

2014 British Spiti Expedition - Summary Report by Derek Buckle

Until relatively recently the region to the north-east of the Spiti Valley in Himachal Pradesh was closed to non-Indian nationals, and even today its proximity to the border with Tibet makes it a sensitive area to visit. Encouraged by Harish Kapadia, who was the leader of the only two teams known to have explored east of the Lingti nala,^{1,2} Derek Buckle (leader), Dave Broadhead, Mike Cocker and Geoff Cohen subsequently received permission to enter this area in September 2014. Unfortunately, a fifth member, Hamish Irvine, failed to receive his permit before leaving the UK and was not allowed to go above base camp. In addition to extending the earlier exploration, the team planned to attempt one or more of the unclimbed 6000m peaks that lie close to the head of the Talung nala. From information provided by the earlier parties, it was known at the outset that access to these higher peaks would be problematic, and that this might in fact present a greater challenge than the climb itself.

After acquiring Inner Line permits at Shimla, the team drove to the road-head at Lalung. From here they trekked for five days north-east of the Lingti nala, over arduous and complex terrain, before eventually establishing a base camp at 5130m. From this camp the team explored and mapped the extensive Lagma plateau and climbed a subsidiary top (PK 5782) via a short, steep couloir (WI2) on its north-west face. After establishing a high camp at 5807m they then successfully made the first ascents of Tangmor (5920m), and PK 5927m by way of their north ridges.



Dave Broadhead, Derek Buckle and Mike Cocker on the first ascent of Fossil Gully (Photo Geoff Cohen)

After two intermediate camps a further high camp was then established at 5476m. From here the first ascent of PK 5924m (Chota Sgurr), lying to the eastern extremity of the high cirque at the head of the Talung nala, was successfully made via its sharp north ridge. Members of the team also made the second ascent of the rounded Lagma (5796m) by its broad north ridge.



Dave Broadhead descending from the summit of Chota Sgurr (Photo Mike Cocker)



PK 5927, Tangmor (5920m) & Manirang from the summit of Lagma (Photo Derek Buckle)

The expedition gratefully acknowledges support from the Mount Everest Foundation, the AC Climbing Fund and the Austrian Alpine Club.

1. H. Kapadia, Himalayan Journal, 40, 96-107, 1983

2. H. Kapadia, Himalayan Journal, 44, 96-101, 1987

