

# John uses skills to help poor children

**A PENSIONER is transforming the lives of very poor children in India after gathering supporters from the travel industry.**

In his latest coup, John Hunt, 71, was given the proceeds from the sale of a very special bottle of whisky – a sobering £42,000 – towards his projects, which have seen him building homes and schools in the remotest and most poverty-stricken regions.

Mr Hunt, a former army captain and Marks & Spencer boss who lives in Hyde, founded the Lotus Flower Trust three years ago.

He has since spent three months a year in India overseeing projects and meeting the children he hopes to benefit. In that time he has helped create more than 15 schools and buildings.

He is currently working on building a home and school for 50 to 100 mentally and physically disabled children in Ramnagar, Utrakhand, in the foothills of the Himalayas, which will enable them to attend school for the first time.

“The only way out of poverty is education,” said Mr Hunt. The £42,000 bid by the World Duty Free Group was for one of 11 bottles of Glenfiddich, a 55-

**By Miranda Robertson**

[miranda.robertson@salisburyjournal.co.uk](mailto:miranda.robertson@salisburyjournal.co.uk)

year-old single malt commemorating the life of Janet Sheed Roberts, granddaughter of the distillery’s founder, William Grant.

Janet reached the age of 110, the oldest living woman in Scotland, before she died last month.

The money was given to Women in Travel, which chose the Lotus Flower Trust as its beneficiary.

The foundations of the school are being dug at the moment and it is hoped it will be open by November, to start making a difference to some of the estimated 11,000 children in the country with disabilities.

“Another £15,000 has still to be raised for the home, and Mr Hunt is busy writing letters appealing for donations.

Smaller projects are also on the go, such as funding two pairs of hands for ten-year-old Bharti, whose own hands were blown off when a spark from a stickle she was using ignited dynamite intended to warn off wild boars.

Mr Hunt said: “Bharta is one of the many living below the poverty line; her family lives on less

than \$1.50 a day.

“One set of hands will enable her to dress herself, the other will have one finger extended for her to use a computer.”

Mr Hunt has been working with youngsters at Winchester College and with their help the charity will build a nunnery for Buddhist women.

“More than £30,000 of the £50,000 needed has already been raised. “I am just staggered at just how much young people can do,” Mr Hunt said.

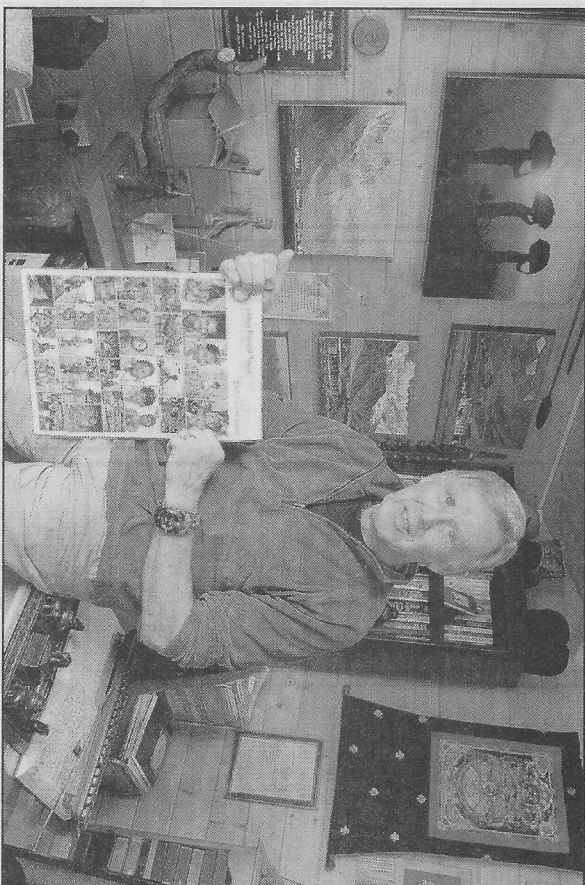
Mr Hunt is hoping to establish a cluster of schools in the Forest, interested in working with the charity.

He also is offering to take individuals out to India for a life-changing trip, if they can raise £1,000 in donation and pay the basic costs of their travel.

He said: “There are 1.2 billion people in India, and 300 million of them are living below the poverty line. That’s a third of the world’s poor, all in one country.

“Yet it’s quite extraordinary how they live, and how they laugh.”

“To find out more about how to get involved, go to [lotusflowertrust.org](http://lotusflowertrust.org), or contact Mr Hunt on 01425 650493, or at [johnhunt@lotusflowertrust.org](mailto:johnhunt@lotusflowertrust.org).

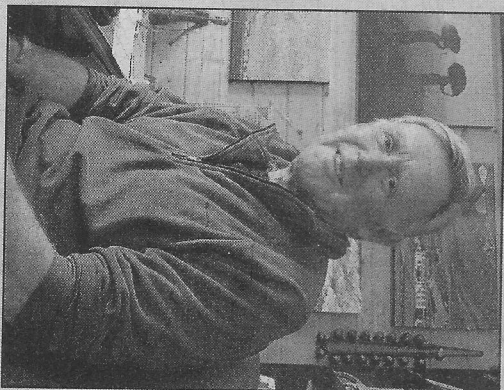


John Hunt at his Froggham home. DC1534P2

Christian Festival

**THE KITCHEN**  
@ Lace

Take the first  
new kitchen  
[www.laceinteriors.com](http://www.laceinteriors.com)  
designs



**What's inside...**

□ Villager transforming lives of India's children: See Page 3