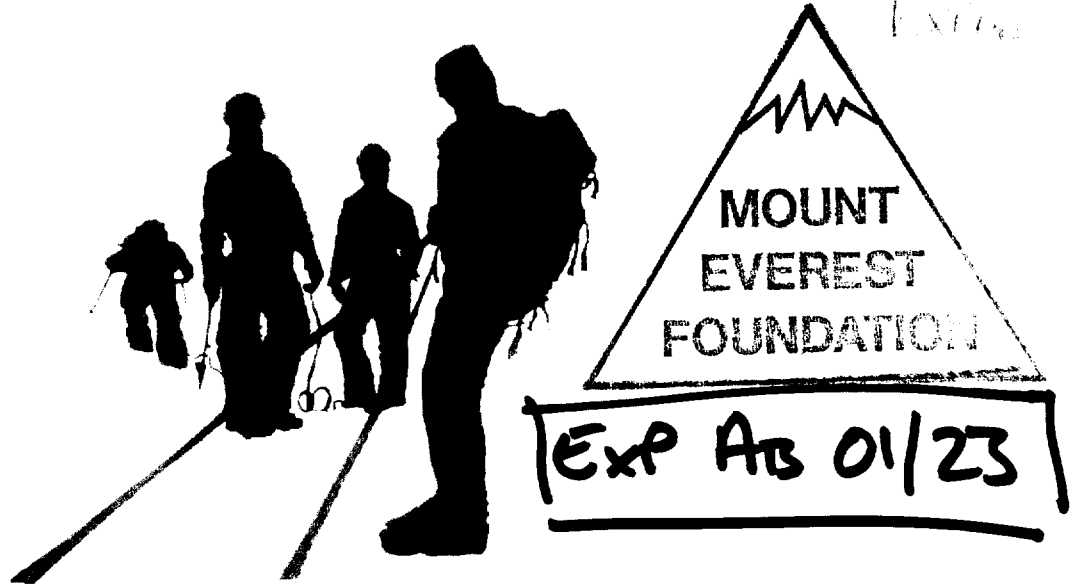


01/23

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British Female Bolivia Cordillera Real
Expedition 2001



CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Summary

Expedition members

PREPARATIONS

- i) Research of area
- ii) Flight
- iii) Accommodation
- iv) Acclimatising
- v) Money
- vi) Food and Fuel
- vii) Kit and equipment
- viii) Health and Hygiene
- ix) Transport
- x) Environmental issues

ITINERY and ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS

- i) Daily Diary and Route Descriptions
- ii) Summary of Itinerary
- iii) Future routes

PLATES

FINANCES

- i) Accounts

THE FUTURE

REFERENCES

ACNOWLEDGEMENTS

We should firstly like to thank the Mount Everest Foundation and The British Mountaineering Council for supporting this expedition.

Thanks should also be conveyed to Mr Malcolm Creasy and Mr Smiler Cuthbertson who agreed to act as referees, Mr Lyndsay Griffin for putting the idea into our heads, Mr Bill Ruthven for his help and advice and Adam Thomas for providing us with considerable information about the area.

A thank you must also go to The Fitzroy agency, Suunto and Accantia for providing us with various forms of sponsorship.

Finally, in title only as expedition leader I should like to thank, Di, Catrin and Nancy for all the work and effort they put into organising the expedition, climbing the hills and compiling this report. For without team members the expedition could not have taken place.

SUMMARY

The idea of a possible expedition to visit the Chachacomani area of the Cordillera Real was initiated after returning from a flying visit to the eastern part of the range at the end of last year's expedition to the Quimsa Cruz. Further research led us to believe that there was considerable potential for exploration in the northwestern part of the range between the Rumca Ridge and Nevado Chiyaruqu (also named Chaeroco). With some detailed information from Adam Thomas and Phil Amos's expedition Report 1998 a team of four British female climbers was put together to explore the area and to attempt to make an ascent of Nevado Ch'iyaruqu (6104m). With funding from the Mount Everest Foundation and the British Mountaineering Council the team left England on the 25th July to spend a month in the area. After a short acclimatization trek, organising supplies and transport the team left the road head at Estancia Loco Lloconi for a two day trek into base camp. After establishing a base camp, a number of reconnoitre trips were made to high points and an ascent of Dome 1 (5520m) completed. It was evident that there were a huge number of possibilities for new routes and first ascents in this area. Attempts on R1 on the Rumca Ridge were made via two different routes, each attempt however, had to be aborted 200m below the summit and an attempt on Chaeroco was also aborted due to bad weather and dangerous glacial conditions. Despite the unsettled weather the team managed to make an ascent of Quellani (5850m) via the North East Face and put up two new rock routes on glaciated slabs on the lower slopes of Quellani. Various new routes were discussed and gear stashed for a final assault on the arête on R3 and an ascent of Dome 2. An attempt on the arête was made but again we had to retreat due to very dangerous slab avalanche conditions. The team although disappointed with their apparent success on peaks in the area were satisfied that they had explored this remote area of the Cordillera real and had managed to eye up several new lines for future expeditions. Despite running out of food with still two days to go the team trekked back out to the road head happy but very hungry!

EXPEDITION MEMBERS

Adele Pennington (Expedition Leader). School teacher North Yorkshire

Di Gilbert (MIC) Mountaineering instructor Scotland

Catrin Thomas (MIA) Mountaineering instructor N. Wales.

Nancy Brooks (MIC) Mountaineering instructor N. Wales.

Research of area to be visited.

Information on the area in the Cordillera Real between the Rumca ridge and Nevado Ch'iyaruqu is very limited, The only maps that were acquired were the Liam O'Brien Cordillera Real 1:135000 (1995) and copies of hand drawn maps produced by the Reading University Andean Expedition 1962, A.Thomas and P. Amos British Cordilleras Expedition 1998 and that of the Calzada-Chiarhoco Chachacomani-Negruni (J. Villarroel). Yossi Brain describes further information concerning routes on Chaeroco and Chachocamani in Bolivia a climbing guide. Although peaks on the Rumca ridge and Quellani would have most certainly been climbed no information was found on the routes taken. Furthermore, a series of domed peaks to the North of Chaeroco gain no mention in any of the information acquired. Access to the region is well described with a good approach road to Loco Lloconi (East of the region) and then a two day trek following the Western tributary of the Rio Chiquini to a base camp south of the Rumca ridge (See sketch Map). This Eastern approach is now recommended due to hostile locals on the Western side.

Flight

There are numerous ways of flying to La Paz and most of the major airlines offer regular flights costing in the region of £800. Despite problems with American Airlines in 2000, the company was used again and care was taken to label all baggage and ensure that the computerised baggage tabs were carefully stuck on. A 64Kg Luggage allowance meant that there was no excess baggage fee.

Accommodation

Hostel Torino, Calla Socabaya, Zona Central, La Paz was used for all accommodation. At 30 Bolivianos per person per night the hostel was cheap and cheerful if a bit noisy. Kit was stored in a locked room and there were no problems with bookings. Hot showers were available at certain times of the day.

Acclimatisation

On arriving in La Paz two days were spent sorting equipment, transport and food. Diamox had been taken 48 hours prior to arrival in La Paz. In order to aid acclimatisation we decided to go on the Cumbra trek that reaches a height of 4900m and then descends into the jungle. Although the trek is not recommended the team did feel that it aided their acclimatisation. For details concerning the trek consult the Lonely Planet Guide to Bolivia.

Money:

Two main currencies, Bolivianos and US Dollars are accepted in La Paz. (£1 being worth approximately 10 Bolivianos). There are several money exchange shops (Cambios) and it is worth being selective to obtain the best exchange rates. Street money trading is legal and offers a convenient method of exchanging US \$. It is also possible to use plastic money and obtain cash directly from the bank cash machines.

Food. And Fuel

Food

The main bulk of food can be purchased from the markets in La Paz. The markets are split into areas selling particular types of food. Market shopping was entertaining and with a certain degree of haggling most items such as tea, coffee, milk powder, smash, pasta, rice, herbs, biscuits, sweets, cheese, fruit and vegetables could be purchased cheaply. In order to obtain tinned fish, hard cheese and bread a Western Style supermarket called Zaks was used. This was expensive and required a taxi journey from the main city centre.

A number of items from the UK were taken these included, muesli, yeast, egg powder, muesli bars, soya protein, peanut butter, custard and pancake mix. After previous experience with Bolivian Pasta and rice, the majority of food was purchased in the UK.

A washing up bowl and large pan purchased in the markets were extremely useful.

Fuel

Fuel was purchased from the Gasolina Kantujani. Premium fuel is quite rare and 6 litres cost 69 Bolivianos. It is important to purchase containers in the market, as they were difficult to acquire at the garage.

One dragon Fly stove and a lightweight MSR were used. By the end of the trip neither stove worked. The fuel needs to be filtered and stove maintenance is vital during the trip. Ensure that spares for the stoves are taken and stoves are cleaned regularly. It does appear that Epigas can be bought from some shops and trekking agents. It is expensive but much more reliable.

Kit and Equipment.

With alpine style climbing in mind the kit we took was that you would expect to take for a Scottish winter trip or to the Alps.

4 x 50mm 8mm ropes were taken including 50m 7mm rope for tat. This gave us plenty of scope to mix and match ropes depending on the climbing. 2 winter racks were taken and one set of friends. 4 snow stakes were also faithfully carried but none were used.

Plastic boots or leather alternatives were taken together with rock boots and approach shoes, which were suitable for the walk in.

In addition to climbing equipment and personal equipment a nylon tarpaulin was taken for use as a cooking shelter. A selection of books, duvet jacket, and 4-season sleeping bag are also important in order to occupy the long dark very cold nights. Two Wild Country Quasar tents were used for base camp.

Health and Hygiene.

The main health problems associated with climbing in Bolivia are those due to altitude and contaminated water.

Diamox was taken for the first few days of the trip and appeared to alleviate any real problems of altitude sickness. We were all very careful to avoid drinking any water that had not been treated with iodine and with careful choice of food we managed to stay relatively tummy bug free. Nancy did suffer on the Cumbra trek and this was thought to be due to the dilution of some fruit juice at the Torino cafe!

A comprehensive medical kit and dental repair kit was carried and luckily not used.

Personal hygiene is very important and every attempt was made to be very vigilant.

Transport.

Transport arrangements were not prearranged for this trip. On arrival in La Paz a number of trekking agencies were approached and finally Azimut explorer adventure travel was used (E mail azimexbo@caoba.entelnet.bo) Yuan the manager appeared to be well informed and reliable.

An initial price of \$170 for transport and \$162 for Mules and Mule man were negotiated. However as Yuan was unable to contact the Mule Man he returned the \$162 and left it up to us to negotiate our own fee on finding the Mule man.

Mule Costs

Final price paid was 40 Bolivianos per mule per day.

Approach to base camp 7 mules for 2 days

Return from base camp 4 mules for 2 days

Total 880 Bolivianos

Environmental Issues.

With increasing popularity of the mountain ranges in Bolivia it is important to consider waste management. On this trip all combustible waste was burnt and the ash carried out together with non-burnable waste. Human waste was left to decompose naturally as the base camp was well below the snow line and therefore the temperature would be such to allow natural decomposition. Toilet paper was burnt. Designated areas were set in order to avoid any contamination of the watercourses.

Safety

Although recommended to pay for a base camp guard, at \$10 per day we opted out. We did experience the theft of a wash kit and toothbrush by some local children. On future expeditions it would be advisable not only for peace of mind but to increase the number of possible routes attempted so that rest days did not have to be coordinated. The locals were very friendly and wanted to trade food for bits of equipment e.g. camera film.

Daily Diary and Route Descriptions.

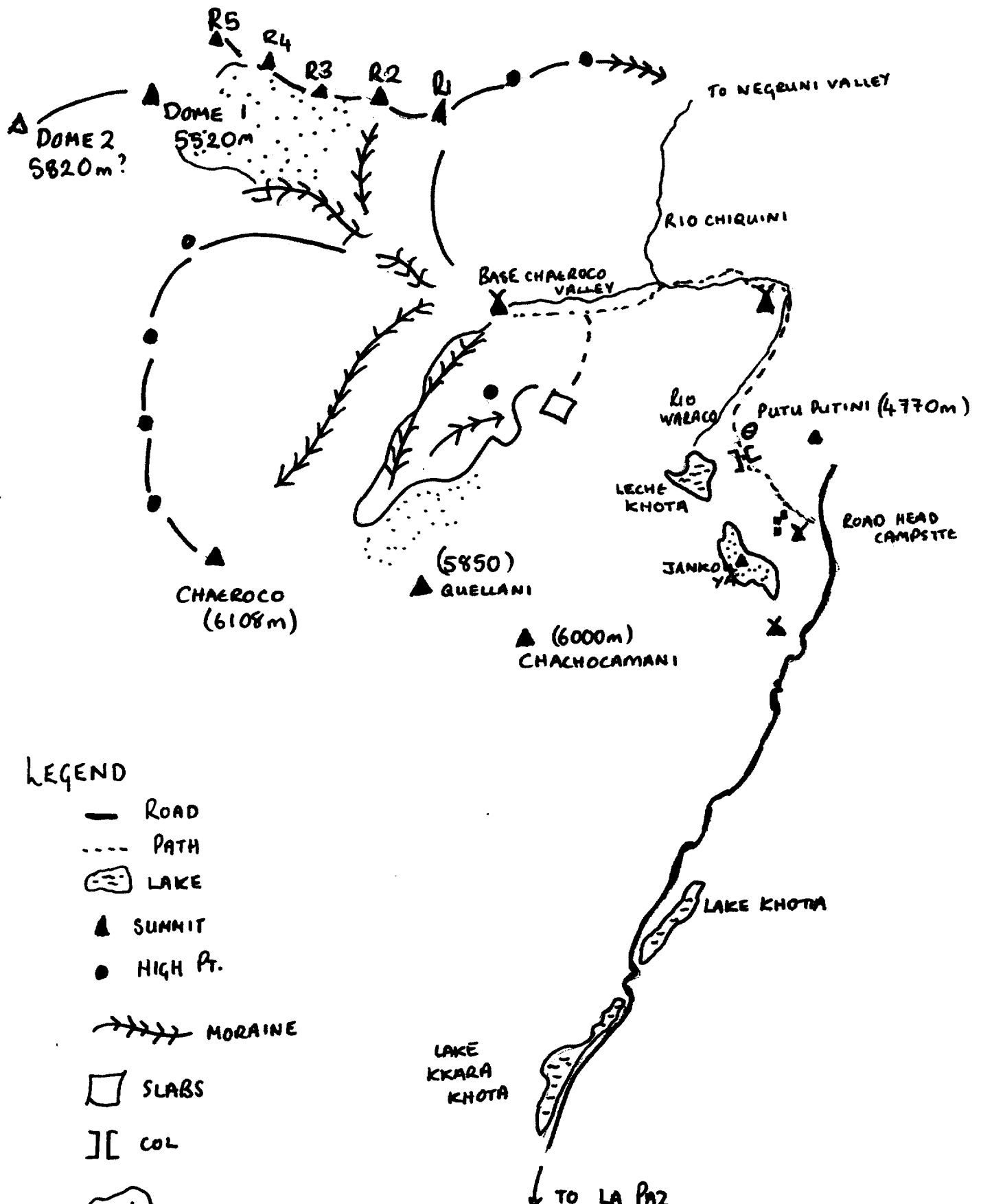
- 30th July. Four wheel drive from La Paz to Lloco Lloconi (4hrs). The route passes over a high pass 5000m and therefore is subject to closure during heavy snowfall. Camped near to village but advised to keep all equipment in tents.
- 31st July Walked up valley in NW direction to col at 4770m then down to small lake (Putu Putuni ; 2hrs). Continued in NNE direction following Rio Waraco to junction of valleys (4050m) camp.
- 1st August Left camp 9.00am. Walked up valley following Rio Chiquini until reaching left hand tributary (2hrs). Follow river to reach site of base camp (4560m) Total walking time 4hrs. Sorted food into weekly sacks and stored in boulder field to avoid theft.
- 2nd August. Recce of area North of base camp reached height 4950m.
- 3rd August. Nancy Brooks & Adele Pennington
Ascent Pt 5630 North Ridge Chaeroco. PD+ (10hrs)
Head up into Rumca Valley following L.H side of moraine. Moraine rises in Westerly direction to meet snow line on N. Ridge. Stay on Easterly side of ridge until an easy ascent through broken ground is possible. Follow ridge to Pt 5630m 40 to 50 slopes. (Beware of cornices) Return via same route.
- Catrin Thomas & Di Gilbert
Ascent of Dome 1 (5520m) PD (12hrs)
Head up Rumca Valley following LH moraine. Continue up moraine until it possible to gain glacier immediately before seracs. Follow northerly direction towards ridge on Dome 1. Head up ridge-traversing on right side (45) until obvious route descends right onto main glacier. (On this ascent it would have been impossible to continue along the ridge due to hanging seracs. Pick a path through crevasses until col between Dome 1 and R 5 is reached. Head NW on easy snow until summit is reached. Return via same route (12hrs).
- 4th August Rest day
- 5th August Nancy Brooks & Adele Pennington
Pt 5315 S ridge Quellani. PD+ 10hrs
Follow east most Moraine towards Chaeroco and follow ridge until it turns easterly. Scramble up mixed ground until reaching high Pt. Descend firstly in Easterly direction and then Northerly towards Achapamp. Then westerly down valley.
- 6th August Di Gilbert & Catrin Thomas

**Attempt on R1 South Face Direct TD Scottish Grade1V ice.
Plate 2 &4**

The initial plan was to follow the S. Ridge to the Summit of R1. After obtaining a height of 5090m on the ridge via the chicken ramp on the Western Face, the route became impassable due to very loose rock. The slabs were then bypassed and an attempt on the S. Face made. An excellent route with a final height of 5300m being reached before the team were blasted with collapsing cornices and rock fall. It appears that under the right conditions the route would provide a challenging line to the summit. Abseil retreat.

- 7th August. Nancy Brooks & Adele Pennington.
Set out with full bivouac kit to attempt S. W Spur Chaeroco.
Turned round after 1hr in blizzard conditions.
- 8th August. Second attempt on Chaeroco, walked up central moraine and then dropped down to glacier. Hanging seracs and very loose rock made progress very slow. Returned to base camp as needed to look at possible new line to avoid dangerous glacier.
- 9th August Di Gilbert, Catrin Thomas & Adele Pennington
Attempt R1 via Rumca ridge PD (12hrs) Plate 2
Attained glacier to East of R1. Numerous rolling crevasses meant that a very indirect route was taken. Attained ridge via numerous small arêtes. Excellent ridge traverse through mixed ground reaching a number of false summits (5360m). Just before final summit an impassable rocky buttress barred the way. Retreated via ascent route.
- 10th August Catrin Thomas Adele Pennington Nancy Brooks
Rock Climbing Plate 3
From base camp walk down the valley on the Right hand side and make an ascending traverse to southern slopes of Quellani. Follow line of crags to water worn granite slabs.
Classic Crack VS * (50m)** Follow 2nd crack line from right hand side of buttress.
Chimneys sweep VS! (50m) Follow first crack line gardening as you go.
- 11th /12th Aug **Ascent of Quellani (5880m) via NE face PD (15hrs)**
Midnight start to avoid heat of day. Head towards Quellani in Southerly direction 3hrs to glacier. Pick a route through the Glacier keeping to the right hand side. Short steep section 50-60 before summit. Scramble up 15-20m to summit . abseil off summit and descend via same route. An excellent day.
- 13th -23rd August Bad weather Many attempts to leave tents made. Gear stashed and valley walks made\!!
- 24th August Attempt on R3 via Arête **Plate 5**

NORTH



LEGEND

- ROAD
- PATH
- ☞ LAKE
- ▲ SUMMIT
- HIGH Pt.
- ⤵ MORAINE
- SLABS
-] [COL
- ☞ GLACIER
- ▲ CAMP

SKETCH MAP. NOT TO SCALE.

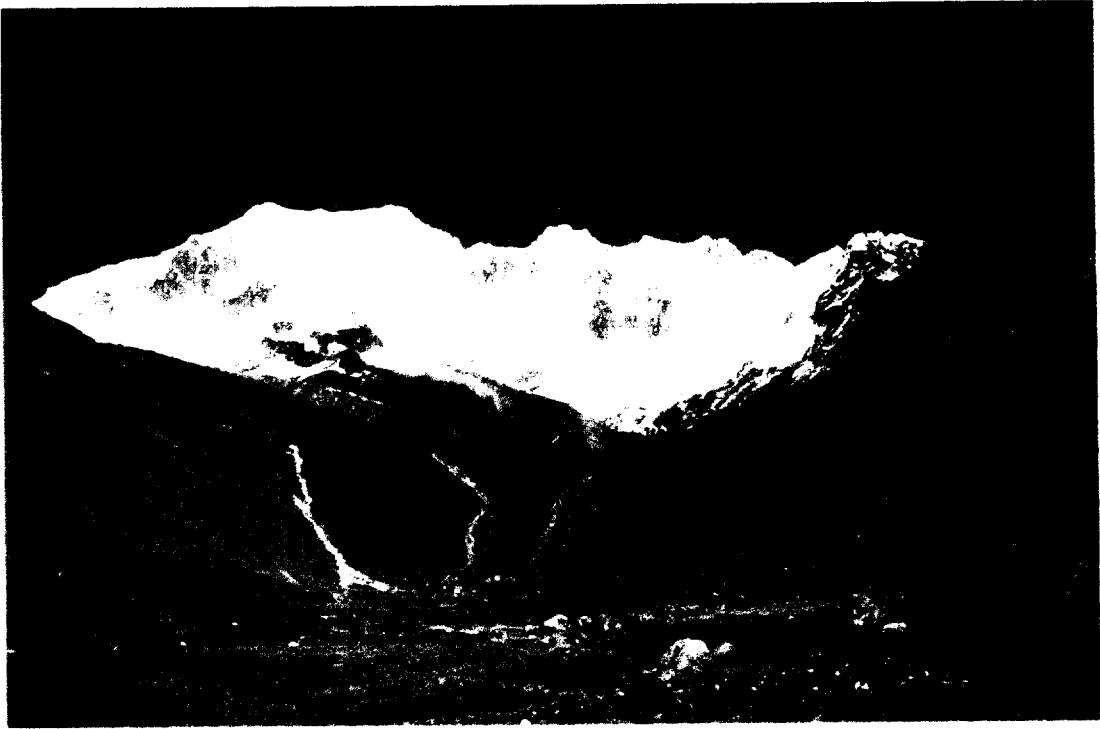


PLATE 1 View of Chaeroco.(6104m)

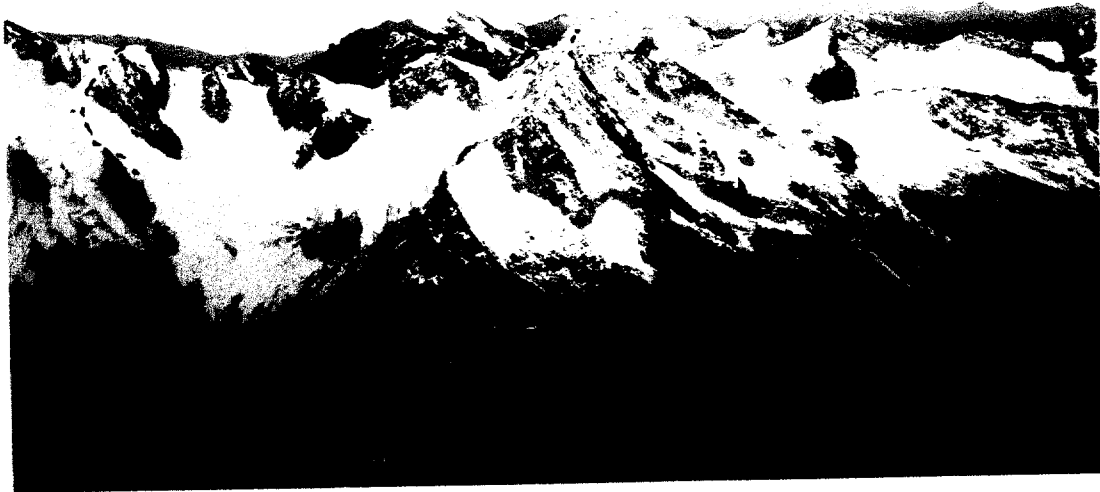


PLATE 2 View of Rumca Ridge from Quellani Routes marked on
S. Face R1
The Arete R3 -----

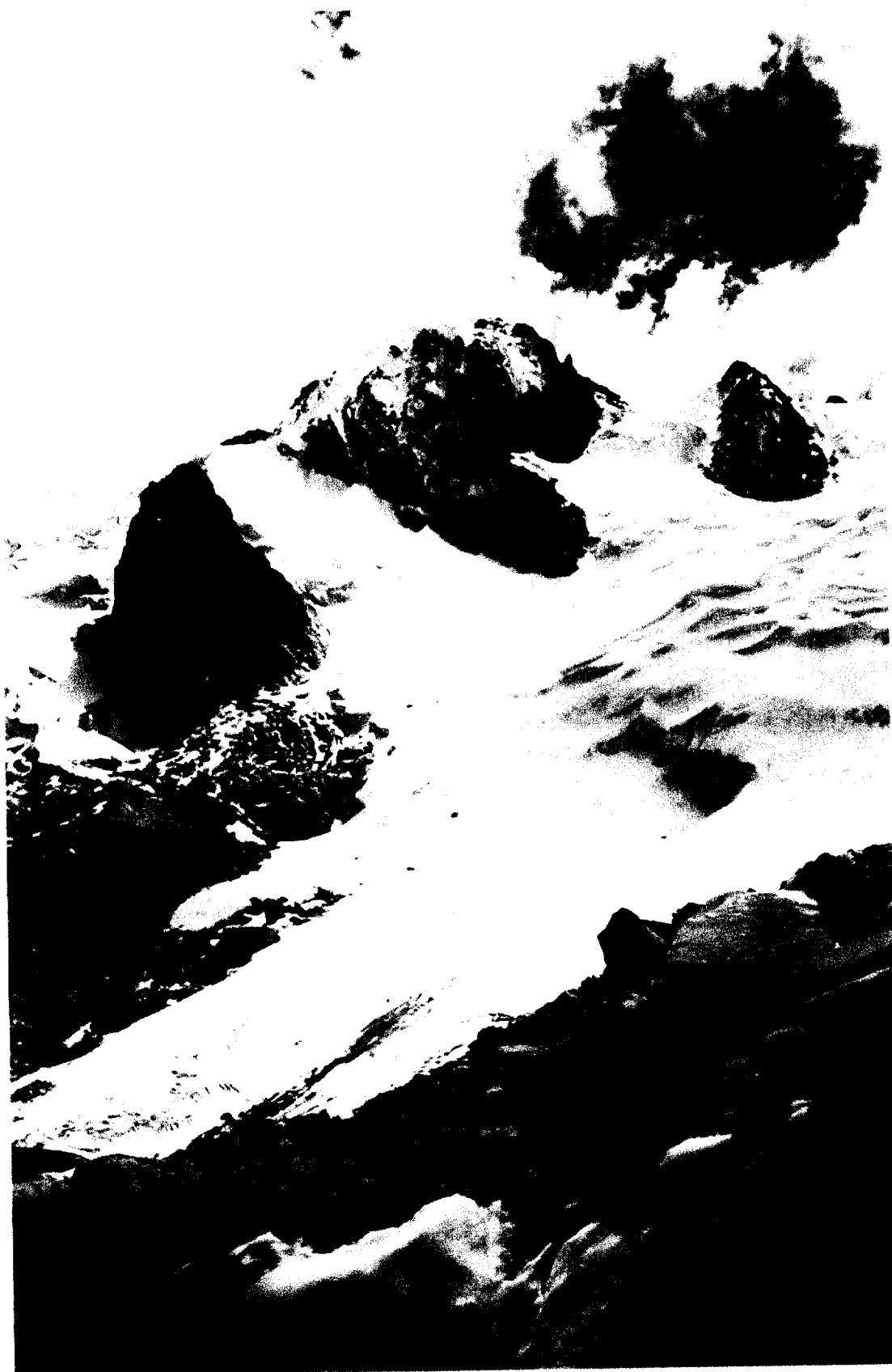


PLATE 3
Di Gilbert on Crux pitch
South Face R1



PLATE 4

Nancy Brooks on Classic Crack VS



**Plate 5 Arete on R3. Attempt made 24th
August 2001**

DETAILED ITINERY (Cordillera Real Expedition 2001)

DATE	WEATHER	TIME	ACTIVITY	TEAM
23rd July	Good	2days	Arrive La Paz: Organise equipment and food supplies	AP NB CT
25th July	Good	3days	La Cumbre to Corico TREK Acclimatisation	DG
28th July	Good	2days	Last Exped member arrived La Paz. Organisation	
30th July	Good	4hrs	Drive to Est Lloco Lloconi 4700m	
31st July	Good	5hrs	Trek to Palaca with Donkeys 4050m	
1st Aug	Good	5hrs	Trek to base camp 4560m	
2nd Aug	Good	5hrs	Receee South Base camp 4950	
3rd August	Good	10hrs	ASCENT of S. Ridge Dome 1 5520m (Possible first ascent)	CT DG
	Good	10hrs	New route to Pt 5630 Chaeroco N. Ridge	AP NB
4th August	Good		REST DAY	
5th Aug	Good	6hrs	New route to Pt 5370 Quellani S Ridge	AP NB
6th Aug	Good	13hrs	Attempt on South face direct R1 (Abseil Retreat 200m from summit due to falling debris	CT DG
7th Aug	snow	2hrs	Attempt to reach bivi for high camp Chaeroco retreat due to weather	AP NB
8th Aug	OK	6hrs	Receee possible gear stash Chaeroco	AP NB
9th August	Good	12hrs	Attempt East ridge R1 to Pt 5240m Impassable Buttress stopped play	AP CT DG
10th August	Good	6hrs	Two new rock routes Glaciated slabs Classic crack VS; Chimney Sweep VS	AP CT NB
11th Aug	Good	15hrs	Ascent Quellani 5850m? Cf 5991m Guide bk New route ?NE Face	CT AP DG
12thAug			REST DAY	
13th Aug	Good		Gear stashed for planned routes Dome 2, unnamed peak and Sface arrete R3	
14th Aug	Good			
15th Aug	SNOW/ Lightening storm			
16th Aug	SNOW		Learnt to play Bridge	
17th Aug	Intermittent Snow/ Cloud		Walk up Mina La Paz valley to investigate Slabs	
18th Aug	SNOW		Another 12.00am wake up to find more snow	
19th Aug	SNOW		Another 12.00am wake up to find more snow	
20th Aug	MORE SNOW		More Bridge	
21st Aug	OK		Fetched frozen kit from stash/ Cloud and hill very avalanche prone 1m new snow on hill	
22nd Aug	OK			
23rd Aug	OK		Prepared for attempt on Arete	
24th Aug	OK	6hrs	12.00am start Attempt on R3 S. Face Arete. Retreat due to Slab avalanche conditions.	DG AP CT
			Receee Negruni Valley.	
25th Aug	OK		Packed kit for arrival of Donkeys	
26th Aug	Good (Surprise!)		Walk out	

27th Aug
28th Aug
29th August
30th August
31st August

Good (Surprise!)
Good (Surprise!)
Good (Surprise!)
Cloudy
cloudy

Walk out
Drive back to La Paz
Shopping
Shopping
Leave La Paz

ACCOUNTS Cordillera Real Expedition 2001

INCOME

BMC GRANT	£1,000.00
MEF GRANT	£440.00
TOTAL	£1,440.00

EXPENDITURE

FLIGHTS	£846.00 x4	£3,384.00
INSURANCE	£130 x4	£520.00
TOTAL	£3,904	

Equipment purchased

Ropes x2	£115.00
Medical Supplies	£87.00
Camera film	£46.32
Food UK	£80
TOTAL	£248.32

IN COUNTRY

La Cumbra trek	212Bs	£21
Transport Quimsa Cruz	\$170	£106.00
Fuel + container	105Bs	£10.50
Total Accommodation La Paz	720Bs	£72.00
Transport Illimani	\$220	£151.70
Expedition Food	560Bs	£56.00
Maps	42Bs	£4.66
Living La Paz	865Bs	£86.50
TOTAL		£508.36

AIRPORT TAX	\$25 each	£62.50
TOTAL		£62.50

SUB TOTALS	£3,904
	£248.32
	£508.36
	£62.50

TOTAL	£4,723
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Income	£1,440
Expenditure	£4,723

Personal contribution of team	£3,283.00
--------------------------------------	------------------

	Set off 2.00am towards glacier below R3. Head up glacier towards large buttress. Thigh deep snow and slab avalanche conditions meant a retreat had to be made. Looks like it would be a fantastic line
25 th August	Packed kit
26 th August	Walk out via inward route
27 th August	Walk out via inward route. Gave all remaining food (bag of sugar) and equipment (pans and washing up bowl) to Mule man. Sold him crampons very cheaply (60Bs) to enhance his chances of work in the mountains
28 th August	Return to La Paz

Future Lines and Routes

The arête on R1
Dome 2
Traverse of Chaeroco from North ridge. (Looks like it would be a great expedition and would take 2-3 days)
N. Face direct Quellani
The whole area needs to be explored further and has huge potential for both Alpine style and Himalayan style ascents.

THE FUTURE

Although we did not achieve all the goals of our expedition we felt it was a very successful trip and more importantly a very enjoyable one. Bolivia is a fantastic country and the Bolivians are on the whole are very accommodating to western Visitors. We had only minor problems with theft but it is essential to look after your belonging. On future expeditions we would hire a camp guard. Padlocking rucksacks, as a deterrent and being vigilant in the city are important. The locals were very happy to receive small gifts such as spare fuel, containers. We did not find it necessary to tip the mule herder or Yuan of Azimut travel. Small gifts and letters of thanks seem to be more appropriate.

To conclude this expedition report a number of points that could improve future expeditions to Bolivia are summarised below.

- 1) Ensure all flights are confirmed and booked through to the final destination before leaving the UK.
- 2) Ensure baggage labels are firmly attached to avoid lost baggage
- 3) Ensure when booking accommodation you have written proof of your booking and any money paid.
- 4) Acclimatise slowly and carefully. La Cumbra trek proved to be useful
- 5) Treat ALL water with Iodine
- 6) Take Pasta, noodles and hill food from the UK
- 7) Visit various trekking agents to get best price on transport.

- 8) Hire a camp guard
- 9) Enjoy yourself

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