



ROTARY:
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE



HIMALAYAN MULTI-DISTRICT-INDIA

“A LEARNING ADVENTURE CAMP 2018”

28th MARCH - 11th APRIL 2018



Hello Sirinder,

Ben came to club this week to talk about his experiences with you and he said it was the best fortnight of his life and he was completely overwhelmed by the experience. The photographs he showed were amazing. I had heard from him whilst he was with you saying he could not wait to let the club know all about it. He was particularly keen to pay tribute to all the people who were running the camp, how friendly and welcoming they were. It is an experience he will never forget.

He appreciated his contact with the young people from other countries and he is keeping in touch with them and hopes to visit them in the future.

Hopefully there may be longer term benefits for Newport as coincidentally we were thinking about starting a Rotaract club and Ben is keen to be part of this because so many of the young people he met were members of Rotaract.

He told us about the woman he met whose son was coming to the hospital in Newport. I am sure Ben will be in contact with him and do what he can to help him settle in.

Ben said that you have been doing these camps for thirty years it is wonderful that you can keep them so fresh and exciting. How many young people there are all round the world who will remember the exciting and mind changing experience that you have given them.

Please pass on the greetings of Newport Uskmouth Club to the rotary clubs in India that looked after Ben so well and gave him such a wonderful experience.

Thank you again

Dear Surinder,

I hope you are well!

Thank you very much for organising this incredible camp, it is very difficult to summarise this camp when words themselves do not do this experience justice. I have actively encouraged all friends and family since being home that they must visit India and join your camp for the next year, a truly once in a lifetime adventure. Before arriving in India you said to come with an open mind, to not judge the country before seeing India for what it really is.

When we first arrived in Kolkata it was already a different world to what I have personally experienced. I don't think I had ever seen so many people, cars and noise. Personally I loved it, to be immersed in a completely different world to my own was intriguing.

Next were the Sunderbans, the largest mangroves in the world, like nowhere I have ever been, it was great to see so much wildlife and although we did not see a tiger, I can not be disappointed as they are such a rare sight nowadays. It was eye opening to see the local villages. My learning that wealth doesn't always have to be how rich you are but how happy you can be and make do with what you have was backed up in plain sight. The people of the village were classed as poor and you'd think they would be unhappy but I saw so many people rich in life. The long boat rides were fun but I think towards the end of the days in Sunderbans it was quite tiring to be on the boats all day, but as you said the rivers are the roads of the Sunderbans.

The train journey to Puri and Sikkim were a bit of a shock, but it was a new experience and it was made a lot easier by the friends I made on the trip which I already know will be everlasting! Puri again was completely different to anywhere we had travelled to in India thus far. Konark temple was the highlight of Puri, the temple had incredible detailed walls and was beautiful. At the meditation centre I realised that I did not know as much about the practice as I thought but it was very interesting to learn about it.

For me the state of Sikkim was the highlight of the entire trip. Everywhere you looked was like a painting. I will never forget visiting the school in Gangtok and meeting the lady whose son was about to start working in the hospital that I was born in. It reminded me of how close you can be with people even if they live on the other side of the globe to yourself. White water rafting was a great way to end the trip in Sikkim, I found myself in the Himalayas, in a freezing cold river with people I had only met two weeks before. Yet I laughed with my friends as if we had known each other for much longer.

Thank you for bringing Ashok with you, his energy and laughter added a lot to the trip! I can't thank you enough Surinder for organising this trip, I will never forget about these experiences, the times I cried laughing, when I saw the Himalayas for the first time, I could go on and on! I wish you the best of luck in the future and you will always be welcome to stay in Wales!

The most difficult subjects can be explained to the most slow-witted man if he has not formed any idea of them already; but the simplest thing cannot be made clear to the most intelligent man if he is firmly persuaded that he knows already, without a shadow of doubt, what is laid before him.

Leo Tolstoy



Our last "A Learning Adventure Camp 2017" had a huge surprise for me, when Felix son of George from Sustria applied and joined the camp, 30 years ago had the pleasure of hosting his father Gorge!



Once again an unforgettable experience specially designed for the adventurous who would like to combine their time spent gaining knowledge with having fun! Learn about the ancient culture and religions- Hinduism

and Buddhism-at the holiest city of Puri, with its marvelous temples dating from 3rd century, situated at the exotic sea resort in the Bay of Bengal. From there on to the picturesque Himalayan State of Sikkim, in the city of Peling and Gangtok, visiting the oldest monasteries, interacting with the Lamas. Browse in the only Buddhist University in the world, engage in discourses with the monks at the breathtaking Rumtek Monastery.

Visit the world's largest mangrove forest in the back waters of Bay of Bengal, far from the madding crowd, cruise in the river and be lucky to sight a tiger in the wilderness. Along with 41 exchange students we were so fortunate to sight one in 2011. It has left an unforgettable deep impact!



The city Of Joy-Calcutta-Rev. Mother Teresa's Tomb pay homage to a modern Saint. The city which once was capital of India during British Rule, with its monuments and the oldest Rotary Club in Asia. Not to miss the shopping, which you will find to be delightfully cheap.

A meeting with Master Sculpturer and visit to his art gallery and workshop in Puri. A visit to an ARTI-SANS village, declared a world heritage VILLAGE, where each home is an artist's workshop. The Sun Temple of KONARK will be spellbinding, a 11th century masterpiece! And in Sikkim, Gangtok, flower show with some of the best orchids. One of the world's highest lake, Tsongo, is a spectacular site situated at a height of more than 4000 mts. With view of the world's highest peaks! Added to all this will be white river rafting in the river Teesta.

The adventure does not end here. The tremendous varieties in food, the people with 18 official languages, with 50 more and 1000 of dialects. Melting pot of different clothes, culture, religions which coexist and not speak of different folk and classical dances. Memorable two weeks of everlasting impact.



Dear Surinder!

First and foremost thank you so very much that for these two weeks we had this unique opportunity to catch a glimpse of an entirely different world. It was great fun spending my time with new people in a place I had never been to before, and I think I speak in behalf of everyone who came with me on this camp that it was a great lesson about life for us all.

What I have always thought about the camps that Rotary International offers throughout the year is that during such a stay in another country you meet people you would have most likely never met in your entire lifetime, and this is what we learnt about India and its culture what I cherish most thinking back to this extraordinary time. I understand that we were a particularly small group, but I think that this enabled each of us to form an even tighter bond during our time in India. Everyone brought a piece of their country and culture with them on this trip and shared it with everyone in the group, and this is what I think this camp is also about, not only getting to know the country you're in right now, but also learning about everyone else's.

As I said I had never before been to India, and you told us to leave behind anything we might have heard or read about India, forget all possible prejudices and come here with an open mind. So I did, and I was overwhelmed by this country: the cities, the people, the lifestyle, I could go on. I was baffled by some of the things (traffic for example) and I was very happy to see, that the India you showed us was so close to the "real" India, in a way that no ordinary tourist trip could have ever shown us. I became immersed in this country and I every day I thought to myself "that's all there is for now", but I was wrong. Every day you showed us something new, something exciting.

Finally I would like to add, how much it was to have Ashok with us on this trip! He was always in a good mood and did his best to keep everybody in a good mood (and also well fed). I feel like it couldn't possibly have been the same without.

30 years ago my father joined you on one of your first camps, saw the country, made friends he still regularly sees back home, and probably took a whole lot of photos. Now I had the honour - 3 decades later - to step into his footsteps and I hope I can do him justice. Speaking of photos, I will add a link at the end of this e-mail leading to the pictures I took.

Again thank you for everything you have done for us, it's not self-evident that someone takes his time to show some youngsters around their country, but you did and we are all very grateful that you did. Rest assured that you are always welcome in our home in Wolfsberg, I'm sure that everyone would be happy to have you.

Best wishes to you and Ashok and I hope I'll see you again in the near future

Dear Surinder and Ashok

I do not know where to start. There is so much to say and so much to thank you for!

First of all I'm thankful that I was able to join the camp, meeting you both and all the other students from all over the world. It is truly amazing that such a camp exists and gives us young people the chance to travel to a completely different country with totally different people. We didn't only get to know each other but also India, or at least a part of India. I fell in love with India. Maybe it's the way people behave, the culture, the food, the smell in the air, the crowded cities, the landscapes, the trains, the faces or the versatility. All together made it so special and different to all of the things I knew and saw before.

There's nothing I regret seeing, even if it wasn't happiness only and not that heart warming, those were the things that made me think about the world and myself differently.

So I wouldn't change anything of what we've done, where we've travelled to or what we've seen. Everything was necessary. At every place we were, I learned something new, saw something new, got to know someone who's living a completely different life than I do and having a conversation about something we're both interested in. Here are just a few things that made this experience unforgettable:

- The Village near our resort in Sunderbans.
- The bus ride to the Sunderbans and back. I couldn't stop looking at all the people, the architecture, the nature, the agriculture and the change from the rural area to the city.
- All the train rides. It was a totally new train experience for me, which I loved. The beds, the open doors, the rats at the trainstations, all the people and the changing landscapes from Kolkata to Shiliguri.
- The car ride from Siliguri to Peling with Pizzas and baggage on our knees driving through a kind of valley, the changing faces of the people and the adventurous road.
- Peling and its surroundings, which kind of reminded me of Switzerland. I really enjoyed driving around with the car, hiking and visiting the Buddhisttemples.
- The last afternoon/evening in Gangtok, which we spent with some of the people from the school.
- The food in general, especially "Nan"!
- The last day in Kolkata, where we got to spend the day with our host family.
- The taxi drives.
- And last but not least; talking to you and Ashok was probably one of the things I enjoyed the most. It was so interesting listening to you and so nice that we could ask you anything we wanted. That you guided us throughout the whole trip and helped whenever we needed your help. Thank you!

I'll always remember our trip and the time we spent together.

I hope to see you soon in India or maybe in Switzerland. Both of you are always welcome at my home!

All the best for you and your family.



Dear Surinder,

first of all, I'm very sorry that it took so long to write this E-Mail. You were so right, when you said that we wouldn't have time for it, being back in our home countries.

And I want to thank you for this amazing trip in India:

At first, I was a little afraid to go to India, because you hear so much bad stuff about it, especially how dangerous it is for women. But then I thought, if I go with Rotary, it will be super safe.

And so it was. I never felt uncomfortable or in danger. And we learned so much about India and the Indian culture. It was great to have you and Ashok with us, because you have such a great knowledge and could teach us so much! I also learned so much about all the other countries the people came from.

I loved to see the beautiful nature and monasteries in Sikkim and to be with our host families in Kolkata. They were so warm and welcoming! And I think it would be a wonderful idea to expand the program, so you can spend some more time in a host family.

The Sunderbans were also great and so different from Kolkata. Suddenly you wouldn't hear anything but the nature.

And the sea in Puri was beautiful. It was also really interesting to visit the Meditation center and the old Konark temple.

It was so funny to take the train to all the different places and see, how the people in India travel. Also the streets in Sikkim were incredible!

I can't thank you enough for giving me this amazing chance!

If you come to Germany, just give me a call, and I'll do my best to make your stay as perfect as mine in India.

Regards,

Imke

Dear Surrinder,

thank you so much for taking us with you to this amazing trip. I am so glad that I came to India and experienced the beauty, diversity and pureness of this country. I have learned a lot, not just about the Indian culture, religion or food but also about life, people, happiness and myself. I will never forget this incredible time we have had in India all together, the beautiful and happy moments as well as the sad and frustrating moments. I will always remember it with pleasure. It is great that in two weeks I found many new and very good friends from different countries and we all share this incredible experience of the travel to India with each other.

It is an amazing and great gift for every student who joins this trip, that you travel with them and with us and show the real India, teach us and help us.

Thank you for making this adventure possible.

I am also very happy, that you brought Ashok with you this year, he was a great company and I like him a lot.

I wish you the very best, know that you are always welcome in my house in Germany.

Lots of love and greetings,

Lea

Dear Surinder,

first of all - sorry for sending you the report so late. :)

Maybe I am so late because I really don't know what to write or how to find the correct words to describe my emotions and impressions of this 2 weeks I was allowed to spend with you.

The day before we left our home countries was really weird - it felt like there would be an earthquake in my stomach and many questions came to my mind, like: Lisa are you serious? You are going all alone to India? You don't know anybody? How will the group be? It is a completely different country and not compareable to any other country you have seen before? What if you get sick? What about the raped women you always hear about in western news? etc.

Than Felix arrived at my parents home at about 6.30 pm and he really took all my nervousness away in not even 5 minutes.

So now, 2 weeks after arriving back home and coming down and thinking about everything I have experienced - all the questions which came to my mind before departure to India were completely not worth it to think about - not even 1 second. Actually, I feel kind of ashamed for my thoughts.

I have never been to such a well planned trip. From the beginning when you picked us up from the airport when you suddenly stood in the middle of our desperately looking group and saying with your deep, big voice "Hy. I am Surinder." (will never forget that first impression of you "what a self esteem - this guy will be able to take care of us"). Till the last day when you ordered us the taxi and told us "give them 400 rupees, not more" and waking up for us to say "goodbye" - it was just perfect.

The group was awesome - I will never forget the question of Miss Switzerland "Lisa, don't you get bored of us younger ones?" I told her that I really don't care about the age, I care about how you treat me. That has nothing to do with age, it has something to do with everyones character. All of us are in an age where everyone is trying to find their own way of life, to take the raw character and try to polish it - like a diamond, to become the person you want to be in life. Open minded people, like we are, are always trying to exchange with others, to experience other cultures, to get to know other opinions and most important - we try to use our brain. We had such great conversations with so many different opinions and experiences - it was awesome.

It was so great to really get in touch with indian people like in the meditation centre, the art village, the school, the village in sunderbans, the host family and last but not least for sure Ashok and you. The white river rafting was so much fun, this memory puts a smile on my face now. I was in the boat with Darius and Filippo so you may could imagine how much fun it was. Really crazy boys. Ashok had a save place in the middle of the boat. The sweet pineapple after the boat trip was divine.

There are so many memories in my mind combined with so many positive emotions, I nearly could write a book.

Just some facts to keep it short and simple:

"Reduce your desires and you reduce your problems"

"The difference between like and love. If you like a flower, you just pluck it. But when you love a flower, you water it daily."

(A memorable moment with Ashok - we have seen the plate with this sentence on it at the last monastery - as we started to say the sentence "thats one of the most beautiful sentences I have ever heard in my life" at the same second and looking at each other) I don't know if he remembers, but I will always remember. He had this sureness and truth in his eyes.

Your so true explanation of how to get to know other cultures and countries through eating and that you have never eaten indian food in an other country - I don't know if you remember this conversation with me in sunderbans. (Just a short excerpt of it)

So for me and the development of my personality this definetely was the most useful trip I have ever had.

Every day was worth it waking up, every trip was worth it to participate.

One more time I really want to thank you for your time you spent with us, for your patience and for giving us the possibility to get to know this beautiful country. It maybe was just a small piece of India but I have an impression now.

Big THANKS and I wish you all the best for your future und for the following camps - may you will be able to organize it one more 30 years.

Send big, warum hugs to you and Ashok

Best regards

Maximum participation will be 30 and on first come basis. Age 16-25 years. Registration Rupees 82,000 (current rate is 1 Euro = ₹72/-) INCLUDES: Traveling on trains (airconditioned with sleeper berth), local transport. Site-seeing. Meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Accommodation-3 to a room with attached bath all in reasonably good hotels and resorts DOES NOT INCLUDE: Cold drinks, mineral water, laundry, telephone, ENTRY FEE TO SOME MONUMENTS, WHITE RIVER RAFTING and anything extra which is not included in the above. All train and hotel reservations have to be done three months in advance.

HENCE IT MUST BE A FIRM COMMITMENT

1st Day:

Participants to report on 28th March by 8.00 am. at Kolkata International Airport.



Emirate Airways has convenient flight from their hub in Dubai, which has connections to most countries. After arrival Check into Hotel. Debriefing and orientation.



2nd Day:

Depart for Sunderbans after early Breakfast 5 Hours journey by Bus and Boat. Arrive in Sunderbans Tiger Resort. Cruise on the backwaters. Evening "Jumer" Folk dance followed by camp fire.

3rd Day :

Cruise, Breakfast on boat. After lunch visit a ethnic village. Evening A folk ballet "Yatra", followed by camp fire.



4th Day :

Early morning Yoga under guidance Yoga teacher. Early morning Cruise. Check-out and depart for Kolkata. Evening Depart by train for Puri overnight journey.

5th Day :

Arrival Puri Check into Resort. Early morning Yoga under guidance Yoga teacher. Beach Activity. After Breakfast Visit Meditation Centre. After Lunch - Visits to a) Ancient City of Puri b) Visit Art Gallery and the workshop c) Beach Market. Return to Resort.

6th Day :

Early morning Yoga under guidance Yoga teacher. Morning-beach activities. After Breakfast visit Famous 11th Century Sun Temple "Konark". Typical Indian style Lunch. Followed by visit to the heritage village GUTI PAO dance.



7th Day :

Early morning Yoga under guidance Yoga teacher. Morning beach activities - check-out 12 p.m chinese lunch. Depart by train for Sikkim. Arriving following day at 12.40 p.m.

8th Day :

Arrive in Siliguri afternoon and depart for Peling. A beautiful picturesque town up in the Himalayas with ancient Buddhist Monasteries. 4-5 hours picturesque drive. Stay in Norbu Gang Resort.

9th Day :

Early Morning breakfast followed by trek to ancient monasteries. Return to resort for lunch. Followed by another trek.

10th Day :

After Early Morning Breakfast depart for YAKSAM. Return to resort by evening.

11th Day :

Check out After Early breakfast. Depart for Gangtok. Visit Buddha





Dham at Reva Bangla. Also visit Temi tea garden and factory. Gangtok hotel check in evening visit Tibetan museum.

12 th Day :

After early breakfast, depart for Tsongpo Lake. One of the highest in the world. Again drive through the most

spectacular view of the Himalaya. Return to hotel for lunch. Evening free for exploring the town and shopping.



Lamas and learn about Buddhism followed by White River Rafting. Evening catch overnight train for Kolkata.

14th Day :

Arrive in Kolkata check in hotel after lunch home stay with Rotarian family. Evening farewell dinner.

15th Day :

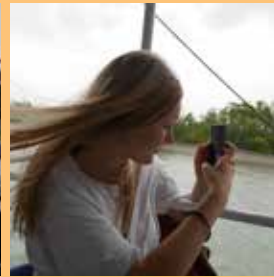
Depart for your countries and home, as per your schedule.

13th Day :

Early Breakfast and check-out. Visit Rumtek Monastery, seminary for the Lamas and the only Buddhist University. Interact with the



What you are is what you have been, what you'll be is what you do now.
-Buddha



IMPORTANT:

1. PARTICIPANTS MUST HAVE INSURANCE AGAINST ILLNESS, ACCIDENTS AS PER ROTARY INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES.
2. While applying for Indian Visa must get "Visit to Sikkim" included.
3. Bring copies of your passports with visas along with copies of your photograph for obtaining permission to travel in restricted areas.
4. Travel as light as possible, include one formal beach wear, walking shoes. A windcheater for Sikkim, where it will be cold. Otherwise will be quite warm 30-38 celsius.
5. Please don't bring expensive jewelry etc as we will not be responsible.
6. Registration amount bring in Cash convenient to change here.

Feel free to contact for any further clarifications : Himalayan Multi-District-India
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