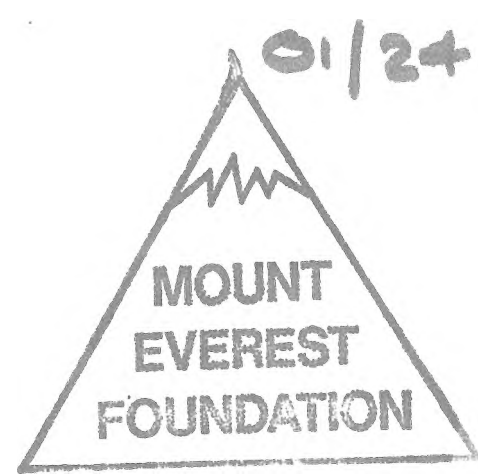


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# THE BRITISH BROKEN TOOTH EXPEDITION 2001

**MEF Reference 01/24**

## **EXPEDITION REPORT**

**A mountaineering expedition to the Central Alaska Range of Alaska**

**19th May to 10th June 2001**

**Supported by : The Mount Everest Foundation  
The British Mountaineering Council**

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## **Introduction**

The Central Alaska range is situated in a National Park in Alaska. It is the home of Denali, the highest peak in North America and two other giant peaks - Mounts Foraker and Hunter. In addition to these three peaks, the range consists of another 60 recognised summits, many of which provide challenges similar to the biggest routes in the Western Alps. With its location being at such a northerly latitude (63 degrees) compared to Everest's (27 degrees), this mountain range experiences a much lower barometric pressure than the Himalayas resulting in the summit of Denali having a pressure similar to that of a Himalayan 24,000 foot peak. Similarly, the weather can be extremely severe. In the summer season it is quite common for the summit temperatures on Denali and Foraker to be as low as minus 40°C. The summer ascents of the smaller peaks in the range are very similar in undertaking to climbing in the Western Alps in winter.

This expedition was planned to make an ascent of a route on The Broken Tooth. The unclimbed South East face of the Broken Tooth lies above a glacial shelf above the Coffee Glacier.

## **Acknowledgements**

Our sincere thanks go to all the individuals, companies and organisations that helped us.

Our thanks to the following Companies and Organisations that supported us :

The Mount Everest Foundation  
The British Mountaineering Council  
Talkeetna Air Taxi  
First Ascent

# **Objectives and summary achievements**

## **Objectives**

To make the first ascent of the South East face of the Broken Tooth.

This objective was abandoned due to deep snow pack on the Coffee glacier which prevented both a landing on Coffee Glacier and if that had completed, the approach to the base of the wall would have been very avalanche prone.

## **Summary achievements in order :**

The first attempt on the unclimbed peak above the 747 col in the Ruth Gorge. The attempt reached a height only 600 feet below the summit, but driving winds and heavy drifting snow prevented further progress.

An attempt on a new line on the South face of Thunder mountain.

## **Team**

The membership of this expedition consists of two very experienced cold climate alpinists.

### **Geoff Hornby**

The expedition leader and planner. Geoff was making his 11th expedition to either Alaska or the Yukon. His last 6 expeditions have received the generous support of the MEF and the BMC. During this time his teams have achieved the following successes :

- a. The 1st ascent of Point 9070 on the Kahiltna Glacier
- b. The 1st ascent of Thunder Mountain (the last major unclimbed peak in the Central Alaska range) on the Kahiltna Glacier.
- c. The 1st ascent of the East face of Benign Peak in the Chugach range (& in winter).
- d. The 1st British ascents of the SW ridge of Mt Hunter.

- e. The SE ridge of Mt Crosson.
- f. The 1st ascent of the Central Spur on the West face of Wood Peak in the Yukon.
- g. The 1st British ascent of the Lowe route - Keystone Green steps in Valdez.
- h. A new route in winter on the West face of Sukakpak in the Brooks Range.
- i. The 1st ascent of Mt Sholes.
- j. The 1st ascent of Mt Tassles.

In addition to this, Geoff has led four Himalayan expeditions, the highlights of which have been the 1st ascents of Laspa Dhura, Nandakhani & Nandabhanar and repeat ascents of Tharkot and Tharpu Chuli.

His alpine record includes the first free ascent and in winter of the Direct start to the Supercouloir, the 1st British ascent of the Lalidererspitze North face direct, the Walker Spur and the Matterhorn North face.

Elsewhere in the world, Geoff has succeeded on a winter ascent of the Diamond couloir direct, a winter solo of the Ice Window route and the 2nd ascent of Behemoth on the East face of Kishtwa Tembo, he has made over 45 first ascents in the Wadi Rum and climbed extensively in Oman, Norway, the Tatra in winter & Ecuador .

His big wall experience includes ascents of the Nose, Zodiac, Watkins South face and the NW face of Half Dome (in a day) in Yosemite and the Troll Wall in Romsdal.

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## **David Wallis**

A 29 year old Anglo Australian who has spent much of his climbing time in Nepal, Tibet, Greenland and Peru

His major alpine ascents include :

Ama Dablam SW ridge, Gasherbrum 2 North face to 6400m, Makalu SE ridge to 7200m, Ozymandias on Mt Buffalo, Pyramid de Carcillasco, Le Fil a Plomb, Mt Kenya SW ridge, Mt Kenya SE ridge, Greenland - Pt 1385 new route on SW ridge, Trillingerne W ridge, Pt 1609 new route on SW ridge.

## Diary

- 19.5.01 Flew to Anchorage, slept at Airport.
- 20.5.01 Bought food and gear and travelled to Talkeetna.
- 21.5.01 Bad weather for flying, rested in Talkeetna.
- 22.5.01 Flew a scenic flight into the Coffee glacier, found the Broken Tooth was plastered in fresh snow. The slopes below the South and East faces were banked with deep snow and were cut with recent avalanche runs.
- 23.5.01 Flew in to the Ruth Gorge
- 24/25/26/27.5.01 Snowing continuously, over a metre of fresh snow
- 28.5.01 Storm clearing from the South but strong winds building from the North
- 29.5.01 Moved up passed the South face of Dickey to bivouac below the unclimbed 747 peak.
- 30.5.01 Attempt on 747 peak. Climbed up to 747 col and moved South to climb the headwall of the 747 peak. Deep snow at the base of the wall was drifting heavily in the strong winds. The option of traversing down the Backside glacier was abandoned due to huge unstable seracs above the route. An attempt on the headwall direct was abandoned due to the snow conditions and a descent made to the bivouac.
- 31.5.01 Return from the bivouac to the base camp.
- 1.6.01 Resting in base camp.
- 2.6.01 Relocated to the Thunder glacier to attempt a new route on the South face of Thunder Mountain.
- 3.6.01 Attempt on Thunder Mountain abandoned due to exceedingly warm night temperatures.
- 4.6.01 Attempt on unclimbed peak South of Thunder Mountain abandoned due to unsettled snow conditions on the approach.
- 5.6.01 Resting and watching

- 6.6.01 Packed up camp
- 7.6.01 Flew out to Talkeetna
- 8.6.01 Travelled down to Anchorage
- 9.6.01 Flew back to England

## **Accidents and injuries**

The members of the team were involved in no accidents during this expedition.

During the attempt on the unclimbed 747 peak, we lost an ice tool, bivouac pans and a belay plate in the drifting snow.

## **ACCESS AND TRAVEL**

Access is very easy to this mountain range.

Fly to Anchorage, easiest via Seattle - 20 hours.

Get a taxi service from Talkeetna to collect you from the airport.

Register with a Glacier Pilot Operator - we used TAT aviation.

Whilst the quality of service is constantly changing, it is not realistic to make recommendations in a report that may be read in 10 years time. For further detailed advice please contact the expedition leader by telephone.

# EQUIPMENT

The following set of equipment was the basic set used by each of the four climbers :

## CLOTHING

Polartec thermals  
Polartec fleece jacket  
Helly Hansen fleece salopettes  
A lightweight down duvet  
Heavyweight full weather protected down jacket  
A single or two piece Gore Tex shell  
Vapour barrier socks  
Wild Country toaster socks  
Scarpa Vega boots with normal inner and alveolite inner  
Supergaitors  
Fleece balaclava  
Down booties

Inner gloves  
Wool gloves for technical climbing  
Pile lined overmitts

## SLEEPING

Serious Goretex covered 5 season sleeping bag.  
3 sleeping mats, either Foam or Thermorests.  
Antartica dome tent.

## COOKING

White gas MSR's with kettle and stainless steel pan sets.  
I have a home made kitchen platform that is excellent in the snow.  
A thermos is essential for keeping liquid overnight and simplifies brews on the glacier or on routes.

## CLIMBING

Clip on crampons. Normal technical ice tools.  
Troll Expedition Whillans harnesses.  
6 ice screws and 3 snow stakes per person.  
100 metre 8.2 millimetre ropes.  
Slings and tape.  
Scottish mixed rack for harder climbing.  
Snow saws and snow shovels, one shovel should be lightweight.

## FOOD

Standard food, nothing fancy or clever, all bought or buyable at a Safeways in Anchorage.

## EXPENSES

TRAVEL	to Anchorage : £625 x 2	= £ 1250
	Anchorage to Talkeetna return : £80 x 1	= £ 160
	Glacier flights : £240 x 2	= £ 480
	Glacier radio hire : £200	= £ 200
	<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>= £ 2090</b>
FOOD AND FUEL	25 litres of Blazo	= £ 40
	Base camp and hill food	= £ 300
EQUIPMENT	1 new tent, 1 new set of Gore tex, abseil tape, snow stakes, 1 new pair of snow shoes, 1 new thermorest, extra warm weather clothing.	= £ 900
	<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>= £ 1240</b>
INSURANCE	1 x £150	= £ 150
MISCELLANEOUS AND CONTINGENCY	To cover bunkhouse accommodation in Talkeetna, food in Talkeetna, lighters, film, maps, photocopies, research costs.	= £ 200
	<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>= £ 350</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>= £ 3680</b>

This trip was financially supported by significant contributions from :

The Mount Everest Foundation  
The British Mountaineering Council

to whom we are eternally grateful.

## **CONCLUSION**

We were very unlucky. The weather in the Central Alaska range was very good this year. Unfortunately we picked a weather window to make this trip.

Geoff Hornby made two trips to the range this year and experienced bad weather on both trips, whilst other people had good weather during the other periods. 4 peaks were climbed by Hornby on his second trip, so good things come to those who persevere.

Anyone requiring further information on this expedition, or on how to mount an expedition such as this, or would like to discuss some objectives in this range are very welcome to contact Geoff Hornby as follows :

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