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# Anglo - Scottish Vilcanota Expedition 2004



**Cordillera Vilcanota, South-Eastern Peru, July/August 2004**

**Expedition Report**

# Anglo-Scottish Vilcanota Expedition 2004

## Summary

Dates: 9<sup>th</sup> July to 7<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2004.

Venue: Cordillera Vilcanota, South-Eastern Peru.

Members: Dave Wilkinson, Geoff Cohen, Des Rubens, Steve Kennedy.

Approached via plane to Cusco, minibus to Tinquí, and 2-day walk-in with horses to base camp at Yanacocha.

Reconnaissance of the main objective, the first ascent of the South/SW side of Colque Cruz I (6102 m) revealed deep unconsolidated snow on south slopes (caused by unseasonal heavy snow in June). This was abandoned for objectives with more favourable aspects.

## Ascents made:

- (i) Probable first ascent of Ichu Ananta (c.5720 m) by its north flank and east ridge. (DR, SK, GC & DW).
- (ii) Probable first ascent of Ninaparaco (c.5930 m) by its north face. (This is the subsidiary peak, situated c.1 km north-east of the main summit of Jatunhuma I, aka Pico Tres, 6093 m). (DW & GC).
- (iii) First ascent of the "Scottish Spur". This is the west spur of the west peak (c.5650 m) of Kiru (5720m.). It was climbed to the end of the difficulties (c.5600m.), but not to the summit, due to poor snow. (SK & DR).
- (iv) Ascent (not first) of a northern subsidiary peak (c.5400m.) of Cayangate I. (DR & SK).

## Expedition Report

Main text by Dave, "Scottish Spur" by Des.

Sketch map by Dave.

Photo production by Bruce Bensley and Ralph Atkinson.

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.

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## Photos

Cover: Colque Cruz I (centre) and Ichu Ananta (right centre) from advanced base camp. (photo Dave)

Page 11 top: Ninaparaco (left) and Jatunhuma I (right) from the NW. (photo Dave)  
bottom: Dave at start of left traverse, Ninaparaco. (photo Geoff)

Page 12 left: Scottish Spur (centre) from point c.5400m. (photo Des)  
right: Steve approaching the ice chimney (top right), Scottish Spur. (photo Des)

Page 13: Route lines on Ninaparaco and Scottish Spur.

## Introduction

The Cordillera Vilcanota lies in south-eastern Peru, some 60 miles ESE of the ancient city of Cusco. It is part of the Cordillera Oriental, the eastern sub-range of the Andes. The mountains are a little less challenging than the popular Cordilleras Blanca and Huayhuash well to their north-west, but challenging enough, with the same sort of flutings, mushrooms and other bizarre snow formations which give the Peruvian Andes much of their unique flavour. Compared to the Blanca and Huayhuash, the more remote location means that far fewer climbing parties have visited the Vilcanota, in spite of the trekking popularity of the circuit of the highest mountain, Ausangate. While most of the mountains have been climbed, there remains plenty of scope for serious new routes.

Dave Wilkinson visited the range in 1982 and again in 1983, but an attack by robbers at the 1983 base camp caused that trip to end prematurely, and dampened enthusiasm for future visits. The subsequent rise to prominence of the terrorist Sendero Luminoso organisation then caused the Peruvian Andes to be avoided by all climbers for a decade, and other mountains provided plenty of more friendly scope. But the recently perceived threat from terrorists elsewhere in the world has led to a renewed interest in Andean trips. Nowhere has better scope for pioneering routes of a high-Andean character than the Vilcanota.

In a fairly casual email, Geoff Cohen mentioned to Dave that he was considering an Andean visit with Des Rubens, but without any previous visits, these two had limited knowledge. Dave suggested that he knew a good part of the Andes, Steve Kennedy was also enlisted, and so the trip was born.

The vast majority of Peruvian people are extremely friendly and helpful, but a minority are kleptomaniacs. The risk of robbery is one of the least attractive features of Andean trips, this part of the world being abnormally prone, and it is worth spending a bit of extra trouble and expense to reduce the risk. The 1983 robbery was partly caused by staying alone at a base camp in the mountains. Local men staying at base camp would act as a deterrent to would-be robbers. Travelling to the mountains by public bus also has an element of risk – one is vulnerable hanging around with piles of luggage waiting for buses. Transport organised in advance with trusted locals is much safer.

Dave Sharman was an old acquaintance, with plenty of Andean knowledge. He has published a guide book to the Blanca, and has one in preparation for the Vilcanota. He was very helpful with mountain information, and also put the team in touch with Angelina Laiso, a woman of Irish descent now living in Cusco and running a trekking company. She booked all transport in Peru, accommodation in Cusco, arranged horses for the walk-in, 2 base camp cooks, food for the walk-in and at base camp, and hire of base camp tents and cooking equipment. This provided a level of luxury little experienced on previous expeditions, and the comfort and security were well worth the modest extra cost. Angelina's services are highly recommended to any subsequent party planning to visit this region.

Base camp was to be the idyllic site near the small lake of Yanacocha, as used in 1983. This would settle the score for Dave's previous robbery, and more importantly be a suitable starting point for a host of good objectives in the eastern Vilcanota. The main objectives, were to be the first ascent from the south-west side of Colque Cruz I, one of the main 6000 metre peaks in the Vilcanota, and also its many subsidiary summits, most of which had been climbed from the other side but not from this.

## Approaches

Three of the party flew from Edinburgh to Newark, where they met Geoff (currently living in Maryland), then on to Lima, taking advantage of the huge American baggage allowance. They slept briefly on the floor at Lima airport, then continued with an internal flight to Cusco, the heart of the old Inca realm. Lima is not an attractive place to stay, very prone to robbery (even by Peruvian standards) and it lies at sea level. Cusco, on the other hand, has an altitude of 3,400 metres so acclimatisation can start immediately. It is also ideal for visits to Spanish colonial churches, Inca ruins, and simply soaking up the charm of the old city. Angelina was waiting in person at the airport with a minibus, and whisked the team to a pleasant hotel with views down on the red-tiled roofs and church towers across the bowl in which the city is built.

Two days later, they met their cook Domingo, his assistant Quintino, and set off in a well-loaded minibus on a seven hour road journey to the village of Tinquí, where the walk-in would start. 45 minutes on a well-surfaced tarmac road, led to the market town of Urcos, about half way to Tinquí as the condor flies. But the rest of the journey did not go as the condor flies. The road now changed to a stony track, and went across the grain of the country, negotiating two high passes in the process. In 30 miles, the road must have wound its way by four times as much. It was surprising to find an unmade road, as this was a fairly major route, the main road to the city of Puerto Maldonado in the Amazon jungle. At the half-way point of this drive, a taste was provided of the luxury catering which had been semi-inadvertently subscribed to. The minibus stopped at a grassy stream bank, and the team were treated to a fish salad lunch, with hamper and table-cloth on the grass, reminiscent of a Victorian country picnic, Domingo and Quintino in the roles of cook and waiter. This sort of scene was repeated three times a day for the rest of the trip.

The smooth operations continued on arrival at Tinquí. The Arriero (horse-man), Leonides was waiting. Brief discussion confirmed the destination and set a departure time for the morning. Then “the servants” provided a three-course dinner.

Andean approaches have much less rugged terrain than the Himalayas/Karakoram, so pack animals can take the place of porters. Donkeys are traditionally used in the Blanca and Huayhuash, but in the Vilcanota, horses are usual. The gringos set off well before the horses, leaving Leonides to complete their packing, and knowing that being unacclimatised, they would be overtaken all too soon. They were.

A short pull up from the village led onto the grassy altiplano which slopes up gently towards the dazzling contrast of the snowy mountains. This undulating plain has a deceptive scale, a fascinating monotony, and gives one a treadmill illusion. Easy strolling over short-cropped, sun-bleached grass has an endless feel to it. Herds of alpacas graze placidly, and drift past in the cool breeze. The ground moves under one’s feet but in the background the mountains seem to stay fixed.

Eventually, of course, they did get somewhere, and suddenly it was time for lunch - another al-fresco Victorian picnic. Within sight of a col at the altiplano’s top, the party stopped for the night. A couple of hours next morning took them to the col and a sudden change in scene. A much steeper slope the other side revealed a steep sided valley occupied by a string of glittering lakes. The way continued with a descending traverse into this valley, a sharply undulating path avoiding craggy lake-side obstacles, and a final rise between rocky bluffs to the camp site, a hidden grassy meadow surrounded by old moraines.

Surprise! – another party was already in residence. This was quite unexpected in so little-frequented a range. Nine Slovenian climbers with a host of tents – they seemed to have a tent each plus communal ones. However there was still a little room, and they seemed friendly enough. Slovenians are not generally teetotal, but this team seemed to have run out, so during the first evening, one bottle of good malt whisky was jointly disposed of, which further warmed British-Slovenian friendships. They had some bad news. A big unseasonal dump of snow had fallen in June, which had led to poor snow conditions on the hills, especially on south-facing slopes. In fact, had advanced warning had been given of this – Angelina had told of heavy snow, right down to the streets of Cusco, which had never been seen before. But there was also good news, the Slovenians had not climbed the south-west face of Colque Cruz. They had not been idle, but what they had done did not coincide with any of the expedition’s objectives, and they were leaving in two days time! No matter how amiable another party might be, one does like to have remote mountains to oneself.

## Acclimatisation and Reconnaissance

The Slovenians were bid a fond farewell, tents were moved into prime positions, and the expedition started in earnest. With the base camp at 4600 m, the first three days were spent in reconnaissance of approaches beyond the camp, particularly the glacier leading eastwards, which would give access (hopefully) to the main objective. In spite of the Slovenian warnings, hope persisted (vainly as it turned out) that a week or two would see sufficient consolidation of the soft snow.

The path leading to the moraines of the approach glacier, while still not passable by horses, had been much improved in recent years, with flat rocks laid in steps, like the result of a job creation scheme in the highlands. This had been done, it was later learned, by porters employed on a newly popular trek over to the large lake of Sibinacocha, several days' walk to the south east. In any case, it certainly made for easier walking over this rocky ground, which led in a couple of hours to a camp site in a sandy hollow on the glacier's south flank.

Small tents were moved up here, and enough food and gear for a proper look at the approaches to Colque Cruz. This advanced base camp was not far from the base camp, but was actually on the wrong side of the glacier. The Colque Cruz peaks are mostly unclimbed from this side and there must be reasons for this. One such reason was becoming apparent: they're not easy to get to. Next morning the built path was left, and three hours spent crossing the tedious rubble-covered glacier. This was made even worse by patches of the recent snow covering bouldery ground and causing no end of expletives as feet plunged through the soft snow to jar on rocks below. Eventually, the crossing was completed, and the way continued up an icy corridor on the north side of the subsidiary glacier descending SSE from Colque Cruz I. The corridor proved to be both easier and safer than it appeared, and led past a big crevassed area onto a flatter section which, it was hoped, would give access to the mountain. A small dump of gear was left, and the team returned to base camp.

A few days later they were back with big sacs for a closer look. Tents were pitched on the side glacier ready to continue to the foot of the mountain in the morning. The glacier above the camp was covered in snow, too much of it recent. The snow's softness varied markedly with the slope's angle and orientation. South-facing slopes get little sun during this season, especially steep ones. Level ground or east or west-facing slopes were quite firm, but as soon as the angle steepened or the direction changed to south, it was wading up to crutches. They were glad to be four. A more broken part of the glacier gave some interesting ice pitches as a relief from the floundering, then easier ground led back west to the broad col below the main peak of Colque Cruz, and it was time to take stock.

From the col, a shallow spur led to the summit. This looked like climbable ground, but the recent snow had stayed put on it. There were no striation marks to indicate sliding, nor avalanche debris below. The fresh snow was poised, waiting to slide off, onto them or with them. Thoughts of persisting with the main objective vanished straight away. However, the team had travelled half way round the world to these mountains, and had no intention of returning empty-handed. There was plenty else to do.

## Maps and Names – a digression

And now we have naming of peaks. The official Peruvian maps are published by the IGM (Institut Geographical Militar). The relevant sheet (sheet 28t, Ocongate) is probably worth getting. The terrain is shown with reasonable accuracy given the poor scale (1 : 100 000). However, only the main mountains are shown; the maps are not good for the many subsidiary peaks. Moreover, the names shown for mountains often bear little relation to traditional usage by locals or climbers. For example, Colque Cruz is shown as "Nevado Alcamarinayoc". This sort of obscure naming is widespread in these maps.

In this report, where a peak name is well established (e.g. by sketch maps in previous expeditions' reports), that name will be the main one used here. IGM names, where different (which they usually are), are only used when no other name is established in the climbing literature.

## Climbing

### Ichu Ananta (c. 5720m.)

Standing on the col having sadly opted out of their main objective, one might imagine the team were feeling depressed. Not so. The decision was not prejudged, but nor was it totally unexpected. There was even had an alternative objective ready and close at hand. Immediately south of the col was a peak of about 5700 metres called "Ichu Ananta" by the IGM. It seemed that it was unclimbed ... but not for much longer.

Above the col, moderate snow slopes led to a mixed ridge, sideways-on to the col, having several summits. It was not clear which of these was the highest. There were two main candidates, and in a spirit of idleness they chose to try the nearer one first. The snow slope of about 40 degrees faced north and got plenty of sun, so the snow was well consolidated. In fact it showed severe signs of too much sun, being eroded into "snow fences", parallel plates of snow, at right angles to the slope, hard but thin and fragile, with air gaps between. These demanded care, but were inconvenient rather than dangerous. Above, rocks on the ridge led to a peak, which proved to be the wrong one. It is often the case in Peru that ridges are harder than faces. Rather than traverse the ridge to the main summit, they chose to descend part way and traverse the snow-fenced face to re-ascend for the final section of ridge. This gave pleasant moving together, mixed climbing with cornices and short rock and ice steps (Scottish grade II). The summit was reached at about 4 pm, and gave excellent views of the surrounding peaks on all sides. They stumbled back down to the top camp in the gathering darkness, donning head torches for the last hour. In these tropical latitudes, one has to be aware of the short days and rapid sunsets.

As if to make up for its June misbehaviour, the weather had so far been kind, with only one morning of light snow showers at base camp, otherwise wall-to-wall blue skies and night frosts. This near-perfect pattern continued throughout the whole trip, the best weather ever seen in big mountains.

After a good rest at base camp, they felt another route coming on. However, there was disagreement in the party over route choice. This did not cause any problems as the party were equipped and prepared to climb as two pairs, and it also increased the "productivity". Close to base camp, a prominent spur rose to the north-east, and led up towards the main Colque Cruz ridge well west of the main peak. Des and Steve were keen to try this, Dave and Geoff less so. Dave felt that this line could have some of the same poor snow conditions observed elsewhere, and his previous experience had taught him that Andean ridges were often more difficult than they appeared. So Dave and Geoff decided on a trip up the rubble-strewn glacier to the east of base camp to investigate and hopefully climb one of several possible objectives in the Jatunhuma and Cayangate groups.

### Ninaparaco (c.5930m.) (DW & GC)

The Cayangate peaks have a number of challenging unclimbed east faces. But those closer to base camp showed problematical approaches off the glacier. In the Jatunhuma group, the main peak, Jatunhuma I (called "...Pico Tres" by the IGM) had been previously climbed from most sides, but its long curving north-east ridge had a number of unclimbed subsidiary peaks. The whole of this side of the mountain is called "Ninaparaco" by the IGM, so that name has been applied to the highest of these subsidiary peaks, shown as over 5900 m, which lies c. 1 km north-east of the 6093 m. main summit of Jatunhuma I. (This Ninaparaco is not to be confused with the mountain further south-east in the group which bears the same name on the IGM map but is also known as Jatunhuma III. The situation is reminiscent of Carn Dearg in Lochaber, or Raven Crag in the Lake District).

Passing by the challenging temptations of the Cayangate peaks, Dave and Geoff turned eastwards up the seemingly unvisited side glacier between Jatuncampa and Ninaparaco to a camp just above its lower icefall. Next morning, travelling light, the pair continued up the glacier towards the north face of their peak. At a levelling, a surprise was in store. The glacier below their face proved to be a shelf, detached from the main glacier, which necessitated a long deviation to the left, then back right along the shelf to the foot of the face proper. This used up valuable time and contributed to subsequent benightment.

Above the shelf, the north face of Ninaparaco started with a rocky section, then snow and ice above. On closer inspection, the rocky start showed itself to be smooth and slabby; couloir lines breaking the face were wet and rocky rather than snowy. Without bivouac equipment, more rapid terrain was preferable. Over to the right, under the col between Ninaparaco and Jatunhuma I, a hanging glacier gave easier climbing, but exposed to serac fall.

This section was climbed as quickly as possible, with some sections of Scottish III ice, and a short rock slab at "Severe". It started with about 100m of unroped climbing, following an undulating ziz-zag course to a sheltered spot in a big ice cave. This gave lungs and nerves a brief rest while the rope was donned. Dave led on up a more exposed gully on gradually steepening ice to further respite at a stance under a welcome rock overhang. Geoff led left and up the rock slab to a couloir and held his breath at an exposed stance.

Dave followed and led on up another ice pitch, then leftwards on a ledge system which gained a snowy spur above the lower slabby rocks and out of the line of fire from the seracs. A bit more relaxation was possible, but a total sense of commitment was now felt. Time was pressing, but resolve to complete the climb did not waver.

Ridges on Peruvian mountains are often scary and time-consuming, with convoluted cornices and snow-mushrooms, so it was preferable to reach the top directly, rather than emerge some way down a summit ridge. On the previous day's approach, while still well back from the face, careful note had been taken of the summit's location in relation to other features. This enabled a good line to be taken. Now unroped, a left traverse was made from the spur into a gully feature leading directly to the highest point. The summit was reached at 4 pm, not much time to linger. The rope was donned to descend the top pitch, then unroped again down the route of ascent. Dave, who had now got his second wind, continued ahead to locate the right traverse line before darkness. Unfortunately, this led to the team becoming separated in the dark, and by the time contact was remade (by voice and head-torch), Geoff had taken too high a traverse line, but found an adequate ledge and settled down to bivouac. Then the full moon emerged and shone so brightly that a night-time descent would have been possible had the party been together. Such are life's quirks. All spare clothing was donned, feet were put in rucksacks, and teeth clenched for a long cold vigil. During the night, the sky clouded over and snow started to fall, but mercifully this was only light and intermittent, and cleared up the next morning.

Even long Andean nights eventually end, a very chilled pair were reunited, shook their limbs back to life, and continued the descent to reach their camp in mid-afternoon for much needed food and re-hydration. A lie-in would have been in order next morning. But only four full days remained before the scheduled departure from base camp, which left insufficient time for further routes. The fine weather had also re-established itself, food and fuel were plentiful, so they pair indulged in a complete rest day, and only then set off down again. Back at the ranch, the cooks were fretting over the continued absence, and Domingo even came up to meet them an hour above base camp – an unnecessary but kind show of concern.

While this had been going on, the other pair had not been idle.....

### The Scottish Spur (west ridge of west peak(c.5600m) of Kiru) (SK & DR)

The prominent spur which Des and Steve coveted was a clear objective leading up to the ridge that connects all the main summits of the eastern Colque Cruz group. It took the form of a rocky spur for about half of its length, after which it turned to snow and ice, part of which was characterised by the typical Andean flutings, cornices and honeycombs. The ridge had been studied from various angles. While Dave was more pessimistic about the outcome, due to his greater prior experience and knowledge of Andean ridges, Des and Steve were convinced it might go. The adventure was that there was no certainty of success. Noses would have to be rubbed in the ice to find out.

The pair set off early and climbed the right edge of the prominent scree slope right of the lower slopes of the spur. Although tedious, this offered no difficulty. From the col at the top of the scree slope, a steep gully of snow led to a tiny col on the ridge proper. Hopes that this snow might have consolidated proved vain and much wallowing in thigh-deep material had to be endured. Mixed ground alleviated the suffering and the crest was gained in the pleasant morning sunshine.

The rest of the rock went in a straightforward way, with little in the way of route finding problems and no roping up required. The rock was generally loose and required a lot of care. It required care to memorise for the descent, and the odd cairn was built for guidance.

Abruptly, and pleasantly soon, a large cornice loomed above. They roped up and Des moved out left and up good snow-ice onto a fine crest. The views had really opened up with magnificent vistas of the Matterhorn-like peak (Huayna Ausangate) to the left and the Colque Cruz group and the peaks on the other side of the valley to the right. A hundred metres beyond, the typically Andean icy crest threatened ominously.



Steve went on and almost immediately discovered a good bivvy site about 30 metres below the crest, the first reasonable one encountered. It had taken six hours from base camp.

A beautiful sunset and a good night's sleep was enjoyed. Next morning, they roped up almost immediately and Steve began traversing under the crest. The climbing was demanding and time consuming, being mixed and with unconsolidated snow. After about 60 metres, a route beckoned to the crest and Des decided to head for it. The ice was good, and bypassing a threatening overhang without difficulty led onto the exposed crest, which was well-defined and gave the only line.

The pair was able to swing their curvy tools with gusto. Another two long pitches of beautiful, steep, exposed but not too difficult climbing led to a short levelling off. Des crossed over to the south side to a fine, if chilly, lunching spot, overhung by a honeycombed icy cornice. The pair was forced back onto deep soft granulated snow. The views over to Ichu Ananta and down onto the deeply crevassed glaciers were outstanding.

They were now on a level part of the crest leading to an intimidating looking icewall with an icy chimney. The spur here took on a fantastical form, with mushrooms, through routes, massive icicles and bottomless voids. The route was forced onto the south side of the crest where the snow was horrendous. Progress slowed dramatically. Initially Steve found a route down a short icy chimney and ploughed along just below the crest. This all took some time. Des' pitch ascended more steep unconsolidated horrors but eventually, with relief, struck more solid ground. This led to the final obstacle on the spur, the bottomless icy chimney, which had been spotted days before as a possible way onto the easier angled ground above. So it proved, but it was a struggle with wide bridging and good ice giving way to several feet of truly dreadful snow before floundering over the top and panting for some minutes in the thin air. The crux of the route had been overcome. The difficulty of the two hard pitches was estimated at maybe a soft touch Scottish Grade 5.

Although the ridge was now broad and exposed to the sun, disappointingly, the snow was as awful as ever. Steve, heroically floundering up to his waist, led up to below a rise, just left of a prominent crevasse, well seen from base camp. The top of the ridge was not clearly defined and the decision to go down was somewhat arbitrary. Had the snow been good, they might well have continued for another hour or so, but both on level ground and on the south side of the ridge, it was, without exception, very deep and unconsolidated. Unfortunately the clouds had been drifting across for a while and the views had gone.

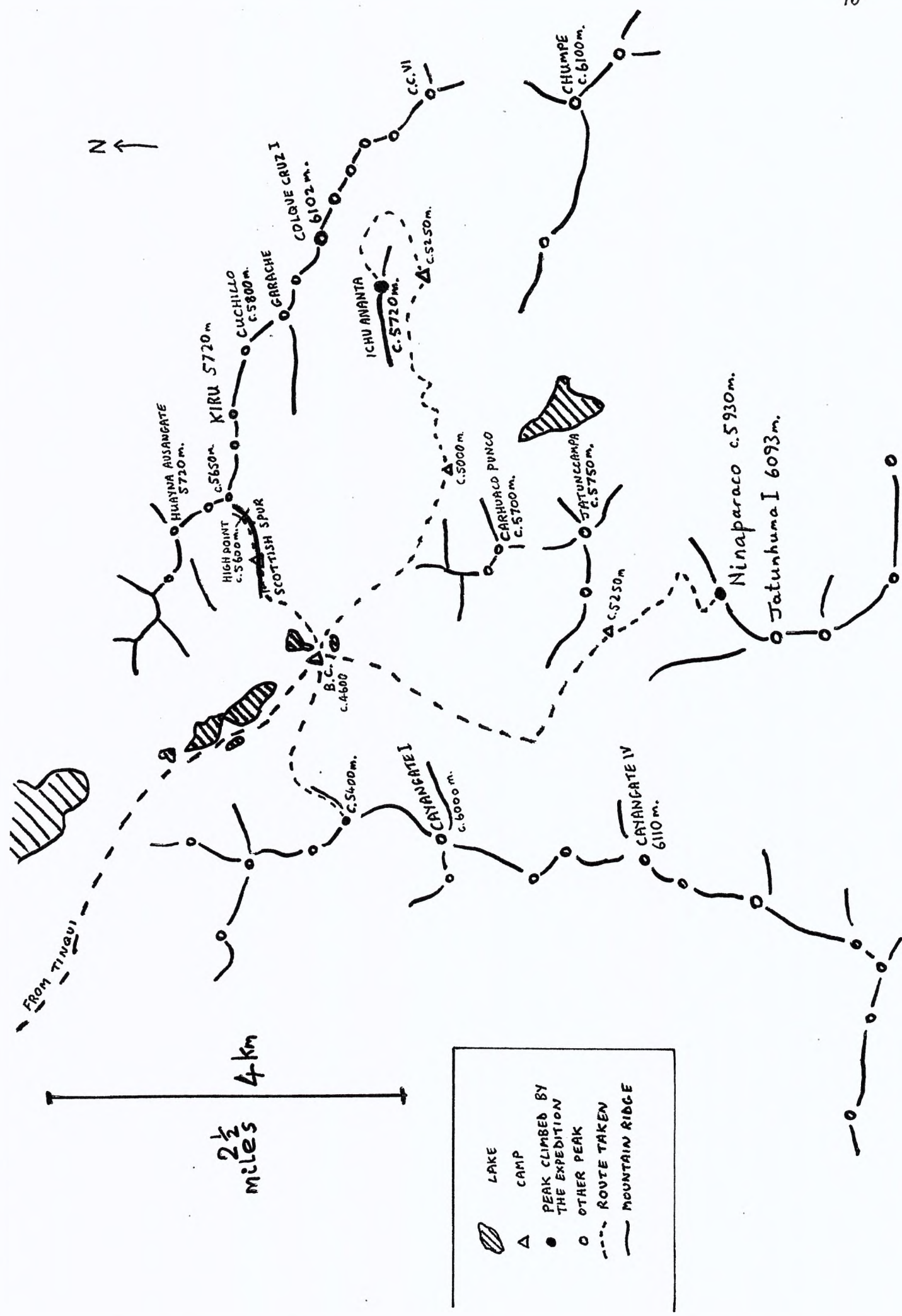
Retreat went easily with some down climbing and their use, for the first time, of "Abalakov" ice-threads and, for the descent of the icy chimney, Geoff's snow stake.

A contented bivouac followed. A first rate tussle had been enjoyed, some superb technical climbing, and although the amount of unconsolidated snow was very disappointing, they felt they had achieved their objective.

#### Subsidiary peak (c.5400m) of Cayangate I. (DR & SK)

Two days before leaving for Tinquí, Des and Steve climbed a small peak behind base camp. Reaching a small coire by a snow gully, they deviated rightwards up a short wide couloir to a loose top overlooking base camp. From here they descended about 60 metres back to the corrie and then moved back right to an attractive tiny glacier, leading to a pinnacle. They enjoyed a wonderful wind-down day of great clarity and magnificent views over the Colque Cruz range. The peak was the closest to Cayangate I of its northern subsidiary peaks. They stopped some 20 feet short of the pinnacled summit, as they were not equipped for rock-climbing. Foot steps in the snow showed that it was the one climbed a few weeks previously by the Slovenians, if not before. The lower peaklet may not have been done previously.

Although these lower rockier peaks look attractive from afar, the rock is very disappointing.









Ninaparaco – approximate line taken



Scottish Spur – approximate line taken

## **Return Journey**

On Des and Steve's return, an even more lavish than usual final dinner was served, complete with bottle of Peruvian red wine. This was finished before the cooks were asked why it had come a day early - departure was not till the next morning *but one*. Domingo hadn't realised that July has 31 days. Next evening, there was still a little whisky left to go with the second final dinner, Leonides arrived with the horses, and a long walk following day saw everyone back at Tinquí by the evening for a third final dinner. Tinquí is not a specially well-appointed village, but provided enough beer for a rowdy session with all and sundry. The minibus arrived the following day, taking the party back to Cusco for a fourth final dinner, this one in a proper restaurant. Sadly, the trip was now ending - next day the team flew home, enjoying a fifth and final final dinner at Lima airport.

## **Conclusion**

The terrorist threat no longer exists in Peru, but "ordinary" robbery seems as likely as ever. The main reason this party employed an agent was as an anti-thieving measure, and it was certainly effective – they got home with all possessions intact. The particular agent used proved to be very efficient, and quite reasonably priced. The pre-booked transport was safer from robbery and also saved time. Apart from being good company, the cooks, whose main purpose (although they may not have realised it) was to act as base camp guards, were actually very good at the catering, which was a welcome bit of luxury.

From the climbing point of view, the conditions this year did not enable full advantage to be taken of the superb weather. The Vilcanota still has some of the best scope for "high-Andean" style new routes in the whole Andes, especially the south-west faces of the Colque-Cruz group and the east faces of the Cayangate group.

## **Food and Fuel**

Angelina provided all food for the walk-in and base camp. This was prepared by the cooks using propane gas and stoves which were also provided. The climbers did their own catering above base camp using some food brought out with from home, and other food bought in Cusco. All needs could have been satisfied in the shops of Cusco, but with less variety. The hill cooking used 250 gm butane/propane cylinders ("Doite Pro Gas"), bought in Cusco. These are the squat shape of cylinder with a screw-on fitting, which fitted the Epigas/Coleman burners brought out from home.

## Medical

With his first aid certificate, Des acted as expedition “doctor”.

There were no serious health problems. Members had the usual injections for Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Tetanus, Polio, etc. as recommended on the World Health Organisation’s list (available from any G.P.)

The W.H.O. also recommend yellow fever injection, and malarial prophylaxis for Peru. However, their advice does not seem to take sufficient notice of the extreme altitude and climatic variations within the country, and while these two diseases may be common enough in the jungle area 100 miles further east, all this trip took place high in the mountains, so the party considered such risks to be non-existent, and resisted any pressure from G.P.s to take these measures.

A more serious risk on this trip was caused by the short time scale, only one month in all. This meant that to give sufficient climbing time, a fairly quick acclimatisation was needed, so the danger of pulmonary/cerebral oedema could not be totally ignored. The team decided against taking Diamox or other such acclimatisation aids, being unconvinced of their long-term value, and having firm views about “drugs-in-sport”. However, a small supply of two remedial drugs Nifedipine and Dexamethasone (recommended on the B.M.C. web site) was taken, which, it was hoped, would give a long enough time window to lose altitude for anyone who showed oedema symptoms. Thankfully, there was no need to use these.

Des also took out the usual small kit of wound dressings and medicines including pain relievers, anti-diarrhoeals, throat tablets, and antibiotics.

The only ailment which caused a member any incapacity at all was Dave’s cold. On the way in, he caught a common cold in Cusco, and the effects of this lasted the whole trip. His body proved unable to cope with acclimatisation and shaking off an infection, even so minor a one, and even with a course of antibiotics. His blocked nose necessitated breathing through his mouth, and the cold dry air caused the inevitable altitude cough. However, this was more of an annoyance than a serious problem, and served mainly to slow him down (even more than usual!).

Surprisingly, there were no medical demands from the locals, apart from the assistant cook, Quintino. He suffered from moderate tooth ache, which responded well to a fine traditional remedy, oil of cloves.

## Expedition Diary

9th July	Fly Edinburgh to Newark to Lima
10th	Fly Lima to Cusco
11th	In Cusco
12th	Minibus Cusco to Tinquí
13th & 14th	Walk-in Tinquí to Base Camp
15th to 17th	Acclimatisation/reconnaissance
18th	Up to A.B.C.
19th	Up corridor to dump and back to B.C.
20th	Resting at B.C.
21st	Up to A.B.C.
22nd	Up to Camp 1
23rd	Ascent of Ichu Ananta and back to C1
24th	Back to B.C.
25th & 26th	Resting at B.C.
27th	Resting/reconnaissance
28th	Up to respective camps for next routes
29th	SK & DR ascent of Scottish Spur, and DW & GC ascent of Ninaparaco.
30th	SK & DR descent to B.C., DW & GC descent to their camp.
31st	SK & DR resting B.C., DW & GC resting at their camp.
1st Aug	SK & DR resting B.C., DW & GC descend to B.C.
2nd	SK & DR climb subsidiary peak of Cayangate I, DW & GC resting B.C.
3rd	Resting and packing B.C.
4th	Leave B.C and arrive Tinquí evening. Beer.
5th	Minibus Tinquí to Cusco
6th	Fly Cusco to Lima
7th	Fly Lima to Newark
7th & 8th	Fly Newark to Edinburgh

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who helped us at all stages of the trip, especially the following:

The Mount Everest Foundation, the British Mountaineering Council/UK Sports Council, and the Mountaineering Council of Scotland for cash grants;

David Sharman and Lindsay Griffin for mountain information;

Angelina Laiso for organising our transport, food and accommodation in Peru;  
(email: [operaciones@aventuraquechua.com](mailto:operaciones@aventuraquechua.com))

The Wolverhampton Mountaineering Club for loan of a Macpac mountain tent;

Ralph Atkinson for digital scanning of our optical images;

Bruce Bensley for colour prints.



<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
M.E.F.	575	3 air fares, Edinburgh to Lima return	2160.60
B.M.C.	1,100	(Continental Airlines, 3 @ 720.20)	
M.C.of S.	400	1 air fare Washington D.C. to Lima return	378.45
Members' contributions		4 air fares Lima to Cusco return	551.58
(3 @ 950.71 + 1 @ 608.96)	<u>3461.09</u>	(LanPeru, 4 @ 137.89)	
Total income	5536.09	Excess baggage on Cusco flights	65.50
		Airport taxes in Peru	55.25
		Members' Insurance (Endsliagh, 4 @ 86.50)	346
		Hill food bought in U.K.	83
		Hill food bought in Cusco	74.74
		Food & drink in cafes etc.	125.16
		Expedition food supplied by Angelina	309.39
		Whisky bought in Edinburgh & Newark	57.35
		Gas cylinders for the hill bought in Cusco	28.73
		(18 × 250 gm of which 10 actually used)	
		Hotel Cusco	119.34
		Transport Cusco airport to Cusco	6.63
		Minibus Cusco to Tinquí return	220.99
		Cooks' wages etc.	324.34
		Arriero's wages	28.73
		Hire of horses	86.19
		Hire of base camp tents & cooking equipment	207.18
		Agent's commission	189.86
		Sundry costs in Peru	7.97
		Medical costs	32
		Report production	21
		Sundry costs in UK & USA	56.11
		Total expenditure	<u>5536.09</u>

**Notes on these accounts**

1. Costs in Peru converted from new soles to \$US at 3.43, the average rate we got.

Costs in Peru and USA converted from \$US to £ at 1.81.

Dollar bills were provided by Geoff who is currently resident in the USA, and reimbursed to him by the expedition in £, at 1.81. This benefited all concerned (apart from the banks and money-changers).

It is possible to change directly from £ to Peruvian soles in Cusco, but not easy, and the rate is so unfavourable that the two-stage conversion is slightly better.

2. Members' contributions. Geoff contributed less because his flight from the USA to Lima cost less than the others' from Edinburgh.

3. Climbing equipment is *not* included in these accounts (apart from 2 abandoned items reimbursed to the owner). Members had their own personal gear, and although all had to replace some items before or after the trip, this varied so much from one member to another, that it would have been unrealistic to try and include it here. Mountain tents and other items of communal gear were loaned to the expedition by the members, apart from one tent borrowed from someone else.

4. Members' insurance. Unfortunately, the premiums for the BMC expedition insurance have recently become prohibitively expensive, so we were obliged to shop elsewhere.