



The Summit of Mount Everest is Reached

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Over 4500 miles from Mount Everest lies the highest point of the North York Moors National Park, Round Hill on Urra Moor, at just 454m above sea-level. Although it is marked by a trig point and stands close to the Cleveland Way long-distance walk, many would undoubtedly reach this point not realising they had reached the summit of this mass expanse of beautiful moorland.

On 29th May 1953, by contrast, there was no doubt that Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Edmund Hillary were on the top of Mount Everest (8848m) - the first two people to reach it – and the news travelled to England just in time for Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation. Hillary and Tenzing were part of a British expedition led by John Hunt, a well-known British mountaineer and a colonel in the British Army.

An iconic landmark and more mountain-like summit in the North York Moors than Round Hill is Roseberry Topping, at 320m – Everest is almost 28 times this height! This local 'mountain' lies close to the village of Great Ayton, on the northern flanks of the national park, and thousands trek each year to its peak to take in the magnificent views. It is often referred to as the 'Matterhorn of the Moors' as it resembles the shape of

the famous mountain in Switzerland. There is no definite date when the first person summited the distinctive Roseberry, but it is well known that James Cook as a young boy regularly took himself up the hill and it was perhaps this that gave him his taste for adventure and exploration.

Despite the lack of any major cliffs or mountains on the Moors, local climbers started to explore the crags that bound the upland plateau in the 1920s. Many famous climbers honed their skills on these crags before making their historic names in the timeline of British, Alpine and Himalayan climbing. Throughout the last century, the modest crags of the North Yorkshire Moors, with names such as Scugdale, the Wainstones, Ravenscar, Highcliffe Nab, Park Nab and many more have provided the rock-climber with numerous challenging problems.

In the same year that Everest was conquered the Cleveland Mountaineering Club was founded. Now with over 150 people on its membership list, club members enjoy summer days and evenings rock-climbing and exploring the wild expanse of the North Yorkshire Moors. The climbing guidebook to the area was written by the club's members and has lured many climbers to the crags. As the climbing grades have risen over the

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years, talented climbers are still pursuing new routes to tantalize others and entice them to take up the challenge of stretching their abilities..

Alan Hinkes OBE, the first Briton to climb all of the world's 8000m peaks (there are 14 of them) is a fellow member of this club, and is still to be seen climbing and walking in the area. Inspired by his conquests and a dream to climb Everest, I pursued a training routine of running up Roseberry Topping and soloing many easy routes at Scugdale after teaching Chemistry all day at a local secondary school. Older members of the club passed on their experience and wisdom and smiled at my antics, practising crevasse rescue off the edge of Captain Cook's crags and fixing my own line to ascend steeper routes. For me this was a way to gain confidence and skills and make small steps towards an as-yet unfulfilled dream.

In 1998, I was lucky enough to be invited to join

a Himalayan expedition to make a winter ascent of Ama Dablam (6836m) - the 'Matterhorn of the Himalayas'. I was the first British woman to do so, and the view of Mount Everest was overwhelming. The sharp contrast of the Himalayan mountains with snowcapped peaks, as opposed to the blanket of heather that was familiar from the North York Moors, led me to take evening jaunts to the higher hills and crags of the Lake District and to spend weekends in the Scottish Highlands at every opportunity. As with the early pioneers of Everest, the self-indulgence of climbing and training took over and in 2008, 55 years after the first ascent, a dream came true: I reached the summit of Mount Everest.

Now, a further ten years on and with two summits of Everest and a further five 8000m peaks, the opportunity to walk across the moors, climb at Scugdale and summit Roseberry Topping is nothing but pure pleasure.



Find out more

Cleveland Mountaineering Club,
<http://www.clevelandmc.com/>

Rock-climbing in the North York Moors,
http://www.climbonline.co.uk/north_york_moors1.htm

BBC News report of the first ascent of Everest,
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/29/newsid_2492000/2492683.stm



Mount Everest ('Chomolungma' is its Tibetan name)



Adele Pennington at the Everest Summit



Climbers on the Wainstones, Hasty Bank