



NEWSLETTER
2018

SPITI PROJECTS



The Kunzum La Pass, entrance to the Spiti valley

Improved roads and new travel permits in the Spiti Valley

Our journey to Spiti in July this year was fun. I had the pleasure of the company of three ladies who travelled with me to this beautiful Himalayan valley with high peaks and awesome valleys. The roads have improved, especially around the area of the Rhotang pass, but inevitably there is always a problem with the melting snow washing away roads from time to time.

Travel in Spiti is changing as the government has set in place some new rules. Because of Spiti's eastern boundary areas borders with China/Tibet, foreigners now have to acquire permits to travel to Kaza from Manali, then further permits are needed to travel south beyond Kaza towards Tabu and the places in between. These can be obtained at a government office in Sikkim.



The Rhotang Pass - leaving the Kulu valley



Community Eye Centre

We are very proud to announce that one of the Eye Technicians completed her training at the L V Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad this summer. She will now go to work at the Rotary Eye Hospital in Palampur to gain some practical experience. We have been offered a place for a second student to train on the next course which starts next February.

Surgeons came to Spiti from the Rotary Eye Hospital in Palampur in June to treat the local people and carry out some Eye Camps. This was a great start and they treated many patients.

The Refraction Clinic

Our top priority is to raise the funds to provide the urgently needed **Refraction Clinic** for the people of Spiti to have their eyes tested and acquire spectacles. At the moment they have to travel 300K to Shimla or Manali to get this facility, while we in the west just go to the nearest Spec-savers in the High Street.

A refraction examination is carried out to test pupil function and there are many things to be considered at the time: ocular mobility and visual field among many



We aim to offer operations to patients diagnosed with cataracts. These would be undertaken at the Community Centre by surgeons visiting Kaza from the Rotary Eye Hospital in Palampur at least twice a year



Patients being treated by excellent, experienced doctors from The Rotary Eye Hospital using the finest equipment available before this facility was available

others.

For this the following equipment is needed:

LED vision chart - cost £440 This is essential for all examinations.

Slit lamp - cost £5,000 Doctors cannot work without a good light.

Ophthalmoscope - cost £3,500 This allows inspection of all ocular

media from the cornea to vitreous and will reveal cornea abrasions, simple infections and more.

Once the diagnosis is made, we need to be able to offer spectacles for patients to purchase to restore their sight.

Please help us achieve our goal.

The Community Centre

The building is now completed and fitted out inside. We now have a resident cook ready to offer delicious meals of many different cuisines.

Our Home Stay rooms are now available for hire and are the best in town with solar heated water for your shower.

The Craft Centre is up and running. There is a fantastic selection of Spiti socks and shawls made locally and handicrafts plus, of course, plenty of postcards.



The Meeting room



The Craft Shop offers locally made items



Sponsored children and their future

We now have twenty seven sponsors who are supporting children by giving them the opportunity of a good education in the Spiti valley and there is a continuous list of children waiting and hoping for sponsors.

I made a point of trying to meet as many of the children as I could find in the valley this year. At each school I visited it was a real pleasure to see these young people blossom, they had a sparkle in their eyes and smiling faces. This is a big change from the first time I saw them when each child had a story of poverty and hardship. The generous sponsors are giving these young people an opportunity for a really positive future. When I asked these lovely



A happy school girl and the newly built boarding school

students their aim in life, they spoke of their hopes and dreams. They all have high expectations - some may leave at 10th class (GCSE) level and some wish to continue to 12th class (A level) and then go to college.

The students are totally motivated, work very hard and appreciate the opportunity given to them by their sponsors!

We invite you to sponsor a child.

APPLES Glorious Apples

Earlier this year whilst watching a programme of HRH The Queen walking round the garden of Buckingham Palace with David Attenborough praising the interesting variety of magnificent trees planted by many dignitaries over the years, I thought, if this is the Year of the Tree, how can we equate this to Spiti? We came up with the idea of Apple trees.

One of the positive sides of Climate change is that the valley is wetter and warmer in summer and it is now possible to grow apple trees. Many farmers have created orchards of twenty to fifty trees and they are thriving very well. To start with there were no fences around their orchards - the village children love to pick apples (a great treat for them that they had not had before) but not good for the farmer! Now the orchards have high fences with strong gates!

Our Trustees thought that if we could provide each household with



Small children enjoying apples in a farmer's orchard!

two apple trees the children could "pick their own" and the farmers would be left with their apples to harvest and sell. Apples are rich in vitamin C and would be an extra treat for young children. There are over one thousand households in the Valley.

I invite you all to give £50 to provide each Spiti family with apple trees.

HOME STAYS

an excellent way of getting around the valley

The Spiti Valley has opened up more to visitors from India and afar so there are more opportunities for home owners to offer Home Stay. This has been a great success. This summer we were privileged to stay with families in their houses which enabled us to enjoy a more personal experience of real Spiti life.



A typical village house for Home Stay visitors



A home stay bedroom



Joanna Lumley supports Spiti Projects Charity

The work the Spiti Projects is accomplishing is of the greatest importance to the region and of inestimable value to the people of Spiti. This glorious area has been left behind by the modern world. Spiti Projects will help the region with educational and medical facilities hitherto unknown in the region. I support them with all my heart.

Joanna Lumley



Spiti Projects supported by Dalai Lama



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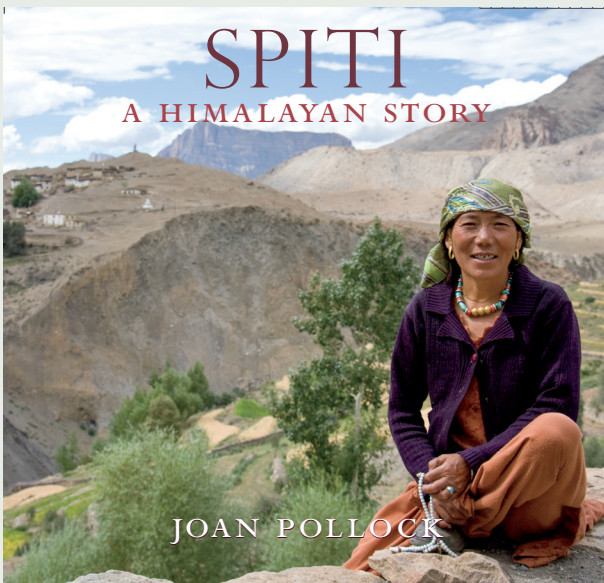
Secretary to
HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been visiting the Kinnaur and Spiti areas since the mid sixties and is familiar with the difficult condition of the people in these areas. There is much need for development in many fields. His Holiness believes that health and education are extremely important issues in this remote Himalayan mountain region of India. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is happy to support The Spiti Projects

In particular The Spiti people desperately need to raise their quality of life without damaging the importance of the Buddhist faith. The Spiti Valley is very isolated, cut off from the rest of India and has also been declared a restricted area for about thirty years in the recent past. The development in the region has therefore been slow and small compared to many other parts of India. In view of these any help from organizations in the West to improve the living condition of the people will be much appreciated and of great benefit.

Tenzin Geyche Tethong

SPITI A HIMALAYAN STORY



JOAN POLLOCK

SPITI A HIMALAYAN STORY

SPITI A Himalayan Story is a photographic essay which explores the many aspects of the life and culture in the Spiti Valley.

Joan Pollock's wonderful photographs follow the landscape, the people and their customs through the seasons and give an extraordinarily vivid insight into this traditional society trying to come to terms with the modern world.

Paperback, 262 x 255mm, 122 pages
£20.00 plus postage

Available from: joanswinnerton@gmail.com

Working to improve the quality of life of the people of the Spiti Valley

Trustees; Joan Pollock, Jean Rivington, Tony Swinnerton

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www.spiti.org

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