



## Taking the 'dis' out of disability

### A Walk on the Wild Side *Andrew Long in India*

On the 15th March 2008, Andrew Long went on a trekking holiday through India. His trip took him into the foothills of the Himalayas for two hard weeks. He very kindly decided to turn his holiday into a fund-raising activity for Sportability. Here's his story:

Arriving in Delhi, we stayed for just a day before travelling to Dharamsala, where the Dalai Lama resides. Unfortunately we didn't get to see him, as he was otherwise occupied with the issues in Tibet. Nevertheless, it was interesting to watch some of the protests and learn more about the underlying issues.

After Dharamsala we headed further into the Himalayan foothills, to Bir, to acclimatise. We spent a few days relaxing and visiting monasteries and even got to sit in on a prayer session.



After that we started trekking in earnest. This involved a fair number of steep ascents and descents, crossing rivers, walking along valleys, across cols and passing through tiny hillside villages.



#### Part of the rollercoaster route

The best thing about the six days trekking was that we were the only Westerners there, and you really got the feeling that you were experiencing life as it is actually lived, rather than the tourist version.

So, after roughing it for six days it was back to a working shower and away with the tents. Unfortunately, it was also time for us to head back towards Delhi for our flight home. Although this time we did make a 'slight' detour, (two days once you'd taken travelling in to account) to see the fabulous Taj Mahal.

In all, it was a wonderful trip, but it got me thinking. I lead a very active lifestyle and greatly enjoy all manner of sports, but I am aware that there are many people not as fortunate as myself. So I took this opportunity to raise money for Sportability. I hope that my donation will enable many

people with paralysis to enjoy all manner of activities.

*Editor: That's exactly what Andrew's contribution means. With the funds he raised we were able to put on three multi-sports days, in three different areas of the country. Thanks Andy – it is appreciated.*

### Have you tried this?



One of the recent additions to our sports portfolio comes courtesy of Chris Selway our Area Organiser for Bristol and Glos. We've featured land-yachting before, but now there's a handy kit version – the Blokart!

Chris has been a keen Karter for some time, but after a trial day last year decided to add this sport to our gliding events at Cotswold Gliding Club.

Using the spare runway and with a tandem Blokart, Chris has been providing try-rides with tremendous success. In fact a couple of our people preferred to come along just for the Karting!

A recent e-mail from Chris tells us "You can Blokart on the beach, tarmac, grass - even fit blades and do it on ice." So watch out for some more Selway shenanigans this coming Spring.

### Or this?



Ever wanted to fly high into the wild blue yonder? Well a few of our adrenaline junkies did just that - up and away over the Salisbury Plains in a two-seater microlight aircraft.

Our good friends Rob and Raymond at the APT Charitable Trust have, as they say, "been making flying dreams come true" for the past fourteen years.

And moreover their claim "No physical

disability, however severe, is ever a barrier at the APT to achieving complete independence in the sky" sits very nicely with the Sportability ethos!



#### Alison strapped in and ready to rumble

Based at Old Sarum Airfield near Salisbury in Wiltshire, APT use specially adapted Microlight aircraft – the Shadow.

Each has two-seats, with specially modified controls for pilots with varying disabilities.

We had a couple of days with them and judging by the response it was perhaps one of our most appreciated events.

*I've been microlighting today and wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed it. It was really fab. I always assumed M.S. would stop me doing something like that. Well done Sportability!* Martin

*A fantastic day. What a wonderful experience to actually fly! Thank you so much. It was so good. I really enjoyed it and would love to go again.* Tony

*What a fantastic day! I never thought I would actually get to fly the microlight. Fab!!* Ali

Perhaps the best summary comes from Tim Worner, our Area Organiser. *The people at APT were excellent. No one was taken as a passenger - they all had full control from taxi out, thro' take-off, flying, then landing. It was great to see such a variety of people - age, background, different disabilities and from all over the country. A great day.*

Hot news: The APT team are planning to take the microlights around the country. So we're hopeful of flying in Surrey and the Midlands in 2009. **Bring it on!**

### Fun for Sail



We again had a full programme of sailing in all our areas. Magical days on the water, that we'll be repeating this year.