

“ A newsletter ? ” I answered to Marilyn and Tom “ Why ? ”

“ Because...” they said “...not everybody knows or understands what you are up to when you are gallivanting in the Himalayas! ...“

I guess I take for granted the fact that on my twice-yearly trips to Nepal I am not just “ shopping for England ”, although I am not doing too badly there.... You are already aware of the long term commitment to running my business based on Fair Trade. You are also probably familiar with my personal concerns and involvement with the well being of the many craftsmen and women I have been working with in Nepal (some since 1980...), who produce such beautiful work for us. But for me our efforts are not restricted to looking after and working well with the talented people that we merely represent - I also want to make a real difference to the lives of many less fortunate than us in Nepal.

At the age of fifty I am privileged enough to have a business that is still standing after 28 years and fantastic colleagues that enable me to be of help to people I know and care for, but it is your continued patronage, support and recommending of the Galleries that allow us to make this constant contribution. For all this I want to thank you because running a business, after my stint in the affluent if “unfortunate” world of advertising, has never meant to me just “ making a living ” and was a rather welcomed and enriching opportunity to work with many like-minded people whom I trust and respect here and abroad.

Working closely in Nepal with as many people as I possibly can means in practice that the funds made available to me from the Galleries can be spread across many households, providing them with the opportunity to make a real and decent profit as well as a chance to promote their rich and valuable cultures.

This may not make for the most efficient business. If you can imagine my limited time away from Todenham, swallowed up with the demanding social interaction required and the amount of travelling necessary when I do my “ tours ” sourcing, designing or checking production for the new collections; not counting all those endless cups of tea and huge plates of rice I have to get through wherever I go... But someone has to do it...and I love it !

So, involved I do get and some of you already know of the kindergarten set up several years ago, primarily for the children of single mothers we support at the rug weaving workshops (although now every other worker’s children attend – 57 on the last count). This is doing well.

In September 2004 we decided to give two young talented but struggling, brothers Narendra and Prakash (barbers by trade), the opportunity to work for themselves by opening for them one of the best



and cleanest salons in the Kathmandu valley. Two years down the line there are now four barbers / hairdressers earning a really good income providing for some thirty people back in their villages.



Last autumn the two brothers got enough money together to have two modest wedding ceremonies at home and marry the “ two most beautiful girls ”.



But the most challenging and rewarding was last December. Sanish, the very bright seven-year-old boy of Nepalese friends of ours was diagnosed as having a heart condition requiring an emergency operation.

In the western world, when such a traumatic situation falls upon us we only have to think about the success of a delicate operation and speedy recovery of the child, which you will agree is more than enough to bear. In so-called developing countries unless you finance the operation yourself, the chances or thought of survival are nil.

After a really serious and nerve-racking marathon to get the funds transferred quickly to Nepal, Sanish was successfully operated on and, after an almost unbearable week of suspense, recovered remarkably well.

During my recent trip last February I spent time with the family and Sanish is now a 150% healthy and perky seven-year-old little boy who will soon be able to climb trees again.

Being so young and some say "lucky", Sanish's story has stirred up a lot of hearts in Nepal and we have managed to secure a scholarship for him in one of the very best private schools in Nepal, and this until he is seventeen !

The whole point of this newsletter is that we realised that perhaps many of you might not be aware of projects or events like these and not always aware that whenever you make generous donations of children's clothing or toys, that I personally carry away with me and distribute, or a large or small purchase in the Galleries, you are inextricably part of these projects and events, and for this I thank you. I guess and hope that together we will be able to make a difference and help some more.

More news are that so many people have asked where and when I give my talks on Tibetan rugs and whether they can attend (to which they usually cannot unless they are members of the group I am a guest speaker for), so we have started to hold slide-illustrated talks at the Galleries. At present up to 28 people can be comfortably accommodated, until we extend the Red room... All the small groups we have entertained seem to have enjoyed the informal location and program, and the private visit of the Galleries and gardens seem to them a bonus.

If you are interested in attending one of these future events or perhaps even better, you would like to organise a group of your contacts or friends to either come to us or for us to visit, just email us, Marilyn, Tom or Alain to info@AlainRouveure.com

You may also like to know about other private events and promotions we will be having at the Galleries, and sending us your email (if you possess one) will guarantee you the first opportunity.

As you are reading this, I am probably up to my neck in the tribal art, the beautiful rugs and the fabulous jewellery I just brought back, and getting everything ready and catalogued for the galleries.

I hope you are keeping well.

All my very best wishes,