



## APPLICATION FOR THE EXPLORERS MUSEUM PENNANT

Applications by email should be sent to: [info@explorersmuseum.org](mailto:info@explorersmuseum.org)

**Name:** Paul Devaney

**Connection/Affiliation with The Explorers Museum:** via Tim Lavery

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**Name of Expedition:** Irish Seven Summits – Everest 2015

**Why do you believe that the expedition/project merits carrying TEM Pennant:**

I carried the pennant on request from Explorers Museum.

**Geographic Region(s):** Asia

**Countries:** Nepal

**Ultimate Destination:** Everest Base Camp

**Latitude N:** 28.0072222

**Longitude W:** 86.8594444

**Itinerary and routing please include locations, means of transportation, as well as any subsistence arrangements required.**

Arrive Kathmandu – Flight March 30<sup>th</sup>

Arrive Lukla – Flight April 1<sup>st</sup>

Trekking for 15 days through Khumbu valley to base of acclimatizing peaks

Completed Island Peak (6200m) and Pokalde (5600m) en route to Base Camp

Trekking to Everest Base Camp – Arrived on 19<sup>th</sup> April

Climbed through Khumbu Icefall 80% of way to Camp 1 on 24<sup>th</sup> April.

Preparing to begin first rotation to Camps 1, 2 & 3 from 25<sup>th</sup> April.

Expected summit window on 15-25<sup>th</sup> May

(Earthquake occurred on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 11.56am, expedition abandoned)

**Please list other team members and additional personnel:**

Mingma Tsiri Sherpa (Ascent Himalayas Trek & Expedition) – 19 times Everest summits

**Have you or any member of the expedition carried the TEM Pennant before? If so, state Pennant number and date of expedition.**

No

**State your role in this project and your qualifications.**

**Date of departure:** 29<sup>th</sup> March 2015

**Expected date of return:** 5<sup>th</sup> June 2015 (Actual return was 16<sup>th</sup> May 2015)

**NOTE: Please contact The Explorers Museum should your expected date of return changes.**

**How is the expedition to be financed? (List as is applicable, travel, housing and subsistence supplies.)** Self Funded

**Indicate approximate total cost of expedition.** \$45,000

**Please list the institutions and/or individuals sponsoring the expedition** N-A

**Have you and/or the expedition any commercial affiliations, obligations, or contracts with any commercial organizations?**

**If yes, please clarify.** Not for Everest 2015

**List any supplementary material and attach to this application (limited to ten pages).**

Trip report is attached to this document.

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**This section for use only by The Explorers Museum Pennant Committee**

Review Committee:

Comments:

Approved: (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Pennant # Assigned: \_\_\_\_\_

Not Approved: (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

## Everest 2015: Trip Report

### Day 49 - 16th May (Ireland):

Journeys end. It didn't quite go as planned now did it. Such is life I suppose. Good to be home. Thank you to everyone for the kind messages of support over the past weeks. I really appreciated it. I tracked some key data during the Everest 2015 mission as follows.

Climbing/Hiking Days = 23  
Average Heart Rate = 113 bpm  
Calories Burned = 51,328 kCal  
Total Steps = 216,997  
Total Ascent = 9483m  
Total Distance = 143km  
Total Time = 97 Hours

### Day 48 - 15th May (Earthquake Relief - Project #5):

Earthquake Relief - Project #5... Early this morning Paul and the team hit up the village of Dharmasthali (less than half an hour from Kathmandu city centre) to distribute tarps and blankets on behalf of Nepal Ireland Society. The area has 5500 inhabitants and the village had 550 homes. Now 350 homes are completely destroyed and 140 homes are partly damaged and many are now uninhabitable. 16 people died in this village which is around the size of Ballinalee and frankly it's amazing the number was not much higher based on the damage we observed. The damage is pretty widespread and quite visually powerful. I was struck by how little recovery work had been started in a village located so close to Kathmandu city centre in the 20 days since the big quake. If this village was anything to go by then the areas affected in the countryside had better fend for themselves rather than wait for government help to arrive! Paul met and spoke to the Rotary Club of Tripureswore team and president who were on site planning construction of temp shelters over the coming 4 weeks before monsoon season (on their own initiative). They plan to try and attract enough donors to build 300 shelters using corrugated iron and wood to help protect the villagers from the monsoons and in the period until rebuild can occur. Each shelter will cost \$120. They were keen to get started and were well organised. Many thanks to Nepal Ireland Society team locally for helping to arrange today's aid distribution to a very needy village keen to rebuild and stand tall again soon. This is my final in-country activity. Farewell for now Nepal, see you again in better times.

### Day 47 - 14th May (Earthquake Relief - Project #4):

Earthquake Relief - Project #4... Today Paul supported Nepal Ireland Society in distributing shelter material and blankets to the Kathmandu village of Matatirthe where we encountered our first experience of anger by locals at the lack of general support in the wake of the Great Earthquake. The anger was palpable and looked at times like it might escalate into something further. We quickly went about our business of distribution and left. While the locals no doubt

appreciate the gesture, they are very evidently growing impatient at the lack of sizable, tangible support either via government or NGO. The list of needy was determined largely by the strongest voice in the village and one large domineering local was much much louder than the rest and seemed to be dictating terms. He wanted all supplies to be given to him to distribute afterwards. No deal from our side! In the end we distributed items individually based on guidance provided by him and others. All in all not an ideal situation or environment but the anger is understandable when a small Irish group end up being the first and only sign of help in a Kathmandu suburb 20 days after the earthquake!!!

#### Day 46 - 13th May (Earthquake Relief - Project #3):

Earthquake Relief - Project #3... Paul provided assistance to the Nepal Ireland society in the distribution of shelter material to two villages on the outskirts of Kathmandu today. Halchowk with a population of 600 has seen almost half of the houses completely destroyed and four villagers killed in the Great Earthquake. Meanwhile the nearby village of Ramkot lost 22 villagers, 59 sustained injuries, 85 houses were destroyed and 696 were badly damaged. Both villages badly needed shelter materials ahead of the monsoon season and were very glad to see us. This is your money in action so credit to Deepesh, Dhana, Rabi, Rajender and Rannu for conspiring to make today's project a reality. We will be out in two more villages tomorrow.

#### Day 45 - 12th May (Another Earthquake!!!):

EARTHQUAKE #2! Delay in update due to phone smashed on the floor when the building I was in started moving about the place in the earthquake today. I have never moved so quickly to get down to the street level in the Thamel district of Kathmandu. Everyone took to the streets in fear again and there has since been a mass exodus from the city. The tents are back in the parks and people are scared to go back indoors. Frightening experience just as we were about to head out to distribute shelter materials in some of the villages. I walked a bit of the city afterwards and (apart from the eeriness of nobody around) there did not appear to be much additional damage. My legs still feel the ground moving under them but im fine and will be sleeping with one eye open tonight and have packed a kit of everything I need to stay outside if I have to cut and run for the streets again. Paul spent last night sleeping outdoors in tents with Mingma Tsiri Sherpa and his neighbours all in fear of further shakes. We had a 5.2 quake at 3am and a further half dozen tremors between 4.0 & 5.0 on the scale since then. No more sleeping indoors for now.

#### Day 42 - 9th May (Earthquake Relief - Project #2):

Paul went to work in the village of Chisapani Palanchowk in Kavre District where he helped to establish a temporary medical camp. The medical supplies were sponsored directly from Nepal Ireland earthquake relief funds and the medical team of doctors, nurses & sisters came voluntarily from Nepal Cancer Hospital in Kathmandu. The village is in quite a rural location in the hills and was very badly affected by the quake. Upon arrival we set up an assessment area using an outhouse and some polythene cover and the medicine distribution area was

established in a local house. Around 200 locals from the village and surrounding area for medical assistance and assessment. While the doctors were assessing and writing prescriptions for the people outside, the sisters from the hospital were inside administering medicines to those with prescriptions. The medical team was very well organised and efficient. Very cool to see them in full flow doing what they love to do and helping their fellow Nepalese too. The village had taken some major trauma during the quake with most houses majorly damaged or destroyed and the school also reduced to rubble. The locals have since purchased corrugation for roofing and constructed a temporary shelter as well as sourcing a Chinese Relief Aid tent too and so they have cover and are OK for now but they face the prospect of rebuilding houses that had stood for 40-50 years and the threats of landslide and flooding that will come once the monsoons hit. Goats and other livestock are also unprotected and in danger from wild animals. The local population are very resourceful and upbeat and are focused on the rebuild of their homes. They really appreciated the medical camp support and the medical team themselves were excellent and really enjoyed the project. It was a privilege to assist such a positive and generous group of Nepalese professionals and it was fantastic to be part of putting Nepal Ireland Society fundraising to good use here in Nepal. This is your money at work so thank you to everyone who donates to whatever cause you are supporting in Nepal. This was the first of a series of projects planned by Nepal Ireland Society to help put your funds to work locally. Information on other projects will be available shortly.

#### Day 39 - 6th May (Kathmandu):

Spoke with our lead Sherpa Pesang this morning here in Kathmandu. He is attempting an air drop to his village with food, meds and tents. I am attempting to link with him to help facilitate that activity with some funds from Ireland. I meet with Deepesh from Nepal Ireland here in Kathmandu tomorrow to better understand how best to direct funding so it reaches those in most immediate need. I met the Smithsonian Television documentary crew today here in the city to do some filming. Tomorrow I travel to the Ministry of Tourism to close out paperwork for our abandoned Everest expedition with Mingma Tsiri Sherpa. Most of the climbing team has flew home now so its time to close out that side of things.

#### Day 38 - 5th May (Kathmandu - Summary):

At this stage in post earthquake Nepal the difficulty is to establish where the most affected areas are and where our fundraising efforts should be focused. Here are some facts to consider... Dead: 7366, Injured: 14371

70% of those who died lived in the 'Central Region' of Nepal while 23% lived in the Kathmandu Valley (including the city of Kathmandu). In terms of affected districts here is the latest breakdown of fatalities...

*Sindhupalchok 2838, Kathmandu 1202, Nuwakot 798, Gorkha 412, Dhading 686, Rasuwa 433, Kavre 313, Bhaktapur 294, Lalitpur 173, Dolakha 69 (Includes Rolwaling village), Makmanpur 34, Ramechhap 26, Solukhumbu 22, Okhaldhunga 19, Sindhuli 10.*

The pareto of fatalities does not directly relate however to the areas of greatest need right now. The greatest need is in the villages and not in Kathmandu. I can say that having walked the city and spoken to medical personnel from Stanford Medical who have given me first hand accounts from some villages they visited via helicopter in recent days.

In terms of the earthquake itself the damage in the city seems very localised and not very widespread. Deepak Chamlagain who has worked for 15 years as a seismologist in Nepal said the following in the Kathmandu Post yesterday:

"In many areas of Kathmandu and Lalitpur it doesn't even look like an earthquake has just taken place. If we go towards the edges of the Kathmandu Valley, towards where the hills begin, there we can see the extent of the damage. Look at Bhaktapur, Sanjhu and Bungmati. There is massive damage. What has happened is that soil structure of the Valley propagated and amplified the shock waves towards the edges where the waves met the rock structures and were bounced back. That is where the damage occurred. The science here says that the cause of the damage is the amplification of the seismic wave energy. It is not just because of poor construction of buildings. It is because the soil conditions were not investigated and efforts were not undertaken to strengthen the quality of the soil."

For those in the mostly affected rural villages, monsoon season is less than a month away and the race now is to ensure that folks in those mountain village areas have somewhere to sleep and enough food and fuel to make it through that period. For some villages the priority is tents and food, for others its just food and meds. Folks in the mountains are resourceful. They built villages at 4000m with no roads or transport routes of any type, so they will find a way to source what they need to rebuild their villages over time. But right now they need the basics and in some cases they need medical expertise too to aid the wounded.

Many of our Sherpa come from a village in Dolakha district called Rolwaling. The villagers have all evacuated to a different location where they are staying in tents, so they are structurally fine for now and just need a supply of food and meds. They were lucky because next door in Beding the village was wiped out and the same happened in Langtang where part of the glacier released and basically carved the entire village off the face of the earth. It is gone without any trace. Other villages suffered significant structural damage and landslides due to the soil type which isolates them from rescue and relief. Many are living under tarp or whatever makeshift materials they can get their hands on, which won't bear up well when the rains come.

I am attempting to link with locals and our Sherpa to see how funds raised in Ireland could go directly into food or aid drops to some of these most effected villages. In the meantime please can you check where your funds are going and please be insistent in knowing that they are going to those most in need.

I will write shortly with some specific recommendations and perhaps even an option for a direct set of food drops via helicopter using local contacts here sponsored directly by funds raised in

Ireland. Many great organisations are out here attempting exactly this on a larger scale but use of government helicopters will result in delays due to bureaucracy and local political ineptitude which may then require more local solutions and time is ticking by.

Economically it is estimated that 80% of all hotel bookings in Kathmandu have now been cancelled and the footfall of foreign tourists is very visibly impacted. With Everest now closed the trekking influx has come to an immediate halt. Nobody is coming here for climbing or trekking right now (understandably) and the local economy will have a very difficult time as a result. But generally in terms of day to day commerce, the city of Kathmandu is getting back to a form of normal. The streets which were eerily empty are filling back up again and the traffic is starting to return to the usual frantic levels that visitors to Nepal have come to expect and love.

The most enduring aspect of this tragedy for me is the attitude of the local Nepalese. Smiling, positive, getting on with life. The quake has rocked their city but it has not shaken their resolve. From the newly homeless guy in the tent learning Korean to the stall merchants in Thamel, this city is getting back on its feet thanks to the amazing positive attitude of its citizens. There is much more to be done and many opinions about how best to do it. I hope I can offer some clarity soon as to how best to channel our small contributions to ensure it reaches those in greatest need.

#### Day 37 - 4th May (Kathmandu):

Interesting 48 hours in Kathmandu. Got to see some of the major structural damage especially to the historic buildings in the city. Also went to see the camps set up in the centre of the city. Spoke to Raj in one tent where he was studying Korean to enable him to work in Korea even though his house 10km outside Kathmandu was gone and he was now living in a tiny tent. No winging or crying about entitlements, just big smiles and trying to find a route out of his dilemma.

Joined the Redpoint/Ripcord team and Stanford medical team at the military base at the airport this evening to chat with the Ambulance service team who are doing a great job. They have 5 public ambulances for the city and the EMT guys were amazingly well trained and tuned in. While I was there an Indian Air Force helicopter arrived with a patient who went through triage before being ferried to a Kathmandu hospital.

While I was at the airport the US Marines arrived in some style with two Ospreys and a jet. Amazing to watch. Lets hope they can help the effort to get support for rural valley communities still badly effected.

#### Day 36 - 3rd May (Earthquake Relief - Project #1):

Today Paul joined the Ripcord guys (Al, Matt and Rebecca from Stanford Medical) in getting food aid to a Gorkha village via helicopter and Paul reported that the Redpoint/Ripcord guys done an absolute awesome job and really made an impact in a small rural village. He met US

army special ops team member Josh at the helipad in the airport who gave him a good run down on status of support across the country.

Kathmandu is getting back to normal now but the rural villages affected by the quake have a long road to go including Rolwaling where many of our Sherpa come from.

Please continue to support these incredible Nepalese folks in the days and weeks ahead thru the Nepal Ireland fund especially as the news cycle moves on and leaves many villagers facing into an uncertain future with the monsoon season looming.

#### Day 35 - 2nd May (Kathmandu):

Paul arrived in Kathmandu this morning from Lukla and met the Ripcord/Redpoint guys at the airport for a quick chat. They saw lots of destruction on the way into the airport but centre area where they are now is fine. Lots of Antonov aircraft from Russia and China at the airport offloading relief supplies. Now to work a plan to make myself useful here. Thanks to Bupa/IHI Travel Insurance in Denmark for helping to take care of Pauls journey to Kathmandu today.

Our expedition team are all safely off the mountain. Most are still in Kathmandu and looking at ways to help the relief effort. Thank you to Mingma, Pesang, Palden, Cchering & Furtemba and our team of dedicated Sherpa for your support during the quake and our descent. More on the relief effort and my 24 hours working with the Redpoint/Ripcord team shortly.

#### Day 34 - 1st May (Namche - Summary):

I am in Namche at 3400m and plotting the long move further down the valley towards Kathmandu airport tomorrow to base myself for the next phase of activity which will hopefully involve relief work. Lukla airport is 10km from here and would normally be the main air route back to Kathmandu but the crowds and reports of disorder in the airport there means that we will likely try to bypass it completely and find an alternative route to Kathmandu.

The first member of our team successfully made it back to Kathmandu today to receive treatment on an ankle injury before planning her trip back home. The remaining 6 climbers remain here in Namche with Mingma, Pesang and Palden who are doing a great job. Our trek down from base camp has been quite lonesome with almost nobody else on the route. Happily we have not been a burden as the houses have been empty and our custom was actually very welcome. The Gurka 200e team are here too and all are planning to move south shortly.

Namche is typically packed with tourists and trekkers at this time of year but we have the town to ourselves now. In fact the 7 hour route from Pheriche to here was pretty much empty throughout. It was uniquely eerie and echoed the challenges this area will face going forward with reduced footfall in the post earthquake Nepal. What is obvious is that the base camp route is not majorly effected with very little sign of major destruction. There are many areas of great need in Nepal but the Khumbu valley is not among them.



Reports have also been circulating for the past 24 hours that the South Side of Everest will be reopened to climbers within a matter of days. This story has been coupled with the fact that Russ Bryce's HimEx team are still at base camp and so many are postulating that Russ will lead a restart of the season. This is not accurate - the season here is over! HiMex were one of the teams at the centre of crisis management post the earthquake at base camp and they are only now emerging to plot their journey home.

Yesterday we did observe first hand the ferrying of many ladders labeled "SPCC 2015" towards base camp. We asked one of the porters to confirm the destination and he told us that they were bound for the icefall. It seemed the season was somehow being restarted... or so we thought.

The reality is that the SPCC (a government organisation responsible for management of Everest including securing of the icefall and roping of the upper mountain) have been told by the Ministry to re route the icefall and enable conditions such that climbers can in theory continue. However almost all teams have left Base Camp and most have left the Khumbu Valley altogether while the final team remaining in base camp (HimEx) confirmed today that they will be departing for home shortly too. So why are the SPCC preparing an icefall for a season without climbers?

They are doing so in order that the Ministry can avoid granting permit holders such as myself and my team an extension of a year or more to the climbing permit (worth \$11k). The ministry has ludicrously forced people to carry ladders up to EBC in recent days in order to create a simulated "season is back on" facade to permit extensions which are actually enshrined in law in event of an earthquake. It is also worth noting that while a restoration of the icefall will enable clients to reach Camp 1, it does not resolve the issue of roping the Lhotse Face and upper mountain which typically involves a 15 strong sherpa team - a team which currently does not exist at base camp and is unlikely to materialise in an abandoned camp.

Below us in a chaotic Kathmandu, many Nepalese are growing impatient at the inaction of their government in reacting effectively to the needs of a growing number of homeless and hungry victims of the earthquake. In the rural valley areas there appears to be wide distrust of government and the distinct feeling that you must buck your own goat to survive this catastrophe because nobody from Kathmandu is going to help and any funds sent to the government will never find its way out into the rural areas.

The road ahead remains long and uncertain for many here in Nepal. Tomorrow I will reach Kathmandu and this project will shift from mountaineering to relief work.

### Day 33 - 30th April (Namche):

Reached Namche after trekking for 7 hours at a good pace today. The route is completely empty - no trekkers or climbers to be seen anywhere and villages are virtually deserted with

some minor damage evident along the route. Due to congestion, reaching Lukla airbase and from there, Kathmandu, is not viable for a few days so they will set up camp and discuss their options.

#### Day 32 - 29th April (Pheriche):

Final day at Pheriche. Attempting to make it down towards Kathmandu airport via Namche and Lukla and locate there for a few days as we attempt to evacuate our team home. Not feasible to stay around the central area of Kathmandu due to the sheer volume of people and aid workers. Plans is to remain in Nepal and join in the relief work possibly in the remote village areas where the ability to operate at altitude will prove useful.

#### Day 31 - 28th April (Pheriche - Summary):

In Pheriche today and safe. Here is a more detailed account of the past 48 hours...

We had been in the icefall almost 70% of the way to camp 1 on 24th and 25th was changed to be a rest day at base camp before our planned move to camp 1 starting at midnight on 26th. We were in the food tent on morning of the quake on 25th and I noticed the table starting to move, then a violent movement. I ran outside and the entire Khumbu Glacier was moving violently under my feet. Our camp was directly under the icefall so I stared up at the icefall expecting any danger to come from there. The movement was extraordinary and exaggerated by the fact that we were stood on an active glacier.

My climbing buddy Teo from Norway screamed at me to turn around and I then saw a wall of snow as high as I could see coming towards our camp at frightening speed. It was a massive avalanche from Pumori triggered by the quake. We just had enough time to dive into the food tent and scurry under the table before the wall of snow and energy hit. Between the quake and the avalanche we didn't really know what had happened. A few minutes later I emerged from the tent and into the realisation that we had just been hit by a massive earthquake. We could see some action down towards the middle of camp and so our Sherpa Pasang grabbed some of our oxygen and went to investigate. I wanted to keep our climbers together for now so we stayed in camp. Some of our Sherpa were in camp 1 & 2 and I knew a handful of people who were up the mountain and at that point all of my worry was for those in the icefall or at camp 1 & 2. I never for a moment thought the tragedy would be less than 50 metres away and in base camp.

Within minutes a guide was in our camp shouting for people to help carry the injured. I shouted at the team to move and we headed for the medical camp. As we ran through base camp (which is around 1km long) the scale of the devastation became apparent. It was like a tornado zone. Entire camps flattened and personal effects and equipment scattered everywhere. The medical camp somehow survived but everything around it was destroyed. The medics were attempting a camp wide triage effort. I saw bodies lying waiting to be covered and a mixture of seriously wounded and walking wounded. It was like a war zone. We immediately got to work to help out. Both Sherpa and clients were as one in shouldering the load. I was asked to help carry seriously injured to the IMG camp. The system established was... seriously injured to IMG, walking wounded to HiMex and overflow to Asian Trekking. I was alongside my fellow climbers Teo and the 23 year old from Norway got stuck in without question as we spent hours helping to ferry injured and medical supplies to the key camps.

At IMG my old guide from Antarctica Greg was in charge and boy did he do an awesome job. I must pay incredible tribute to the medical team and to the IMG, HiMex and Asian Trekking teams who stood tall when everyone needed them. I was never so proud to see the depth of cooperation that took place and the great leadership from Greg, Russell and those who took charge of grim tasks. As the day wore on the death toll rose from a half dozen into double figures and eventually to the same level as 2014. The big good news was that everyone at camps 1 & 2 were ok. I can't tell you the relief... Paul, Ellen, Ellis, Alex and our own Sherpa were all ok. I wanted to scream with relief.

By the time I got back to my camp that evening I was exhausted and emotionally shattered. I wish I could have done more. I wish I could have got there earlier. I cannot find words to describe the heroics performed by the medical team and those charged with organising rescue and triage. I knew some of the people being treated for serious injury and I knew some of the people lying still under the blue plastic covers. I wanted to sit and cry but the danger of the quake was not passed and so we were instructed to put on our helmets and not to sleep so that we could react immediately. What followed was the longest night of my life. Every sound caused us to jump. I could still feel movement under my feet. It was not real but it felt real. We knew an aftershock was likely but we had no idea when or how big. I could still see in my mind that wall of snow and energy coming towards us like something from a movie. We were all very scared. I was scared to death. I was lucky. Our team were lucky. We had placed our camp in the right place, by chance and not design. Had we been in last year's location we would surely have been wiped out. I have to be honest that there was not much time to contemplate such things at the time. Next morning I went to IMG early to check on my buddy Paul and the docs told me

he had just been evacuated and was doing OK. I was so relieved. I could think of nothing else all night but how he was doing. The helicopter evacuations were in full flow at IMG and Greg was coordinating. I tried to keep him amused with some sarcastic banter and I gave him a few Boost bars to keep him fed. It was pathetic really but it was all I could do to help at that moment and he seemed to appreciate it. The death toll was now 15. Our expedition leader Mingma found a body under a crushed tent earlier in the morning. He and his brother Pasang were now helping to load injured onto helicopters.

Later in the afternoon we had an aftershock. I was in my tent which I had adjusted into a fortress with bags all around the perimeter. The earth shook and Teo ran into my tent. We covered ourselves with the mattress, helmets on and sat in absolute fear waiting to hear if an avalanche would be triggered. It didn't happen and there was wide relief. But by now we were all heavily unsettled. Another long night of sleepless waiting.

The next morning I spoke to Mingma and Pasang about what our options might be. We agreed that I would go speak to the biggest team on the mountain and assess the possibilities. It was a short conversation. The icefall was seriously damaged and it would be unlikely that a safe route could now be found. Also the families of many Sherpa were now homeless and so we were likely to see a massive outflow from base camp as they returned to help rebuild their homes. In short I was told that once our guys got back from high camps that we should pack up and leave. We also heard a report that a bigger shake might be coming. There was no Internet and so everything was unsubstantiated. We had to decide based on rumour and fact. With small avalanches being triggered every few hours the choice seemed clear. We needed to get out of the danger zone and down to safer levels. We hugged our sherpa when they finally arrived back from camp 2. It was time to go. I got the team together and Mingma instructed us to pack sleeping bag and warm clothes and that we would be evacuating to Pheriche some 7 hours south. I trekked thru the devastated base camp for the last time and met my good friend Paul Pottinger who had just been evacuated from Camp 2. I was so very glad to see him. We talked a little about what had happened and vowed to meet again in happier times. I diverted into IMG to see Greg and thank him for his great work. We agreed that we were done with Everest after two years of disasters and I wished him well. As I crossed the heli pad I saw Garreth Maddison standing over the body of his good friend and my heart bled for him. Two seasons of tragedy for him to endure. It was too much. It was unfair. I walked on and out of base camp for the last time with tears in my eyes. This was so unfair. People who just wanted to climb were dead.... at base camp for fuck sake! I was angry. I was hurting. I was selfishly mourning the end of my

seven summits project as if that mattered a crap at that moment. But all of the emotion of the previous days was leaking out and I couldn't help it.

I am now in the safety of Pheriche and now we sit and wait. The climbing season is most certainly over now. Our next decisions are about how to get home. This country has been shaken to its core. We are all in shock and it will take much time to process it all as well as all that has been seen and cannot be unseen. I am so very proud of my teammates for the way they helped those in need. I am in awe at the medical personnel and the teams at IMG, HiMex and Asian Trekking. I pay great tribute to the helicopter pilots who flew in difficult conditions to rescue climbers and evacuate injured. The road ahead is unclear but I hope the response to the Nepalese plight will be resounding and immediate.

#### Day 29 - 26th April - Evacuation:

The team has decided to evacuate to safer location and are on their way to Pheriche via Gorek Shep. There they will camp for the next 3 days and the groups will formulate a plan to determine the next steps. This morning Paul walked through the destruction at base camp where the extent of the disaster is beginning to hit hard. He described the past 48 hours as harrowing for all involved with the added terror of further tremors and avalanches taking hold over all those at camp since the quake. It is a heart breaking situation to see yet another tragedy strike the mountain and those who climb her. As Paul's camp was close to the start of the significant damage zone, he is very much cognizant that he and his crew are extremely fortunate to be able to tell the tale while so many others were not and thoughts continue to be with the families and loved ones of all those lost as well as those who have suffered injury during the disaster. Those still stationed at Camp 1 & 2 above Base Camp are being evacuated by helicopter and nor reports of injuries on their side. They include Sherpa from the Paul's crew who are safe and well. Once down, the plan is to evacuate all from Base Camp shortly and onto Pheriche where they will set up camp. Base Camp is no longer considered safe due to the possibility of further aftershocks and resulting avalanches. The plan is to then remain in Pheriche until the time comes when travelling to Kathmandu becomes viable, at which point they will be flown out of Nepal.

#### Day 29 - 26th April - Aftershock:

Paul has been in contact this morning and confirmed that they are unharmed following yesterdays disaster. Further avalanches triggered by a large aftershock occurred a short time ago. Unclear as to their effect. The scale of the disaster has taken their toll physically and

mentally as they and all able bodied climbers assist the Emergency Response unit on the mountain, tending to those affected. In excess of a dozen people dead at Base Camp. Helicopters arrived this morning at base camp to evacuate the injured. Awaiting climbers above Camp 1 & 2 to make their way back down once the icefall has been checked. Everyone is devastated by the loss of life both on the mountain and in Kathmandu and further afield and are thoughts are very much with those who have lost loved ones.

#### Day 27 - 25th April - EARTHQUAKE: Sat Phone update from Everest Base Camp:

Paul confirmed via Sat Phone from Everest Base Camp that an earthquake (since reported in news at magnitude 7.9) had hit the camp late morning and news reports tremors reaching as far as 200 miles away in India. The quake was felt significantly on the mountain with the team taking cover from the resultant effects (avalanche) but Paul and his crew are safe and unharmed.

Day 26 - 24rd April: Khumbu Icefall - Climbed 70% of the icefall today to get an idea of the task ahead to reach camp 1 before returning to Base Camp. Early start at 4am and climbed in the dark until dawn. Great experience and glad to be in the icefall at last.

Day 25 - 23rd April: Everest Base Camp - Rest day to prepare for first trip into the Khumbu Icefall at 4am.

Day 24 - 22nd April: Everest Base Camp - Training today on ladders, fixed ropes and abseiling near base camp.

Day 23 - 21st April: Everest Base Camp - Today is Puja Day. Climbers and their equipment are blessed ahead of the climb.

Day 22 - 20th April: Everest Base Camp - Today is rest day at the base camp with preparations ongoing for the next stage of the expedition on the upper mountain.

Day 21 - 19th April: Everest Base Camp (5400m) - Paul finally arrives into Everest Base Camp after a three week trek!

Day 20 - 18th April: Lobouche (4900m) - Today Paul moves past Chukhung to Lobuche en route to Base Camp.

**Day 19** - 17th April: Chukhung (4730m) - Paul moves back to Chukhung to prepare for the trip to Everest Base Camp.

**Day 18** - 16th April: Island Peak Summit (6189m) - Paul completes summit of Island Peak and back to 6000m for night.

**Day 17** - 15th April: Island Peak High Camp (6000m) - Moved from Base Camp to High Camp reaching 6000m for the first time on this trip.

**Day 16** - 14th April: Island Peak Base Camp (5080m) - Improved conditions allowed Paul trek To Island Base Camp for the next climb.

**Day 15** - 13th April: Chukhung (4730m) - Snow storm has limited movement keeping Paul and the team grounded.

**Day 14** - 12th April: Chukhung (4730m) - Today spend preparing for the upcoming trek and climb of Island Prak (6,200m).

**Day 13** - 11th April: Chukhung (4730m) - Arrived in Chukhung for well deserved rest day.

**Day 12** - 10th April: Pokalde (5600m) - Paul climbs to 5600 on Khomla Pass ridge. Pokalde summit not in condition to be climbed due to too much snow up high and across the pass.

**Day 11** - 9th April: Pokalde (5400m) - Paul climbs onward and upward from Base Camp to High Camp on Pokalde. Lots of snow!

**Day 10** - 8th April: Pokalde - Today's trek takes Paul to Pokalde Base Camp.

**Day 9** - 7th April: Dingboche (4410m) - Rest Day. Met Paul Greenan from Dublin and Dan from Google for coffee and chat.

**Day 8** - 6th April: Dingboche (5042m) - Today's hike takes Paul past the 5000m altitude level for first time on the trip.

**Day 7** - 5th April: Dingboche (4410m) - Arrive in Dingboche For Easter weekend. Received Lama blessing on Easter Sunday.

**Day 6** - 4th April: Pengboche (3985m) - Bypass Deboche and on to Pengboche after 7 hour trek.

**Day 5** - 3rd April: Namche Bazaar (3441m) - Acclimatization Day. Climbed to 3750m to catch the first glimpse of Everest.

**Day 4** - 2nd April: Namche Bazaar (3441m) - Trekked 6 hours from Phakding to Namche Bazaar.

**Day 3** - 1st April: Phakding (2610m) - Arrived in Lukla and from there, completed the first trek to Phakding.

**Day 2** - 31st March: Kathmandu (1345m) - Official formalities completed, permit in hand and preparations completed for tomorrow's flight to Lukla.

**Day 1** - 30th March: Kathmandu (1345m) - Arrived in Kathmandu after 20 hours flight.

**Day 0** - 29th March: Dublin Airport (0m) - Flight to Abu Dhabi en route to Kathmandu with over 30kg of gear and equipment and 2 years of training invested.