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05/23

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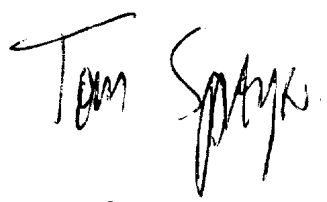
18/06/05

Dear Ian,

Re. 05/23 British Ruth Gorge

Enclosed is the expedition report. I hope it meets the criteria. I have also enclosed Orgler's topos for the Eye Tooth and Hut Tower for BMC records. I haven't included details of Ham & Eggs on the Moose's Tooth because the line is very obvious, and receives loads of ascents. Transparencies showing what we climbed and attempted and a diagram of 747 buttress will follow when I get my photos back. Thank you again for all the support!

Yours sincerely,



Tom Spreyer

20 JUN 2005

EYETOOTH WEST-PILLAR

1ST ASCENT: SWANACE TOMMI
 HATS RAINNO
 ORALOR ANON
 (AUSTRIANS)

8/1.7.1994

5.10 ALL FREE



23	VI-	25m
22	V-	50m
21	VI-	55m
20	IV+	40m
19	V+	50m
18	V	45m
17	V	55m
16	VI-	50m
15	VII-	45m
14	III	75m
13	V	50m
12	V	50m
11	V+	55m
10	VI	55m
9	V+	50m
8	VI	50m
7	V	55m
6	IV+	50m
5	V	55m
4	IV	45m
3	VI-	20m
2	V+	50m
1	VI-	50m

Expedition Report: British Ruth Gorge 2005

MEF Reference: 05/23

1. Summary of Expedition (for expeditions database)

This two person team had designs on a new line on the east face of Wake, and a steep unclimbed goulotte on the west face of London Bridge. However, unseasonably warm and unsettled weather (record highs for April and May in Anchorage) necessitated a change of plan and the team moved into rock climbing mode, making a one day ascent of 'Dream in the Spirit of Mugs', of the west pillar of the Eye Tooth. An ascent of a mostly formed 'Ham & Eggs' with a continuation to the west summit of the Moose's Tooth was also made.

2. Contact Details

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3. Original Objectives of the Expedition

- East Face of Mt. Wake, new route. Large (approx 1500m glacier to summit) granite face rising from the Ruth Glacier. In character the East face is reminiscent of classic winter alpine north faces. The proposed line follows the glacier up into the amphitheatre of the E face itself. The existing Lowney-Teale route (April 2002) takes a direct line to the right of a vague central spur and is threatened by seracs throughout. Our proposed route takes a line further left following ice runnels through mixed ground to join the SE ridge (Pillar of Tolerance, Desprat, Lestienne, Salles, May 1996) near the top. This will then be followed to the summit.
- West Face of London Bridge. In May 2003 two new routes were made on the West face of London Bridge (The Frozen Road of Our Incertitude, Constant, Mercader, & Miss Kelli, Wolf, Stoker, Hassler). Both routes begin up a 400m couloir (45 deg.) that characterises the initial part of the face. The proposed line follows what looks to be a continuous gully to the right of the couloir throughout.

4. Diary of Events:

- Routes climbed and attempted
- Explanation for changing of plans
- Comments on weather and ground conditions

06/05/05 Flight into Ruth gorge (with TAT). Clear skies, but very warm.

07/05/05 Skied around, observed severe lack of ice and warm temperatures. (14deg.C on glacier around noon). Clear weather.

08/05/05 Attempt on unclimbed, unnamed peak known as 747 buttress, due to its being next to 747 pass.- A term coined by air taxi pilots. The east face of the buttress is split into three by two very deep gullies. The NE buttress has a particularly good looking mixed line. Unfortunately at 4am the temperature was above freezing and the snow was very poor. We climbed about 10 very unconsolidated and loose pitches up a system of runnels on the N face to join the crest of the buttress (difficulties to Sc.V). We continued up the ridge on reasonable rock (to VS) and more extremely unfrozen mixed ground for another 6 pitches to a dead end, where, if it had been colder, superb thin face climbing would have snaked back up onto the upper N face. Unfortunately it was all mush so we descended, having climbed around 600m in vertical height, which got us between two thirds and three quarters of the way up. This experience led to our questioning the suitability of other mixed potential. Clear weather.

09/05/05 Skied to the head of the gorge looking for rock potential on Barrill and the Gargoyle. Despite the warm temperature (16degC at noon) due to it still being reasonably early in the season most possibilities were running with water. Clear weather.

10/05/05 Dragged all rock gear to the Gargoyle anyway. Investigated new potential to the right of the two existing routes. Would require lots of hard aid. Clear weather.

11/05/05 Skied 747 pass and Pittock pass, thus circumnavigating Dickey and Barrill. Partially cloudy.

12/05/05 Heavy snow, sleet, and rain(!)

13/05/05 Planned attempt at 'Dream in the Spirit of Mugs', W pillar of Eye Tooth. Turned back on approach due to weather.

14/05/05 Rain/sleet. 12degC at 9am.

15/05/05 Attempt on Eye Tooth W pillar. Good climbing to pitch 10, when it started blizzarding again.

16/05/05 Clearing weather but bad forecast. Skied to base of Eye Tooth, retrieved cache of gear left earlier.

17/05/05 Heavy snow and sleet

18/05/05 Skied up to the Root Canal below the Moose's Tooth W face (4hrs). Climbed Ham & Eggs (V 5.9 WI4, 900m), and continued along W ridge to main summit. 3½ hrs on the route, 1hr along top portion of the ridge. Descent via line of ascent. 25 abseils, 4 hrs. Many good in situ nuts for rap anchors and easy to place abolakov potential for the upper ridge. Bottom section of the route was totally bare but made for fun rock climbing/dry tooling. Main body of the route was thin but fine, with only short steep sections (Sc.V but never longer than 15m between easy angles sections). Superb ski decent back to the Ruth. Clear weather.

19/05/05 Rest, then skied to bivvi at the base of Eye Tooth. (About 2hrs with gear). Clear weather.

20/05/05 Climbed 'Dream in the Spirit of Mugs', Eye Tooth W pillar (1100m V 5.10c). (Seventh ascent, first all British ascent?) Varied climbing with some route finding. We could appreciate why the French team (Hasbani etc) got lost and reached the bivvi ledge at night fall. Contrary to High Mountain info, the bivvi ledge is more like half height than two thirds and could in no way be described as 'good'. We felt the climbing was sustained at about HVS, rising to E2, with equates to the other ascensionists' grades of F6b/VII/5.10c. However the 5.7 pitches were consistently just as serious and sustained as the 5.9s, and the 5.10c didn't stand out as being much harder, just more devious route finding. There is lots of scope for spending time slightly off route, and we felt that Ogler's topo and grades, while very useful, should be taken with a pinch of salt. We climbed to the same point other teams report- the end of the difficulties about 50m from the summit, in 10½ hrs, and immediately descended due to only having rock shoes (so not fancying the summit snow ridge), and gathering storm clouds everywhere. We descended in 24 abseils in 4½ hrs. There is potential for stuck ropes due to the fractured rock and the need to do many diagonal abseils to hit the bivvi ledge. Below the ledge there are many fixed stations, many of which look like parties' 'high points'. Clear morning, clouded over in afternoon, to light snow in the evening.

21/05/05 Sleet/snow.

22/05/05 Somehow both snowing and 18degC at noon!

23/05/05 Attempt at 'Men's World', Hut Tower W face (5.11+ 600m). Very good slab climbing with dirt filled cracks that must be excavated to reveal good protection. Weather came in again at the top of pitch 8. Descended in heavy snow/sleet.

24/05/05 Snow/rain for most of the day. Cleared in the early evening. Flew out around 7pm.

5. Comments on Access

There are almost no access problems in the Ruth gorge. Later in the season, with less snow cover, it becomes impossible to land a plane in the gorge itself and pilots will drop climbers near the Don Sheldon hut at the head of the gorge, in the Ruth amphitheatre. This does not seem to be a problem in May. (Although TAT seem to be the company most willing to do slightly 'marginal' flying, which may be worth bearing in mind).

6. Other Information about Teams operating in the Field

Excluding Ham and Eggs on the Moose's Tooth, which received a number of ascents from teams who were flown directly onto the root canal (only TAT will do this), to the best of our knowledge there were only two successful ascents in the Ruth during the time we were there. One was our ascent of Eye Tooth. The other was a very impressive but dangerous route climbed by two Quebecas on the N face of Bradley. They succeeded on their second attempt, climbing for 48 hours and bivving once. They reported ice running with water, steep mixed ground, and rain on the summit.

In the week before we arrived the weather had apparently been colder, and the Quebecas (whose names I have forgotten) climbed Johnson, and repeated Miss Kelli on London bridge, confirming the quality of the latter route.

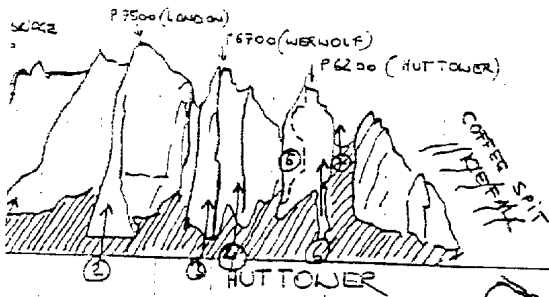
There were some other very experienced American teams around, including Jack Tackle and Kevin Mahoney, who also tried 747 buttress and were turned back for similar reasons to us, and were also weathered off Eye Tooth.

Two young Canadians, Geoff Hill and Jeremy Firmer, tried the Cobra pillar on Barrill, and reported exceptionally bad rock.

7. Financial Summary

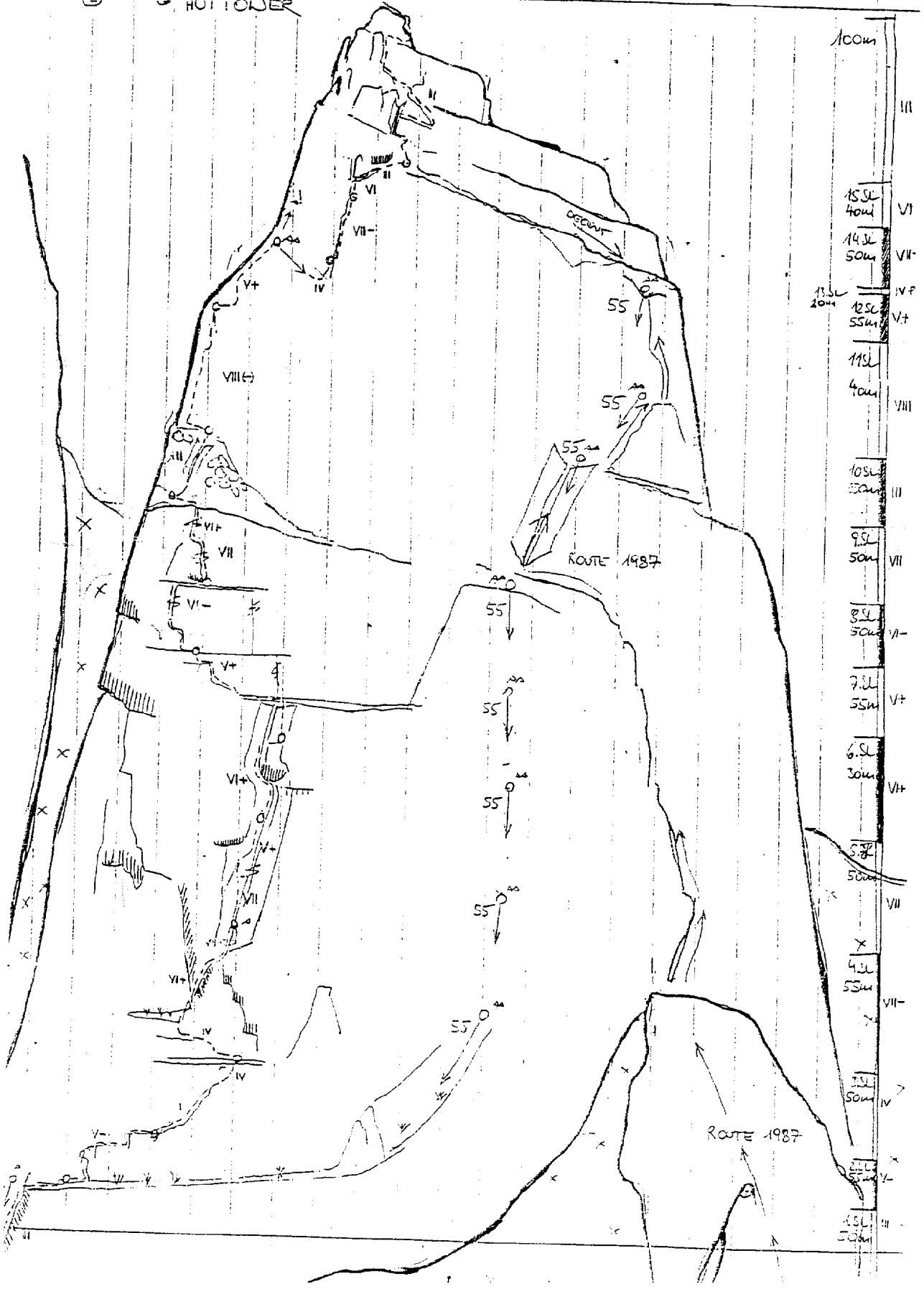
Flights to Anchorage	£1200
Shuttle to Talkeetna (one way)	£60
Air Taxi	£400
Rental of radio	£50
Food, supplies and general equipment	£500
Insurance	£250
TOTAL	£2460

We received generous financial support from the BMC (£1100), and expedition rate equipment prices from Rab.- Thank you.



- 1- BÜBLER-ULMANN 1989
- 2- NISCHLAGER 1990
- 3- ORGLER LUTER 1990
- 4- ORGLER GEB. WINKLER 1991
- 5- THIS ROUTE 1995
- 6- ORGLER LÖCHLER 1997
- 7- DAYGE RUTALO 1998

HUTTOWER
 "LUTER" FACED
 1st ASCENT 16th 7 1995
 PAUL NEWTON & KEITH WOODRUFF
 AND/OR ORGLER
 5.11+



100m	III
15 SL 40m	VI
14 SL 50m	VII
13 SL 20m	IV F
12 SL 55m	V+
11 SL 40m	VIII
10 SL 50m	III
9 SL 50m	VII
8 SL 50m	VI-
7 SL 55m	V+
6 SL 30m	VI+
5 SL 50m	VII
4 SL 55m	VII-
3 SL 50m	IV
2 SL 50m	V-
1 SL 50m	II