

The expedition;

The original plan was to visit the khumbu region in winter and make the first ascents of two summits, beginning with the peak 5939 meters situated just south of the Chola Pass .We planned to base our selves in the Dzonglha lodge, climb the peak via its S.W. face and then descend to Pangboche to explore the peaks in the vicinity of Ama Dablam .The year before I had been solo climbing in the Omega valley and seen potential for climbs .Our idea to climb there on the peak 6425 was scotched when the Nepal mountaineering Association pronounced that we would have to have a liason officer that would cost nearly \$2000.This happened at the last minute and we had been told by our agent that we would be able to negotiate on the spot. So we thought we would concentrate on the first objective and call via SAT phone from up there to our agent and book what ever took our fancy for a follow up climb. This system I adopted my first winter in the Khumbu in 2007/8 when I climbed Dawa Peak. A climber friendly way of doing things when one has a knowledge of the listings put out by the NMA.

Upon arriving at Dzonglha we saw immediatly that there was no ice at all on our peak 5939,apparently the sun can still be warm enough at these altitudes (even in winter)to strip the face. So we changed our ideasand finding porters in the village of Lobuche we moved round to there. This became our base for the time we were up there. Soon we began exploring around the Changri Nup glacier and the approaches to the west summit of Lobuche,that had a tempting north face. It was whilst ferrying up our gear that I had a fall on steep,loose moraine carrying a heavy load. The load on my back meant that I fell awkwardly and hit the base of my spine on a rock. Added to this there was the whiplash effect on my neck and this developed into spasms of pain (a trapped nerve)that left me with at times a slightly paralysied left shoulder. Even so we finished the day and returning to the village remarked upon the clouds massing over the big summits .Sure enough, in the night, this gave snow with very strong winds. It put down enough to keep us indoors, but the wind picked up,b lowing from the north and soon had stripped the snow.

The next day, the 1st january, we carried up the remainder of our kit and this time we planned to sleep up there .On the 2nd we walked up to the foot of the face to inspect the initial pitches, hard steep ice seemed to give onto a hanging glacier after which.....The wind still blew and we waited out a day, rationing food, until we could finally set off to climb, on the 4th.We climbed steepish ice (75/80 degrees)and some mixed that led to the glacier, up this we broke trail through accumelated snow to bivouack at the beginning of the upper wall. a cold night and I slept badly due to the back injury and I felt really groggy the next morning as we woke before the dawn,it looked settled and windless. Victor did the work of leading off and accessing the upper face, snow and ice at 75/80 degrees led to around 5750/800.Here it became apparent that I was in too much pain and too slow to think of making the top in one. We had left the bivvy gear in or der to move fast but that just wasnt possible now. I have never hurt so much on a mountain. We rappeled down to recover the sleeping stuff and carried on down to the tent,this we folded to continue down to the village for nightfall.

The next day, accompanied by a porter, we walked down to Pangboche. I suffered, but it was hoped that the lower elevation would help me heal. I restarted taking the pain killers (I stopped as they effected my vision) after 3/4 days it became apparent that I was finished and wouldn't heal in time so we left on the 10th going down to Namche Bazaar, the day after we went on to Lukla, spent a night and flew out on the 12th. Victor left for Europe on the 16th and myself, eventually on the 14 february as I had other things to do that kept me there. Alltogether not a success and the only time I have hurt myself seriously in nearly 25 expeditions. We will return as there is a lot to do. winter is a quiet time to visit the region, its austere as it is cold and off the too beaten tracks of the standard trek routes wild enough to please me.