

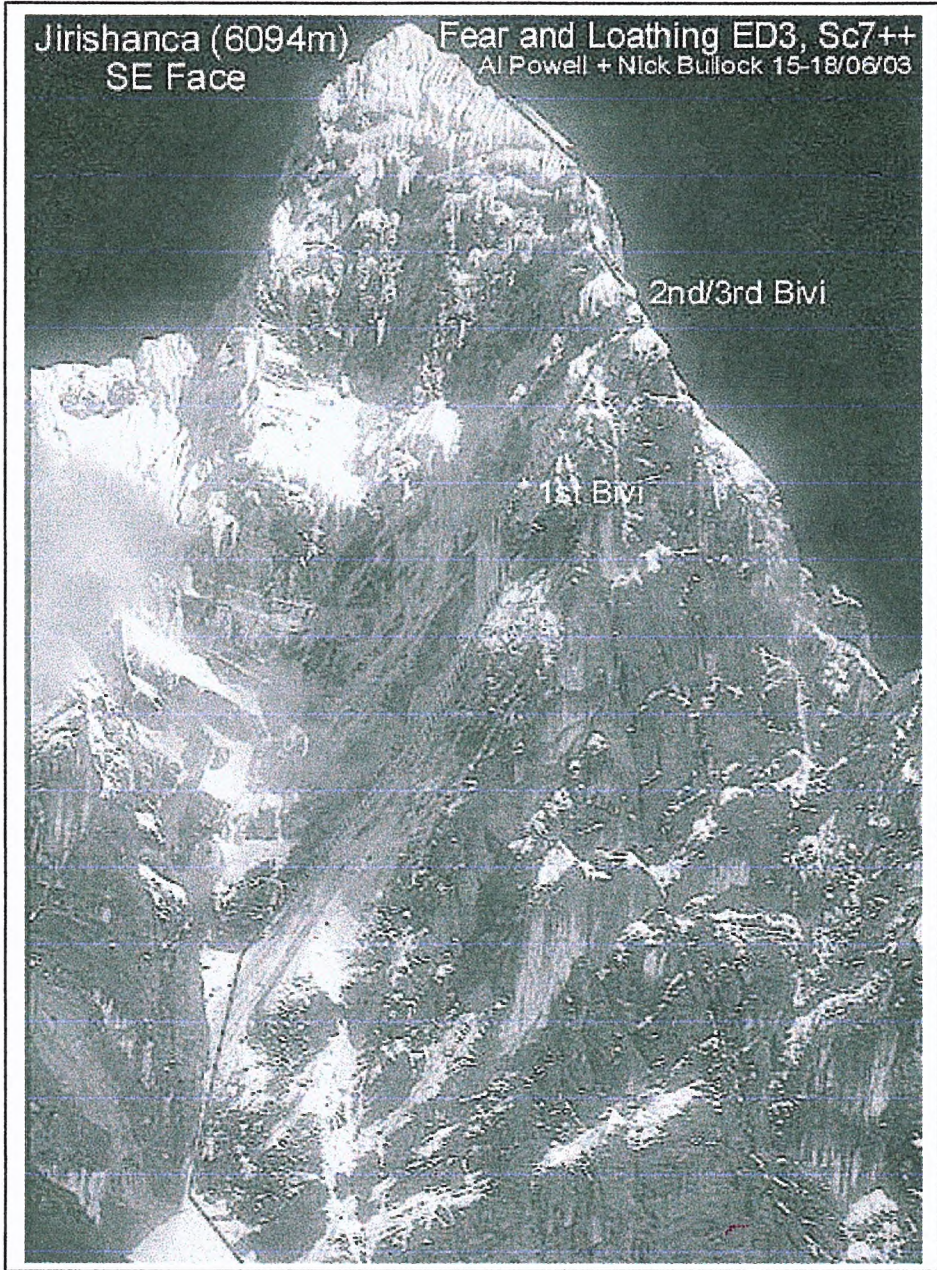
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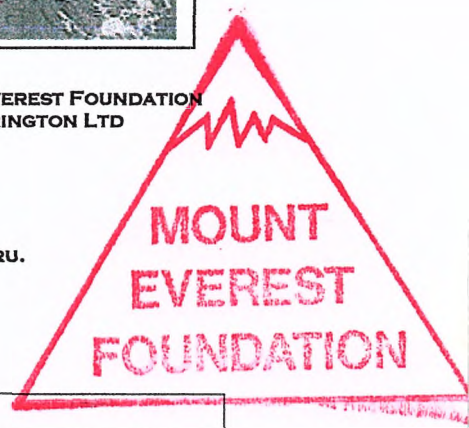
JIRISHANCA REMATCH EXPEDITION 2003

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Supported by	BRITISH MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL THE SPORTS COUNCIL MAMMUT CLOTHING	MOUNT EVEREST FOUNDATION RAB CARRINGTON LTD
Dates	30TH MAY 2003 – 28TH JUNE 2003	
Location	CORDILLERA HUAYHUASH & CORDILLERA BLANCA, PERU.	
Climbers	AL POWELL	NICK BULLOCK



ABSRACT

1st Ascent of central couloir on SE Face of Jirishanca (6094m), Cordillera Huayhuash, Peru. Route: 'Fear and Loathing' 900m, ED3, Scottish 7++ (French VII,6+).

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1 Introduction

Despite our near death experiences in 2002, we couldn't get Jirishanca out of our heads and decided to return for a rematch in 2003. For details of logistics etc for climbing in the Blanca and Huayhuash, see our 2001(Quitaraaju) and 2002 (Uita) reports as little has changed. This report concentrates on where we went this year and what we got up to, rather than how to get to these ranges in general. Our team consisted Nick Bullock and Al Powell again, as per 2001 and 2002.

2 Expedition Diary

Date	Event	Weather
May 29	Fly Gatwick – Dallas – Lima	Fair
30	Bus Lima – Huaraz. Edwards Inn	Sunny + some cloud
June 1	Sorting kit in Huaraz	Sun am, rain pm
2	Sorting kit in Huaraz	Sun am, rain pm
3	Taxi, Huaraz to Laguna Llaca (4475m)	Sun am, build up pm
4	Vallunaraju (5685m) N Ridge AD- 5hr up, 2 ¾ hr down	Sun am, rain pm
5	Rest – Laguna Llaca	Cloud am, rain pm
6	Up gl to Jangyaraju ~5200 deep snow poor weather, bailed	Snow am, cloud pm
7	Taxi to Huaraz + shopping pm	Sun am, build up pm
8	Sorting kit in Huaraz	Sun am, build up pm
9	Bus-Huallanca-La Union-Banos. Car to Queropalca, 11hr	Sunny + minor cloud
10	AM walk Lag Carhuacochoa 4hr, Lag Chaclan – Jorg + Hilda	Cloud am, sun pm
11	Search for Alex + Julien. Found sac, helmet + avalanche	Sunny
12	Load haul – Jirishanca bivi. 2.40 up, 1hr down.	Sunny
13	Up to bivi, discovered pan leak, down to BC	Sunny
14	Up to bivi again with a good pan.	Sunny + minor cloud
15	Day 1 solo couloir of death, up ramps, bivi 3/5 way up, 15hr	Sun am, snow pm
16	Day 2 up to ridge, bivi under ice mushroom, 8hr	Sun am, build up pm
17	Day3 up summit ridge 8hr, descent in storm to bivi 3hr.	Sun am, storm pm
18	Day4 abb face 5½hr + 2hr to BC, lots of fresh snow.	Sun am, cloudpm
19	Resting Laguna Carhuacochoa	Cloudy
20	Walk-Queropalca, Car-Banos, Colectivo- La Union	Sun am, storms pm
21	Bus-Huaraz, resting at Edwards Inn	Cloud am, rain pm
22	Resting Huaraz	Sunny
23	Huaraz – Nick ill	Sun am, build up pm
24	Trek to look at Chacraraju, walk to nr Yanama + bivi, 9hr	Sun am, build up pm
25	Trek Punta Yanayaca 4850m - Quebrada Uita, bus-Huaraz	Sun am, cloud pm
26	Bus Huaraz – Lima, sleep on airport floor	Sunny
27	Fly Lima – Dallas - Gatwick	Sunny
28	Arrive Gatwick AM	Fair

3 Travel

We flew American Airlines via Dallas, which despite a few worries about the airline nearly going bust, all went very smoothly (apart from the lack of free drinks on the plane). After a night on the airport floor as usual, we hopped onto the 7am Ormenos bus to Huaraz and settled down at Edwards Inn, in our usual beds.

Huayhuash Approach Following last years approach via Queropalca worked just as well, though cost a little more as we had to hire vehicles to and from Queropalca because there were no colectivos around when we wanted to travel (locals charged a gringo rate of 40-50 soles for the journey from Banos). There is now a road as far as Llamac on the west side of the range, reducing this approach to a shorter drive followed by a 7hr (as apposed to 4hr from Queropalca) walk. I would guess the Arrieros charge 2 stages + return for this route though, so it wouldn't be much cheaper over all.

4 Environment

Laguna Carhuacochoa The head of this idyllic lake served as our base camp area – a better spot could not have been dreamt of. The east side of the Huayhuash is quite different from the oft visited western valleys of the Blanca, being practically devoid of trees with almost entirely close grazed grassland. Around the lake the local families from Queropalca spend the dry season engaged in traditional pastoral pursuits: principally rearing sheep, cattle and horses, cheese making, fishing for trout and growing potatoes on impossibly steep slopes. We brought trout from the family on the NW shore of the lake and could have had cheese, eggs and potatoes too if needed. They also provided us with donkeys for the

walk out and kept an eye on our tents whilst we were in the hills. They are great people and well worth getting to know a bit – it certainly gave me the impetus to try and improve my pidgin Spanish!!

Flora and Fauna around BC a few strands of dwarf shrubs survive amongst the rockier ground, whilst various ground hugging alpine flowers and rosette like bromeliads punctuate the short cut grazing land. On the wild animal front numerous Viscachas (Squirrel x Rabbit = Viscacha) inhabit the rocks and we came across the remains of a couple of badger type beasts the locals had killed. The variety of birds in the area however, is amazing. Of the most easily identifiable are the Andean Goose, Lapwing and Gull, Carunculated Caracaras and Andean Flickers (ground dwelling woodpeckers – no trees), wheatears, hummingbirds, numerous species of finch and duck, various falcons, a large flock of black ibis type birds and much else beyond my ken. We didn't see any Condors for the first time this year however.

Rock The Huayhuash has a reputation for poor shale type rock – however there is also a lot of good limestone around too. The SE face of Jirishanca is composed of very compact limestone on the lower half and something resembling weatabix higher up. Luckily we only climbed a few feet of rock on the entire route.

Snow and Ice The face was well plastered this year, but our intended line up the central area wasn't formed properly – with a thin layer of snow on slabs, rather than ice. The line we ended up climbing had the usual full range of Peruvian horrors, from good solid ice to aerated mush and vertical snow pitches, with a good helping of mushrooms and icicle fringes thrown in too.

Weather We decide to head out a couple of weeks later this year, after our experiences in 2002 – a very good move as it panned out. The weather had been uniformly poor through May and the first week in June whilst we were acclimatising, but came good as soon as we travelled to the Huayhuash. Teams active during May were experiencing extreme avalanche danger, with a Spanish team having their high camp obliterated by a large powder avalanche below the S face of Copa in the Blanca and the tragic accident involving the Austrians below Jirishanca Chico (see below).

Waste Management We adopted a minimal impact approach as usual – reducing packaging and equipment taken in to the mountains as much as possible. All rubbish was packed out to Huaraz at the end of each sortie.

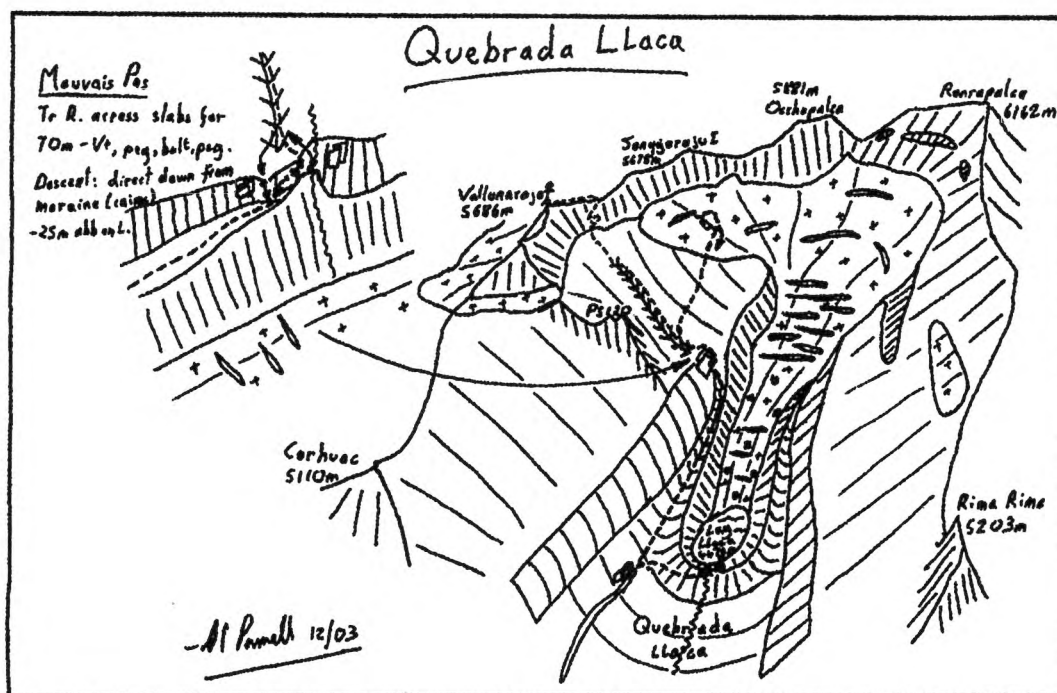
5 Climbing

We spent a lot longer acclimatizing this year, which again proved a good move as we were then able to climb much faster up the route as a result. All in all the trip was a resounding success with the 1st ascent of Fear and Loathing on the SE Face of Jirishanca being the result.

Vallunaraju (5685m) N ridge, AD-. The quiet and unspoilt Quebrada Llaca is incredibly easy to reach, lying as it does just a 2hr taxi ride from Huaraz (100 sols + 10-15 sols entrance fee to the locals) and a great place to get away from the crowds. Camp sites are within 200 yards of where you step out of the car (there is also a hut here used by the local guides, key from the guides bureau \$5/night) – we decided to camp by the lakeside. There are several bolted rock routes here too on good granite – ask at gear shops for details.

The normal sketch for Vallunaraju is to take a high camp at 5000m before making the ascent, but as usual we dispensed with this and climbed from BC to summit in 5hrs (via some slightly wayward route finding up the initial rock band to where the ridge is joined). This is not such a bad plan if you are fit, as there is a mauvais pas at the top of the initial moraine where a traverse must be made over smooth slabs (about hard severe, just keep heading right for 70m, past a peg a bolt and a 2nd peg - spaced) which is sporting enough in big boots and might be quite entertaining with a heavy sac. On the way back, drop directly down from the upper moraine (cairns) rather than following the way you came up, leading to a bolted 25m abseil on the left as you look out.

We also had plans to get a little more slogging at altitude in by traversing Jangyaraju, but shelved the idea at around 5200m after a couple of hours wading through thigh deep fresh snow on the glacier seemed to be getting us nowhere near our objective. The weather came in again ½ an hour later in any case, so probably the right decision. The other main attraction in this valley is Ocshapalca (5881m) S face, which sports a dozen or so modern ice routes in the upper grades, all with abseil descents.

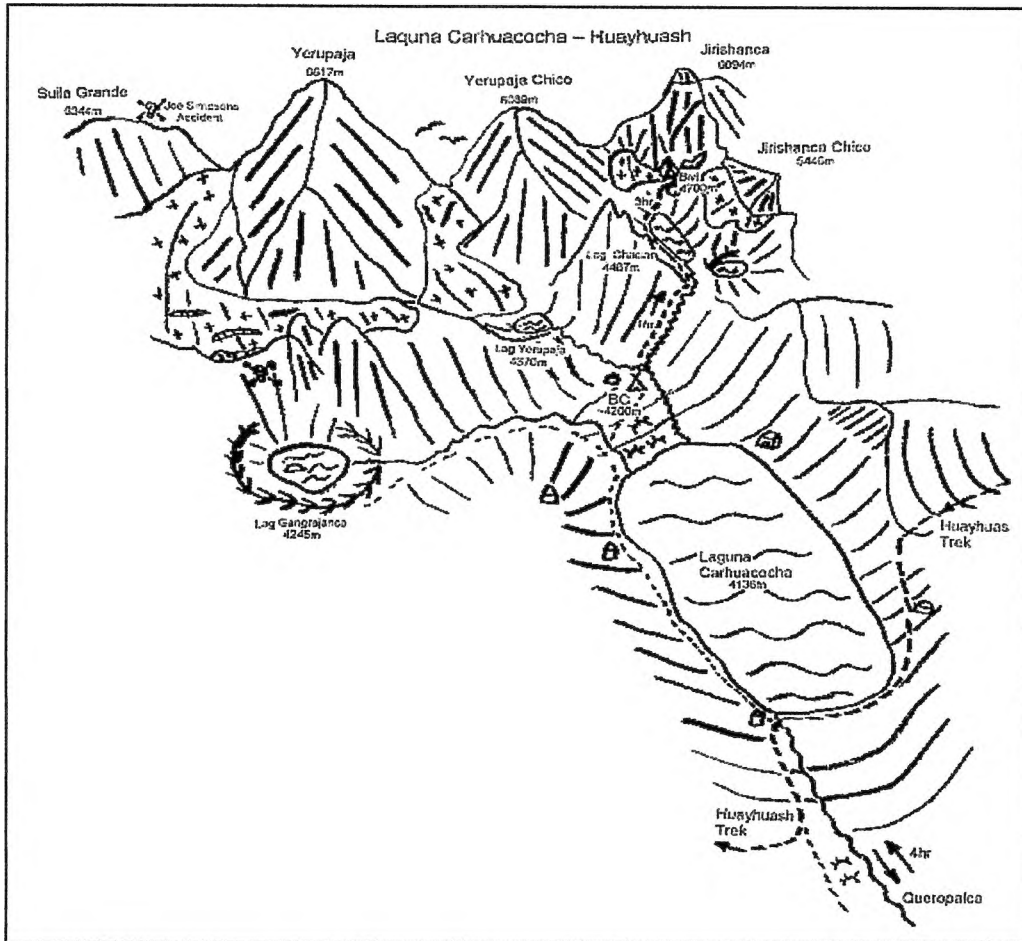


Jirishanca Chico – Avalanche Accident On arriving at our base camp in the Huayhuash, our first job involved the sad task of searching for two missing Austrian climbers – Alex Fidl and Julien Newmeyer who had been in the area in May also hoping to climb Jirishanca. The alarm had been raised by the Arriero returning to pick them up, who found an empty camp and no sign of the climbers despite two days searching.

A diary was discovered with their kit - the last entry some 2 weeks before, saying that the weather had been poor but they were off to try the SW Face of Jirishanca Chico. We were joined by the well known American activist John Ricker, who happened to be trekking in the area with his family - and together with 6 policemen from the rescue centre in Caraz, set off up the glacier following a set of old tracks. Directly below the SW face of Jirishanca Chico we found a rucksack and a helmet amongst a large pile of avalanche debris. In the following days the police team managed to locate the bodies and retrieve them from the mountain.

It appeared from what we found that the accident happened after they had been climbing on the face and were on their way down to camp. It looked as if they were on the glacier below the face, roped up for crevasse travel and simply got hit from above - ie they were very unlucky. Both were experienced - and by all accounts cautious - guides in their home country and will be sorely missed by the climbing community.

After completing the search, we refocused on the task in hand and set about getting loads up to the face. Our first planned departure got as far as the bivi where upon we found we had a leaky pan, so had to bail down to camp and return the following night. Conditions on the face appeared similar to the previous year, except that it was a lot colder with good overnight freezes and crucially the bottom couloir was just about filled with snow ice.



Jirishanca (6094m) SE Face **Fear and Loathing** **900m ED3, Sc 7++ (French VII,6+)**
 Al Powell + Nick Bullock 15 – 18 June 2003

The route follows the central couloir before heading up ramps to very steep ice climbing through cascades and fringes. These lead to the East Ridge (Egger/Jungmaier, 1957). We climbed this with some interest - arriving at a point we believed to be the summit mushroom in a storm, before descending the same way. From later, we are now sure we actually climbed to another mushroom some 60-80m back along the ridge, just short of the highest point. The face however, has finally been climbed.

The route should only be attempted in cold, stable weather and you **must** be well established on the ramps by dawn (or you will be killed). Serious. Climb the lower couloir for 150m as fast as possible (solo it, Sc4 up to 80°, constricted) and the snow slope above (65°) to a sheltered overhang where the couloir splits. Head right, up the ramp system (65-70° steps) to a steeper pitch (80°). Three more follow (70°, 80°, 70°), trending right to the base of the 100m icefall. Take this on the right: the first pitch is very sustained (50m, 85-90°), leading to a steep gutter up the right hand side. Climb this at first on ice then difficult mixed climbing, with a hard exit through an icicle fringe at the top (110°, M6+, A2 – poorly protected). Two easier pitches (70°) lead to a snow rib on the right, below a fringe. Bivi 15hr.

Traverse back left for a pitch (75°), then climb back right along the lip of the fringe (80° rotten ice) to a series of mushrooms. Complex route finding (vertical ice walls + very steep snow) leads to another easier section (70° snow, no belays) and short wall (80°) to gain the East Ridge. Bivi two pitches up the ridge under a huge ice mushroom 8hr.

Leave the bivouac via an icicle bridge on the L, turning the next mushroom by another L traverse and the steep rock tower above this by a thin ice pitch, also on the left. Above, the ridge becomes snowier with poorer protection and many mushrooms to negotiate. We had to down climb the upper section before making an abseil descent (several free hanging abs over icicle fringes – serious).

NB Timing the descent of the lower face is also critical in order to catch the couloir at a safe time.

JIRISHANCA, SE FACE

6096m

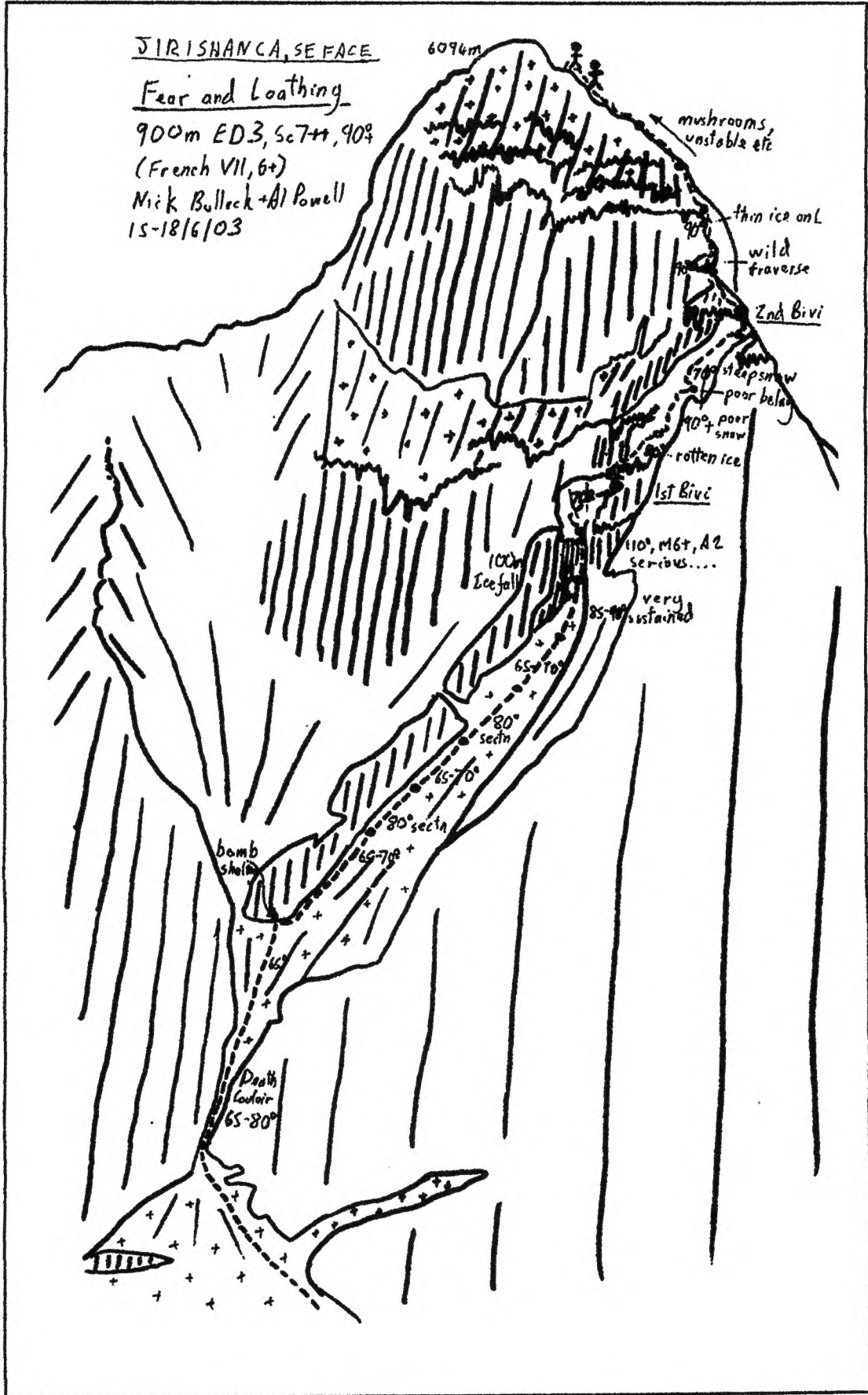
Fear and Loathing

900m ED3, Sc7+, 90°

(French VII, 6+)

Nick Bullock + Al Powell

15-18/6/03



6 Equipment

Maps The best map of the northern half of the Blanca is the new Austrian 1:100,000 trekking sheet (Alpenverienkarte, Cordillera Blanca Nord). For the Huayhuash try the Alpine Mapping Guild 1:65000 map (Cordillera Huayhuash, Peru). Both are available from Stanfords in London.

Clothing Rab provided Latok one piece suits, quantum waistcoats and 400g quantum bags – all of which proved ideal. Nick had an equally good set of Marmut goretex shell wear.

Climbing Hardware We took 9 screws, 2 friends, a set of wires, a few pegs and an ice hook. Of these, the screws were used on every pitch, but we only made a couple of rock belays on the whole route (both on the ridge). A fair bit of rock kit got left as abba anchors (most of it on the last 3 raps).

Stoves and Fuel Clean fuel is available in gear shops and hardware stores for use in petrol stoves. Gas is also available (both resealable and Gaz type cartridges), so this year we used a Markill cook set with a gas burner, which was fine.

Water We used a water filter again and didn't get sick. Although a pain in the neck to do all the pumping, it's well worth the effort. NB In the Huayhuash we had a clean water supply and didn't need the filter, which saved a lot of trouble.

Food and Stores Various personal favourites were brought out from the UK plus four tubs of isostar and lots of munchies bars (expensive in Peru), with everything else being purchased in Huaraz.

7 Finance

Accounts Below is a summary of finances for the trip. We were lucky to get good grants from the BMC and MEF, which eased the financial burden considerably.

Item	Income	Expenditure
Flights		-1300
Insurance		-360
Equipment		-230
Travel		-450
Food and Stores		-320
Accom		-350
Report and Misc		-120
BMC Grant	2000	
MEF Grant	495	
Personal Contns (2x£332.50)	665	
Balance	3160	-3160

Budgeting The following may help in planning a future trip.

Flights We paid £650 return with American Airlines via Dallas. (2 bags, 70lbs +40lbs hand luggage!)

Arrieros Cost \$10/day + \$5/burro (3-40kg load). You must provide food, a tent and pay return time too.

Admin at least £100

Prices for particular journeys are mentioned in our 2002 report and in the Lonely Planet guide. We ate out well every night but bought food for breakfast + lunch. ~£100 per week each could finance a cheap trip to the Blanca. If you hire jeeps, cooks etc or spend more on meals and accom, then expect your budget to be higher. If you are really skint you could do it for much less.

8 Information

Bibliography These should prove useful in planning a trip.

Peru

Climbs in the Cordillera Blanca

Escaladas en los Andes (Best Blanca Guide –Spanish)

American Alpine Journal

jirishanca Expedition 2002

Lonely Planet Guide

Dave Sharman

Desnivel

AAC (send new route details here)

Exped Report

Further Info If you want to know more, just drop us a line at any time: powellalun@hotmail.com

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9 Thanks

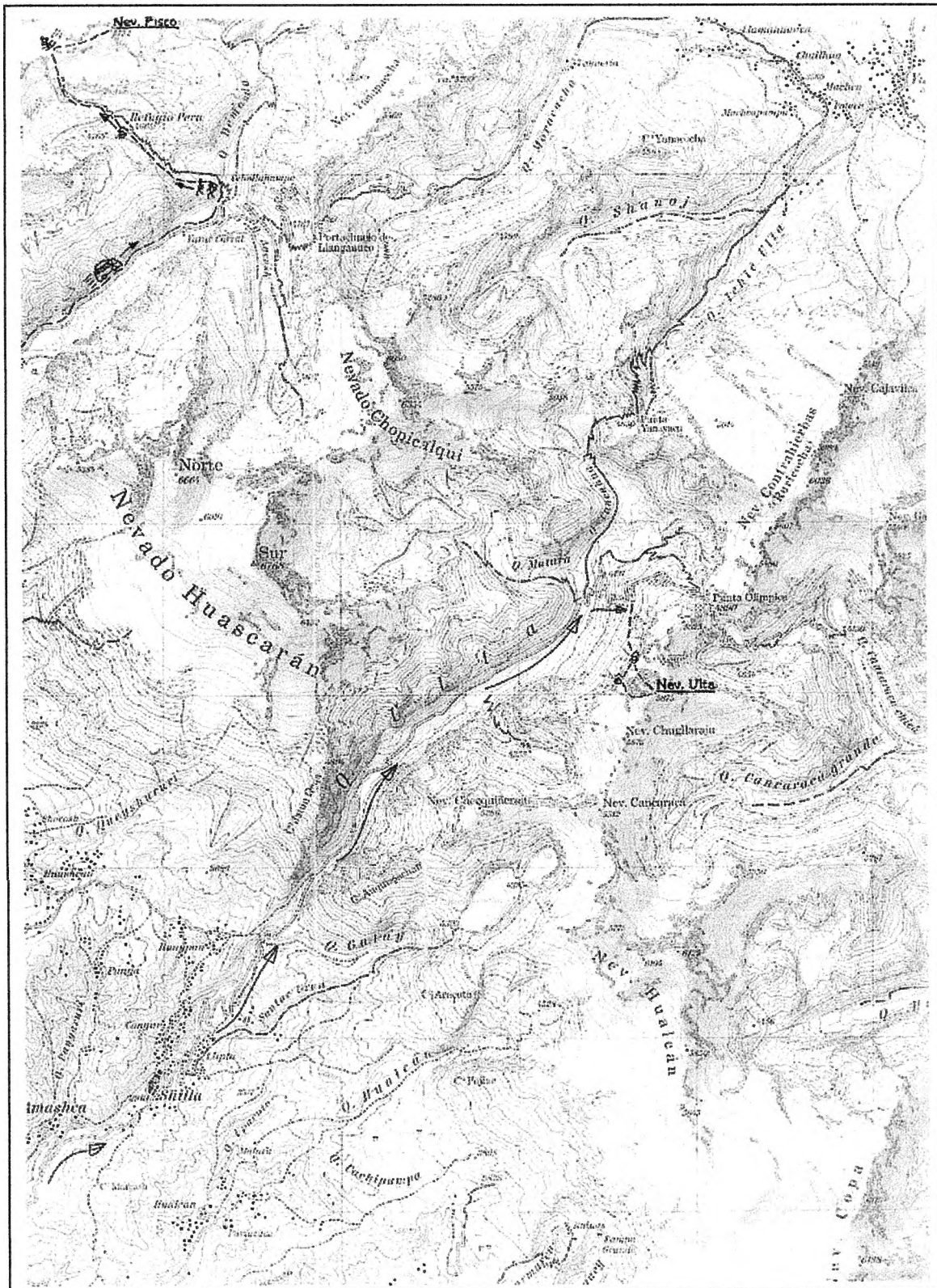
To Andy Benson and Jules Cartwright for references, Rab for gear sponsorship, Libertadia and her family for such kind hospitality in the Huayhuash and the BMC and MEF for grants.

The compilers of this report and the members of the expedition agree that any or all of this report may be copied for the purposes of private research.

Al Powell

10 Area Maps

Cordillera Blanca – Llanganuco and Ulta valleys.



Cordillera Huayhuash - Northern half of range

