

5 Apr 06

Hi there from Everest Base Camp! (north side in Tibet)

My mother has kindly passed on your message and I hope it will not take too long for this to be uploaded and sent back. Firstly please pass on my hello to all at the club, really miss training and socializing with you all. You really made my tour in NI at lot more fun and personal. I am enjoying Cambridge but have yet to get back into Tri training, too busy with Everest training. Though I am pleased to report to Tommy that I have improved my 1 km time down to 17mins 30sec (good for me as it used to be 19-20 mins!)

We have limited email access here but if I can I will try and email again. Have attached an extract from my email to my mother so will give you some idea of what is going on...

"After a few days feeling ill myself and one other of the team member slept at 4000m for the night (Base camp is at 5100m). Have now ascended back up to Base camp now and having made sure that I am drinking enough now (my acute mountain sickness AMS was prob in part due to dehydration) I am feeling ok. Though I must say that I am sick of drinking around 5-6 litres of water a day. Try it sometime? You basically have to drink constantly and live with a waterbottle by your side!

Our Base camp is located in the Rongbuk valley to the N of Everest. Each morning I wake up to the most amazing view of the mountain. The air is crystal clear and you can see the whole of the west ridge up to the summit. We have yet to spot our mountain just yet but should be at our advanced base camp around 16 Apr. From there we will hope to climb and summit Lhakpa Ri 7045m around 18/19 Apr. Life in base camp is pretty dull as all we are doing is allowing our body to acclimatize to the altitude. If you move around too fast or bend over it is easy to feel dizzy and get a painful headache. Going to the toilet is an experience as you have to use the crouch position which increases your blood pressure, gives you a headache and makes you dizzy (you have to then be careful not to fall in the hole!). Keeping relatively clean even though the conditions here are very dusty. Had my first shower in 10 days today! It meant stripping naked under a solar shower (black bag with water heated by the sun) and washing in around 60 secs! The wind was blowing and it was bloody freezing even with the warm water. As the wind break had been blown away I was exposed to the entire base camp area including some local Tibetan girls who were giggling away at the sight of this western bloke naked having a wash. I think it will be my last!

Anyway having a great time, though the headaches have not been fun, and feel confident all is going well. We have an extremely capable team and the doctors are all over us like a rash ensuring we don't get AMS or any other illness. It was sad to see that other expeditions are not so well prepared and a sherpa from a nearby expedition died from an altitude illness last night. Unfortunately they did not ask us for any help, even though our doctors would have been able to keep him alive! A reminder that conditions here are dangerous but with the right team and expertise the risk can be kept to a minimum."

All the best to you and Maureen on your IM, let me know how you get on. I will be cheering you on from wherever in the world I am at the time!

Yours
Mike