

PE teacher makes emotional trek to Annapurna

A PE teacher from Plymouth will be reunited with Sir Chris Bonington for the first time in 50 years when the two men make an emotional trek to the Himalayan peaks of Annapurna in May.

Malcolm Grant, now based in Dover, was just a nine-year-old schoolboy in 1960 when he met Sir Chris, before the legendary mountaineer made the famous ascent of the 8,000-metre high Annapurna II with Malcolm's late father Dickie.

Malcolm and Sir Chris, now 75, will reach a top altitude of 5,560 metres at Namun Bhanjyang Pass on the trek in May. They will be accompanied by Malcolm's 22-year-old son Andy to complete a generation of the family who have trekked with one of the world's most famous mountaineers.

"My Dad was in charge of the rations for that trip and I can remember as a small boy wondering why he was packing so many Mars bars!" said Malcolm.

"Following in my father's footsteps is always something I wanted to do and I know he would be thrilled at me doing it. I heard about the trek and it's just something that I've got to do."

The tour is being organised by Bonington Treks, a company set up by Sir Chris's son Joe, a Sydney-based sports coach, who will be leading the trek. Joe is a seasoned expedition leader in his own right.

Malcolm said he was looking forward to learning more about his father, who died in 1982.

"I can talk to Sir Chris about his experience during that trip in 1960 because my Dad was never really able to talk to me about on an adult level," said Malcolm.

"My son Andy is also really into the outdoor life and he's really looking forward to it."

Malcolm, who is also a geography teacher, will be 60 during the trip. Despite being physically fit, he will not be taking the trek for granted.

"I've always looked after myself and still do, but you can't be gung ho about the altitude and you have to be prepared for the trip."

The trek costs £5,000 per person. Included in the price are accommodation at the Hotel Dwarika in Kathmandu and in tents on the trail, all meals, internal flights and a lecture by Sir Chris.

For more information on this and other specialist treks in Nepal, visit www.boningtontreks.com or contact 0845 5570186.