



HIGH HOPES: Lee Farmer is set to tackle Mount Everest.

Lee ready to scale the heights

LEE Farmer, a Torquay Grammar School old boy from Teigngrace is preparing for the biggest adventure of his life – an assault on Mount Everest.

The 35-year old sets off for Kathmandu next month, prior to making an attempt on the summit via the north ridge, the route on which Mallory and Irvine were last seen in 1924.

For every metre scaled, he hopes to raise £1 for the National Society for Epilepsy – that's 8,850 metres and hopefully £8,850. His choice of charity is, at least in part, guided by the fact that his younger brother Glenn, 32, suffers from the condition.

Mr Farmer, a land acquisition agent and motivational speaker, is joining a team of seven by private invitation.

An experienced climber and qualified mountain leader, his long term ambition is to scale the highest peaks in all seven continents. He has already climbed Mounts Kenya and Kilimanjaro in Africa, Aconcagua in South America, Cho Oyu, Asia, Vinson, Antarctica and Kosciusko in Australia. Everest will be his greatest challenge.

The 70-day expedition will start with a trek on the south of Everest in Nepal to acclimatise to the altitude, before the

team turns to the north route in Tibet.

'It is a huge undertaking not just because of the time and preparation it demands but also the cost. The equipment alone will cost up to £10,000,' he said.

The team will endure temperatures of minus 25 degrees Centigrade, risk of hypothermia, frostbite, acute mountain sickness, pulmonary and cerebral oedema - fluid build up in the lungs and brain – affecting the ability to function.

But the biggest risk is avalanche. Climbers are twice as likely to die that way as from a fall or by slipping.

The training regime has been extreme. Mr Farmer drags a tractor tyre to build up core strength and weights his pack with up to 70lbs of water to accustom himself to the loads he will be carrying. That will include oxygen for when they reach the 'death zone', fuel and food needed to provide 6,000 calories a day.

Although Mr Farmer now lives in Berkshire, he plans to plant the Devon flag on the summit.

Mum, Marion Farmer of Brocks Lane, Teigngrace, said that they are very proud of him, although they can't help worrying when he is away.

'He has climbed several mountains in the past so he knows what he's doing,' she said.