment of a Trekking Expedition to 5100 m: A Comparison of Computerized and Written Testing Methods Gregory A. Harris, MBBS (Hons); Jennifer Cleland, PhD; Alex Collie, PhD; Paul McCrory, PhD Wilderness and Environmental Medicine, 20, 261 268 (2009)

**Accommodation near Chamonix** Juliette and Oliver Kemp have generously offered to share with other medex members an apartment, situated in Les Houches in the Chamonix valley. It sleeps 6 + sofa bed and is ideally situated for stunning mountaineering, ski touring and climbing routes and of course skiing. Rates would be the same as for family and friends. Coincidentally they are expecting their first child! Website: [www.leshouchesski.com](http://www.leshouchesski.com)  
Contact: [juliette@medex.org.uk](mailto:juliette@medex.org.uk) or [oliver.richard.kemp@gmail.com](mailto:oliver.richard.kemp@gmail.com)

**Charlie Houston** died on 27th September 2009 age 96. The experienced alpinist devoted himself to the medical dangers faced by climbers after a fellow mountaineer died during an expedition up K2. He also helped found the Peace Corps' medical branch and was the inspiration for the Hypoxia symposia. He was known to a number of our members including Jim Milledge and James Anholm. James writes: "Charlie was a great man who invited me to join their research project on Mt Logan after my first episode of HAPE in medical school".

Obituaries can be read at the following links:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/doctor-charles-houston-mountaineer-who-tackled-k2-twice-and-became-the-foremost-authority-on-altitude-sickness-1795568.html>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/oct/04/charles-houston-obituary>

## Baby congratulations!

Kate Wilson and Paul are the proud parents of Joshua David born on 28th June.



and on 20<sup>th</sup> May Henriette van Ruiten and Andy had a son, Roan.



**Meanwhile** John & Gail Sanders have moved to Salt Lake City and John has been excelling in various mountain marathons – mainly on skis I think.

