

# NEWSLETTER-1996-Vol. 1



## Tales of the Unexpected

At the end of a long hot Iranian day traversing south from Bam towards Mirjaveh, yet another desert check point loomed. By now everyone was used to the procedure—passports were unearthed, the music turned down. Upon arrival the border guard jumped up onto the foot plate—face contorted with pain—and gestured urgently for a molar extraction to ease his discomfort. With no dental skills on board the best we could offer him were two Turkish paracetamol tablets, a 7lb spanner and some long nosed pliers. The paracetamol were gratefully accepted and the D.I.Y. surgery politely refused. The border barriers were raised and we continued on our way leaving a happy Iranian guard who had forgotten to check our details. (Motto—always expect the unexpected).

In Pakistan near to the entrance of the Khyber Pass we were introduced by our local guide to a man we were told was a hired assassin. The group quickly managed to rattle off a few pictures of him displaying what looked like a well

used rifle before he excused himself stating he “had to go and find someone”!

In the remotest part of the jungle on the “Daring the Darien” expedition, whilst sitting around enjoying spaghetti bolognese a telephone suddenly rang. One of the group answered it and paced up and down deep in conversation. He then turned to Eric the intrepid photographer saying “it’s for you”. Eric—deeply

surprised, but nonetheless delighted—took the phone and said hello, only to be greeted by guffaws from the rest of the group, who knew it to be a \$2.00 model from a toy shop.

Later on this same trip the group were relieved of their possessions by some jungle Robin Hoods at the edge of the Darien. Luckily most people had little money, but one poor chap only had enough to buy a plane ticket home. Looking very sad after they had relieved him of his money, he said he would not have enough to get home now, whereupon the leader of the gang asked him what he needed and redistributed their wealth accordingly. Robin Hood and his Merry Men no longer live in Sherwood Forest!

The Amazon must be the last truly wild place on earth—there are not only wild animals but wild people have been there too! A recent trip up the Manu river in Peru found newly shot arrows and a basket made from leaves on the banks of the river. Once the experts had inspected these finds they concluded that they came from an unknown tribe which, they believe, have no metal knives or tools and don’t even use fire. It is thought that there are people living in the Amazon who are virtually from

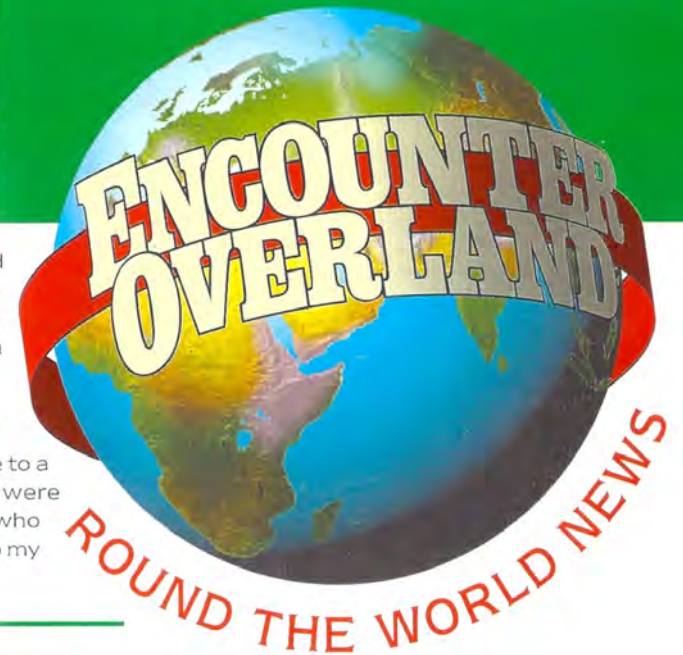
the stone age, eating raw fish and berries. No-one knows their language or movements—“an uncontacted tribe still living wild in 1996”.

The least expected welcome came to a group in Morocco where they were greeted by a beaming official who shook hands and said “welcome to my country, I have worms!”

## 20 YEARS ON Party in Brugges goes with a bang

“ On 28th July 1995 there was a lot of noisy excitement in Brugges, Belgium. Most of the people hadn’t seen each other since the end of the trip in 1975. 14 of the original group came, and with their spouses and children we totalled 36 people. We came from USA, Australia, Switzerland, France, Germany, the UK and Belgium.

Most of those who couldn’t make it sent tapes, slides, letters and pictures. The excitement was great and by the 3rd day it felt as if our adventurous journey had only taken place a few months ago. We felt so good together! We have already made plans for the next reunion “25 years after” in Australia in the year 2000.



By then, some of our kids will probably be on an EO truck, cursing the terrible roads in Africa!”

Extract taken from a letter from Jos Dupon—London to Johannesburg 1975

The “Backroads of Asia” group (Kathmandu to London—23rd September 1982) are apparently meeting for their 20 years on reunion in Kathmandu in September 2002.

Do let us know of any other reunions planned.



## From the SOUTH CHINA SEA to the ROOF OF THE WORLD



Black Thai village market—northern Vietnam

On the 17th September 1995, this project set off with great excitement and trepidation in search of a viable route from Vietnam to the upper source of the Mekong and Tibetan Plateau. The eight week itinerary offered a great contrast of culture, scenery and climate with added bonuses of delicious food, beaches and an incredible welcome throughout.

The group comprised British, New Zealand and German with ages ranging from 24 to 54. A serious night out on day one established an overall interest in local food, beer and pool playing (a game played with balls on a green felt table with holes, in case anyone was wondering). The first experience of Vietnam railways took them to Nha Trang—the first beach stop—with delicious seafood.

The Reunification Express train linking the south with the north only averages 25 kms per hour. There was plenty of time for beach stops and seafood—in Vietnam "life is a beach". At the imperial city of Hue it was time for history and culture. Bicycle visits to the tombs of the emperors and the Forbidden City. In Hanoi the balance between the groups culture, history, food and drink were established—the latter won, perhaps in the fear that Tibet might hold nothing but boiled Yak and butter tea. Then a visit to the incredible archipelago

of limestone isles at Halong Bay—Mr Kodak, Fujii and Agfa fared well here—and yet more swimming and seafood.

Four days jeep ride over rocky washed out roads in the remote region of north west Vietnam. Here amongst the breathtaking scenery live many ethnic minorities: the Black and the White Thai, Hmong and Dao. This was the highlight of Vietnam, although so had everything else been up to then. What a wonderful and hospitable country. Finally the border at Lao Cai—a little bu-

reaucracy and not an entirely corruption free crossing into China ensued.

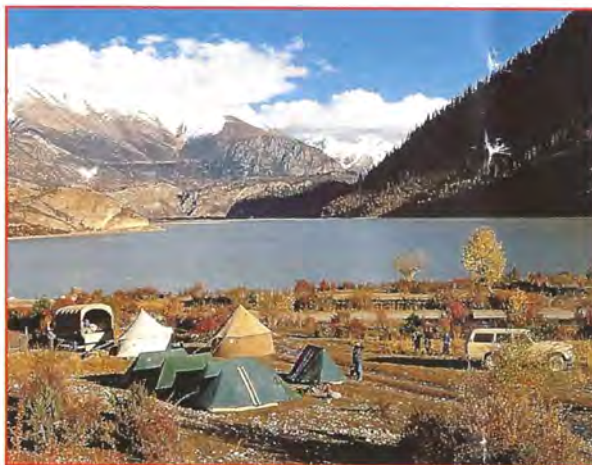
Onwards the group went through the heart of Yunnan province, Kunming, the Stone Forest and then to the ancient walled city of Dali, the home of the Bai people. North to Lijiang, the lands of the Naxi people. All but one braved the trek through the "Tiger Leaping Gorge" that carves its way through a 3,900 metre deep canyon of the Upper Yangtze river. Further north the region becomes politically sensitive where the borders of Tibet and Burma are close by. Special permission is required to travel through this region and unfortunately, our Chinese agent with this permission was some 300 kms away.

Diplomatic and persuasive skills were stretched but eventually the group were on their way. Through eastern Tibet, the Kham region and the most amazing scenery, crossing the upper Mekong and Salween Divides, camping at night and meeting the local nomadic people.

Eventually after an incredible journey past Namcha Barwa, "The Torch in the Sky", the highest peak in Eastern Tibet at 7,650 metres, they arrived into the relative civilisation of

Lhasa for several days of culture, shopping, eating and relaxation involving a night out at the "New York Disco". Finally, a ride up through Gyantse, Shigatse and Sakya to the cold but totally cloudless Pang La Pass at 5,200 metres. From here the awesome view of Mount Everest. Then to Nepal and Kathmandu. What an end to an amazing journey—a first for Encounter Overland or any other company.

Before departure the distance estimated was approximately 5,600 kms but in fact they travelled 7,065 kms. Did they get lost? They are admitting to nothing!



Overnight camp—eastern Tibet

**Encounter Overland is planning more journeys following this route and the next departures will be:**

**From Ho Chi Minh (Saigon)  
8 weeks**

1996 15 Sept—9th Nov  
1997 16th March—10th May

## NEW TRIPS IN 1996

Encounter Overland have successfully launched a number of new trips in 1995. Ethiopia has proved to be very popular. Due to the war in Ethiopia during the '70's and '80's this country has been little visited in recent times but it has some of the most fantastic scenery of any African country. Following the rift valley up from Kenya there is the Lake District region and then further north stunning mountains. Unlike most sub Saharan countries, the cities in Ethiopia are of great historic importance, full of architecture influenced by different cultures and religions. "The Ethiopian Highlands" and "The Footsteps of the Explorers" were designed after the 1995 reconnaissance trip "The Blue Nile & Beyond".

**"The Ethiopian Highlands" (15 days)**

|          |                 |
|----------|-----------------|
| ex Addis |                 |
| 1996     | 23 Nov—7 Dec    |
|          | 7 Dec—21 Dec    |
|          | 21 Dec—4 Jan'97 |
| 1997     | 11 Jan—25 Jan   |
|          | 1 Feb—15 Feb    |

**"The Footsteps of the Explorers" (28 days)**

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Nairobi—Addis |               |
| 1996          | 26 Oct—22 Nov |
| Addis—Nairobi |               |
| 1997          | 16 Feb—15 Mar |



Tisatis Falls, Ethiopia, Dec. 95

## HELP THE ENVIRONMENT



### Save a Chimpanzee

Encounter Overland in conjunction with Tusk Force is offering this fabulous T-shirt for just £10.50

£5.00 from each shirt goes directly to Tusk Force's Chimpanzees in the Congo fund.

*"Work here has been commenced because Chimpanzees are now a seriously endangered species, mainly due to loss of habitat. But there is also another more sinister reason why our closest relatives are in such danger a cruel trade has existed for years in baby Chimps, who are sold around the world to be exhibited and exploited in holiday beach resorts.*

*The work in the Congo is to be done in conjunction with The Jane Goodall institute. West Africa has been badly underfunded in the past, and yet it has one of the richest bio diversities of wildlife and habitats in the world. This project is to help create a reserve around the Jane Goodall Institute's orphan chimps sanctuary at Tchimpounga in the Congo. A survey of the forested area will establish how many wild chimps are still in the area and then ensure their survival. In addition it is planned that an education centre will be built providing information, books and videos".*

To receive your T-shirt please send a sterling cheque or sterling money order (if overseas) made payable to Tusk Force. Cost in UK £10.50 incl. postage and packing. Cost outside the UK £12.50 which includes postage and packing. Please send to: Tusk Force Merchandise, PO Box 327, Surrey, England, KT13 9WR.

Tusk Force is a Registered Charity No 1022653.

### Other endangered species The Leader/Driver



### Wanted

for being too wild and wanton and deliberately having too much fun! John Leivers. Famous throughout three continents for wearing incredibly silly clothing, for encouraging groups to drink bars dry, for terrifying jungle tribes by being too friendly and kind. Do any of you know this man?

John joined Encounter Overland in 1987 and early on made a great impression. For a number of years he mastered the backroads of Asia, braved the muds of Zaire, pulling the truck out of potholes with a tow rope and his teeth. We thought the only way to suppress him would be to send him to the Darien. No luck—he tamed the Darien Gap. Then to the jungles of Peru at Manu, but alas no, not even the uncontacted Indian Tribes could subdue him, they just befriended him. Where to next for John? What about Tibet we thought, maybe a yeti will tame him. But no, it was not to be; he has just become wilder and wilder. Where next can we send him? Will the jungles of Borneo do the trick? Will the local hooch of the Iban tribesman finally control this man? Who will dare to join him on his next mission....?

## A POSTCARD FROM EGYPT

Thomas Woodruffe won our last Encounter Overland competition and a free trip to Egypt last October. He sent us a postcard....

*"On the plane to Egypt I was very excited as I had read and heard so much about Egypt and its history, my images were of Lawrence of Arabia with endless deserts and an occasional oasis. It lived up to my expectations—the highlight of the trip was relaxing in the hot and cold water springs in the desert, also sailing up the Nile on a felucca. The whole trip was most enjoyable and well planned and I look forward to travelling again with Encounter Overland."*



## CAPTION COMPETITION

The Winner of the Caption Competition is Alan Young with the following caption

**"Well....OK—as long as I get 5% of the gross and Michelle Pfeiffer plays Dian Fossey"**



## ENCOUNTER OVERLAND 5000 KILOMETRE CLUB

To all those who have travelled with Encounter for 5,000 kilometres or more—you will qualify for free membership of this exclusive club.

By registering your details in the box you will receive the following benefits:

1. A 5% discount off the brochure price of any future project.
2. A further 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>% discount to you off that project, should you bring a friend or relation.

3. Upon booking that project you will receive a free Encounter Overland 5,000 Km Club 'Holdall' bag.

4. Plus regular updates on new projects or special offers.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

State previous trip/s and dates

Return to Encounter Overland 5,000 Km Club, 267 Old Brompton Road, London, SW5 9JA, England.

# A WORLD TO ENCOUNTER

## SLIDE INFORMATION EVENINGS

Every other Wednesday at 7.00pm we have an informal evening at our London office, 267 Old Brompton Road, London SW5 9JA, only 5 minutes walk from Earls Court Underground Station.

The next slide information evenings are on Wednesday

|          |              |
|----------|--------------|
| 15 May   |              |
| 29 May   | 21 August    |
| 12 June  | 4 September  |
| 26 June  | 18 September |
| 10 July  | 2 October    |
| 24 July  | 16 October   |
| 7 August | 30 October   |

For slide information evenings around the UK please call the number below:

FOR MORE  
INFORMATION ON  
ENCOUNTER  
OVERLAND  
PHONE NOW

**0171  
370 6951**

## PRIZE CROSSWORD

### 1st Prize

15 days in Ethiopia with Encounter Overland.

Land arrangements only, must book by 31st December 1996.

### 2nd Prize

20% off a trip of your choice.

Either a trip that you have already booked with us, or one you book direct with us prior to 31st December 1996.

### 3rd Prize

An Encounter Overland T-shirt.

Fill in the Crossword and send it to Encounter Overland, 267 Old Brompton Road, London SW5 9JA by 1st September 1996, when we will draw the winners.



## Across

1. Town in Mali, sought after by explorers of the 19th Century (8)
5. Capital of Amazonas in Brazil, famed for its Opera House (6)
8. Active volcano in south west Iceland most recently erupted in 1991 (5)
9. Large Ape found in Borneo (9)
10. Northumbrian River (3)
11. Handy musical instrument around the camp fire (6)
13. Indian clarified butter (3)
15. Exotic fruit originally from South America (5)
17. Slang used in the north of England for a sandwich (5)
18. Country formerly known as the Belgian Congo (5)
20. Administrative region on the east coast of the South Island, New Zealand (5)
23. Eat fast and greedily (5)
24. Nomadic tribe from southern Kenya and northern Tanzania (5)

25. What you hope to have after a lovely sunny trip (3)
28. Elgar's obscure variations (6)
29. A people from south east Nigeria (3)
30. Bird with a long hooked beak, commonly found in northern and central India (5,4)
31. City in Mali on the junction of the Niger and Bomi Rivers (5)
32. Just short of a dozen (6)

33. Large country in east Africa famed for the Serengeti National Park (8)

## Down

1. Capital of Iran (6)
2. River that rises in Tibet, flows through China, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam to the South China Sea (6)
3. Northern tributary of the Congo River (6)
4. Largest city of pre Columbian America--about 40kms north east of Mexico City (11)
5. The opposite of major (5)
6. Active snow capped volcano South East of Quito in the Andes (8)
7. Capital of Chile (8)
12. Port in northern Chile (11)
14. The opposite of him (3)
16. The ancient Egyptian Sun God (2)
18. Formerly known as Rhodesia (8)
19. Prevent the passing of heat and sound (8)
21. In India this drink is often boiled ready with milk, sugar and cinnamon (3)
22. To pass from one place to another—with Encounter Overland (2)
25. A Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian god who died annually, rising again in the spring. Identified with the Greek God Adonis (alternative spelling) (8)
26. Japanese name for Japan (6)
27. Herze.... (6)
28. A French spa town famed for its mineral water (5)

Name .....

Address .....

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Telephone .....