

Time to get equal

scope

About cerebral palsy.
For disabled people achieving equality.

Event Fundraising

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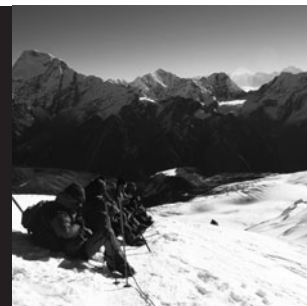
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Life Changing Experiences

Nepal - Mera Peak Expedition 6,476m

22 October – 13 November 2009



Thank you for enquiring about Scope's Mera Peak Expedition.

A summit expedition to 6,476 is no small feat and this is one of the toughest events that Scope has ever organised. We would ask you to read through all the enclosed paperwork very carefully, both to ensure you can commit to the challenge and that you meet the required criteria to apply. You must be aged between 18 and 60 by the date of departure and have previous experience at altitudes of at least 4,500m. We will also ask to speak to a referee who was with you when you were at altitudes of over 4,500m. This should be the trek leader who accompanied you on the event where possible, or if you took part in a previous Scope event we can act as your referee. You will also have to attend our pre-event training weekend in Wales which is likely to be in April 2009 (exact date TBC). The weekend will cost approximately £200 each and include twin room accommodation for a Friday and Saturday night, all meals and hire equipment. The training will include instruction on using crampons and ice axes on a ratio of one instructor to six people.

Enclosed you will find an itinerary, Q&A about the event, medical form and application form. There is also a list of what is provided within the minimum sponsorship and because this expedition requires specialist equipment, we've enclosed a packing checklist. This way you can get a realistic idea of what you will need to provide and pay for yourself.

Places on this expedition are strictly limited to just 14 and in order to apply you will need to send us the following: a completed application form, completed medical form signed and stamped by your GP, two passport photos and the entry fee of £250 made payable to Scope. (We will not cash your cheque if the event is full or if you are not eligible, but once cashed the entry fee is strictly non-refundable.) Please note your application cannot be assessed until ALL the forms are received so please send them in all together.

Once we receive your paperwork, we'll give you a call to chat through your application, which, if approved, will then be processed. Your fundraising pack (including sponsor forms, advice and ideas for raising the money, authority letter and badge, t-shirt and more information on Scope) will then be sent out to you, along with further information about the event.

Thanks again for your interest in this incredible expedition. If you have any other queries, do feel free to call me on the number below and we look forward to welcoming you to the Scope Mera Peak Expedition Team very soon!

With very best wishes,

Tom Dixon (020 7619 7289)
thomas.dixon@scope.org.uk
Event Fundraiser

Your questions answered

Is there an age limit for this expedition?

Yes. In order to participate you must be aged between 18 and 60 by the departure date.

Do I need previous experience at altitude?

Yes. The effects of altitude sickness can be felt from around 2,500m. This event will be a tough challenge at extreme altitude. Everyone who takes part must have previous experience at heights of at least 4,500m and have tolerated the reduced atmospheric pressure at this height. We will be calling everyone who applies for the trip before they are accepted in order to chat through their previous experiences and we will require everyone to provide a reference from someone who was with them whilst at altitudes of over 4,500m – preferably the trek leader.

How will the altitude affect me?

Our Mera Peak itinerary has been designed for gradual acclimatisation. Individuals vary widely in the height at which they develop symptoms, the speed of onset of AMS (acute mountain sickness), and the severity of their illness. There is unfortunately no way of predicting who AMS will seriously affect and who will escape it. There is more information on the altitude and AMS on the back of the packing checklist.

What happens if I get altitude sickness?

If you are severely affected you will be escorted down the mountain to one of our lower camps – rapid descent is the quickest and most effective way to deal with acute mountain sickness. Descent to a safer altitude on Mt Mera is quick and relatively easy.

Will I be safe?

We use the highly experienced Summit Trekking to organise the event. Summit Trekking is run by Kit Spencer, a former British Gurkha officer based in Kathmandu and they have organised hundreds of treks in Nepal including ascents of Mera Peak and Everest.

What kind of back-up is there?

An experienced tour manager will accompany the group from the UK, carrying with them a full medical kit and satellite phone. We will also have a locally based experienced mountain doctor on the event. On the mountain there will be a hyperbaric (or 'pressurised') chamber and oxygen. All guides have previous experience on the mountain and carry radios. Summit Trekking take special care of their porters who are probably the best equipped and clothed in Nepal, with items specially purchased in the UK. Our Sherpa guides are professionally trained and among the most experienced in Nepal, with the logistical back up of one of the leading trekking companies in the world.

How much training will I need?

This expedition is a high altitude trek and requires a very high level of physical fitness. The high altitude, strong winds, and length of time you spend in the mountains and extremes of temperatures will present a tough, physical and mental challenge. Mera Peak itself poses little technical difficulty, but at 6,476m it is a strenuous climb with short, steep sections over snow. You will be spending over two weeks trekking, walking for long periods of time every day (apart from acclimatisation days). In addition to excellent fitness levels you will also need the physical strength to carry your own gear from Khare. The person best suited to this expedition

will need to be physically and mentally extremely fit and very determined. We will provide you with more information on training once you have signed up for the event but please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss your training schedule before making that decision.

Do I need experience using crampons and ice axes?

Experience using specialist equipment such as crampons and ice axes is recommended – although you will be taught this on our compulsory pre-expedition training weekend so it is not essential to have experience at the time of signing up.

Do I have to attend the pre-expedition weekend?

Yes, everyone will need to attend so we can ensure each person is fully prepared and suitable for the challenge. In addition to the practical experience you'll gain using specialist gear, all aspects of the trip, including altitude sickness, training, equipment and safety, will be discussed fully over the weekend. It's also a great opportunity to meet the rest of the summit team and find out more about Scope and fundraising ideas. Scope reserves the right to withdraw your application from the Challenge if you do not attend the training weekend or our expert leaders feel you are unsuitable for the event.

Will I reach the summit?

We can't guarantee anyone will. Our expedition has been designed to allow sufficient acclimatisation and we have built in an extra day to allow for bad weather or extra acclimatisation if needed. However, no-one can predict the weather or how you will react to the altitude as you move up the mountain – even experienced mountaineers get altitude sickness. Our crew will do their best to summit as many people as possible, but your safety is their number one priority. You will not be allowed to continue if you are suffering from severe altitude sickness, nor will any summit attempt take place in adverse weather conditions. At the end of the event, our head guide will provide everyone with a signed ascent certificate, detailing dates and heights reached.

What will the weather be like?

This trek will have a wide range of temperatures depending on the altitude and time of day. In the mountains between 1,000m – 3,500m the nights will be cool, normally around 5°C, and during the day temperatures sometimes rise to 25°C. At higher altitudes temperatures range from 20°C to minus 20°C. The mornings are generally clear with clouds building up during the afternoon and often disappearing at night to reveal beautiful starry nights. Mountain weather is at best unpredictable and the notes above are only a guideline as to what you can normally expect. All our treks and expeditions are scheduled to coincide with periods of stable weather when prevailing conditions should be right for each particular departure. However, snow and rain can fall at any time of year causing the higher parts of the mountain to be impossible to climb. Whilst this is unlikely at this time of year, and we have added in an extra day for the summit attempt/bad weather, any changes and decisions will be made at the discretion of the trek leader and local guides.

What are the facilities like?

Accommodation is shared. The first two and final two nights will be spent in the Summit Hotel in Kathmandu. During the expedition you will be camping in two-person tents although during the first couple of days on trek you may be able to stay in tea-houses but this will be at your own expense.



Do I need specialist kit?

Yes. A complete packing checklist is enclosed. It may be possible to hire some specialist kit and further details will follow.

What will I eat and drink?

All the water on trek will be boiled and safe to drink. Bottled water is available to buy in the hotel and some tea houses on the first few days of the trek. Food will be basic but plentiful with lots of carbohydrates – eg pancakes, porridge, sandwiches, potatoes, rice, chicken and soup. Vegetarians will be catered for. It is always useful to bring along energy bars, nuts and chocolate etc. to keep you going while trekking and as a treat.

What do I carry during the day?

On the approach to Khare and up to and including Day 14 you will just need a daypack with basic supplies – rainwear, fleece, water, camera, suncream (a trekking belt is not sufficient). From Khare onwards to Mera la Camp and up to High Camp, you will need to carry your own gear except for your sleeping bag which the porters will carry. You will not need to take all your supplies and can leave some bits at Khare but this will mean you should take a 35 litre day sack for the duration of the trek to ensure you have enough room for everything. Do bear in mind that during the summit attempt temperatures at this altitude will be very cold indeed so you will be wearing the majority of your warm weather gear anyway, so the weight in your actual day sack won't be too overbearing but will be more than you are perhaps used to.

Will I be insured?

No. It is your responsibility to ensure you are adequately insured for this trip. Please be aware that the fact this is an expedition to 6,500m will affect premiums and the number of companies who can insure you. It is recommended on a trip such as this that you take out the British Mountaineering Council Insurance, www.thebmc.org.uk or use a company called Snowcard, www.snowcard.co.uk. We will also require a copy of your insurance policy before the trip departs.

Do I need a visa?

Yes. Visitors to Nepal require a visa. A single-entry visa costs approximately £20 and visas are valid for 6 months from the date of issue. You must have at least 6 months validity on your passport from the date of return to the UK.

Do I need any vaccinations?

We recommend Typhoid and Hepatitis A jabs, plus you should ensure your Tetanus and Polio boosters are up to date. If you decide to extend your stay in lowland Nepal then you may need anti-malarial protection.

How much money do I need to bring?

The currency in Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee with the exchange rate at the time of going to print being £1 = 103 Nepalese Rupees. You should take out Sterling or US dollars in small denominations, which can be exchanged at the hotel. Visa and Mastercard are also widely recognised and useful to have in emergencies. Approximately £250 spending money should be sufficient for drinks, tips and some souvenirs.

How can I find out more about Mera Peak?

There are lots of websites containing information on the mountain including www.lonelyplanet.com or you could buy **Bill O'Connor's Trekking Peaks of Nepal** (1989 Crowood Press). There are also plenty of guide and map

books available to buy via Amazon or Stanfords in London: www.stanfords.co.uk (**Recommended map:** Schneider Shorong/Hinku 1:50,000).

Can I stay on?

There will be a very limited number of extensions allowed, and these will be filled on a first come first served basis with an extension fee of £75 per person.

How do I go about raising the minimum £4,500 sponsorship?

If you need our help we have plenty of ideas and suggestions for raising money. You'll also receive a comprehensive sponsor pack to make your fundraising as easy as possible and there are more ideas on our website: www.scope.org.uk/adventures/info/fund_tips.shtml. If you raise over £4,500 that's fantastic! Those who raise over £5,500 will have the option of having their entry fee refunded. Don't put off your fundraising – the sooner you start, the easier it is.

What happens if I can't raise the money?

The minimum £4,500 must be paid to Scope eight weeks prior to departure. At this time all tour and travel costs will be paid to the tour operator and you will be issued with an ATOL receipt. If you cannot raise the £4,500 we will ask you to make up the balance yourself, in order to keep your place on the event. If you do have to withdraw from the event, we can refund your sponsor money, minus any costs, directly to your donors if required. Please do phone us for advice and ideas, if you are experiencing difficulties.

How do I get my sponsors to give me their money before I complete the event?

Ask for donations up front – explain why Scope needs the money to your donors, they are usually very understanding. It's also easier to collect money as you go, rather than having to chase people months later. Alternatively, get them to donate on line by setting up your own sponsorship page on the www.justgiving.com website. Then simply email your friends and family and you no longer have to chase people for cash.

How much does the event cost?

There are costs of travel, accommodation and equipment, etc. Some of the non-travel costs will be met from your entry fee and the remainder – around £1,900 – will come from part of your sponsorship. This means £2,600 of sponsorship will come direct to Scope. If you feel unhappy that part of the money raised is used to meet costs, you could pay some of these costs yourself (this also makes it easier asking people for money). Please make sure that your sponsors are aware that part of their sponsor money may be used to meet costs.

Tell me more about Scope

Scope is a national disability organisation whose focus is people with cerebral palsy. Cerebral palsy is the most commonly diagnosed physical disability in Britain today and affects more than 1,800 babies born each year. Cerebral palsy is a condition that jumbles messages between the brain and muscles and can make it hard to talk, sit or walk. Scope works with people with cerebral palsy, their families and carers and provides a range of services to meet their needs and enable them to live the lives they choose. For more details, read the leaflet enclosed and visit our website: www.scope.org.uk

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Your package includes

- International return flights to Kathmandu.
- Twin hotel accommodation in The Summit Hotel at the beginning and end of trek.
- Shared tented accommodation on trek.
- Professional trek guides and sherpas (who have climbed Mera Peak many times).
- Airport transfers upon arrival and local transfers.
- Baggage transfers on treks.
- English-speaking expedition doctor on trek (full medical kit including oxygen).
- Ultimate Travel Company expedition leader.
- Full board throughout except the lunches in Kathmandu.
- National park and permit fees.

Extras you will need to provide

- Pre-event training weekend in Wales.
- Registration fee of £250.
- Airport Tax (approximately £120 payable in advance).
- Nepal Visa (approximately £20).
- Nepal Departure Tax (approximately £15).
- Comprehensive mountaineering personal travel insurance.
- Lunches in Kathmandu.
- Gratuities.
- Personal expenses (including all extra facilities used in hotels, drinks etc).
- Recommended vaccinations (some GP surgeries charge for this service).
- Personal kit (ice axes, crampons, harness, plastic mountaineering boots, 4 season sleeping bag etc. A full packing checklist is enclosed).

Please note we have incorporated a spare day into this itinerary to allow for extra acclimatisation or bad weather. If we summit early and return to Lukla or Kathmandu, any extra arrangements will be at your own expense ie. Teahouse in Lukla, flight change fees, Summit Hotel in Kathmandu etc.