school aid India

NEWSLETTER

Letter from Helen Jones - Taking Stock

What a lovely autumn we've enjoyed this year. The countryside has been glowing for weeks as the foliage of shrubs and trees turns colour. It's very different in the foothills around Darjeeling, where the forests remain dark and sombre throughout the year since so few of the trees shed their leaves. Even so, I love the way the mountainsides take on a soft golden-brown hue in autumn, reminiscent of our own bracken-covered hills.

November is traditionally a good time to travel in the Himalayas, despite the intense cold made more severe by the altitude. The weather is usually dry, with bright sunny days when the gleaming white peaks stand out sharply against a deep blue sky. Exactly twenty years ago, I had an unforgettable week travelling through these foothills to reach a remote viewpoint on a high pass over 5,000 metres. From there, Everest was clearly visible, accompanied by several other mountain giants.



I felt deeply grateful to the team of local porters and cooks who made that journey possible, and I wanted to give something back to their community in return. From that feeling, the seed of an idea was planted- an idea that would eventually lead to the building of Roseberry School. It was especially meaningful that several of the labourers who later helped construct the school came from the Sherpa community, whose ancestors once accompanied the early Everest explorers as they set out from Darjeeling along the very route I had just travelled.

Banking matters

Our original account with Natwest is no longer in use.

Our current account is now with CAF Bank.
Acc. No 00034784
Sort code 40-52-40

Heartfelt thanks to all who continue to support the work of Roseberry School with regular payments.

Contact

Helen Jones
School Aid India
20 Sunnyfield
Great Ayton
TS9 6NT
Tel 07421389410
helen.r.jones@icloud.com
www.schoolaidindia.org

Small beginnings



Roseberry School opened with just 26 tiny pupils and three staff, but now has over 180 pupils and a team of 14 staff, including helpers. It is thriving. A handful of youngsters from the very first intake have recently completed their long journey through education: seven years at Roseberry, followed by eight years at secondary school, and three years of college preparing for professions such as teaching. They will graduate next year. What an achievement for these underprivileged members of society.

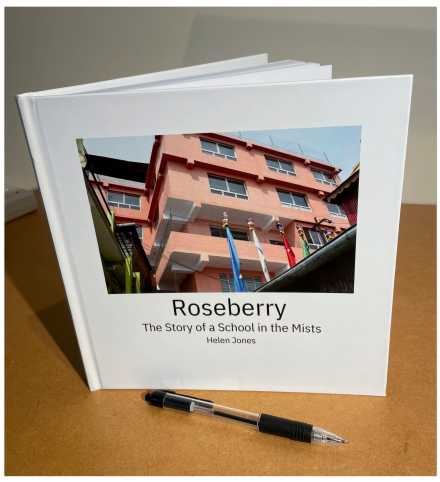
Importantly, it is not only the pupils who enjoy learning at Roseberry; the teachers themselves are continually developing and refining their skills. As one teacher remarked, “It is so interesting at Roseberry. Every year I learn something new.” Older staff are gradually nurturing the younger, less experienced teachers to take on greater responsibility as the next generation steps forward, further securing the school’s future.

Over the 18 years of its existence, we have worked together to safeguard Roseberry’s long-term sustainability by making it at least partially self-supporting through means-tested fees. Even so, financial support from SAI remains essential to our core aim of educating the poorest children entirely free of charge. Most of the other pupils pay a small, subsidised amount, enabling the school to remain accessible to all.

In the years ahead, a steady stream of Roseberry’s former pupils will enter the workforce, and I look forward enormously to seeing them become valued members of the community. This is where our hopes and dreams have led us, and I thank you for helping to make it all possible.

The whole story

As time passes, the early struggles and growing pains of Roseberry are fading into memory. Much of that story lay buried in piles of charity paperwork and site diaries from Darjeeling, so one day I set about reading through every document and drawing them together into an accessible record for the next generation. Writing the story became a real labour of love as I found myself immersed in nostalgia.



The resulting small book was prepared for printing by my grandson Thomas, and one exciting day in the summer the boxes of books finally arrived. The book was never really intended for sale, but after giving copies to those closely involved, a limited number remain available at £25 including postage. If you would like one, please email me at helen.r.jones@icloud.com with your name, postal address, and mobile number. All proceeds go to SAI.