

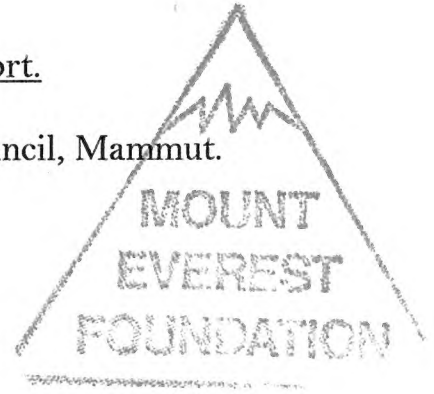
Khumbu Alpine Style.  
Teng Kangpoche. November 2004. Final Report.

Supported by  
Mount Everest Foundation, British Mountaineering Council, Mammut.

Dates: 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2003. – 7<sup>th</sup> December 2003.

Location: Khumbu Nepal.

Climbers: Nick Bullock, Al Powell, Jules Cartwright.



Abstract: Two attempts on The North West face of Teng Kangpoche (6500m) Khumbu. Nepal.

1<sup>st</sup> Ascent of North East Face to the East Ridge D+/TD- Solo.

Introduction:

After originally planning to attempt new lines on trekking peaks because of the ease of planning and organisation (not to mention the saving of money and the lack of a Liaison Officer). The bullet was bitten and the unclimbed North West face of Kang Tengpoche was decided upon. The mountain has only been opened since 2002 and has not received a recognised ascent by any means. Although there is talk of an unofficial ascent from the south in 1974 (?)

Expedition Diary:

2<sup>nd</sup> November. Fly from Heathrow

3-Land in Katmandu.

4-Interview with Ministry, meeting with agent, meeting with Liaison Officer, shopping for food.

5-Fly to Lukla, walk to Namche Bazaar.

6-acclimitisation around Namche.

7-walk to Thame.

8-walk to Thyongbo, check out NW Face.

9-Acclimitisation climb to 5300m and camp at 4600m

10-Acclimitisation to 5200m and camp at 5000m

11-Return to Namche.

12-Shop for food in Namche, return to Thame

13-Walk to Thyongbo

## Expedition Diary Cont:

14<sup>th</sup> Nov-1<sup>st</sup> attempt at NW Face

15-day 2 climbing, Nick gets sick on evening at 5400m

16-day 3, rappel route and return to Thame.

17-return to Namche.

18, 19-Rest in Namche.

20-Cartwright, Bullock to Thame, Powell to Lukla having run out of time. Powell flies to Britain 24<sup>th</sup> Nov.

21-Return to Thyongbo.

22-Cartwright, Bullock 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt at NW Face. Climbed for 11 hours to reach previous high point at 5400m in terrible winds, constant stone fall and constant spindrift avalanche.

23-Sit out the day hoping for better weather at 5400m

24-Return to the valley and Thame as the weather does not improve.

25-Cartwright returns to Namche feeling the risk are to high and suffering toothache. Bullock stays for a rest day at Thame.

26-Cartwright to Lukla and early flight back to Britain. Bullock to bivy at approx 4200m between Thame and Thyongbo beneath the NE Face of Teng Kangpoche.

27-Bullock starts solo attempt at new line on NE Face at 1.30am reaching 6350m by 2.30pm. Bivy in crevasse below summit.

28-After finding the final 150m to the summit is to dangerous due to been to crevassed Bullock starts to descend. 6 hours later Bullock has down climbed a more direct line to that climbed and is in the valley for 1.30pm and back in Thame for 3.30pm.

29-Return to Namche

30-Rest in Namche, visit the Environmental office to gain certificate of cleanliness.

1<sup>st</sup> December-Return to Lukla

2-delayed in Lukla due to weather.

3-Fly to Kathmandu.

4, 5-End of expedition de-brief at ministry and start the long task of recovering the environmental fund (\$1000)

6-fly from Kathmandu

7-arrve in Britain.

## Travel:

All three of us travelled together from Heathrow Airport by Gulf Airlines. A good service with one stop in Abu Dabu, arriving in Kathmandu at 5pm. No problems.

### Travel Cont:

Internal flights were taken from Kathmandu to Lukla. These services are very hit and miss, as flights are dependent on the weather and demand. Yeti Airlines were used. On the return I was delayed a day in Lukla waiting for the weather to improve. An internal airport tax has to be paid of 170 rupees and excess baggage for anything over 20kg.

### Environment:

#### Thongbo

Teahouses were used throughout the trip instead of setting up a Base-Camp, thus reducing any impact on the area in the Thyongbo region. Here a very small village exists and a half built lodge. The local people live a very simple pastoral existence herding Yak and living off the land. There are no trees and the landscape is very barren. Steep slopes and the mountains either side of the valley make it a cold place, which sees the locals moving to Thame for the winter months.

#### Rock:

The rock encountered on the North of Teng Kangpoche was typical loose limestone covering swathes of the massive face, although this also sported cracks and flakes good for protection as in the European Alps.

#### Snow and Ice:

The snow was generally good neve especially in the runnels caused no doubt by the constant debris pouring down the line. In the larger bays the snow was less consolidated turning to thigh deep powder. Ice was generally sparse, thin and fragile.

#### Weather:

In general throughout the whole trip the weather was settled. Clear skies in the morning would turn into cloudy afternoons then clear again in the evening. It only snowed once on the trip. The winds were the major influence on the trip. The morning would be quiet until around 9am. Then as temperatures increased in the valley the wind would increase also.

Until by midday the face was battered by gales causing rock, ice and spindrift to pour down the face.

## Weather Cont:

The temperatures were generally warmer than would have been expected below 5500m for the first two attempts. By the third attempt and above 5500m the temperature plummeted to about -10/15 in the day causing repeated stops to re-warm hands and feet.

## Waste Management:

A minimal approach was adopted by having no base camps and only using lodges for all attempts. On the hill all packaging and waste was carried back and taken back to Namche and Kathmandu.

## Climbing:

We made two attempts on the 1600m North West Face. The first attempt consisted of Powell, Bullock, and Cartwright. Leaving the lodge at Thyongbo a easy approach of an hour was followed until starting to climb at approximately 8am on 14<sup>th</sup> November 03. Finding good snow conditions we soloed on the initial snow cone and continued to solo as the cone turned into a runnel/gully. The line chosen followed this gully system of 55%/75% neve of a grade Scottish 11 – 1V. At one point a mixed corner had to be taken to by-pass an overhang in the gully. This proved quite difficult for short sections of Scottish V/6 until the original line was re-joined. Slightly above this a tent ledge was cut and the first night was spent here. Approximately 4800m.

The second day continued in the same vain although we started to pitch the climbing as it was more sustained although at the same grade and it was approximately at 5pm a tent ledge was cut for the second day beneath the hardest ice pitch led so far, Scottish V/6. 5400m

It was on this evening 15<sup>th</sup>, that Bullock fell ill, vomiting and delirious for 40 minutes making the decision to go down the following day. On the 16<sup>th</sup> they rappelled the line climbed and returned to Thame by 3,30pm.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Attempt on the North West Face. Bullock, Cartwright.

The same line was taken although the direct line was attempted but decided to hard and time consuming. No food or gas was carried as a stash had been made from the previous attempt and left at the high point. An 11-hour single push was completed in high winds and very serious conditions, (stone fall, ice fall and constant spindrift avalanche was encountered). Much of the ground soloed on the first attempt had to

encountered). Much of the ground soloed on the first attempt had to be pitched as it was not known when the next lump of rock or ice or avalanche would hit.

The night was a fraught affair as was the following day sitting out the wind in hope of more favourable conditions. A second night at 5400m was spent but it was decided on the 24<sup>th</sup> to escape in the early morning lull and return to Thame.

3<sup>rd</sup> Attempt. On the North East Face. Bullock, Solo.

To the left of the obvious rock buttress in the middle of the North face the N E Face is more snowy and at a lower angle. Here the shorter and obvious left to right ramp line leading to the lowest point on the East Ridge was taken for a solo, consolation attempt by Bullock.

Starting at 1.30am on 27<sup>th</sup> the lower slopes were climbed following a left to right path below the steep rock walls beneath the East Ridge. Although the ground was not technical for the lower 600/800m it was tiring due to deep unconsolidated snow and the laborious nature of traversing undulating, fluted and ridged ground. Below the most direct and lowest point of the East ridge a decision was taken to continue on the right line aiming for the runnels which appeared to lead directly to the summit from the North as the shortest line to the East ridge appeared to finish up mixed ground which looked difficult.

As daylight approached and height was gained it became apparent a deep colouir would have to be crossed beneath an active band of seracs on the East Ridge. Deciding this was too risky a rib of mixed ground was climbed until directly beneath the seracs. Scottish V/5 100m. The ground covered before this had gradually increased in angle, 60-80% and grade, steps of Scottish 1V/V (quite tenuous due to the unconsolidated nature of the snow)

The serac band was traversed to the left until it became possible to climb the left side and reach a levelling in the East Ridge. The East Ridge was followed until a steepening was climbed to a point approximately 150m/200m below the summit. Here a large crevasse was bivied in as by this time it was very cold and hands and feet needed warming. 6350m was the approximate height and the climb had taken 13hours. It was 2.30pm.

The following morning at 7.30am a line was checked to reach the summit but it was discovered to dangerous to follow, as it was very crevassed for a solo attempt. The decision was taken to descend and after down-climbing to the lowest point in the East ridge and two 30m rappels a direct line was followed until the traversing line taken on the way up was reached and followed to the start point in the valley at 4300m was reached at 1.30pm, 6 hours from the start of the descent



at 1.30pm, 6 hours from the start of the descent from the summit ridge. An overall grade for the line was given of D+/TD-.

Equipment:

Clothing:

For Bullock/Cartwright Mammut supplied clothing, rucksacks, sleeping bags, ropes. DMM supplied technical climbing gear. All proved ideal and well up to the job asked. Powell was supplied by RAB.

Stove and fuel.

A hanging markhill cookset was used with a MSR gas burner. Butane/propane gas was used.

Food:

Most food was bought in Kathmandu and Namche. Some favourites were bought in Britain though this isn't necessary.

Finance:

Below is a summary of the finances for the trip. We were fortunate to receive good grants from The MEF/BMC, which eased the financial burden considerably.

Income:	BMC/MEF Grant. £3450.
	Personal cont's. £2550.
	Total                    £6000.

Expenditure:

Flights:	£1920.
Insurance:	£900
Internal Flights	£450.
Liaison Officer	£750
Agent Fees	£200
Peak Fee	£750
Food and stores	£500
Accommodation	£400
Porter/equipment	£130
Total	£6000.

Further info:

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: High Mountain Info.  
: The Alpine Journal of U.K.

Thanks:

To Ken Wilson and Joe Simpson for references. To Mammut, DMM and RAB for gear sponsorship. Finally once again to The MEF and BMC for grants, without who's help the above trip would not have been possible.

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.

Nick Bullock.



