

British Kyashar Expedition 2011

Supported by Mountain Equipment, Black Diamond, Scarpa, Tendon Ropes, SIS (Science in Sport), Adidas Eyewear, DMM, Boreal and Samsung.

Financial support from The BMC, Mount Everest Foundation, Nick Estcourt Award and Welsh Sports Association

Expedition Members

Andy Houseman (leader)

Nick Bullock

Dates

6th April – 18th May

Location

Hinku Valley, Nepal

Summary

The original objective was to attempt at the first ascent of the South Pillar of Kyashar, 6769m. Due to unsettled weather and an unusual amount of snow this was not possible so an attempt was made on the West Ridge. This unfortunately was unsuccessful due to the quantity of snow and bad weather.

Introduction

Kyashar, 6769m, sits above the village of Tagnag in the Hinku valley, Nepal. Previously known as Peak 43 it's first and only ascent so far was in 2003 by the west ridge and west face. The south side of Kyashar presents a number of possible lines. The southwest face already has a line climbed to the west ridge (no summit). This would be Andy's second attempt on the South Pillar after his attempt in the autumn 2010.

Base camp was situated at the village of Tagnag, 4350m, directly below the south face of Kyashar from where we had very quick access to our chosen line.

Of note is the fact that our LO actually showed up in base camp! This is the first time this has happened to either of the members in the 12 expeditions to Nepal between them. The LO stayed for a couple of days before returning to Kathmandu.

Travel

We flew from Heathrow to Kathmandu with Jet Airways, this was a very good service and highly recommended with 35kg baggage allowance. We then flew with Agni Air from Kathmandu to Lukla, these flights were arranged by our agent. All transfers in Kathmandu we arranged by our agent.

We trekked to Tangnag over four days from Lukla with overnight stops at the villages of Chutanga, Tulikarka and Khothe. We stayed in tea houses each night.

Environment

The Trek

Starting from Lukla at 2840m you trek up through thin forest before a steep climb up to the Zatra La pass (4600). From here you drop steeply down through Rhododendron and thin forest to eventually reach the Hinku River which is followed all the way up to Tangnag.

Base Camp

Tangnag is situated at 4300m, a collection of tea houses having grown over the years due to the popularity of Mera Peak. We found it much quieter here in the spring as opposed to the autumn.

Kyashar

As was found on last year's attempt the rock on Kyashar is very bad. The buttress we climbed to access the west ridge was some of the worst rock either of us have encountered anywhere.

Whether the rock higher on the south pillar is any better is difficult to say.

Weather

For the entire trip we had very unsettled weather, most afternoons we would have snow or hail and thunder storms. There was an unseasonable amount of snow this spring and most teams attempting technical lines were unsuccessful due to this.

Climbing

6th May

We left base camp (4300m) at 00.30 and ascended up to the small glacier lake and moraine at 4700m. From here to reach the col between Kyashar and Kusum Kanguru, 5700m, it is straight forward up easy angled snow slopes to a short ice step past a serac barrier at about 5400m. On our acclimatization foray this had been about a 7m step of WI3 but since then a lot of snow had fallen and sluffed off the face meaning it had banked out and we didn't need crampons or axes to pass it. Once over this step you are on small glacier that leads to the col. Although the ground is very straight forward, it is extremely exposed to anything coming down the massive south face of Kyashar and the reason we covered this ground in the middle of the night, this we thought was fully justifiable and we both felt happy.

From the col a straight forward ridge should have lead to the start of the buttress at the base of the west ridge. The deep unconsolidated snow meant this took 2 hours instead of the 20 minutes we'd expected, a sign of things to come!

The line the first ascent team had taken up the buttress didn't look the best option given the conditions we had so we traversed left in order to find a more 'mixed' line that would allow us to climb free. We ended up completing four pitches (two traversing and two vertical) of the worst rock either of us have encountered, it was very time consuming, slow and sketchy climbing. Eventually we arrived at the easier angled snow slopes and bivi'd here for the night at 5950m. Throughout the afternoon as expected the weather had come in with constant hail and distant rumbling thunder.

7th May

Leaving the bivi at 05.00 the next morning we hoped to get to the summit and descend back to base camp that day. It soon became apparent after 45 minutes of trying to wade through waist deep snow that the conditions weren't any better, even when frozen in the early morning.

With strong winds up high meaning the usual afternoon storm would be a lot more serious up here and the reality that it was going to take us at least two days to reach the summit in the given snow condition and with the lack of extra food we made the decision to abandon our attempt and descend back to base camp. This was completed with four abseils to the base of the rock buttress and running/bum sliding the snow slopes below the south face before the sun warmed it up too much.

Waste Management

Whilst climbing all packaging waste and empty gas canisters were carried down with us, and as our attempt was alpine style, no ropes or fixed camps were left on the mountain. Waste at base camp was collected throughout. Burnable waste was burnt and the rest carried out with us.

Equipment

Clothing/Footwear

Personal sponsors supplied each member with clothing and footwear.

Hardware

We used Black Diamond + DMM hardware and Grivel pitons along with Tendon ropes.

Stove

A MSR Reactor stove was used on the route attempt with Butane/Propane canisters, this was the first time either of us had used this stove and we were both very impressed with it.

Food

We bought dehydrated food packs in the UK for use on the route and were supplied with energy bars, gels and drink mix from SIS (Science in Sport), we found the energy products great to use and well worth taking. Base camp food was provided by our cook.

Budget

We were very fortunate to receive generous financial support from *The BMC, Mount Everest Foundation, Nick Estcourt Award* and the *Welsh Sports Association*.

Income		Expenditure	
BMC	£1,700	Agent fees*	£5,822
Mount Everest Foundation	£1250	Flights	£1,242
Nick Estcourt Award	£1500	Kathmandu food + accommodation	£282
Welsh Sports Association	£900	Tips	£213
Personal contribution	£3,037	Visa's	£125
		Mis. Costs + equipment	£150
		Insurance	£553
TOTAL	£8,387		£8,387

*Agent fees included internal travel, peak fee (\$1200 for Kyashar), Liaison officer (\$1800), Sirdar, staff insurance but excludes the \$1000 garbage deposit which was refunded.

Acknowledgements

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who supported this expedition, **The BMC, Mount Everest Foundation, Nick Estcourt Award, Welsh Sports Association, Mountain Equipment, Black Diamond, DMM, Scarpa, Boreal, Tendon Ropes, SIS and Adidas Eyewear.**

We organised our expedition through **Loben Expeditions**, <http://www.lobenexpeditions.com>. They provide a first class and personal service, we would highly recommend them to anyone planning a trip to the Himalaya, trekking or climbing.

The compilers of this report and the members of the expedition agree to allow any of this report to be copied for the purpose of private research.

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Appendix 1

Expedition Diary

6th April – Depart Heathrow with Jet Airways at 20.45.

7th April – Arrive Kathmandu 15.00.

8th April – After a morning meeting with Liz Hawley Nick heads to the ministry to sort permit and Andy buys expedition supplies.

9th April – Most of the kit is flown to Lukla as freight accompanied by Hasta and Palden.

10th April – Nick and Andy fly to Lukla, meet up with Hasta and Palden who have arranged porters and start the trek. Lukla to Chutange

11th April – Chutange to Tulikaka. Cross the Zatra La pass with quite a bit of fresh snow although there is a good track for the porters.

12th April – Tulikak to Khote. Rain in afternoon, snow at night.

13th April – Khote to Tangnag. Snow in afternoon.

14th April – Set up base camp in Tangnag.

15th April – First sunny day. Go for an easy walk and a bit of bouldering around BC. Snow showers in afternoon.

16th April – Acclimatisation walk up to 5070m with amazing view of Kyashar. Lots of snow in the afternoon.

17th April – Walk up to above Khara for acclimatisation and reach 5300m.

18th April – Head up to the moraine above BC to check out the approach to the col between Kusum Kanguru and Kyashar. Massive thunder storm in the afternoon with hail.

19th April – Rest day in BC, snow showers in afternoon.

20th April – walk up to the moraine above BC to bivi at 4700m.

21st April – Leave the bivi at 02.15 to climb up to the col between Kusum Kanguru and Kyashar. Reach the col which is at 5700m at 08.00 and spend the day + night there acclimatising.

22nd April – Leave the col at 05.30 and back in BC for 08.30. Snow showers in afternoon.

23rd April – Sort rack and food for route. Snow in afternoon.

24th April – Stashed all the rack and ropes at the start of the climbing for the South Pillar then back down to BC. Snow all afternoon and evening.

25th April – Starts snowing late morning, stay in BC all day.

26th April – Bouldering in the morning. Snow starts at 12.00 and lasts all afternoon and evening, lots of thunder.

27th April – Boulder in morning, snow + thunder all afternoon.

28th April – Boulder in morning, snow + thunder all afternoon... again

29th April – Snow again in afternoon

30th April – Retrieve the some of the gear stashed so we can attempt the easier west ridge. Lots of snow and thunder in the afternoon.

1st May – Stay in BC, Snow and thunder all afternoon.

2nd May – Boulder in morning, snow + thunder all afternoon.

3rd May – Boulder in morning, snow + thunder all afternoon.

4th May – Boulder in morning, snow + thunder all afternoon.

5th May – With the weather and snow unfavourable for an attempt on the south pillar we decide to try the west ridge so sort gear for this. Weather slightly improves.

6th May – Leave BC at 00.30 to attempt west ridge, bivi at 5900m on the ridge. Lots of snow/hail in the afternoon.

7th May – Too much snow on the mountain, descend to BC. Snow and high winds in afternoon.

8th May – Rest at BC. Snows in afternoon.

9th May – Rest at BC, snows in afternoon.

10th May – Pack up BC and start trek out, Tangnag to Khote. Rains in the afternoon.

11th May – Khote to Tulikaka.

12th May – Tulikaka to Lukla crossing a still snowy Zatra La pass.

13th May – Day in Lukla, very heavy rain in afternoon.

14th May – First flight out of Lukla and back in Kathmandu by 07.15.

15th May – Nick visits the ministry for de-brief. Try to change return flights but not possible.

16th May – Kathmandu

17th May – Kathmandu

18th May – Depart Kathmandu on 09.30 flight and arrive Heathrow at 18.30.

