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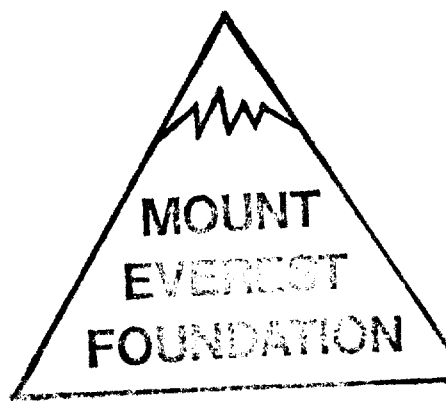
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British Heart of Asia Expedition, 2002.

Exploration and Mountaineering in the Mongolian Altai Mountains

Expedition Report.

14th July – 31st August 2002



Written by **Nina Saunders and Alan Halewood**

MOUNT EVEREST FOUNDATION

Patron: H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, K.G., K.T.

Reference: 02/35

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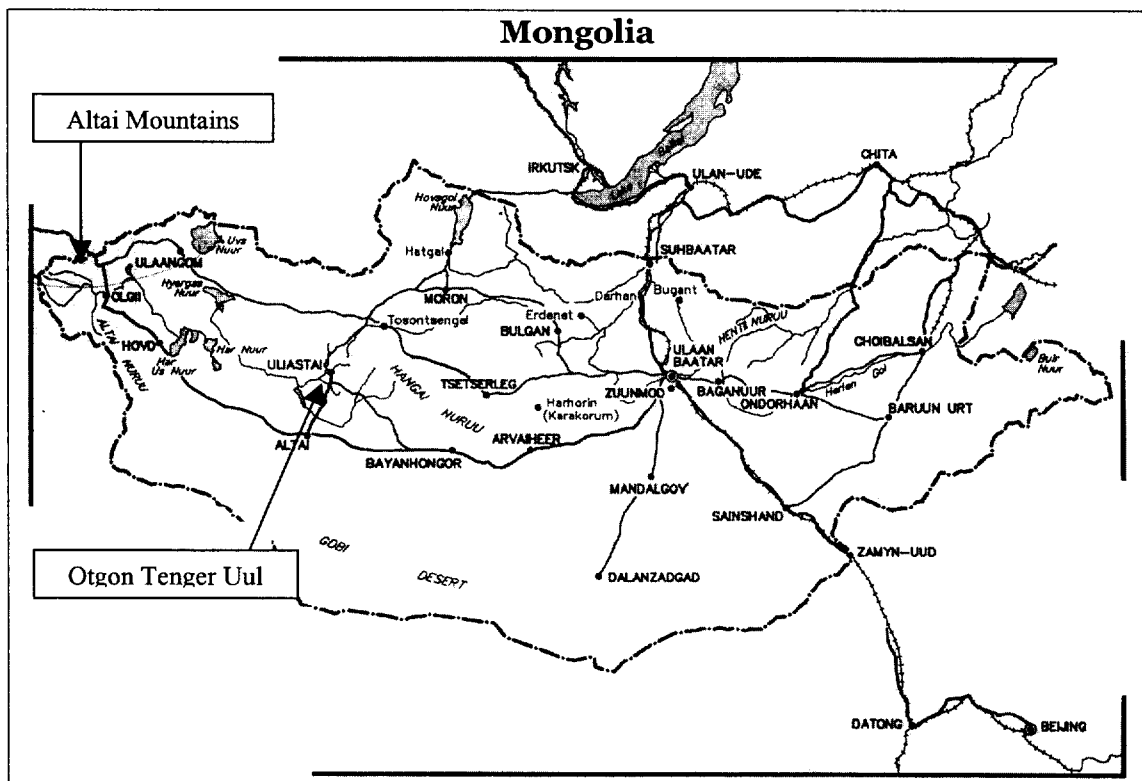
Summary

This Report outlines a mountaineering expedition undertaken in the Tabun Bogd (aka Tavan Bogd) region of the Mongolian Altai Mountains in 2002 by a small group of 6 climbers.

The original aims of the expedition were as follows:

- To make a number of first ascents, new routes and first British ascents of the Polish routes of 1967.
- To record the position of the principal summits using GPS to augment the 1967 Polish map.
- To catalogue the future mountaineering possibilities of the range and to make this information available to the mountaineering community (through an expedition report, articles and a web page).
- To increase the overseas expedition experience of the team members, the majority of whom work in outdoor education in the UK.

Unfortunately due to an outbreak of foot and mouth, it was not possible for the team to spend a prolonged period of time in the proposed mountain range. The Otgon Tenger Uul National Park near Uliastai was visited for a short period of time as an alternative and new routes were climbed here. The latter part of the expedition was spent in the Altai Mountains, in the Northwestern corner of the country, and 3 peaks were successfully climbed. However due to time pressures, detailed mapping of the area was not completed. An up to date web page is currently under construction (December 2002).



Introduction

The Tabun Bogd, one of the most interesting parts of the Altai Range, straddles the triple border of Chinese Xinjiang, Russia and Mongolia. It is inaccessible to climbers from the Chinese side due to political and military restrictions and has seldom been visited from Russian Siberia.

Lying in the most remote Northwestern part of Mongolia, this heavily glaciated Alpine range contains the country's highest peak, Huiten (4,374m). This was first climbed by a joint Russian-Mongolian expedition in 1956 and is the only peak to have received the regular attention of mountaineers. Mongolia lay under Soviet control from 1921-1990 and with climbing only possible for USSR or Eastern Bloc mountaineers, and the peaks not really big enough to attract participants in the Soviet Competition system, it was left to the Polish to carry out a thorough exploration of the range.

Following on from Polish Geological Expeditions to Mongolia, Witold Michalowski led a 13-member expedition to the Tabun Bogd in August 1967 and made first ascents of many of the major summits in the range. The prime objective was Snow Church, first named by the Russian biologist, Sapozhnikov, who explored the area in the first decade of the 20th Century. On the 14th August, Wojciech Branski, Zbigniew Rubinowski, Andrzej Skupinski, Andrzej Wachal and Szymon Wdowiak made the first ascent via the North-East Ridge, which marks the frontier between Mongolia and China. One hour after they reached the summit, Richard Palczewski, Wieslaw Skubisz and Witold Strupczewski also reached the top via the much easier East Ridge. The Polish expedition also climbed 14 other summits in 1967.

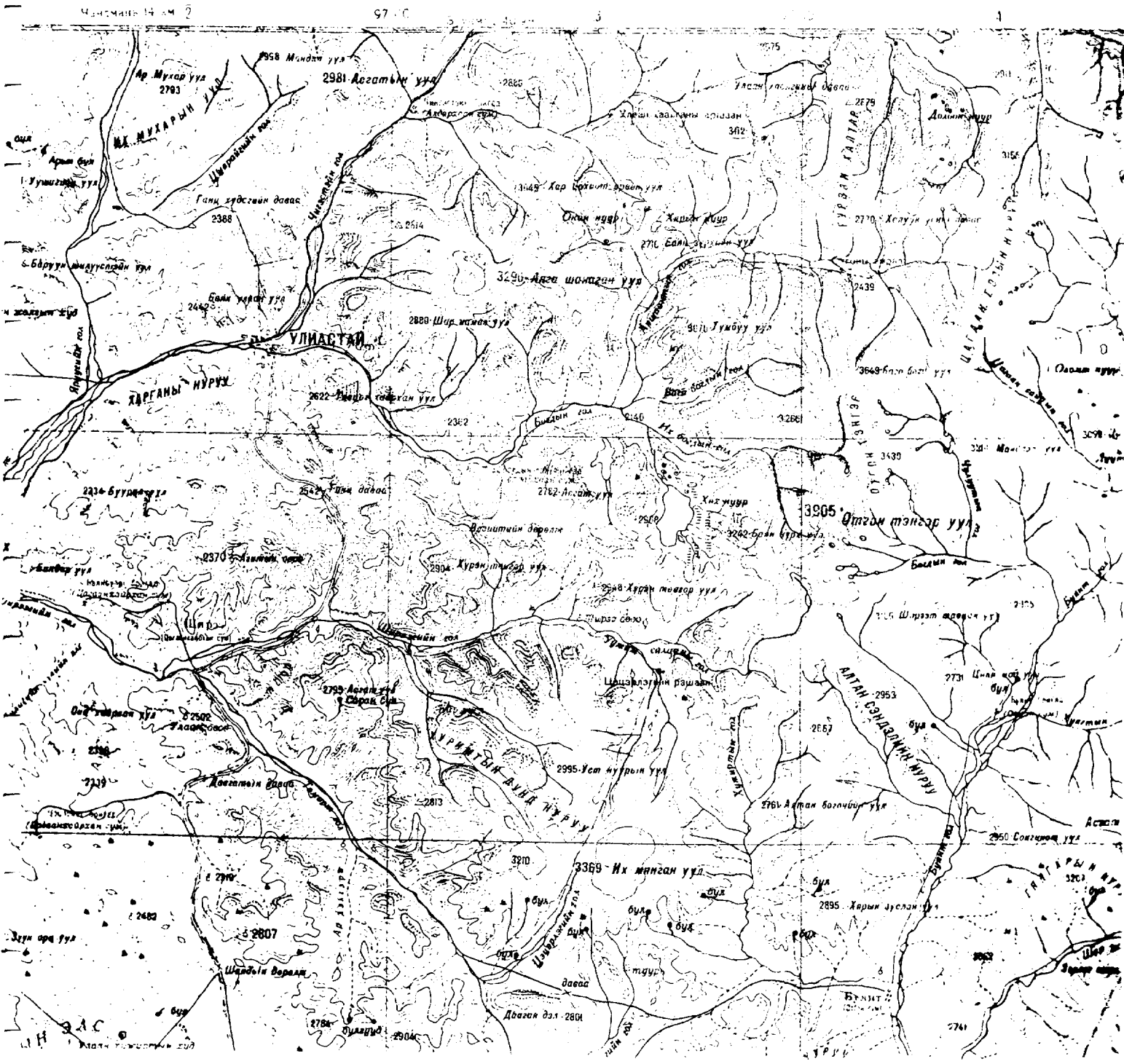
Mongolia was virtually closed to Westerners until 1992 when the first British ascents of Huiten were made by the British Mongol Altai 71 Years Expedition and leaders from an Operation Raleigh Expedition who also explored the area. Since then, a group from New Zealand have also made an ascent. Although at least 2 commercial expeditions have also made ascents of the highest peak and some of the easier surrounding peaks, there is no record of British ascents of many of the Polish routes. Neither are their detailed records of further exploration in the range despite the mountaineering possibilities.

With this in mind the British Heart of Asia Expedition 2002 decided to spend a prolonged period of time in the Altai Mountains climbing the surrounding peaks and improving the existing hand drawn Polish map. Coupled with an enthusiastic friend living in Ulaan Baatar, and a team member having already paid two trips to Mongolia urging us to explore this unique mountain range, we could resist temptation no longer.

Otgon Tenger Uul National Park¹

ХҮВЬ АЙМАГ

УУЛИАСТИЙ



¹ Please refer to Appendix 1 for full area map

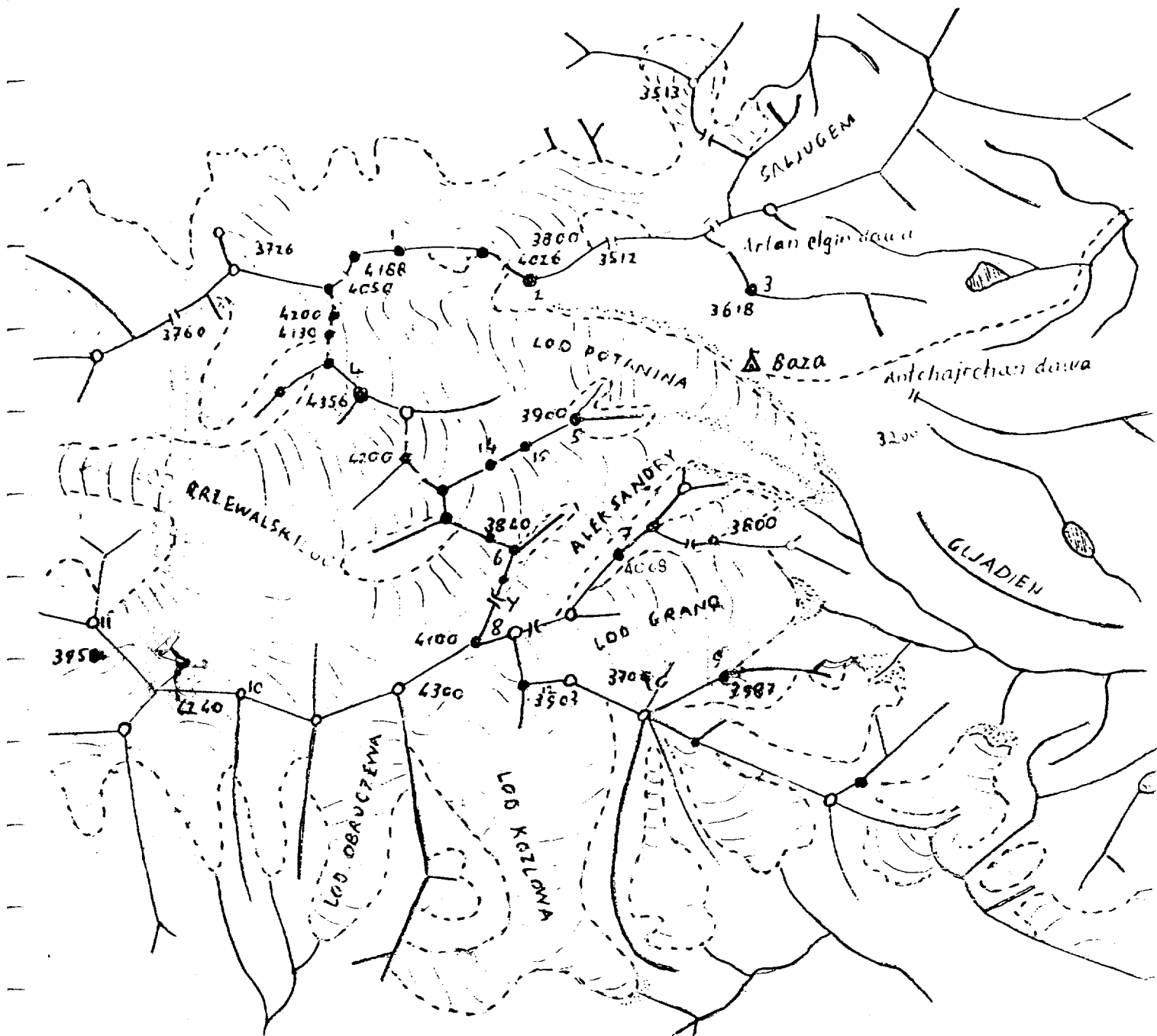
The Altai Mountains (Triple Border Area)²



² Please refer to Appendix 2 for full area map

Altai Mountains (Polish Map 1967)

1cm=1km, approx 1:100 000



Index to Peaks, Cols and Glaciers

1. **Ruski Szatier**, 4133m (Russian miner)
Traversed including 4050, 4200 and 4130 in 1967
2. **Malczin Chajrchan**, 4026m (Malchin, cowboy, herder)
E Ridge, NW Ridge and Traversed in 1967
3. **Antchajrchan**, 3618m
4. **Kijtyn**, 4356m/4374m (Huithen, Huiten, Khuiten)
E Ridge, NE Ridge 1967, SW Ridge 1992, N to SE Traverse in 2001
5. **Hadat Chajrchan**, 3900m
NE Ridge 1967, E Face 1992
6. **Selenge Chajrchan**, 3840m
NE Ridge 1967/1992, N Face 1992, Frontier Ridge Traverse 1992
7. **Birkut Chajrchan**, 4068m (Eagle Mountain)
SW Ridge from N 1967
8. **Snieza Cerkiew**, 4100m (Snow Church)
NNE Ridge, E Ridge 1967, NE Face (incomplete) 1992, NNE Ridge 2000,
NW Face 2000
9. **Polszyn-Mongol Najramdach**, 3987m (Polish-Mongolian Friend-
ship Peak)
Ascended 1967
10. **Sz. Pietrowicza**, 4240m
11. **Krasawica**, 3958m
12. **Kowalewski Chajrchan**, 3903m (Author of first Mongolian/Polish
French Dictionary)
S Ridge 1967
13. **Sunset Peak**, 3970m
Traversed 1992
14. **Midas Peak**, (?m)
By the Midas Ridge (5.9) 1992
15. **Yeti Col** (?m)

Glaciers: Potanin, Prezewalski and Kozłowa were all Russian Explorers

Expedition Members

1. **Nina Saunders**, 28 (Leader). Nina is currently a full-time PhD student at the University of Strathclyde (researching women in leadership) she also works part-time at the Glasgow Climbing Centre. No stranger to expeditions she has worked as a leader and taken part in trips to countries including Ecuador, Peru, Alaska, and Pakistan and has made a first ascent in Bolivia. She is an active mountaineer with particular interest in photography. Nina is arranging our flights and helping to find sponsorship.
2. **Alan Halewood**, 31 (Deputy Leader). Alan is a former Naval Officer who now works full-time in Outdoor Education. He has a First Class Honours Degree in Outdoor Education in the Community and extensive experience of expeditions in Greenland, South America, Africa, Antarctica, The Gulf States, Central and South-East Asia. A keen climber with a record of 10 first ascents he loves mountaineering in remote and unexplored areas and currently works as an Assistant Manager at the Glasgow Climbing Centre. Alan has done a lot of the background research for the trip.
3. **Janet Fotheringham**, 35 (Interpreter). Janet has lived and travelled all over the world working in the adventure activities industry. She has recently worked as an interpreter/trekking leader for an organisation in Chile and as trips co-ordinator for an American summer camp. She has an HND in Sports Coaching with Sports Management in Outdoor Pursuits and has made first ascents on Tierra del Fuego. An active climber, Janet will also be important on the trip as she speaks a little Russian.
4. **Michael McLaughlan**, 26 (Accounts). Mike works as a part-time blacksmith and climbing instructor. He has been climbing in Scotland for the last 7 years and has completed several alpine seasons, which includes an ascent of the Eiger. This is Mike's first expedition outside of Europe and he is looking after the accounts for the expedition.
5. **Rob Watts**, 27 (Equipment Manager). Rob is active in many outdoor pursuits and has caved in Norway and climbed in America, France, Spain. He has also explored unclimbed peaks in Chile. He has a Degree in Outdoor Education from Strathclyde University and currently works part-time in an outdoor shop and at the Glasgow Climbing Centre. Rob is also a kit monster so he will be arranging the equipment we plan to take.
6. **Sebastian Nault**, 26 (Cultural Liaison). Seb is an adventurer and climber who has spent a lot of time living with nomads of the steppes of Mongolia. He has a world of experience working in the Arctic and in survival conditions. He has an Honours Degree in Adventure Leadership and is a qualified teacher. Seb will be our cultural liaison and digging for sponsorship.

Planning

The idea to visit the Altai Mountains as a team was originally conceived in 2001. The next twelve months were fraught with activity. Fortunately with the advent of electronic mail, this speeded up communications, which would not have been possible five years ago.

Travel and tourism in Mongolia, particularly in the far North West of the country is still very limited, and added to the language barrier this was another dimension we had to overcome in our expedition planning.

We were very lucky, however, to have Sebastian join our expedition. Seb has visited and spent prolonged periods of time in the Mongolian countryside and has amassed a considerable number of contacts in country. This assisted us in finding drivers and vehicles for our overland journey.

The assistance of Miss Sylvia Hay (Blue Bandana Expeditions), and a good friend of Alan and Nina, was also a great help in purchasing maps, applying for visa's and gaining necessary border permits. Without her intimate knowledge of the Mongolian political bureaucracy, we would never have made it out of the capital.

The Final Team (L-R): Rob, Michael, Nara, Nara's Husband, Gantamor, Gerry, Seb, Alan. (Insert Janet)



Itinerary

Day	Date (2002)	Proposed Itinerary	Actual Itinerary
1	July 14 th	Depart UK	Depart UK
2	July 15 th	Arrive Beijing	Arrive Beijing
3	July 16 th	Beijing	Beijing
4	July 17 th	Arrive UB	Arrive UB
5	July 18 th	UB: Organisation/Shop/Permits etc	UB
6	July 19 th	UB: Organisation/Shop/Permits etc	Dept UB for Countryside
8	July 20 th	Depart UB - Travel overland to Olgi	Countryside arranging Drivers
9	July 21 st	Travel to Olgi	Depart Countryside, travel to Olgi
10	July 22 nd	Travel to Olgi	Travel to Olgi
11	July 23 rd	Arrive Olgi	Travel to Olgi
12	July 24 th	Organisation/Shop	Travel to Olgi
13	July 25 th	Depart Olgi for BC	Arrive Bayan Olgi Border
14	July 26 th	Travel and establish BC	Travel to Uliastai
15	July 27 th	Altai Mountains	Travel to Uliastai
16	July 28 th	Altai Mountains	Travel to Uliastai
17	July 29 th	Altai Mountains	Uliastai: Organisation/Shop
18	July 30 th	Altai Mountains	Travel to Otgon Tenger Uul NP
19	July 31 st	Altai Mountains	Otgon Tenger Uul National Park
20	August 1 st	Altai Mountains	Otgon Tenger Uul National Park
21	August 2 nd	Altai Mountains	Otgon Tenger Uul National Park
22	August 3 rd	Altai Mountains	Otgon Tenger Uul National Park
23	August 4 th	Altai Mountains	Otgon Tenger Uul National Park
24	August 5 th	Altai Mountains	Otgon Tenger Uul National Park
25	August 6 th	Altai Mountains	Travel to Olgi
26	August 7 th	Altai Mountains	Travel to Olgi
27	August 8 th	Altai Mountains	Travel to Olgi (Quarantined)
28	August 9 th	Altai Mountains	Travel to the Altai Mountains and BC
29	August 10 th	Altai Mountains	Altai Mountains
30	August 11 th	Altai Mountains	Altai Mountains
31	August 12 th	Altai Mountains	Altai Mountains
32	August 13 th	Altai Mountains	Altai Mountains
33	August 14 th	Altai Mountains	Altai Mountains
34	August 15 th	Dept BC for Road head	Dept for UB
35	August 16 th	Dept for UB	Travel to UB
36	August 17 th	Travel to UB	Travel to UB
37	August 18 th	Travel to UB	Travel to UB
38	August 19 th	Arrive UB	Arrive UB
39	August 20 th	R & R	R & R
40	August 21 st	3 members depart for UK	3 members depart for UK
41	August 22 nd	R & R, 1 member departs for Japan	R & R, 1 member departs for Japan
42	August 23 rd	2 members depart for Moscow	2 members depart for Moscow
43	August 24 th	Transiberian	Transiberian
44	August 25 th	Transiberian	Transiberian
45	August 26 th	Transiberian	Transiberian
46	August 27 th	Arrive Moscow	Arrive Moscow
47	August 28 th	Moscow	Moscow
48	August 29 th	Moscow	Moscow
49	August 30 th	Moscow	Moscow
50	August 31 st	Depart Moscow for UK	Depart Moscow for UK

The Expedition

Getting There

Seb flew direct to Mongolia one week in advance of the main team arriving. During this time, he liaised with Sylvia (our agent). They started work on permit applications, accommodation, finding transport, drivers and availability of food.

The rest of the team members flew out via Beijing. Their 48-hour stopover enabled them to do some local tours to the Great Wall of China, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City and to sample the local food.

Ulaan Baatar

Upon arrival in Ulaan Baatar (UB), they were met at the airport by Sylvia and Seb and taken to a hostel in the city, which we used as an operations base for the next couple of days. The team were invited to attend a donation of climbing gear from the Alex Lowe Foundation to the newly built local climbing wall (and appeared on local TV). Time was also spent changing money to local currency, purchasing food, introducing ourselves at the Embassy, arranging border permits and registering with the local authorities before we transferred out to the countryside, where we were to meet our drivers.

The Countryside

We had been invited to stay with the extended 'Damberjan' family who were based in a collection of gers about an hour from UB. We spent a couple of days living with them; we played football, taught the children frisbee, helped herd sheep, collect water and sampled our first Mongolian cuisine. The family provided us with 2 jeeps and 4 drivers to help us get to the Altai.

Across Mongolia

It took 5 days to drive across Mongolia to the border of Bayan Olgi Aimag. The amazing scenery of rolling plains enlivened the journey. Our first stops were at the Erdene Zuu Iid Monastery and Tsagaan Nuur, a volcanic lake next to a lava field. We climbed the local volcano and enjoyed swimming and fishing here. The weather was extremely hot and frequent stops were necessary. On the road itself, we stopped at various gers, in search of palatable food. The first bouts of food poisoning were also apparent, with Nina and Alan both falling foul of bugs, and Seb's bout of heat stroke.

Upon arrival at the Bayan Olgi Aimag, via Naranbulag, we were told that we were not allowed to enter the region due to an outbreak of foot and mouth. Even spending the evening plying the local officials with vodka did not change their mind. The satellite phone came in very useful enabling us to phone our agent and the British Embassy and trying to find out if there was any other way into Olgi. There wasn't. There was nothing we could do but turn back and go to an alternative area.

Otgon Tenger Uul.

We decided to head to the Otgon Tenger Uul National Park near Uliastai. Uliastai is a large town in central Mongolia, which we reached after 3 further

days driving. From here we resupplied and passed up a valley to the National Park, passing a large roadside crag with a group of climbers putting up new routes (hard, multi-pitch).

We camped by the National Park entrance, next to a summer school, met the ranger and negotiated time in the Park. The next day we managed to get the jeeps 10 miles along the track, encouraged by the ranger on his motorbike. This was the only day we experienced any real rain. We walked for six hours and decided to make camp after an afternoon of very Scottish weather; rain. The following day, 2 hours walk took us below Otgon Tenger Uul to a lovely camp beside a lake, a glacial sinkhole. Which although cold was great for swimming and was well stocked with fish (grayling).

On the following day we split into 3 teams of two and climbed the ridge opposite the mountain. We took 3 different routes up the broken and friable crags above our lake. From the top we were able to prospect the route up the peak. Two teams took a similar line up a chimney, whilst another climbed a steep multi-pitch route that took them to the summit ridge. One team attempted a traverse of the ridge, however, they returned to camp late in the day leaving it uncompleted.

Next morning Al, Janet, Rob and Seb climbed Otgon Tenger Uul (Approx. 3905m), by the normal route (Normal for the many Eastern Europeans who climb the peak). Nina was ill that day and still weak the following, so Mike climbed it alone the second day (his birthday), and retrieved Rob's hat. The weather proved to be fairly stable and hot and views fantastic. Unfortunately, the sight and smell of a dead horse near the summit was less attractive.

Returning to Uliastai, we discovered an occasionally functioning Internet connection at the Post Office. We also heard on the phone that there might be a possibility of getting to the Altai Mountains. We had explored our alternative area and were keen to make a final push for the elusive Altai!

Uliastai – Altai Mountains.

After another 2 days driving, we passed into Olgi Aimag, and then encountered problems at the official border post. The Mongolian border guards waved us through with smiles, but it was not so cheery on the Kazak side. Despite having the relevant border permit, the officials refused us entry. We tried a second time (with a bottle of vodka), still no luck. Finally, on our third try and a bribe of \$10 US, they agreed that we could enter. However, our luck ran out for the day when we arrived at a roadblock above Olgi the capital of the west of the country.

We were effectively 'quarantined' for the night by the roadside, not allowed back where we had come from or continue on. The following day, Gerry our driver explained our position to the chief of police (following a meal and vodka) and he finally agreed to let us through. We needed food but because we were not supposed to be in the area, Janet was smuggled in a car into town with the chief to buy provisions for us. Our vehicles were fumigated and we swiftly continued on our journey before anyone could change their minds. After one more night on the road, and a spectacular river crossing in the jeeps,

we reached 3 gers at the road head with the mountains in sight. A so-called '5 kilometre' walk turned into a long 5-hour trudge in the dark behind a flatulent camel laden with our 8 large bags. We camped for the night beside 2 empty gers next to the Potanin Glacier.

The Altai

Next day we split into 3 teams; Nina and Mike were to head up the Potanin Glacier for Huiten. The other two teams (Rob and Seb, Alan and Janet) headed up the Alexandry Glacier to the foot of Snow Church. All three teams encountered flooding on the lower glacier, soft snow (often knee deep) after midday and extensive exposed crevasse systems necessitating a good deal of pedalling back and forth across the glaciers.

The following morning Nina and Mike began a South East-North traverse of Huiten. Other potential routes were ruled out due to avalanche dangers. This took 25 hours, included a short bivouac on the glacier and involved complex route finding among crevasses. They found no other evidence of climbers on the peak, and lots of evidence of avalanche activity. Their traverse took them over the 5 main tops of the highest mountain in Mongolia. When they eventually returned to their tent platform, they found their tent had blown away. Eventually it was located thirty feet down a nearby crevasse and eventually rescued!

Alan and Janet, Rob and Seb set off along the East Ridge of Snow Church; heavily corniced and with a series of loose rock steps reminiscent of the Aonach Eagach in Scotland in winter conditions. Alan and Janet decided they were moving too slow and opted to turn back before the final ice slopes. Seb and Rob completed the multi-pitch ice climb to the top and returned to the ridge via a series of abseils from Abalakovs. They then used Alan and Janet's abseil stations on the lower sections of the ridge.

After their exertions of the previous day (or two) Rob and Seb, Nina and Mike remained in their camps. Janet and Alan crossed the pass on the South side of the Alexandry Glacier to the Grano Glacier. From here, they climbed an unnamed peak at the West end of the glacier overlooking China by its East face. They found old footprints on the summit and followed them down the South Ridge. They then climbed Kowalewski by its apparently unclimbed North Ridge and returned by their ascent route before re-crossing the pass back to the Camp.



Above: The Snow Church showing the East Ridge on the left and the pass to the Grano Glacier on the extreme left.

On the final day we had available for climbing a storm swept in from China. Nina and Mike made their way back down the Alexandry Glacier to the 2 empty gers. The others remained camped in the path of the gale coming through the Yeti Col and remained tent bound until they too retreated the next day in better weather.

Unfortunately, some safety equipment including a group first aid kit, a satellite phone, and some personal belongings had been stolen from a cache left at the 2 gers in our absence. This appears to have been taken by a group including one Westerner and a member of the Mongolian Border Police. Our camel driver turned up on time and we made our way back to the jeeps. The families of the 3 brothers living at the road head entertained us royally with an incredible amount of local meats, and in return, we entertained the children and presented gifts to the families. We spent the night here before beginning the journey back to the East.

Return to Ulaan Baatar

The return journey was quicker than the outward one due to the recurrence of Mike's tooth abscess necessitating a speedy return to visit a dentist. We were still not allowed to enter Olgi town, and managed some even more spectacular river crossings in the jeeps (aka boats). We encountered spectacular thunderstorms on the flat plains. Food became a problem. Due to the foot and mouth outbreak, no supplies had entered the area and local shops remained unstocked. Our drivers caught and cooked 'Bortok,' a local dish of marmot cooked in a bag made of its own skin. This managed to give one of our driver's food poisoning (but strangely enough none of us!).

Ulaan Baatar

A dentist was located and Mike was operated on. We sorted our kit and went our separate ways. Sylvia, our agent and friend joined us for a final blow out at a Mongolian/Mexican restaurant (food prepared by an Indian chef) before the team went their separate ways.



Above: The Last Supper!

Departure

Seb heading on to Japan overland, whilst Alan, Rob and Janet returned to the UK via Beijing and too many dumplings. Nina and Mike took a relaxing and revitalising journey to Moscow on the Mongolian arm of the Trans-Siberian railway. They then spent three days exploring Moscow itself before returning home.

The Mountains

Otgon Tenger Uul

(Alternative location visited due to outbreak of foot and mouth in Bayan Olgi). The road head to the mountains is 4 days drive from Ulaanbaatar, or a 1 day drive from Uliastai.

From the road head, it is a 1 day walk to Base Camp, located at the head of the lake $47^{\circ}38'10.1\text{ N } 97^{\circ}33'03.3\text{ E}$. From here, the surrounding peaks can be climbed if sufficiently acclimatised.

Details of Ascents

Otgon Tenger Uul (3905 metres): (A hard walk) Alan Halewood, Michael McLaughlan, Janet Fotheringham, Robert Watts and Sebastian Nault. Followed the normal route up mountain on loose scree. (This peak is very popular and non-technical, and the highest in the area). Otgon Tenger Uul Summit $47^{\circ}36'32.3\text{ N } 97^{\circ}33'08.7\text{ E}$



Above: The normal route up Otgon Tenger Uul follows the ridge from the left of the photo to the summit in the centre of the photo (Mike in foreground).

Unnamed Peak (approximately 3100 metres) (Opposite Otgon Tenger Uul): (Scottish Severe) Rock Chimney, 1 pitch (First British Ascent, possible new route?). Alan Halewood, Janet Fotheringham, Robert Watts and Sebastian Nault. The latter two climbers then went on to traverse the ridge to assess the possibility of ascending Otgon Tenger Uul from here. Rock very loose. Descended scree back to base camp. Peak Ascended for acclimatisation and to recce the ascent of Otgon Tenger Uul. Summit coordinates: $47^{\circ}37'40.6\text{ N } 97^{\circ}31'51.2\text{ E}$

Unnamed Peak (approximately 3100 metres) (Opposite Otgon Tenger Uul): (Scottish VS 4a) Rock ridge and crack, 2 pitches 'Platypus Crack' (First British Ascent, possible new route?). Nina Saunders and Michael McLaughlan. Descended scree back to base camp. Peak Ascended for acclimatisation and to reccie the ascent of Otgon Tenger Uul. Summit coordinates: 47°37'40.6N 97°31'51.2E



Above: Platypus Crack (so called because Mike dropped his Platypus on the route).

The Altai Mountains³

If visiting the Altai Mountains on the Russian and Chinese borders, ensure that you have climbing or trekking permits before leaving UB. It is possible to get them in Bayan Olgi Aimag, but this cannot be guaranteed. An agency such as Blue Bandana Expeditions can help you obtain these.

Only the truly dedicated, adventurous and experienced of mountaineers should venture into this region. It is beautiful, however, it is also a long way from anywhere, anyone and anything. If you are keen on visiting this area, you must be aware that it is very isolated. These mountains should not be attempted by the inexperienced, they are extremely technical and the effects of altitude must also be taken into consideration. Rescue and recovery here would be very difficult in an emergency.

Park permits must be bought at the entrance to the park. Numerous fast flowing glacial rivers have to be crossed and high passes traversed in your vehicles. Vehicles should carry all necessary emergency equipment and we sought local advice for crossing rivers and finding our way into the main mountain area. Maps of roads or tracks were non-existent; it often felt like we

³ Please refer to Appendix 3 for detailed sketch map

were just following our noses. It is possible to hire the services of a local guide in Olgi. Mr Attai may be able to organise jeeps, guides, horses or camels.

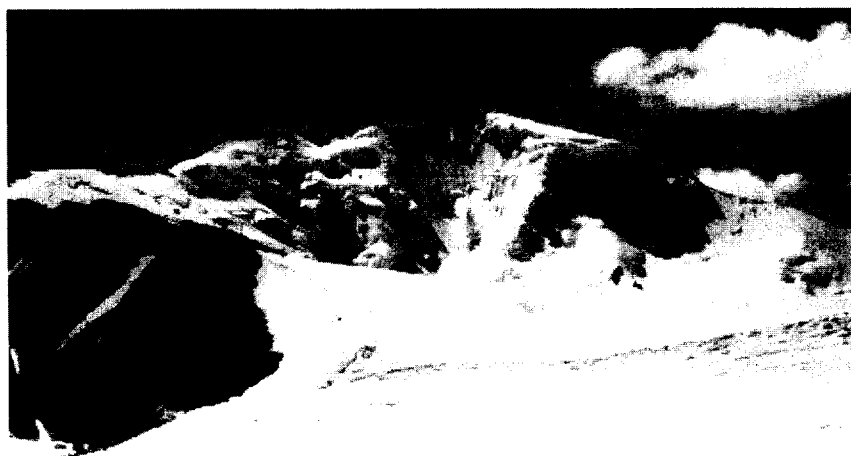
At the road head, we met a local family of three brothers living here with their herds. They rented us a camel for \$20 US, to carry our equipment to the foot of the glacier and back again.

From the road head to the base camp at the foot of the glacier is about 10 kilometres with approximately 600 metres of height gain (5-6 hours walk). When we arrived at the glacier snout, there were 2 gers erected but uninhabited. This is a good spot to set up a base camp and then to make shorter trips up into the mountains in the area. The highest being Huiten (4374 metres), the highest peak in Mongolia.

Details of Ascents

Huiten (4374m). (Scottish Grade II). First known British traverse SE - N. Nina Saunders and Michael McLaughlan.

Advance base camp was situated on the Potanina Glacier, just below the rock ridge on the South East flank of the mountain. Possible avalanche risk. Ascended Huiten via the South East Ridge. Hidden crevasses and seracs. Traversed the 5 peaks of the summit ridge. Summited on highest peak at 9pm. Descended via North flank of mountain to Potanina Glacier. Snow hole on glacier at 2am. Returned to tent at 10 am the following day.



Huiten: Ascent via left hand ridge, over the three visible tops and two further summits (not visible) descent via the back of the right hand ridge.

Snow Church (4100m). (Scottish Grade III/IV ice) Third British ascent (first by E ridge) Seb Nault and Rob Watts. AD

Advance base camp at the head of the Aleksandry Glacier. High risk of rock fall. From here, the Snow Church was ascended, via the South East Ridge. The ridge was mainly snow free loose blocks of rocks. The final 120 metres were ascended in 4 pitches (III/IV) of steep ice and loose unconsolidated snow for last 40 metres. Summited at 5pm. Descent via same route, abseiling on balacovs. Summit of Snow Church 49°05'59.3N 87°51'18.3E

Unnamed Peak (3900m) (PD) At the head of the West End of Grano Glacier. First British Ascent (NE face, descent by S ridge) Alan Halewood, Janet Fotheringham

Kowalewski (3903m) (PD+) Second Ascent (first British) and first ascent of North Ridge. Alan Halewood, Janet Fotheringham.

Advance base camp at the head of the Aleksandry Glacier. From here, Kowaleski was ascended via a snow gully to the North Ridge and was followed to the summit in an 8-hour day.



Above: View over the Alexandry glacier showing the Snow church in the distance on the far left

Further Mountaineering Possibilities.

Although most (but not all) of the principal summits have been climbed many have only been ascended once or twice and often only by one route. There exists much opportunity for new routes at AD grade and above. The rock is generally poor and loose in the area, and the glaciers fairly technical and very hard work after mid-morning. Otherwise, the couloirs and ice fields seemed stable and interesting.

To the south of the main range (probably accessible by foot from the Gljaden valley, see map on page 5), a small number of snow-covered peaks were visible and would probably repay exploration. In summary, a good area for 1 and 2 day ascents of moderate difficulty for those with an exploratory nature.

Right: Nina negotiating a snow bridge on the glacier.



Visas

Mongolian

Mongolian visas can be processed in a day in London; however, it is best to leave a week for the process, although we got ours completed on the spot (£40 each). As we were staying for more than one month, we had to get an invitation faxed to us from our agent inviting us to the country. Forms and photos necessary for visa application.

Registration

At the time of writing it is ESSENTIAL that visitors to Mongolia register with the local authorities as soon as they arrive (ideally on day of arrival). This can be done by a tour agent, for a fee, or in person. Passports and money for a form (1000 tgs) are required and the chaotic queuing system means that you should allow at least half a day for this process. People who had left this process as little as 7 days were being fined hundreds of dollars. During your final few days in country, it is necessary to de-register as well. You will not be allowed to leave the country without the appropriate stamps in your passport.

Chinese

Visas for China can be applied through the Embassy either in London or Edinburgh and take three to five days. They can be processed in 24 hours at additional cost (an 'express' visa cost £45). Make sure you apply for the right one as there are single, double or multiple entries. The Edinburgh Embassy was very efficient, if not a little odd.

Russian

The whole Russian visa system is a bit of a farce, left over from the cold war days. In order to get a visa, you must have copies of your air/train tickets, an invitation to the country, insurance and accommodation booked. We ended up paying the company 'Intourist' (Glasgow and London) to process these things. The visa itself costs between £30 - £80, depending on how fast you would like it to be processed. Embassies in London and Edinburgh. We had no problems getting our visa's processed in Edinburgh, however stories of endless queues and bureaucracy in London were frequent.

Registration

It is necessary to register your passport upon arrival at your hotel in Russia, if not the local police who randomly stop tourists will fine you.

Permits

Border Permits

To climb in the border regions of Mongolia requires a permit from the military. Otherwise you may be refused entry into the area you wish to visit. These can be applied for in UB. Blue Bandana Expeditions secured this for us at a cost of about \$50.

The Mongolian border guards let our team pass into the Bayan Olgi Aimag with friendly smiles and waves, however the Kazak border guards did not. We were turned away three times and refused permission to enter into the Aimag despite having the correct documentation. Eventually 2 hours later, after intense discussions, tea, vodka and a financial bribe (\$10) we were allowed in.

Having all official documents does not guarantee that you will be allowed into the area you wish to visit. Be prepared for negotiation and have a Mongolian/Russian interpreter with you to ease communications.

National Park Permits

There is a charge per day to enter Mongolian National Parks. This is \$1 per person per day for foreign nationals, \$0.50 per person per day for Mongolians. Additionally vehicles cost \$3 per day.

Otgon Tenger Uul

It is necessary to buy National Park permits from the Ranger at the Summer School at the edge of the Park. It is possible to rent a jeep in Uliastai to bring you to the Park entrance here (1/2 day drive). Make sure that you arrange a pick up date and time, if you require transport back to Uliastai, otherwise it will be a long walk.

The Altai Mountains

National Park permits from the Ranger at the Bridge at the entrance to the Park. It is possible to rent a jeep in Olgi to bring you to the Park entrance here (1/2 day drive). Make sure that you arrange a pick up date and time too, otherwise you remain stranded in the Altai.



Above: The Elusive Altai Mountains

Travel

Travel to Mongolia

Travel to Mongolia is relatively simple from the UK. Flights are available from London to Ulaan Baatar via either Beijing (Air China) or Moscow (Aero Flot). Alternatively, the Transiberian Railway can also be taken from either Beijing (1 day) or Moscow (4 days).

On the 14th July 2002, our team flew to Ulaan Baatar via Beijing on Air China; this was easily the most economic method of travel. A 48-hour stop over in Beijing allowed us to be tourists for a couple of days

Travel in Mongolia

We arrived in Ulaan Baatar (UB), the capital of Mongolia, on the 17th July to be greeted at the airport by our in country agent, Sylvia and team mate, Seb. We took a taxi to our pre-arranged hostel, 'Mon You Hostel' in downtown UB. In and around the city, travel is very cheap in local taxis, which can be found at unofficial taxi ranks around the city. For longer journeys to the nearby countryside, taxi's can be booked through local agents. All rates are negotiable.

Domestic air travel using the National airline MIAT proved incredibly frustrating, with constant changes to availability, prices and luggage allowances causing confusion. We decided not to fly to Olgi (the nearest large capital accessible by plane to the Altai Mountains) for economic reasons.

We travelled across country in two Russian Jeeps provided by the Damberjan family. These robust vehicles are tough and easily repairable in the field. Our team increased from six to ten. We had two drivers, Gerry and Nara, plus her husband, and another Mongolian friend Gantamor who decided to come along for the ride! We paid the drivers a set rate per day plus a set rate for the number of kilometres that were driven.

It took us five days of off road driving from UB across country to the border of the Bayan Olgi Aimag via Naranbulag. Finally we were halted on a pass in the middle of nowhere by an official who informed us that we were not allowed to proceed due to restrictions imposed because of foot and mouth disease. We decided to head East again (another three days of driving) to Uliastai, a town in central Mongolia and the Otgon Tenger Uul National Park.

After spending some time in this area, we heard that the Altai Mountains may be accessible and drove back across country once more. We were halted by border officials and the local police several times, but eventually made it to the Altai Mountains on steadily deteriorating roads/4wd tracks. We then hired a camel to carry our packs from the road head to the glacier snout and back. Camels appear to be able to carry 8 or more full expedition rucksacks and made excellent baggage animals.

The journey back to UB was back across country in the jeeps. We managed this in five days due to a medical emergency; one of the members of our team

had an abscess. Our round trip covered 5000 kilometres of hot, dusty, uncomfortable and entertaining driving.

Everyone who visits Mongolia should take the opportunity to ride a horse and a camel in local saddles, a once in a lifetime experience (at least some of the members of our team certainly hope so!)

Return travel from Mongolia

At the end of our expedition, our team split, with three members flying back to the UK via Beijing again. One team member travelled overland to Japan (train, bus and ferry), whilst the final two took the Transiberian Railway from UB to Moscow. This turned out to be a pleasant and relaxing four-day trip, followed by some sightseeing before flying back to the UK.



Travelling across country in one of the Russian Jeeps (one of the smaller river crossings)

Food

Be prepared to experiment and sample some very good and some very bad products. Locals will invite you to eat various delicacies including animal kidneys, marrowbone and genitals. Remember, the fattiest bits of meat are the prime pickings and if these are offered to you, do not turn them down.

Mongolian cuisine is based around their important hooved animals; horse, goats, sheep, cows, yaks and camels. In the capital, it is possible to obtain processed and western foodstuffs in limited amounts as well as fresh fruit and vegetables. Elsewhere, markets in Aimag (regional) capitals were able to provide bread, chocolate, noodles, flour, biscuits and other staples. In smaller towns, local kiosks often sold beer, sweets, biscuits and chocolate and, occasionally bread. We soon learnt to stock up when we could as we found food in general sometimes very hard to come by. If you can, try and buy whatever you can for trekking and remote travel in UB or the capital towns of each Aimag. Jarred plums are great! There is no McDonalds in Mongolia (yet).

On the Road

Everywhere in the country we found roadside 'Guanzes.' These are the local form of a transport café, usually able to provide a meat goulash (distinctly lacking in flavour) with rice or noodles. These were very cheap to eat at. To feed 10 people a meal of tea, mutton and rice cost us about 8,000 tgs (approx £8). They were also good places to stop for a break. The addition of jars of Russian pickled vegetables and a local form of soy sauce went a long way to making this food more palatable to our western taste buds. Closer to the capital the food served in the Guanzes improved in taste and quality.

Camping/Mountaineering Food

In Olgi, Janet found packages of Chinese noodles with flavour sachets, which formed the basis of our hill food (breakfast and dinner) along with biscuits, chocolate, mayonnaise and fruit crystal drinks. The cheaper pasta we found very starchy and almost inedible at altitude.

Airag

Be warned that nearly every visit to a ger, and negotiation with a countryside official, involved copious amounts of Airag. This milk based alcoholic beverage (source variable) usually comes in a dusty, plastic lemonade bottle or jerry can and looks like vodka. It tastes more like vodka and sour milk with a distinct mutton fat aftertaste and tends to coat the lips or moustache with a film of grease. Our team had various tolerance levels for this, ranging from spitting it out (Mike) to engaging in bouts of singing 'Ilkley Moor Ba Tat' at 3 in the morning (Rob and Janet). Mongolians are very proud of their Airag though so do not offend them by refusing to drink.

Fish

We were able to fish in many of the lakes in Mongolia with a rod that Seb brought and the expertise of Mike, our resident member of The Scottish Grayling Society. Note: in National Parks it is necessary to purchase a fishing permit.

Bortok (Marmot)

To sample marmot meat in Mongolia is a delicacy. These large rabbit sized creatures live mostly in the Western regions of Mongolia and they can carry fleas that host the bubonic plague. However, if you are offered marmot, it would be considered an offence to refuse.

On our trip, our drivers managed to catch their first marmot ever, when we were with them, and they were most excited about this. The preparation of the meal was one of the most fascinating and complex food preparations that I have ever seen.

First of all, the marmot has to be caught and killed. Our 'dinner' was cornered beside a boulder and its passage to its hole blocked, then it was stoned to death. Once dead, the marmots head was cut off and all the insides, the bones and meat, intestines etc. were taken out of the animal, whilst the skin of the marmots body was kept whole. The inside of the marmots skin was carefully cleaned. The edible meat was then separated from the rest of its insides.

A fire was prepared and small stones were heated on it. We managed to find wild herbs and some chilli sauce to add to the meat. Once the stones were hot enough, the bum hole of the marmot was sealed with a hot rock, to stop all the meat and juice falling out of it. Then layers of rocks and the meat were placed inside the skin through the neck hole.

Once full, the neck hole was sealed, you could hear the meat cooking by the heat of the hot stones inside the skin, it bubbled and steamed and smelt amazing. Because of the heat inside, the fur moulted off of the skin and this was eventually all picked and scraped off. The whole thing was then placed on the fire and turned over and over until the outside of the marmot was completely blackened and furless.

Eventually, the belly was slit open and the juice poured into a cup. Before the meat could be eaten, the rocks from the inside of the marmot were distributed and those who were eating had to juggle one rock from hand to hand as part of tradition. The meat was well cooked and fairly tasty, probably a lot like rabbit. Although I didn't sample the juice, one of our team members guzzled this down and raved about it for ages.

Below: Dinner!



Accommodation

In Beijing we stayed in a cheap hotel we found at the airport information desk. In UB, we stayed in one of the small flats converted into a hostel. Travelling across the country you can camp almost anywhere, although it would be impolite to pitch a tent right next to a ger encampment unless invited. In Moscow, our hotel had been booked in advance with Intourist.

Mon You Hostel

A converted apartment, with bunks in the bedrooms. Very clean, with a good bathroom and hot showers and a fully equipped kitchen. Centrally located and reasonably priced (\$5 per person per night), sleeps maximum 10-15. Run by Amra who speaks good English.

Local Hospitality

We found everyone outside of UB very welcoming, despite the language barrier. The Mongolians that we met offered us so much despite having so little. We were always offered food and tea and often Airag. Often this would be followed by talk of activities and the expedition, families and animals. Later in the evening, singing seemed to be a popular past time, 'Mini Nir' being one of the most popular songs of 2002.

In return, we took a good stock of vodka, cigarettes and tobacco as gifts for people who offered us hospitality along the way. We also had a supply of balloons, fake tattoos, and postcards, from the UK to give as gifts. If you have sweets for children, give them to the parents to distribute at a later time to deter kids from begging.

We also found that having photos of your own family broke the ice. Having a Polaroid camera was great too, so you can give them a photo of their family there and then, as well as taking your own.

Below: Local Hospitality in the Altai Mountains



Customs and Traditions

In addition to customs already mentioned, we came across the following;

- If a Mongolian steps on your foot, they must shake your hand and vice versa.
- Don't pass things with your fingertips. Offer the whole hand or offer the item on a plate or in a packet.
- When in somebody's ger, try and finish all your drink. Otherwise the last person to leave the ger may be asked to finish off everyone's leftovers. (Either that or make sure that you are never the last person to leave!)
- If the snuff bottle appears, this is a sign of a great privilege, do not really sniff the snuff (there is probably none left anyway), as this is a prized possession. Just pretend to sniff.

Otgon Tenger Uul

The highest mountain in this area is called Otgon Tenger Uul (3905 metres). This is a very sacred mountain to the Mongolians. It is a Mongolian tradition that no woman can climb this mountain and it is hoped that those visiting the National Park respects this custom, and the park rangers wishes if he explains this to you. You must ask permission from the park ranger to climb Otgon Tenger Uul; this may be allowed or denied.

In 2002, our mountaineering party was given permission to climb the mountain (both men and women), possibly because we had Mongolians travelling with us, which made detailed communication possible. However, other parties with Western leaders did not receive permission and the females in these parties were specifically asked not to climb the mountain. However, they went against the rangers wishes, and as part of a routine check in the park, he found that they had gone up the mountain.

The future for climbers in the National Park is now under strain. Following this incident, no other foreigners were allowed into the National Park for the rest of the summer. Please respect the Mongolians wishes and customs.

Staff

We used an agent in UB, Blue Bandana Expeditions (Sylvia Hay) to obtain border permits and invitations. During our trip across country, we had two official drivers, one husband, and one hanger on. Actually, Gantamor, who came along for the ride was very useful, he did some of the driving (despite having no licence), he was also very good at communications. We used a lot of sign language. Because we had very good relationships and understanding between our drivers and our team, it was not necessary to have an interpreter, although at times it would have been useful.

We always sought local advice, for crossing rivers etc. and in return offered gifts of tobacco or vodka. We also hired a local person as a camel driver in the Altai.

We had originally considered having a cook at base camp in the Altai, but we did not follow up this idea when we could not gain access into the mountains.

At the end of our trip, it was very sad to say goodbye (especially) to our driver Gerry and Gantamor as they had contributed so much to the team and our success throughout the whole trip, and we had become great friends despite the language barrier.

Language

Mongolian is not the simplest language to learn and the pronunciation has been compared to two cats having a vomiting competition. The principal European language spoken is Russian/Kazak (in the West of the country particularly) as opposed to English. The latter however, is becoming more widely spoken in the capital. Outside the capital, do not expect to find English speakers. This means that unless you are one of the rare foreigners who speaks at least some Mongolian it will be necessary to hire an interpreter. It is also useful to buy a dictionary, these can be found in the State Department Store.

Weather

Weather conditions throughout Mongolia were usually dry, very hot and fairly stable. However, during the last couple of weeks of the expedition, some electrical storms were experienced. Combined with these was heavy and intense rain. In the Altai Tavan Bogd Mountains preceding a low weather front coming in, it became very windy. If camping on the glacier, make sure that your tents are well secured, as the heat of the day will melt the pegs or stakes out. Two of our tents blew away. One was found in a river on the glacier, and the other was found balanced precariously on a snow bridge 30 foot down a crevasse. Luckily both were rescued.

Environmental

The mountainous areas of Mongolia are relatively untouched, we found almost no evidence of humans in either of the areas we visited. This is encouraging; as Mongolia is becoming more popular and accessible to backpackers, adventure tourists and mountaineers.

We disposed of all of our waste responsibly. We did not bury, we burnt what we could and carried the rest out to nearby towns. Sometimes, locals would request empty jars that we had finished with. In all areas, we dug personal cat holes for personal waste, as and when necessary, and all toilet paper was burned.

National Park Etiquette

There are few Mongolians who actually follow Western ethics and environmental ideals that we have grown up with. They will hunt in a protected area and dispose of rubbish randomly. For example, they will throw sweet wrappers out of the car window (we tended to have a little stash of rubbish in the back of the jeeps when travelling, if our driver found it, she would curse us and try to throw it out). I suppose to some extent this is their way of life, and have lived like this for thousands of years. However, do not follow suit. Set an example and educate the locals, burn your rubbish if you have to, do not bury it. If at all possible, take it back to the local town for a half decent disposal rather than just being thrown into the countryside. Mongolia has the potential to become the worlds greatest rubbish dump, particularly along the roadsides.

Animal Diseases

The Western regions of Mongolia, e.g. the Bayan Olgi Aimag, can be affected by various outbreaks of animal diseases. Diseases in this area include outbreaks of the plague (this is carried by fleas that live on marmots), foot and mouth and rabies.

Foot and Mouth

In 2002, the Olgi Aimag was effectively quarantined due to an outbreak of foot and mouth. We were stopped from going into the Bayan Olgi Region due to this, which was unavoidable. News of this outbreak had not reached UB when we had left the capital, and it effectively put our expedition on hold, as there was no way we were allowed to enter the affected area. This is a serious disease in Mongolia, as the Mongolians livelihoods revolve around hoofed animals. We were effectively quarantined for 24 hours outside Olgi. Subsequently, we were fumigated and sprayed at various points, in somewhat haphazard fashions.

Communications

Prior to leaving on the expedition, all communications were carried out via fax or electronic mail. In country, we used the telephone and fax system to reasonable effect. There are also numerous Internet cafes in UB, although these are still not common in smaller towns. The only other reasonable Internet connection that we found was in Uliastai in the Post Office.

Apart from in major towns, there were no public phone boxes, one family attempted to climb a local telegraph pole and plugged in a device to obtain a connection, which amazingly worked, but it did not go far enough down the line.

We did rent a satellite phone for emergency use only; we had no intentions of using it. However, it did come in very useful when we were stopped because of foot and mouth, albeit very expensive. It is a recommended piece of emergency equipment, especially in such a remote area as the Altai, because there is no other form of communication for miles. Unfortunately, we had ours stolen and the thief ran up a bill, and we then had to repay the company, 'Mobell Communications Ltd' for the bill and this loss.

Specialist Equipment

Apart from the satellite phone, we had no other specialist equipment. We took mountaineering equipment, similar to that you would take on an extended summer Alpine trip. We also had a large group first aid kit. The only kit we bought for the expedition was new ropes for the mountaineering phase and water purifiers, the latter were great until they broke, or got clogged up from overuse. We were very lucky to be given test kit from various companies.

We had originally considered having a ger as our base camp in the Altai Mountains, but we did not follow up this idea when we could not gain access into the mountains.

Photography

All team members took along personal compact cameras. Five took slides and one took prints. Some of the photos have been included in this report. We also took a Polaroid camera, useful for entertaining locals. We took hundreds of photos, in total about 70 films were used.

Finances

Fundraising

We started applying for various grants about one year before we left for Mongolia, we wrote approximately 50 letters and were successful with only 3. However, we are very much grateful to those who did contribute.

We opened an expedition bank account, that accrued about 3 pence interest, and one week before we left, we transferred all money into \$US. Travellers cheques are not commonly acceptable in Mongolia, neither are credit cards. Most transactions were made in cash.

China

In China, we changed our \$US on arrival at the airport in Beijing.

Mongolia

Again we changed about $\frac{3}{4}$ of our money into local currency upon arrival in UB. This was done at the money exchange located in the old cinema on the small ring road. When we arrived this was a haphazard affair, but by the end of the summer it was far more organised and 'official.'

The Mongolian currency is Tughrigs (Approximately 1000/£1). This meant that we ended up with stacks of cash, and our money belts, pockets; secret compartments in rucksacks etc. were stuffed with the notes throughout the expedition. This was the most useful currency to carry and was accepted throughout the country. We kept some \$US in an emergency fund.

Income

Grants (MEF, BMC, SMT)	£2300
Personal Contributions	£8890

	£11,190

Actual Expenditure⁴

Flights/train	£5800
Visa's	£590
Food	£700
Accommodation	£300
Permits	£100
Transport	£1000
Petrol	£200
Medical	£100
Equipment	£300
Insurance	£900
Satellite Phone	£1200

Total	£11,190 (Approximately £1865 per person)

⁴ For more details, refer to Appendix 4

All costs for rental of jeeps, drivers, animals etc were negotiated with the local people in advance and agreed. Particularly when calculating costs for drivers, it was necessary to keep a log of kilometres driven and cost of petrol.

Russia

We changed our local currency into Roubles before leaving UB at the money exchange. In Russia, we declared only small amounts of Russian currency when travelling over the border on the train. We also hid any spare cash, as we had heard reports of money being confiscated by border guards.

Throughout Siberia, food and essentials were fairly cheap to buy, however, in Moscow expect Western prices, usually at Western standards. (We recommend hot dogs and bowling in Moscow).

Insurance

If you are leaving anything at a base camp, make sure it is locked, buried, hidden or employ a local guardian, as some tourists do visit these areas. In 2002, our team had all of its emergency equipment stolen, including the medical kit and a satellite phone. Personal items such as rucksacks, clothes and shoes were also taken. A police report was obtained and included with the insurance claims.

All members of the expedition had insurance cover for the expedition, either BMC or Active/Snowcard (both of whom use the same company, Fortis). We all took out full International expedition policies to cover every eventuality. Claims were made to cover cost of thefts in the Altai Mountains.

Medical

Before leaving for Mongolia, we had all necessary inoculations against TB, Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A and B, and some members had the Rabies injection. Details of necessary vaccines are available from your local Doctor, and information should be sought about four months in advance of departure.

Medical Kit⁵

We all carried personal medical kits containing painkillers, antibiotics, plasters, etc. we also had an expedition medical kit, which was extremely comprehensive. We relied on improvisation for other items, such as trekking poles for splints. All team members held basic or advanced/wilderness first aid qualifications. We were fully aware of the implications of entering such a remote area, and hoped no serious illnesses or accidents would come about.

Illness

All team members (including the Mongolians) suffered from the usual bouts of diarrhoea, none of which were serious, and cleared up after a couple of days. These would have been most probably caused by unhygienic food and water sources. We tried to remain hydrated if suffering. We treated all water with suspicion and filtered it through one of our pumps or iodined it. Seb suffered from a case of heat stroke at the beginning of the expedition, however following rest, cooling and fluid replacement, he recovered quickly.

We had no real accidents as such, apart from Gerry the driver, who managed to turn his stove into a flame thrower and burn his hand. He also had toothache, which he treated himself by sticking a cotton bud into his jeep's battery acid and then applied it to the nerve (not for the faint hearted). These incidents provided us with alternative entertainment!

The recurrence of Mike's tooth abscess became a serious matter, due to the fact that we had all of our medical kit stolen. He needed antibiotics to treat his abscess, but as we now had no medical kit, we had no access to antibiotics. We were not allowed into the town of Olgi, and realised that he required treatment by a fully qualified and preferably English speaking dentist. We made a dash back to UB where our agent found us a fantastic clinic and the abscess was treated. By this time, the condition had become quite serious and Mike was in a lot of pain. Following the success of his dental treatment, he indulged in some serious retail therapy in UB (a necessary aid to recovery) to replace his clothes that had also been stolen.

No serious effects of altitude, apart from sluggishness were encountered, some team members suffered from varying degrees of hangovers (self inflicted, so there was no sympathy). Finally, we all accrued numerous insect bites, mainly from mosquitoes and midges, which were just as lethal as in Scotland. However horse flies are particularly aggressive in the Uliastai region.

⁵ Refer to Appendix 5 for list of contents

Conclusions

Due to the outbreak of foot and mouth in the Bayan Olgi Aimag, we were unable to spend a prolonged period of time in the Altai Mountains and therefore unable to fulfil some of our original aims. We were lucky to find an alternative location in Otgon Tenger Uul National Park and we spent a lot of time driving.

Achievements

We were able to make a number of first ascents and new routes in both the Otgon Tenger Uul National Park and the Altai Mountains as detailed in this report.

The positions of some summits and locations were also recorded using GPS; again those that were accurately taken are printed in this report. Detailed maps have been drawn to augment the Polish 1967 Map (Appendix 3).

Future mountaineering possibilities have been detailed in this report, which will be accessible to other members of the mountaineering community. Magazine articles are currently being written and details of the trip have made local news (The Kilmalcolm Advertiser, The Sussex Express). Finally, a web page is currently under construction.

The overseas expedition experience of the team members was vastly increased by this trip, all of whom developed their understanding of other cultures and living in remote and wilderness environments.

It must be stressed that part of the adventure of this type of expedition is the actual getting there (or trying to get there in our case). We were very unfortunate and no one could have foretold that we would be foiled by foot and mouth. We were very persistent and without the help and enthusiasm of our drivers, we would never have made it into the Altai Mountains for the short amount of time that we did.

The Altai Mountains are a unique and inspiring area, and one which the team hopes to return to at some point. We feel honoured and privileged to have taken part in such an adventure, seen and done so many amazing things, made so many friends. We returned to the UK feeling very accomplished and satisfied, despite so little time in the Altai. We hope that the Altai Mountains remain as peaceful and untouched, so that those seeking a wilderness experience in the future will also be able to do so.

**'Something hidden. Go and find it
Go and look behind the Ranges –
Something lost behind the Ranges.
Lost and waiting for you. Go!'**

Kipling (Source Unknown)

Personal Contacts

Blue Bandana Expeditions

This company specialises in providing support for organisations undertaking expeditions (especially educational expeditions) to Mongolia. The company can help arrange other specialist tours and may be able to help gaining border permits for certain areas. There is a charge for these services.

Sylvia Hay
PO Box 308, Ullaanbaatar 46A
Tel: 976 1132 5545
bluebandana@magicnet.mn

Mon You Hostel

Budget accommodation in UB, run by Amra.

Building 13 (white and blue) opposite the Mercury food market
2nd entrance, 1st floor, door number 17
Tel: 991 72 556 or 329 283
Email: monyouhost@yahoo.com
<http://www.monyouhost.topcities.com>

Mobell Communications Ltd

Suppliers of satellite phone, competitive prices and very pleasant to deal with.

Mobell Communications Ltd
The Winding House
Walkers Rise
Rugely Road
Hednesford
Staffs, WS12 5QU
Tel: 0800 243 524
Email: chrissie@mobell.com
<http://www.mobell.com>

Karakorum Expeditions

A leading company organising mountain based trips to Mongolia. This expedition company is an agent for many of the main foreign companies organising trips to Mongolia.

Graham Taylor
info@gomongolia.com

Intourist

Specialist company specialising in tours to Russia. Offices in Glasgow and London. Can help arrange independent travel, invitations, train tickets etc. Very helpful.

Paul

St Vincent Street, Glasgow

Tel: 0870 112 1232

Email: info@intourist.co.uk

<http://www.intourist.co.uk>

Purple Rock

Company specialising in T-shirt printing and design. Supplied us with team kit! (T-shirts, thermals etc with logo)

Helen Paxton

enquiries@purplerock.co.uk

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Other Sources of Information

- Julian Freeman Attwood
- Lonely Planet (Mongolia)
- Otgon Tenger Uul Guidebook (glimpsed at when we met a Czech group in the Park, possibly available in the Czech Republic or Poland).
- The map shop in downtown UB
- 1967 Polish Map of the Altai Mountains

Acknowledgements

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the support of all those who made our expedition possible. These include Sylvia Hay, the Damberjan Family, Helen at Purple Rock, and Neil and Derek (for letting us all have time off). Finally, we would like to thank all the local Mongolian people that we met, invited us into their homes, helped us out, played games with, and generally made our expedition a truly amazing cultural experience.

Grants

Mount Everest Foundation

British Mountaineering Council

Scottish Mountaineering Trust

Equipment

Mountain Equipment (Waterproof Clothing)

Macpac UK (tent)

Terra Nova (tent)

Grivel (crampons)

MSR (water pump)

Contact

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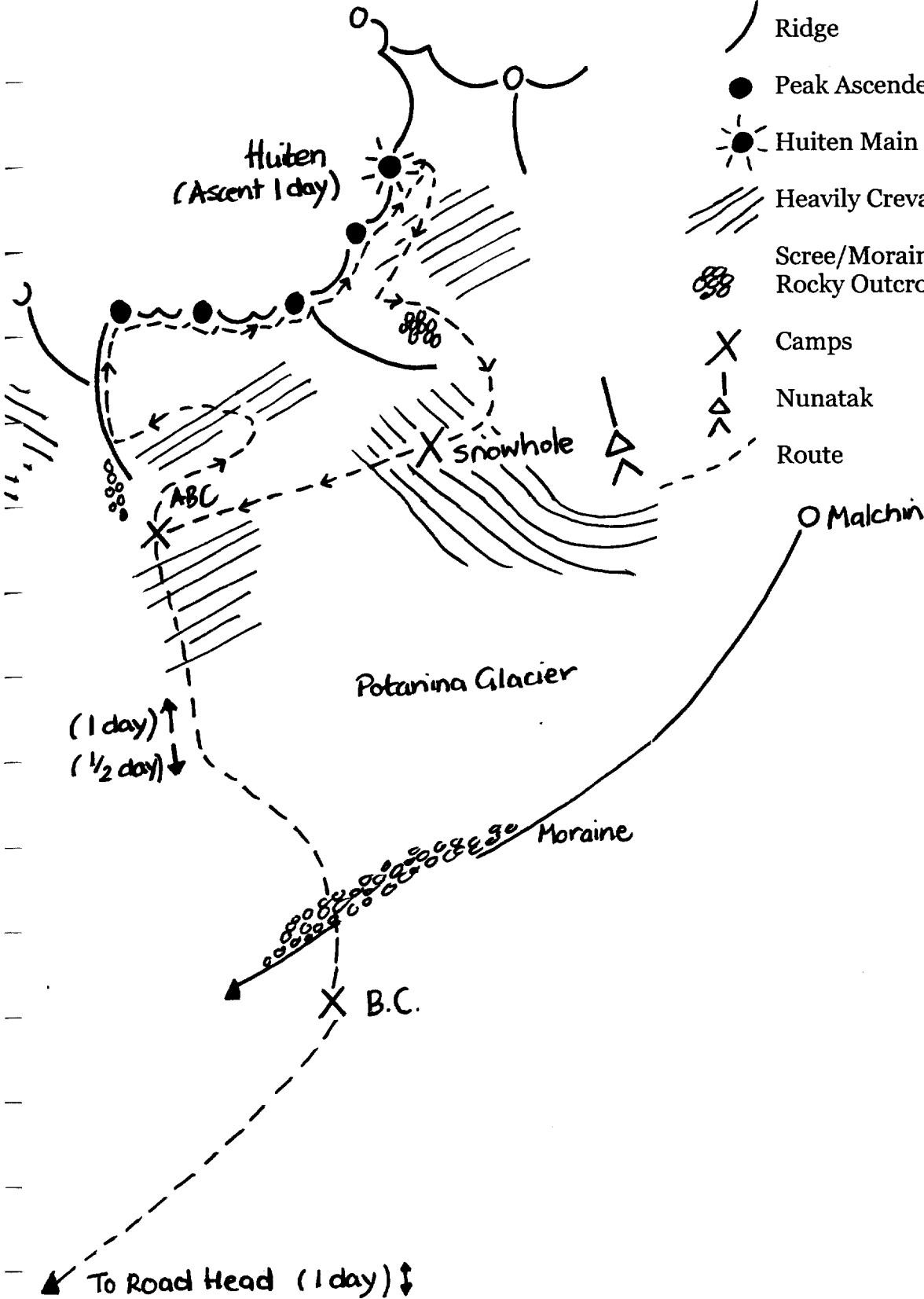
Appendix 3

Sketch Maps of Routes in the Altai Mountains

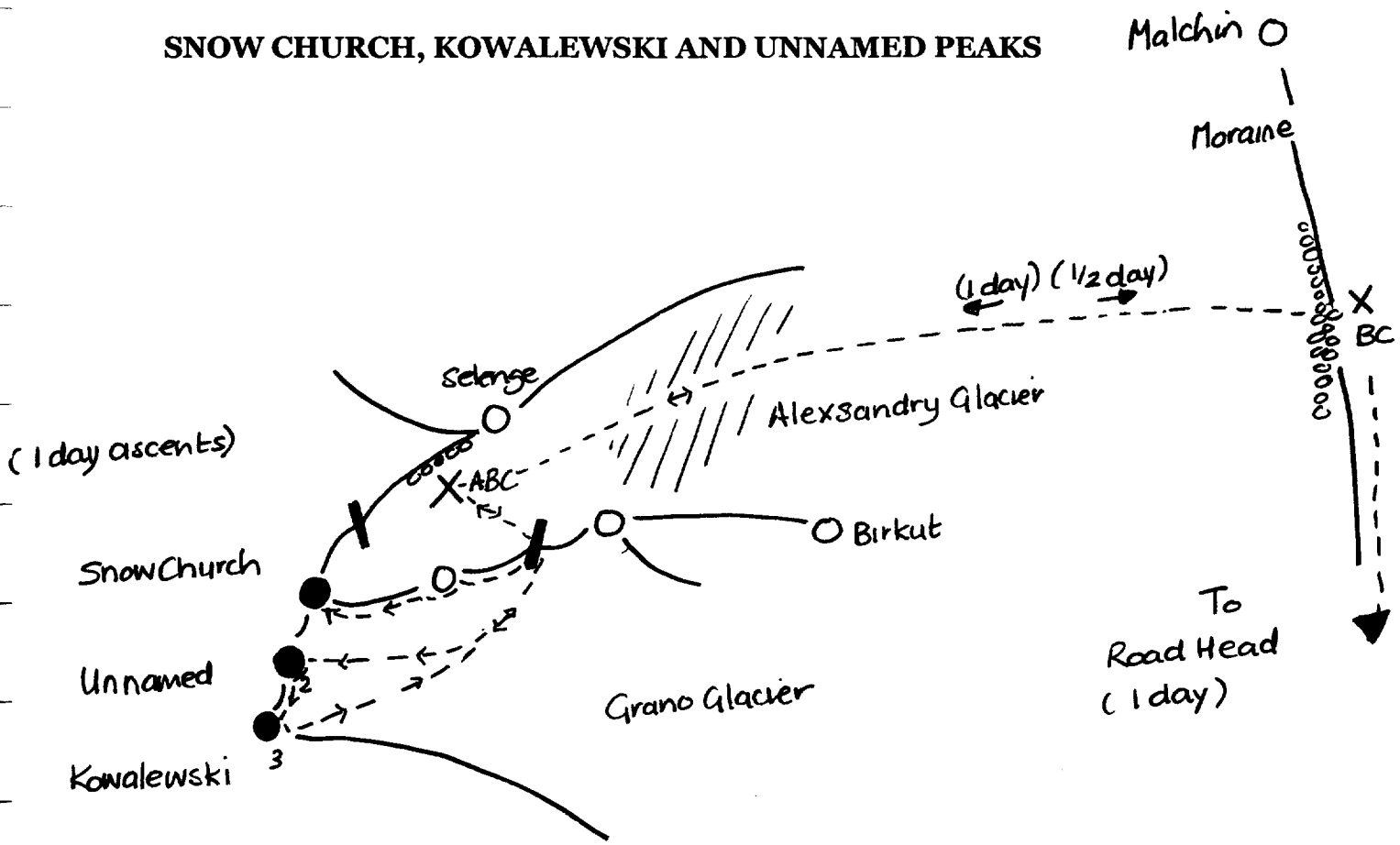
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

-  Ridge
-  Peak Ascended
-  Huiten Main Summit
-  Heavily Crevassed Area
-  Scree/Moraine/Rocky Outcrop
-  Camps
-  Nunatak
-  Route



SNOW CHURCH, KOWALEWSKI AND UNNAMED PEAKS



KEY

-  Ridge
-  Peaks Ascended
-  Unclimbed Peaks
-  Heavily Crevassed Area
-  Scree/Moraine/Rocky Outcrop
-  Camps
-  Routes
-  Col

Appendix 4

Details of Expenditure

Detailed below are some of the costs that were incurred during our trip

Flights

Return on Air China to Mongolia via Beijing £678

Single on Air China to Mongolia via Beijing £470

Single on Finn Air, Moscow to London £150

Rail

Transiberian Railway (second class) £300

Jeeps

Per Kilometre 400tgs

Driver/day \$5 US

Petrol (10,000 kms) £200

Animals

Camel \$20 US

Visas

Mongolian £40

Chinese £45

Russian £80

Accommodation

Beijing Hotel £7/person/night

UB £5/person/night

Moscow £15/person/night

Camping Free

Permits

Border Permits \$50

National Park Permits

\$1/person/day (foreign nationals)

\$0.50/person/day (Mongolians)

Vehicles \$3/day

Food

Varied depending on what and where purchased, approximately £700 total

To feed 10 people a meal of tea, mutton and rice in a roadside ger cost us about 8,000 tgs (approx £8). Our final night blow-out in the Mexican restaurant in UB, feeding ten ravenous people and lots of beer was £100.

Medical

Two trips to the dentist and drugs £100

Insurance

BMC Insurance £900 (some members had year subscriptions)

Equipment

Ropes £300

Communications

Satellite Phone £1200

This would have only been £400 plus call charges, however it was stolen and we had to repay the full amount of the phone, plus callers charges run up by the thief.

Other Approximate Costs we were Quoted

Horse/day \$10 US

Ger/day \$25 US

Cook/day \$10 US

Translator/day \$15

Appendix 5

Contents of Medical Kit

Anti Microbials

Amoxycillin
Ciproflxacin
Erythromycin
Flucluxacillin

Creams and Ointments

Anusol cream
Canasten cream
E45 cream
Flamazine cream
Hydrocortisone cream
Ear drops
Eye drops
Antiseptic wipes

Dressings and Instruments

Plasters
Dental first aid kit
Cotton wool
Cotton buds
Crepe bandages
Compeed
Disposable gloves
Scalpel
Variety of dressings
Micropore tape
Safety pins
Scissors
Steri strips
Thermometer
Tweezers
Triangular bandages
Zinc oxide plaster

Anti Infection

A selection of sterile syringes
Resuscitation aid

High Altitude Drugs

Nifedipine
Diamox
Dexamethasone

Painkillers

Co-proxamol
Ibuprofen
Paracetamol

Other Medication

Throat lozenges
Dioralyte sachets
Imodium
Stemetil