

T H E B R I T I S H

K A N G T A I G A

E X P E D I T I O N

- 1979 -

Members: Rab Carrington  
Brian Hall  
Alan Rouse

## BRITISH KANG TAIGA EXPEDITION 1979

Members: Rab CARRINGTON  
Brian HALL  
Alan ROUSE

### The Objective

Kang Taiga is a peak of 6,779m (22,242ft) in the Nepal Himalaya just a few miles south of Mount Everest. It is one of the most beautiful and dramatic peaks in the region, towering above the famous Tengpoche Monastery. It was first climbed from the S.E. in 1963 by a New Zealand/American party. It was again climbed in the spring of 1979 by a Japanese party following a complicated route from the E. Our expedition planned to climb either the unclimbed N.E. ridge from the Hinku Nup glacier or the W. ridge from the Omega valley. The expedition would use 'Alpine' style techniques doing away with conventional camps and fixed rope, moving continuously, carrying all our gear and food and using no high altitude porters nor oxygen.

### Members

Rab Carrington: Aged 31. Part-time teacher but devotes most of his time to mountaineering. Has formed a very strong team with Al Rouse, making numerous difficult ascents in the Alps in the summer and winter, climbing in South America making many very hard first ascents in Patagonia, Bolivia and Peru, and then in 1978 as a Himalayan debut, climbing Jannu, alpine style. Rab's wife Sue accompanied the expedition to B.C.

Brian Hall: Aged 27. Qualified as an ecologist. Single. An extremely experienced alpinist who has also taken part in the year-long expedition to South America, putting up first ascents in Patagonia, Bolivia and Peru, and then taking part in the 1978 Jannu Expedition.

Al Rouse: Aged 27. Part-time teacher and climbing guide. Unmarried. One of Britain's outstanding rock climbers who has gone on to do many hard routes in the Alps, several of them with Rab Carrington and then teamed up with him in South America and on Jannu.

Chris Bonington: Originally leader, was forced to drop out of the expedition at the last minute due to unavoidable circumstances.

### The Approach and Base Camp

With the help of Air India, Brian, Rab and Sue left Heathrow on 28th August and arrived in Delhi the next day. Al arrived with the baggage from Geneva on 30th. By keeping 'low key' the notorious Delhi customs were cleared with no problems and we flew to Kathmandu on 31st. The next few days were spent buying food, kitchen equipment, visiting the Ministry of Tourism and meeting our cook (Jangbu Sherpa), Sirdar (Nima Chotter) and Liaison Officer (Mr. Bandari). Mike Cheney, through Sherpa Co-operative, arranged our necessary staff for the walk-in and base camp.

On 5th September we travelled by bus to Lamosangu (the start of the Everest trek). The expedition at this point was split into two: a fast team (Al, Rab, Brian, Jangbu and 6 porters) and the slow team (Sue, Nina Chotter, J.C. and 29 porters). The fast team reached Kumjung on the 12th, the slow team on the 15th.

On the 14th we left Kumjung with the aim of finding a suitable position for B.C. We walked to the head of the Omega valley and the next day ascended the ridge between this and the Nare Drangka valley. A good position was found and on the 16th we returned to Kumjung. By the 23rd we had fully established B.C. and were ready to attempt the mountain.

#### Attempts on Kang Taiga

The N.E. ridge of Kang Taiga from the Hinku Nup Glacier is arguably the most attractive objective on the mountain. Between our B.C. and the bottom of the route is a ridge system. On photographs this looked reasonable to cross but on closer inspection it was no simple matter.

On the 24th we left B.C. on a reconnaissance heading for a left to right diagonal traverse line leading to a col at 5,786m. Snow flutings low down caused problems and when we reached the traverse line it was steeper and more complicated than expected so after ten pitches we bivouaced. Eight more pitches the next day and we reached the col. As expected the other side was easy (the upper Hinku Nup glacier being at the same level as the col). Opposite the impressive N.E. ridge rose straight out of the glacier.

The route just ascended was not suitable for descent so we chose a line leading down from the next col to the north (col 5,680m) which led into the Nare Drangka valley. We left a food and gear dump near the col and in rapidly deteriorating weather we descended, arriving at B.C. on the 26th.

The route from B.C. to the bottom of the N.E. ridge was too long and complicated so we considered another route. This was the N. ridge which starts near B.C. and leads over two subsidiary summits before reaching the main summit. It starts up the impressive 'S-shaped' ridge seen from Kumjung region. This ridge would be the major part of the route. After this ridge we would join the Japanese Spring 1979 route.

On the 29th we traversed across moraine and glacier to the bottom of the ridge and bivouaced. Whilst climbing the next day the weather deteriorated, in addition it became apparent that a series of seracs were threatening the route. The attempt was abandoned at about 6,000m and on 1st October we were back at B.C.

Snow was still falling a couple of days later when we decided to abandon the expedition due to:-

- (a) Bad weather (the weather did not improve until mid October)
- (b) The most attractive route (i.e. the N.E. ridge) could not be attempted logistically from our B.C. A B.C. on the Hinku side could not be used as we had to be at Everest B.C. between the first and second weeks of October. (A Hinku B.C. would be about 8 days from Everest B.C.).

- (c) The N. ridge of the subsidiary summit was dangerous and joined the Japanese route two thirds of the way up the mountain.

The B.C. was packed and Al and Brian left for Everest H.C., which they reached in three days on 7th October. Rob left for Kathmandu.

Although the summit was not reached, the expedition was extremely valuable as it enabled a high level of fitness and acclimatisation to be reached which directly contributed to the success of the Maptac climb (7,879m/25,850ft). When climbing high mountains in alpine style a 'package' of mountains has to be seriously considered if the required level of fitness and acclimatisation is to be reached.

The expedition members would like to thank all the firms and individuals who kindly helped this expedition.

FINANCE

| <u>EXPENDITURE</u>   | <u>£</u>   | <u>£</u>            | <u>INCOME</u>            | <u>£</u>            |
|--|------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Travel:</u>   |            |                     | Mount Everest Foundation | 625                 |
| Flight London/Delhi return<br>(1 free flight from Air India) | 850        |                     | B.M.C.                   | 300                 |
| Flight Delhi/Kathmandu return<br>with excess baggage         | 450        |                     | Chris Bonington          | 230                 |
| Hire of bus Kathmandu/Lamosangu                              | 45         |                     | Personal                 | 3285                |
| Hire of car Frankfurt/Geneve                                 | 120        |                     |                          |                     |
| Flight Syampoche/Kathmandu                                   | <u>60</u>  | 1525                |                          |                     |
| <u>Food:</u>   |            |                     |                          |                     |
| Purchased in Kathmandu                                       | 370        |                     |                          |                     |
| Purchased in G.B.  | <u>30</u>  | 400                 |                          |                     |
| <u>Camp Equipment:</u>                                       |            |                     |                          |                     |
| Kitchen  | 100        |                     |                          |                     |
| Fuel   | <u>20</u>  | 120                 |                          |                     |
| <u>Wages:</u>  |            |                     |                          |                     |
| L.O., Sirdar & Cook  | 240        |                     |                          |                     |
| Expenses for staff   | <u>50</u>  | 290                 |                          |                     |
| <u>Fees &amp; Charges:</u>                                   |            |                     |                          |                     |
| Peak Fee   | 500        |                     |                          |                     |
| Insurance  | 250        |                     |                          |                     |
| Agents Fees  | <u>75</u>  | 825                 |                          |                     |
| <u>Porterage</u>   |            | 550                 |                          |                     |
| <u>General:</u>  |            |                     |                          |                     |
| Film   | 150        |                     |                          |                     |
| Miscellaneous equipment                                      | 100        |                     |                          |                     |
| Expenses Walk-in & Out                                       | 120        |                     |                          |                     |
| Expenses in Towns  | 120        |                     |                          |                     |
| Organisational expenses                                      | <u>240</u> | 730                 |                          |                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |            | <u><u>£4440</u></u> | <b>TOTAL</b>             | <u><u>£4440</u></u> |