

Jersey support helps

When a primary school in Darjeeling was devastated by a monsoon mudslide, travelling Jerseyman Duncan Barette wrote home for help – and got it



Duncan Barette (above) unveils the school's new plaque with Bidur Gurung Panchayat Pradham and (left) a presentation of bouquets and posies



A PRIMARY school destroyed by a monsoon mudslide in India has been rebuilt with funds raised by Jersey's Gerard Le Claire Environmental Trust.

Pupils are now back in the school on the Gyabaree tea estate in Darjeeling, devastated in the slide which killed 25 villagers last year.

The children's plight was encountered by Jerseyman Dun-

can Barette while he was travelling in the region. Mr Barette, a teacher currently living in India, sent an appeal for help to his home Island via the Jersey Evening Post.

The project was taken up by the Gerard Le Claire Environmental Trust, whose objectives include the relief of victims of environmental disasters worldwide as well as ecology-related projects closer to home. The re-

sponses to the trust's appeal, including major contributions from the Eddie Dinshaw Foundation and the Juniper Trust, exceeded the £5,000 target needed for reconstruction. The Gerard Le Claire Environmental Trust worked hand in hand with the Indian educational charity Shayog who managed the construction work on the ground in Gyabaree.

Pupils at Gyabaree also helped with the rebuilding of their school, where a plaque records the Jersey connection.

It was opened earlier this month in a ceremony at which an address was given by Duncan Barette, who spoke of Gerard Le Claire's vision and said: 'Just after his death it was written that "in Gerard's short time on earth, he made a difference". The trust set up both in Gerard's memory and in celebration of his life is making a difference too.'

Mr Barette told the students: 'For



have fun!'

Gerard's widow, Sarah Le Claire, who chairs the trust said: 'This project met a previously unfulfilled aim of the trust to assist victims of environmental disasters and combined it with our wish to extend the work of the trust beyond Jersey's shores where appropriate.'

'The trust strives to reflect Gerard's values as both an environmentalist and a humanitarian and we believe he would be proud of the support shown by the Island for this project which will benefit so many young people.'

'We are delighted to have been a part of this project and would sincerely like to thank everyone who helped us in providing much needed support.'

Gerard Le Claire was Jersey's Environmental Services Director. He died tragically at the age of 35 in a helicopter crash in Mongolia in 2001 while on secondment to a United Nations humanitarian mission.

months, you and your teachers have had to endure very difficult conditions in the temporary school and you have all done so brilliantly. Now you have a new school.

'It is your school and you are the school. Do your best, respect your teachers, enjoy your studies and



Small sign, big thank you



The children perform a traditional dance at the presentation