

CELEBRATIONS



Adventurers hit new heights in latest Himalayan challenge

ADVENTURER Louise 'Squash' Falconer is certainly one for milestones.

The Derbyshire woman has successfully climbed to the roof of the world, conquering Mount Everest, and was the first British woman to ride a motorbike to Mont Blanc, climb the peak and paraglide from the summit.

She is now in Kathmandu, Nepal, having just returned from another successful climb. Her team of seven made the first ascent of Nepal's Mt. Khang Karmo (6,704 metres).

The team set off on November 1 and made their ascent of the mountain nine days later via the North ridge. The final summit push took the team 10 hours due to the difficulty of traversing a number of hanging ice ridges.

The summit offered excellent views of Everest, Cho Oyu and Lhotse, as well as a host of other Himalayan peaks – and will likely make it a new prime target for future commercial expeditions.

Squash, from Thulston, said: "We were thrilled to make the first ascent of Khang Kharpo and my fellow climber, Kath Staniland, and I were the first people to paraglide in Na, the highest village in the Rolwaling valley."

On the day of the summit climb, she tweeted: "Exhausted, freezing and about to hit another vertical section – but what a place to be



standing as the sun rose on our summit day!"

Squash, 35, is an adventurer, speaker and presenter. She has climbed Everest, Mt Blanc, Cho Oyu and various other peaks around the world. Kath, also 35 and from Derbyshire, met Squash at Ockbrook School when they were only 11.

She is now an accomplished sportswoman, business owner and mother of three children.

She is an avid paraglider pilot who has been active in the sport since she was 21.

During the trek to Khang Karmo base camp, she and Squash paraglided from 4,500 metres above

Na – and are believed to be the first people to ever paraglide in the remote area.

Fellow team member Alison Levine, a 50-year-old American, met Kath and Squash when climbing Mustagh Ata (7509m) in 2007. She is a New York Times best-selling author and film-maker. She has completed the Explorer's Grand Slam (Seven Summits and both Poles) and completed the first ascent of Antarctica's Hall Peak in January.

In 2013, Squash set a world record for riding more than 3,000 miles on a bike with no saddle.

The machine, called an Elliptigo, combines running with cycling.