

AC

00/14

# Anglo New Zealand Hindu Raj Expedition 2000



MOUNT EVEREST FOUNDATION



Freeze Dri  
**BACK COUNTRY**  
*Cuisine*

**BMC**

راج  
**Emirates**

[www.virginsummits.org](http://www.virginsummits.org)

+321



This report is dedicated to Nezair Uddin, his family and the people of Pakistan, whose warmth and hospitality ensure our expeditions are always about so much more than just mountains.



# CONTENTS

EXPEDITION MEMBERS .....	1
ITINERARY .....	2
AREA DESCRIPTION .....	3
MAPS .....	4
UDDIN ZOM - 5995M .....	4
EXPLORATION AND ACCLIMATISATION.....	5
SUMMIT SUCCESS .....	7
SUBSEQUENT EXPLORATION AND CLIMBING.....	8
TRANSPORT .....	9
PORTERS .....	9
FOOD AND EQUIPMENT .....	10
MEDICAL REPORT .....	10
EXPEDITION RESEARCH AND BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	12
THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	12
EXPEDITION ACCOUNTS .....	13
SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCE MATERIAL.....	14
APPENDIX 1 - SKETCH MAP .....	19



## EXPEDITION MEMBERS



Jock Jeffery, the team's token Kiwi, is 37 years old and a very well known face on the Queenstown climbing scene. During his "career", Cobber Jock has been, to name but a few; a highly successful road haulage entrepreneur, a farmer, an insurance salesman, an accountant, a tour guide and the guy who waves orange table tennis bats around on airport runways. Apart from climbing widely in New Zealand, he has been on three Himalayan expeditions and has made first ascents in Pakistan and Bolivia. Jock is a compulsive fitness fanatic and maintains that his body is a temple, which is true - though sadly a temple dedicated to the twin gods of Excess and Abuse (he's been a very devout worshipper over the years). Expedition duties include being a cheeky, chirpy, lovable Kiwi and the violent, ritualistic slaughter of sundry farmyard animals for the team's consumption.



Adam Thomas is 28 years old and our hard ice guru. During the winter, Adam can be found skulking in various steep gullies throughout the Scottish Highlands, reserving his summers for forays into the most obscure backwaters of the Himalayas and Andes. His accomplishments include the exploration of the little known Tres Marias area in Bolivia (culminating in three British first ascents and one overall first ascent) and the second ascent of the 5900m Kutshkulun Sar in the Western Karakoram. Adam can count among his friends such influential figures as the Postmaster General of Pakistan and (bizarrely) was instrumental in deciding the current corporate colours of the Pakistani Post Office! Expedition duties include porter liaison, research and planning and all matters involving diplomacy and circumnavigating the endless yards of bureaucratic red tape.



Simon Woods is 31 years old, an occasional self employed IT contractor, terminal Asiaholic and veteran of five Himalayan expeditions. Although he has climbed in the European Alps, Poland, Spain and Bolivia (with a new route on the 5995m Pico Schulze in 1998) his primary interest lies in exploratory climbing in the Himalayas, with a growing number of first ascents and new routes to his name. Expedition duties include planning and recruitment, post expedition reporting, Asian cultural advisor and (when social obligation dictates) lead dancer, offering a totally bitching red-hot blend of traditional Pakistani folk dancing and pure Bollywood.



Phil Amos is a 28 year old agricultural waste management consultant, which is obviously a polite way of saying he spends his time up to his waist in, well - something unpleasant. When not ridding the world of bovine manure, Phil can be found irritating motorists by driving tractors down the A1 at 15 mph, and was listed in the Ministry of Transport's annual report as being the sole cause of the UK's traffic problems. Phil has climbed extensively in Britain, the European Alps and Chile and joined Adam on the Tres Marias expedition in Bolivia. Given his profession, Phil's expedition duties primarily involve implementing the team's low impact, environmentally friendly sewerage management strategy (he digs the toilet pit).

# Anglo-New Zealand Hindu Raj Expedition 2000



## EXPEDITION CONTACT ADDRESS

Adam Thomas  
c/o 12 Louisa Street  
Stepney  
London  
E1 4NF  
E-mail: [Adamclimb@Btinternet.com](mailto:Adamclimb@Btinternet.com)

## SUMMARY

The aim of the expedition was to explore and attempt first ascents in the Matkesh/Ochiri valley in the south western Hindu Raj. It consisted of four members, Adam Thomas, Simon Woods, Phil Amos and Jock Jeffery.

The team flew to Islamabad and stayed in Rawalpindi whilst completing official business. They then relocated to Chitral, which was used as a base to buy supplies and arrange transport to the road head. A long day walk saw them establish a base camp towards the head of the main valley, where they stayed for five weeks. This camp was used to explore both the Matkesh and the Ochiri valleys.

After a period of acclimatisation and exploration, the team made a series of attempts on the highest mountain in the valley and was eventually successful in climbing Uddin Zom (5995m).

Woods and Jeffery made an early departure in order to meet another expedition based in Gilgit, whilst Thomas and Amos undertook some further exploration, though bad weather did not allow any additional summit attempts.

Thomas, Woods and Jeffery were involved in an expedition to the western Karakoram in 1999 where they were successful in achieving the second ascent of Kutshkulin Sar (c.5900m). The seeds of the 2000 trip were sown on the summit, as it afforded dramatic views of the little explored Hindu Raj. Being good friends from the previous expedition proved to be one of the strengths of this trip and made it most enjoyable for all.

#### ITINERARY

23 June 2000	Arrive Islamabad
24-28 June	Shopping for expedition supplies and retrieving food from the clutches of Pakistani bureaucracy
29-30 June	Travel by bus from Rawalpindi to Dir and then by pick up to Chitral
1-2 July	Meet cook and shop for food
3 July	Travel by jeep from Chitral to Zhupo
4 July	Walk in to base camp
5 July	Organise base camp and acclimatise
6 July	First reconnaissance – Woods and Jeffrey up Matkesh Glacier, Thomas and Amos up Ochiri Glacier
7 July	Rest
8-10 July	Carry loads up to Advanced Base Camp (ABC)
11 July	Up to Camp 1
12 July	Camp 2 (Woods and Jeffery stay at their own Camp 1)
13 July	Return to base camp in worsening weather
14-15 July	Rest
16 July	To ABC
17 July	Camp 1
18 July	Camp 2
19 July	Rest and acclimatise at Camp 2. Snowing all day.
20 July	Return to base camp in poor weather
21-26 July	Base camp in poor weather

27 July	To ABC
28 July	Camp 1
29 July	Camp 2
30 July	Summit day
31 July	Return to base camp
1-3 August	Rest. Woods and Jeffery leave to join other expedition 3 August
4 August	Reconnaissance
5 August	Rest
6 August	To ABC
7 August	Return to base camp in yet more bad weather
8 August	Pack up base camp
9 August	Walk out to Zhupo
10 August	Travel by public jeep to Chitral
11-23 August	Travel to Peshawar and Rawalpindi. Fly home.

## AREA DESCRIPTION

The Hindu Raj range has received relatively little attention when compared to its giant neighbours, the Karakoram and the Hindu Kush. Nestled between the two, it was somewhat overlooked in the period before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980, when many European expeditions were travelling overland to the Hindu Kush. During the 1980s the entire area was closed to foreigners, only to be reopened in the mid 1990s. Since then there has been some exploration and development, mainly by small parties. Many of the peaks in the region are just under 6000m and thus avoid much of the expense involved with going above that height.

There is little information about climbing in the area, although a thorough trawl through the records in the Royal Geographic Society Library and the Alpine Club revealed a few references. There was a large UIAA expedition in 1998 that concentrated on two valleys on the south eastern side of the watershed and achieved considerable success. Other than that, information is scarce. The maps of the area are mostly old and inaccurate, although we did manage to find an accurate and large scale map of the Matkesh/Ochiri valley in a Japanese atlas uncovered in the Alpine Club.

This arid region of northern Pakistan is broken up by deep, steep sided valleys that allow irrigation from the melt water streams and rivers that fill them. There is a stark contrast between the parched brown of the slopes and the lush green of the valley floors. High above the aridity are snow-capped peaks from 5500m to over 6500m. There is less density of glaciation than in the Karakoram, but there is still plenty of snow and ice on the higher peaks.

Towards the Thui An



High above the aridity are snow-capped peaks from 5500m to over 6500m. There is less density of glaciation than in the Karakoram, but there is still plenty of snow and ice on the higher peaks.

The Matkesh/Ochiri valley was singled out as an objective because access was thought to be relatively easy and also because there were a good number of possible objectives all lying between 5900m and 6000m. From

the road head at Zhupo, the track up towards the Thui An is well trodden by trekkers and the occasional mountaineering trip to the mountains north of the main valley. The southern side of the valley had seen no western visitors and certainly no climbing parties.

The mountains in the Matkesh valley were mainly heavily glaciated, whilst the Ochiri valley allowed much easier access. The rock was of mixed quality, consisting mainly of metamorphics, although there was a small amount of good quality granite. At the head of the Ochiri valley there was a remarkable band of slate like rock that provided a very stable covering of moraine over the Ochiri glacier. The snow and ice was of variable quality, depending on the weather conditions, but on the whole was very good. The temperatures during the summer months in the Hindu Raj tend to be relatively high, even at 6000m, which promotes very active movement of glaciers and seracs.

## MAPS

The maps used were purchased from Stanfords in Covent Garden before we left. They were from the U502 series made by the US Army in 1955, and based on Shipton's survey of 1939. The Matkesh/Ochiri valley is to be found on sheet NJ 43-13. This was useful for planning the approach, but was not of sufficient scale for climbing. The detailed, large-scale map from a Japanese atlas found in the Alpine Club had the valley accurately marked. This was used once we arrived in base camp. On the US Army map the Ochiri Glacier is shown as the Chanuk and on the Japanese map it is shown as Chonuk/Ochiri. Throughout this report we refer to it as the Ochiri Glacier.

Perhaps one of the joys of such an expedition is that there are no really accurate maps. Whilst the map we had was of reasonable quality, we also took a GPS unit to verify positions and heights for all the points we visited.

Because of copyright restrictions on the reproduction of maps we have not included a copy, but have prepared the sketch map shown in Appendix 1.

## UDDIN ZOM - 5995M

This is the name given to the mountain the expedition climbed. As it was not named previously, the team decided upon Uddin Zom. It comes from the family name of the goatherd who lives with his family in the Matkesh/Ochiri valley in July and August. We arrived and set up base camp about 500m from his house and from the start he and his family



treated us as their own. We shared his food and spent time in his home. In return he ate with us many times and we donated all of our spare supplies to him at the end of the trip.

We owe him a great debt, as our time at base camp was very special. To be able to spend a protracted period of time in such a situation was, for all members, one of the highlights of the trip. His front door looks over the mountain that was climbed and it was felt appropriate to name the mountain after him. He was made aware that this would be written up in a report and in books on our return and he was very proud to have been a part of the expedition.

## EXPLORATION AND ACCLIMATISATION

The aims of the expedition were to explore and climb. The exploration stage was relatively quick and easy. From base camp at 3530m Woods and Jeffery decided that they would concentrate on the Matkesh valley above a large icefall. On their first day out they spotted a way of getting round the icefall and gain a reasonable view into the upper Matkesh valley. They then embarked on a two-day trip up the true right bank of the icefall, camping on a plateau above the glacier at about 4400m. From there, they proceeded on towards the glacier, but it soon became evident that there were no real climbing objectives. There seemed to be plenty to climb, but much of it was threatened by large seracs and dangerous icefalls. They could see no safe way up any of the mountains in the glacial bowl and decided to return to base camp that day.

At the same time Thomas and Amos went up the Ochiri Glacier. They found that access was extremely easy all the way to the head of the valley. At first it was a simple matter of following the lateral moraine on the true left bank and then at 4200m moving down onto the moraine covered glacier and following this to the valley head. At this point it was obvious that there were possibilities in this area and the glacial bowl was, at 4380m, a perfect site for Advanced Base Camp.

After a couple of day's rest, we all started to ferry loads up the Ochiri glacier in order to establish Advanced Base. After two trips each over the next two days we were ready for an attempt on the highest mountain in the valley that reared up to the east of Advanced base. Thomas and Amos elected a route that skirted to the true right of the glacier and then reached a plateau below the final face to the summit. They put in a camp at 4880m where Amos suffered a bad headache with the altitude. The following day the pair headed up reasonable glacial slopes with some crevasse difficulties and some deep, sugary snow to a camp at 5340m. This was situated on the lip of a large crevasse overlooking Advanced Base Camp. Thomas suffered from the altitude during the night.



Ochiri Glacier with Uddin Zom in the distance

Meanwhile, Woods and Jeffery decided on a more direct approach and headed up the centre of the main glacier. They managed to find a way through to a camp in a crevasse at about 5000m where they stopped for the night. They planned to head across the glacier from here, to make a steep ascent up a face to the south west ridge. A camp there would establish them on the mountain in order to make a summit attempt.

The two pairs were in radio contact during this period, not least because it was planned to reach the summit on the same day, via different routes. Woods and Jeffery realise that they would need more acclimatisation in order to succeed on their route and elected to stay a second night at their crevasse camp. Unfortunately, the second afternoon out from Advanced Base saw increasing snow showers, which became heavier over night. In the morning both pairs realised that to continue would be unsafe, especially in light of the lack of acclimatisation, and so decided to retreat back to base camp. The descent for Thomas and Amos was somewhat difficult due to poor visibility and snow conditions, but all four made it back to base camp that day.

After a period of rest and leaving enough time for the new snow to have settled, all four members returned to Advanced Base with food for seven days. It was agreed that the group



would climb in the same pairs as before, but this time all by the same route. It was felt that the way tried by Thomas and Amos constituted the best chance of success and so all four set off to Camp 1 at 4880m. The following day saw easy progress up to Camp 2, the site of which changed slightly in order to accommodate two tents, but remained at 5340m. Encroaching poor weather did

not bode well for the ascent, but both pairs settled in for a wait. After continual snow for 36 hours, it was felt that conditions under foot and on the summit face would be too dangerous for an immediate attempt, so the team retraced its steps back to base camp once more.

Despite now being well acclimatised, the weather continued to be bad and the expedition came to a halt to wait out eight days of torrential rain and heavy snow on the mountain. The valley walls above base camp were a riot of activity, with frequent mud slides washing trees away. In the villages below camp a number of fields and a house were destroyed by landslides, giving an indication of the exceptional nature of the weather. Spirits at this stage were quite low, as all members felt that we had come very close to success, only to be thwarted by the weather. The joys of climbing in the Greater Ranges! It was not all bad news though, as during the brief dry spells, a Pakistan verses England cricket test match was organized, which resulted in a shock win for the tourists. As the weather refused to abate, the need for entertainment became more desperate and the Base Camp Olympics were officially declared open. Pakistan was ultimately victorious and fielded a particularly strong team in the caber tossing and shot (rock) putting. The sporting agenda was complimented with cultural highlights in the form of several fondue nights, which helped pass the time for another few days, allowing the snow on the mountains to consolidate. All four members once again set off to Advanced Base with seven days food and what little sanity they had managed to preserve.

## SUMMIT SUCCESS

The same approach was used as for the second attempt, and all four members found themselves at Camp 2 with no real problems. It is worth noting at this point that during the afternoon spent at Advanced Base, the summit face of the mountain avalanched, adjacent to our intended route. Fortunately, the slope avalanched down to bare ice and it was felt that much of the danger had actually been removed for our attempt.

The following day both pairs set off at 1.30am across the plateau, to the summit face. After some difficulty crossing the bergshroud, the face was found to be about 45 degrees and the pairs moved together on their ropes. There was no need for protection as progress was quick and easy. Soon, dawn approached and the slope steepened. After a few rope lengths of 60 degree ice a rock band was reached. Thomas and Amos elected to try and force a way through this in order to take advantage of the good-looking rock in the 25m pitch. Woods and Jeffery took a left traverse that enabled them to avoid all but a small rock step and gave access to the long summit ridge.



Amos above the rock step of Uddin Zom

Amos led the rock pitch, which turned out to be somewhat loose. Just before pulling onto the summit ridge, his foothold collapsed and sent a shower of rock onto Thomas and Jeffery who were belayed to the ice below. The largest block skimmed across Jeffrey's belay and fortunately did no damage. Thomas was not so lucky and was struck on the head by a large rock, which glanced off his helmet and hit his shoulder, causing some damage.



Uddin Zom, with the route from Camp 2 marked

Luckily it was not really serious and having completed the pitch on a tight rope from Amos, Thomas was able to proceed with nothing more than a large dose of painkillers. Woods and Jeffery then led the way up the long summit ridge to a col just below the top. This was a chance for a breather before Woods led the way over a small crevasse onto the heavily corniced summit. There was just room for all four members on the top, which was reached at 8.15am after just under seven hours of climbing.

Being the highest top in the area, we were afforded spectacular panoramic views of the Karakoram in the east, the Hindu Raj to the north and the Hindu Kush to the west. The weather was perfect and the need to hurry came only from the warm temperatures that would

affect the descent slopes. After 15 minutes on the top, the team retreated to the col, where they rested and had a bite to eat.

At this stage Thomas was in considerable pain with his shoulder and it was felt that descent would be safest by the same route as the ascent. Again, Thomas was very grateful for a tight rope from Amos on the descent, and indeed for the help afforded by all of the team. All four reached Camp 2 at 2.00pm without any major mishaps, and stayed the night there to rest, returning to Base Camp the following day.

### SUBSEQUENT EXPLORATION AND CLIMBING

At this stage Woods and Jeffery sadly had to leave the expedition in order to join another in Gilgit. They stayed for a couple of days, before heading off, leaving Thomas and Amos another two weeks at base camp. The next few days were spent waiting for Thomas' shoulder to improve, but then he and Amos set off back up the Ochiri glacier to reconnoitre another route. They opted for a mountain to the north west of Uddin Zom on the true left bank of the main Ochiri glacier. To get to the base of this involved some evil moraine

The first peak reconnoitred by Amos and Thomas



consisting of massive granite blocks perched ready to squash any encroaching climbers. After reaching 4800m from base camp at 3530m, they had a good view of the mountain.

The climb would have involved a camp at the base of a steep ice face about 400m high. After ascending this face, there would then be a difficult and intricate ridge to the summit and descent would probably be via the same

route. Having pondered this prospect for some time, the pair decided that due to the present state of Thomas' shoulder, coupled with a certain lack of motivation brought on by the departure of Woods and Jeffery, they would not attempt this route. It was felt that it would provide some high quality and high standard climbing, especially a little earlier in the season with a better covering of snow and ice.

It was decided, instead, to return to Advanced Base Camp and attempt a mountain at the head of the Ochiri valley. At about 5700m, this would involve a long icefall climb and then a ridge over 1km in length, all above 5500m. This ridge connected with Uddin Zom and descent would be to Camp 2 of that mountain and then back to Advanced Base.

Thomas and Amos therefore returned to base camp, stocked up and then headed up to Advanced Base. Yet again the weather deteriorated, and that evening saw a return of the snow and rain that had consistently dogged previous attempts. Overnight there was no respite and the pair decided that it would take a number of days before conditions would be safe to climb. A large avalanche had already been seen on the icefall and so it was decided not to wait at Advanced Base, but to return to base camp.

This misfortune meant the time had effectively run out and another attempt would mean not meeting the arranged jeep rendezvous. The decision was reluctantly made to leave base camp five days earlier than planned and return to Chitral.

## **TRANSPORT**

Thomas arranged flights for himself, Amos and Woods from the UK, with Jeffery booking his own from New Zealand. Having booked onto Emirates Airlines, Thomas contacted them directly to request an increase in the baggage allowance so we would be able to carry all of our equipment. Emirates were more than helpful with this and everything else relating to our flights, and granted each member an allowance of 40kgs. We are all greatly indebted to them for this service.

From Rawalpindi, a minibus was arranged to take us to Dir and then a Toyota pickup from Dir, over the 3200m Lowhari Pass, to Chitral. This was cheap and easy to arrange, but parties with more money or less time could fly. Transport from Chitral to the road head at Zhupo was arranged in Chitral with a local jeep driver, but again, there is plenty of help available in Chitral if things are looking difficult. The expedition took two jeeps to Zhupo, one for the four climbers and some kit and the other for the rest of the kit and the cook. The road was long and in poor condition, but still quite good for that part of the country.

Woods and Jeffery departed early from the expedition and took the public jeep from Zhupo to Mastuj on the return journey, and then headed over the Shandur Pass to Gilgit. Thomas, Amos and the cook had arranged for a jeep to pick them up, but as they also left a few days early, they too elected to take the public jeep. Whilst this is a great cultural experience it is not to be recommended, especially if one is carrying a lot of kit! They subsequently also caught the local bus from Chitral to Rawalpindi.

## **PORTERS**

As ever, hiring porters was one of the highlights of the expedition, if not one of the easiest jobs! This part of Pakistan seems to have no formal, or indeed, informal arrangements for the hiring of porters. Without the traffic of the Karakoram, they have not established the same sort of protocol as seen in the more popular areas.

Porters were one of the major costs for the expedition even though our walk in was short and we were comparatively lightweight. Local politics seem to play a major part in negotiations, which unfortunately means that the mountaineer is bound to lose out. As the expedition was to go to a valley where there was no established trekking route, it was hard to fix the parameters of the deal. Without a hard and fast knowledge of where you are siting base camp and exactly how long it will take to get there, negotiations will always be difficult.

The team was lucky that one of the villagers spoke good English. Although only sixteen, he helped tremendously, sometimes putting himself in a difficult position. After many misunderstandings from both sides, we eventually made it to base camp in one piece. The porters then felt that we were not paying them enough and went on a sit in strike that threatened to get nasty. We ended up paying over the odds in order to keep the peace.

The return to Zhupo was much less stressful mainly because we left in two parties. The local goatherd had enough donkeys to carry all of our kit and as we had formed a strong

friendship with him and his family during our time at base camp, he was more than happy to help us.

### **FOOD AND EQUIPMENT**

Most of the expedition food was purchased in Chitral where there is a wide array of base camp provisions. Certain products were not available, but the staples for six weeks at base camp were easy to purchase. Any items specifically required are best bought in Rawalpindi, although this is sure to change as more tourists go to Chitral. As yet, there is still a relatively limited number who make the journey and so the supply of some western foods is also limited. The expedition felt that it should spend the majority of its money in the area in which it was spending most of its time.

Experience from the trip in 1999 suggested that dehydrated food for the mountains was not readily available and so this was sent in advance from New Zealand. This actually provided the biggest problem of the entire expedition as the food got caught up in Pakistani bureaucracy. Out of 165 packets of food, 15 contained sweet and sour pork. This was impounded by customs, (even though pork is allowed for foreigners), who were happy to release the rest. However, the parcel was sent by post and the Post Office decided that it could not release a part package. The ensuing battle to release the food left Thomas with heat stroke and took up a lot of time in Islamabad.

In order to avoid this sort of trouble, two pieces of advice are offered. Firstly, do not send pork to a Muslim country (it might seem obvious to all you clever people out there!) and secondly, send all parcels to a recognised shipping agent by airfreight. The agents are well versed in the necessary procedures and will sort everything out for your arrival. If importing any goods into the country, be sure to fill out the necessary forms in advance and give them to your shipping agent. These forms can be easily obtained on the Internet.

The expedition was very lucky to be put in touch with Maqsood Ul-Mulk from Chitral who runs Hindukush Trails. He has an e-mail address, which enabled us to book a cook before we arrived. This was felt to be important as a cook can make or break an expedition. The cook that Maqsood provided was called Zahoor and had trekked up the Thui An previously, so knew as much about the area as anyone. He was rather inexperienced, but made up for it with a huge amount of enthusiasm. The food kept the team in good shape and Zahoor became a friend to everyone by the end. He did manage to burn down the kitchen tent, but that was on the last morning and provided more entertainment than anything else!

Hindukush Trails supplied the kitchen tent as a package with Zahoor and could also provide a mess tent. The expedition actually hired a mess tent in Rawalpindi, but Hindukush Trails would probably have been a better bet. The stove and kitchen equipment were bought in Chitral for a modest sum, as were fuel and blue barrels for some of the provisions. All personal kit and climbing hardware was bought from home by the climbers, although a limited selection is available for sale or hire in Islamabad.

### **MEDICAL REPORT**

The major incident whilst in the field was the shoulder injury sustained by Thomas when hit by a rock during the ascent of Uddin Zom. Although deflected by his (thankfully helmet clad) head, the rock had fallen some distance and struck the back of his shoulder with considerable force. Thomas did well to continue the climb carrying this injury, especially as

it happened at the foot of the technical difficulties, allowing no time for recovery before the shoulder was in full use climbing a rock step. Because the injury was deep inside the muscle, it did not exhibit much visible damage; however the whole area was obviously seriously traumatised, as at the time of writing (some three months later), Thomas is still experiencing considerable pain whilst climbing.

The remainder of the expedition was largely uneventful in terms of injury, although several minor incidents and near misses were recorded on loose moraine and unstable boulder fields. Whilst in the field all members enjoyed good general health, although as on previous expeditions, everyone experienced various gastrointestinal problems before and after the expedition when removed from the "safe" base camp environment. In most cases these were short lived and self-limiting, but after leaving the expedition, Woods and Jeffery developed (respectively), Giardia and Amoebic Dysentery. Tinidazole was administered in both cases, with Woods recovering quickly, the condition having been treated at an early stage. Jeffery however, suffered considerable discomfort for a number of days and did well to recover his strength in time for the walk in to base camp on a subsequent expedition.

Our cook Zahoor managed to seriously cut his finger during the course of his duties and was treated by the team. Nezair Uddin and various members of his family were also treated for a number of minor injuries.

A group medical kit was carried and was as follows; (generic names have been used wherever possible, as trade names vary from country to country).

#### **Physical trauma and injury:**

Surgical tape – Micropure and Elastoplast, Sutures and skin closure strips, Triangular bandage, Crepe bandage, Sundry dressings, Iodine, Sterile wipes and Morphine (as a strong painkiller in case of serious injury).

#### **Altitude illness:**

Acetazolamide (Diamox) 250mg – prevention and treatment of mild altitude illness; Dexamethazone 0.5mg – HACE; Nifedipine 10mg – HAPE; Chloramphenicol ointment – snow blindness and eye infections; Visine eye drops.

#### **Gastrointestinal infections:**

Ciprofloxacin 250mg - bacterial diarrhoea (and urinary tract infections); Norfloxacin 400mg – bacterial diarrhoea; Tinidazole 500mg – Giardiasis and amoebiasis; Loperamide 2mg - diarrhoea; Oral rehydration sachets.

#### **General healthcare:**

Cannulae and hypodermic needles; Amoxicillin 500mg – urinary tract, inner ear and sinus infections, bronchitis and pneumonia; Fexofenadine Hydrochloride 180mg – antihistamine; Cetirizine 10mg – antihistamine; Lidramina - antihistamine cream; Codeine Sulphate 15mg – pain reliever and cough suppressant; Ibuprofen 400mg – anti inflammatory analgesic; Ketoconazole cream (Nizoral) - fungal skin infections; Paracetamol 500mg, Aspirin 75mg, Throat lozenges, Savlon.

All members also carried basic personal first aid kits that were used on the hill and replenished and augmented with base camp stores as necessary.

The vast majority of the above pharmaceuticals are widely available in Islamabad, Chitral and throughout Pakistan and are considerably less expensive than equivalent products purchased in the UK, although care must be exercised with regard to out of date or poorly stored goods.

#### **EXPEDITION RESEARCH AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The idea of visiting the Hindu Raj came during the expedition of 1999. It was known that the area was rarely visited and offered many exciting prospects for exploratory mountaineering. This fact, however, made research very difficult as so little has been recorded.

During the course of research a number of sources were consulted, but because the Matkesh/Ochiri valley had not been previously visited, most journal entries and magazine articles served only to provide background on the general area. They are included here for the sake of completeness.

Alpine Journal (especially AJ 1970 pp179-184)

American Alpine Journal

High Magazine

Himalayan Journal (especially HJ 31 1970-71 pp309-321)

Japanese Atlas of Mountainous Regions (details not known, but held by the Alpine Club)

Lonely Planet Trekking in the Karakoram and Hindukush guidebook.

We were unable to find any direct reference to the Matkesh/Ochiri valley and failed to procure any photographs of the mountains. We had a good idea of what sort of terrain to expect from the volumes listed above, but it should be noted that much of the information gathered predates the time of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. This means that the snow and ice conditions are sure to be different and the expedition certainly found less cover than was shown in the available photographs.

The expedition would certainly have benefited from information from the UIAA expedition to the area in 1999. Despite a very good report on the Internet, Thomas was unable to contact any members of the expedition to procure photographs. They must certainly have had useful pictures, as the summit of Uddin Zom is easily visible from the summits of the mountains the UIAA expedition climbed. More information is available on the UIAA website, although a certain amount of luck would seem necessary to actually contact those concerned.

#### **THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thanks are due to many people and organizations who enabled this expedition to achieve the success it did. They are listed below.

Mount Everest Foundation – for providing financial support.

British Mountaineering Council – for providing financial support from Sports Council funds.



The support of these two bodies is invaluable for expeditions such as ours and is very much appreciated. Encouraging mountaineers to explore new areas and make first ascents is extremely worthwhile and an indication of the commitment shown by these organisations to small scale, low impact, Alpine style climbing throughout the world.

Back Country Foods – this New Zealand dehydrated food manufacturer offered us substantial discounts (trade price less 20%) on their products. We took full advantage of this and purchased 165 meals from their extensive range. For climbers used to suffering either the outrageous prices and bulk of US freeze dried food, or the inedible sawdust offered by British companies, these meals came as a genuine delight and cannot be recommended highly enough. Sadly they are not yet available in the UK, but we are currently working on arrangements to allow British expeditions to order directly from Back Country at favourable prices. Details of this will be posted on our website at [www.virginsummits.org](http://www.virginsummits.org) and further information on their product range can be found on the company's own website at [www.freezedri.co.nz](http://www.freezedri.co.nz)

Emirates Airlines – for increasing the baggage allowance of the British team members to 40kgs. This saved both time and money, as equipment did not have to be air freighted and the ensuing Pakistani bureaucracy could therefore be avoided. The sales team at Emirates was extremely helpful and understanding and we would thoroughly recommend the airline to anyone travelling to Asia or beyond.

Hindukush Trails – Maqsood Ul-Mulk knows more about the Chitral area than most. His help, support and expertise were invaluable.

Nasir Awan at Himalaya Treks and Tours – for providing an address for the dehydrated food we posted (he is a friend of a friend). He must be Pakistan's best trekking agent and one of its nicest natives. His help and patience ensured that the team left Islamabad just before it was swallowed up forever by Pakistani bureaucracy.

The Alpine Club of Pakistan – for helping with contacts and showing such a keen interest in the development of the sport in Pakistan.

The Alpine Club – for having the best selection of expedition records anywhere. Without the AC library, no research would have been possible. We would also like to congratulate them on making the Himalayan Index available on the Internet for use by the general public, free of charge. This not only brings a valuable resource to a much wider audience, but allows one to make many searches very quickly and can be considered the starting point for all expeditions engaged in exploratory climbing. Although the index deals only with peaks over 6000m it can still prove very valuable for parties visiting sub 6000ers, by detailing reports that will often contain information of interest. The club's website and the Himalayan Index can be found at [www.alpine-club.org.uk](http://www.alpine-club.org.uk)

Lindsay Griffin – for his help and enthusiasm. His knowledge of ascents in the Greater Ranges is of course, encyclopaedic, but he also put us in touch with many good contacts.

## **EXPEDITION ACCOUNTS**

Pakistan is a relatively inexpensive destination for an expedition to visit if climbing sub 6000m peaks not requiring permits or payment of peak fees. A brief fiscal summary is

included below and includes all group costs incurred ex Islamabad. Figures are in US\$ @1US\$=56.7 Rupees.

Transport	345
Accommodation	122
Kitchen Staff, Mess Tent, Kitchen Tent	559
Porters	309
Food (Including High Altitude Rations)	958
Kitchen Equipment, Kerosene etc	303
Climbing Equipment Purchased Locally	74
Miscellaneous (Including Radios, GPS)	569
Total	3239

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCE MATERIAL**

The purpose of this report is not only to record the exploits of our expedition, but also to serve as a reference for the next team planning to visit the region. This aspect of the reporting process is something we have sometimes found lacking in other reports. As maps are often of extremely limited value when assessing mountaineering targets on a local level, one must rely heavily on photographic references. With this in mind, we have compiled a number of photographs that give insight into the Matkesh/Ochiri region (see pages 17 and 18). They have been selected solely on the basis of information they impart to prospective visitors, rather than on photographic merit. Reference information is given for each image to assist in the planning process and can be found overleaf.

General information of this, and a number of our other expeditions can be found on our new website at [www.virginsummits.org](http://www.virginsummits.org). Photographs and a brief summary are included and the text only version of this report is available for download.

Teams interested in visiting this area are welcome to contact us, as we are always happy to assist with any information we can.

1. The early stages of the approach to Base Camp. The road in left of shot is the route in from Chitral and goes to the village of Gazin, but is generally only motorable as far as Zhupo.
2. The view towards Base Camp from the bottom of the Matkesh/Ochiri valley. Uddin Zom is shown as the snow peak to the left of shot, with Yaticho Zom center of shot. Base Camp was placed in the vicinity of the second wooded area, (20 minutes from where the photograph was taken).
3. Looking down towards Base Camp from the route next to the Matkesh icefall. Base Camp was placed near the trees on the right.
4. View of Uddin Zom (left) and Yaticho Zom (center) from Base Camp. The Matkesh icefall can be clearly seen to the left of shot. The best route through it is to start up the middle of the glacier, then move to the true right bank before the difficulties start. Find a series of ramp lines and terraces on the valley wall and follow them up to easier ground, which eventually leads you above the icefall and allows access to the upper glacier. There is a large obvious gully lower down the glacier; under no circumstances should this be attempted as it is exceptionally loose and dangerous.
5. Looking towards the summit of Uddin Zom across the Matkesh icefall. For more detail see shot 6.
6. The main summit is Uddin Zom; our route was from the other side of the mountain and of what is visible here, only the top section of ridge below the summit was climbed. The triangular rock pillar and ridge line offer obvious opportunities and the rock would appear to be of good quality, though the climb would be a serious undertaking.
7. The upper reaches of the Matkesh Glacier, viewed from the route above the initial icefall. There are certainly opportunities here for ascents, though we found no objectively safe lines apart from the one mentioned above. Although it does not appear dangerous from the photographs, every natural line of weakness was covered by between one and three lines of rock fall and/or avalanche. Teams visiting in subsequent years may of course find more favourable conditions, though some of the lines are fundamentally unsafe.
8. Another shot showing the mountains of the Matkesh Glacier.
9. Advance Base Camp, with an extremely foreshortened view of Uddin Zom. Our route is shown along with the sites of Camps 1 and 2. The right hand skyline is part of the route proposed by Amos and Thomas that they were unable to attempt due to bad weather. Woods and Jeffery initially camped at the foot of the rocky outcrop that splits the glacier. Their planned route was to climb the face to the subsidiary summit opposite, then follow the skyline ridge to the top. This summit appears here as a small bump on the ridge, but was in fact a major obstacle and can be seen in the picture in the main body of the report and in photograph number 10.
10. Camp 2, showing the face and subsidiary summit proposed by Woods and Jeffery.
11. Looking towards the upper face of Uddin Zom from the initial Camp 1 used by Woods and Jeffery at c5000m. A foreshortened view of the face and subsidiary summit discussed above are shown in right of shot.

12. A telephoto shot of the same region taken from lower down the glacier.
13. Looking towards the upper basin of the Ochiri Glacier from Advance Base Camp. The lower flanks of a mountain we christened Cossack Peak are visible in the top right of shot (see 15 below).
14. Looking towards the summit of Uddin Zom
15. This unusual mountain was named Cossack Peak as the head of a Cossack (complete with hat) can be seen in profile in the shadow at center of shot. The climb would involve a steep face and ridge (see photograph 16).
16. Cossack Peak (left of shot) and the upper Ochiri Glacier seen from Camp 1 on Uddin Zom. Advance Base Camp was situated just out of shot on the true right bank of the glacier.

Whilst the area visited by our expedition does not hold the endless possibilities for ascents one can sometimes find, it does certainly offer sufficient objectives for future teams (especially technically strong ones). It should be noted that the whole Hindu Raj and extreme western Karakoram (Ishkoman Valley) hold much scope for exploratory climbing. However teams must accept that due to the relatively low altitudes and extremely high temperatures, snow cover and quality can be limited. This, coupled with the generally poor nature of the rock often means that although there is usually a lot of climbing, much of it will be out of bounds due to objective danger. We have often found wonderful lines on seemingly perfect faces that are completely untouchable because the snow line is so high that vast unstable scree slopes or gullies full of rock fall are the only means of approach. This is in no way meant to discourage teams from visiting, but merely to warn that a certain flexibility with regard to objective is necessary.

We would urge anyone with a passion for exploratory climbing to visit the Hindu Raj, especially those on a tight budget, as it offers one of the best adventure per dollar ratios of anywhere on the planet.

With regard to the immediate area visited by our party, an ascent of Uddin Zom via a different route is perhaps the best objective. Although for strong teams, Cossack Peak or either of the peaks reconnoitred by Amos and Thomas would also be very worthwhile.

Anglo-New Zealand Hindu Raj 2000  
Expedition Report



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14

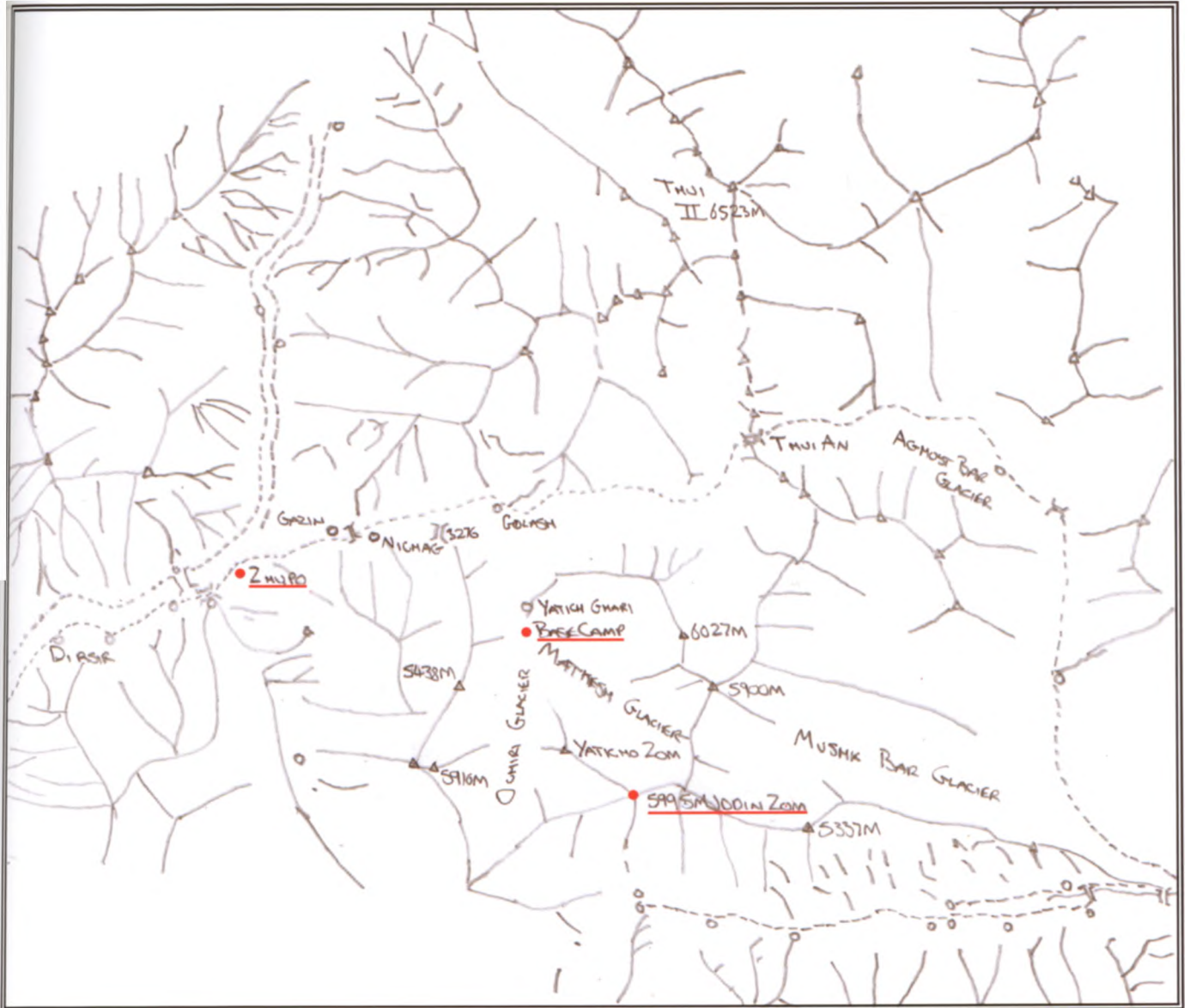


15



16

# Appendix 1



Sketch map based on the map found in the Japanese Mountaineering Atlas of the World. Information to the south west of Uddin Zom is not shown here as the key on the original map obscures this area.