Essex TT player urges Nepal donations after surviving quake

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Posted On: May 01, 2015

The scene of devastation in the next street to where Phil and Sylvia Wolski were staying

After experiencing at first hand the horrific earthquake in Nepal, Colchester League player Phil Wolski is urging the table tennis community to donate to the disaster relief efforts.

The 60-year-old Great Horkesley club secretary and his wife Sylvia were in the Nepalese capital of Kathmandu when the quake, which measured 7.8 on the Richter Scale, struck.

They were visiting the Pashupatinath Temple outside the city – one of the few ancient sites to survive the destruction – and later witnessed parts of the city laid waste by a natural disaster which has so far killed more than 6,000 people. The death toll is expected to exceed 10,000 as more victims are found and later as disease and hunger spread.

The quake knocked the couple off their feet, but they were otherwise unscathed and fortunate to have been on open ground at the time.

Phil's wife Sylvia sleeping on the streets with
homeless Nepalese

Phil said: "Strangely it was a smile of relief and humour that was the first emotion to emerge post the trauma. Then we started to see puffs of smoke appearing all over the city after which the true horror dawned upon us.

"Each mushroom of dust was a fallen building; and by now they could be counted in their hundreds. Even so, one could still not fully comprehend the enormity of the situation from our open vantage point."

Phil and Sylvia were staying at the Radisson, billed as the safest building in the city and built to withstand earthquakes of 10.0 magnitude, yet glass, mirrors, lights and tiles did not survive.

And having been moved into the hotel's ballroom, they were sent running from the building several times during aftershocks – and eventually resorted to sleeping in the open with those made homeless.

"After the sixth aftershock registering over 6.0 on the Richter Scale and each time a 50-yard sprint to safety out of the wildly shaking building, we gave up in fear and joined the many thousands of homeless local people sleeping rough outdoors," said Phil.

"This was the first point where there was true realisation of what ALL the local Nepalese were experiencing, as nobody was indoors; but at least we had pillows and warm blankets."

Phil describes minor casualties roaming the streets, more serious ones laid out on cardboard sheets because no hospital beds were available, and spending the next night sheltering from rain under trestle tables.

With their flights home already booked for last Tuesday, the couple were in Phil's words "seriously relieved" to get back to the UK.

"Having witnessed this first hand and thankfully survived, I feel compelled to urge as many people as possible to contribute generously to the United Nation's Nepal Disaster Fund," said Phil.

Donations can be made via the Disasters Emergency Committee website by clicking here

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