

FIRST EVER SKYDIVE OVER EVEREST

Reconnaissance on the Drop Zone at Shyangboche by the Skydiving Managing Team - A Success

The first ever skydiving program in the Everest Himalaya took place on the 14th & 15th of May, 2008. Four skydivers Ben Ian Wood, Andy Montriou, Nigel Gifford and David Ian Wood successfully skydived from a height of 16,000ft at Shyanboche. All four divers belong to the management team of High and Wild, which is a UK based adventure company. This was the test jump for the first ever program of skydiving in the Everest Himalaya to take place this Autumn. Explore Himalaya, the local partner of High & Wild has received the permit to hold the first ever Skydiving program in front of Mt Everest (29,035ft.) this Autumn(Oct- Nov).

6th May 2008 -Everest SkydiveManagement Team Arrives in Kathmandu On 6th May the management team of the High & Wild Everest Skydive arrived in Kathmandu. Nigel Gifford, the Managing Director of High and Wild, had arrived a few days earlier.

8th-13th May- The team Leaves for Shyangboche After spending a day in Kathmandu, they flew to Lukla to make the final reconnaissance on the drop zone at Shyangboche. From Lukla the team trekked to Jorsale. On 10th May the team reached Namche Bazaar. On the 11th the team walked to Shyangboche to inspect the landing area and returned to Namche. The team returned to Shyangboche again But this time they stayed at Phinju Lodge. The next day, May 13th the team made a thorough aerial survey by Fishtail Air helicopter.

14th -15th May - First Ever Skydive Over Everest On 14th May, two members Ben Ian Wood and Andy Montriou were ready for the test dive. They tried to do it at 6:30 a.m. but since it was too cloudy they had to give it up. At around 8a.m again they flew over by army helicopter piloted by Col.Pramod Lama and his assistant Major Subash Thapa waiting for the weather to clear. Now it had turned windy. At 9:15 a.m., the weather finally cleared. Flying to a height of 16,000 ft, Ben and Andy jumped. Though it was windy, the divers were successful in landing safely at Shyangboche airport. The feat was again repeated the following day (15th May) at 8:30 a.m. by Nigel Gifford and David Ian Wood when they skydived after being flown by a helicopter belonging to Fishtail Air. Nigel Gifford, Managing Director of High & Wild, who is 62 years old, was delighted with the jump. He opened the parachute after free falling for about 8-10 seconds. David followed closely. After a successful jump they tried for a tandem jump (skydiving carrying a passenger) but since the weather turned foul, they had to abort their plan. The team left for UK on the 16th.

This was the first ever program of skydiving in the Everest Himalaya to take place. After a successful Drop `Zone' test, the upcoming Everest Skydive mission (Autumn 2008) sure looks like a winner! Nigel is confident about running this operation as a commercial activity. Explore Himalaya is proud to be associated as a local partner of High & Wild in introducing the Everest Skydive as a new product.