

Eastern Huayhuash 2007 Expedition



July & August 2007

Peruvian Cordilleras Huayhuash & Blanca

Expedition Members: Carl Reilly
Graeme Schofield
Tom Bide
Martin Lane
Lewis Fogerty

MEF Ref: 07/20

Contents page

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	3
<i>Introduction</i>	6
<i>Reasearch</i>	7
<i>Research Materials</i>	7
<i>Maps</i>	7
<i>Guide Books</i>	7
<i>Permission & Permits</i>	8
<i>Finances</i>	8
<i>Fund-raising</i>	8
<i>Costs</i>	8
<i>Insurance</i>	8
<i>Accommodation</i>	9
<i>Food & Cooking</i>	9
<i>Food</i>	9
<i>Expedition's comments:</i>	10
<i>Fuel</i>	10
<i>Water</i>	10
<i>Communications</i>	11
<i>Language</i>	11
<i>Medical</i>	11
<i>Vaccinations</i>	11
<i>Acclimatisation</i>	11
<i>Medication</i>	11
<i>Equipment</i>	12
<i>Photography</i>	13
<i>Weather</i>	13
<i>Risks and hazards</i>	14
<i>Risks in the Mountain Environment</i>	14
<i>Political instability</i>	14
<i>Risk of crime</i>	14
<i>Environmental and social impact assessment</i>	15
<i>Travel, Transport and Freighting</i>	15
<i>Flights</i>	15
<i>Internal Travel</i>	15
<i>The Huayhuash base camp</i>	16

<i>The Contrahierbas Base Camp</i>	16
<i>The Ishinca Refugio [I]</i>	16
<i>Expedition Log</i>	17
<i>Routes</i>	19
<i>Grades</i>	19
<i>Cordillera Huayhuash</i>	19
East Ridge of Quesillo (Electric Lane).....	20
Huaraca.....	22
North East Face of Huaraca.....	23
North Ridge of Huaraca (El macho hombre).....	24
Rock Climbing in the Huayhuash.....	25
<i>Cordillera Blanca</i>	26
East Ridge Point 5325 m on Nev. Uta.....	26
South West Face Urus Oste (Unsuccessful attempt)	29
<i>Cordillera Huayhuash</i>	31
<i>Cordillera Blanca</i>	33
<i>Conclusion</i>	36
<i>Contacts</i>	36

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The Mount Everest Foundation



British Mountaineering Council



The Alpine Club



DMM

(The UK importers of MAMMUT) were generous enough to support us, through discounted ropes and other hardware, for which we are most grateful.



Abstract

A team totalling 5 members (not all members were present for the entire duration of the expedition, see section entitled, 'Expedition Log' for details), climbed 4 new routes in the Peruvian Andes. The team was entirely composed of former and current members of the University of Birmingham Mountaineering Club. Three of the members (Tom Bide, Carl Reilly and Graeme Schofield) had visited the Bolivian Andes two years previously (www.apolobamba.com) and therefore had experience of new routing in the Greater Ranges.

The principal objectives of the expedition were the first ascent of the West face of Jirishanca Chico and new routes in the infrequently visited Eastern side of 'southern spur' of the Cordillera Huayhuash (Jurau, Carnicero, Huaraca and Quesillo). However conditions meant that these objectives posed too high an objective danger and therefore new objectives were sought. From the Huayhuash base camp three new routes were climbed; East ridge of Quesillo, north east face of Huaraca and the north ridge of Huaraca.

The team then returned to Huaraz for recuperation, from where Tom Bide and Martin Lane left to return to the UK, and Lewis Fogerty joined the team. Due to time constraints and the poor condition of the Eastern side of the 'Southern spur' of the Huayhuash the team decided to climb in the Cordillera Blanca instead. In a report by Gareth Hughes *et al.* new route potential was described in the area of Contraheirbas [1]. It was therefore decided to visit this area. During this brief visit a new route was climbed on the South East Ridge Point 5325 m on Nev. Ulta.

Lewis Fogerty then left the climbing team and headed back to the UK. After a couple of days rest Carl Reilly and Graeme Schofield headed up to the Ishinca Refugio and attempted the South West Face of Urus Oste. However they had to abseil the face from around half height late in the afternoon when it became obvious that they were not going to complete the climb without a bivi (for which they were not equipped), the difficult climbing was the main cause of their slow pace (up to Scottish VI). Unstable weather at the end of August and time constraints meant another attempt was not possible. The pair headed back to the UK on the 1st September.

[1]- Rondoy West Face 2005, Gareth Hughes with Tim Darlow, Myles English & Oliver Metherell from UK and Robin Deplante from France
(MEF Ref - 05/46) August

Expedition Members



Carl Reilly, 23 yrs old, British, Postgraduate Engineering Student;

- Rock climbing all over UK and Europe (up to E3 and sport 6C+) (8 yrs),
- British winter climbing (up to 6 VI) (5 yrs)
- Continental ice climbing up to 4+
- Alpine climbing (up to TD) (3 seasons)
- Alpine climbing in the greater ranges (up to TD)
- Talent – Being double the height of the average Peruvian whilst being half their weight.



Graeme Schofield, 26 yrs old, British, Geography Teacher;

- Rock climbing all over UK and Europe (up to E3 and sport 7a) (7 yrs),
- British winter climbing (up to 6 V) (5 yrs)
- Continental ice climbing up to 4+
- Alpine climbing (up to TD) (3 seasons)
- Alpine climbing in the greater ranges (up to TD)
- Talent- ugliness, repulsiveness, lack of manners



Tom Bide, aka “The Donkey Charmer”, 25 yrs old, British, Geologist;

- Rock climbing all over UK and Europe (up to E2 and sport 6b+) (7 yrs),
- British winter climbing (up to V) (5 yrs)
- Continental ice climbing up to 4+
- Alpine climbing (up to D+) (3 seasons)
- Alpine climbing in the greater ranges (up to TD)
- Talent- arousing Donkeys, making people laugh, amusing injuries



Martin Lane, 25 yrs old, British, Engineer;

- Rock climbing all over UK, Europe and Canada (up to E1 and sport 6b) (7 yrs),
- British winter climbing (up to V) (4 yrs)
- Continental ice climbing up to 4+
- Alpine climbing (up to D+) (2 seasons)
- Talent- human dustbin, stinking feet, camp house wife



Lewis Fogerty, 25 yrs old, British, Environmental Engineer;

- Rock climbing all over UK, Europe and Canada (up to E1 and sport 6a+) (12 yrs),
- Continental ice climbing up to 4
- Alpine climbing (up to D) (1 season)
- Talent- being the nice and civilised team member

Introduction

The five man team met though The University of Birmingham Mountaineering Club during the period 2002-2003. Since then the group have climbed extensively together in the UK and Europe, both rock and winter climbing; spent 3 seasons in the French/Swiss Alps and 3 members have also visited the Bolivian Andes (www.apolobamba.com).

The team returned to the Andes due to the lack of bureaucracy involved in climbing there, easy access to mountain regions, a suitable time of year for the best climbing season and the range of infrequently visited areas. The Cordillera Huayhuash is located in the north west of Peru, just south of the Cordillera Blanca, as seen below.



The Peruvian Cordilleras Huayhuash and Blanca [2]

[2] The Andes - a guide for Climbers; John Biggar; 2005

Research

Research Materials

The literary sources consulted in planning the expedition were:

- Expedition reports held by the Alpine Club, RGS and BMC
- The Andes - a guide for Climbers; John Biggar; 2005
- Classic Climbs of the Cordillera Blanca, Peru; Brad Johnson; 2003
- Climbs and Treks in the Cordillera Huayhuash of Peru; Jeremy Frimer; 2005; Elaho Press
- RGS- Mountaineering in the Andes; Jill Neate; 1994
- Mountain Info; Climber & Climb magazine; Lindsay Griffin; 2004-2007
- Climbs of the Cordillera Blanca of Peru; David M. Sharman; 1995

Maps

Very good maps of both the Cordillera Huayhuash and Blanca exist and are available for purchase both in the UK and Huaraz.[3].

- Cordillera Huayhuash Map (2nd Edition); 1:50,000; 2004; ISBN: 0-9758606-0-7
- Alpenvereinskarte, 0/3a Cordillera Blanca North (Peru); 1:100,000
- Alpenvereinskarte, 0/3b Cordillera Blanca South (Peru); 1:100,000

Guide Books

The guidebooks we used were:

- Climbs and Treks in the Cordillera Huayhuash of Peru; Jeremy Frimer; 2005; Elaho Press
- The Andes - a guide for Climbers; John Biggar; 2005
- Classic Climbs of the Cordillera Blanca, Peru; Brad Johnson; 2003
- Climbs of the Cordillera Blanca of Peru; David M. Sharman; 1995

The Jeremy Frimer book is extremely comprehensive for the Cordillera Huayhuash as it is reasonably up-to-date, thoroughly researched and contains clear descriptions and topos.

The Brad Johnson book was found of less use than anticipated, as it is a selective guide covering only the most popular routes (the ones we wanted to avoid).

The Sharman book although now outdated is a useful source of information on the Cordillera Blanca as it is the latest comprehensive guide to the region.

Another useful source of information can be found at the Guides Association Office [4]. Here upon request it is possible to view the new routes log book. This is an extremely useful source of information, on both current conditions and new routes.

[3] www.stanfords.co.uk or www.themapshop.co.uk

[4] Parque Ginbra, Huaraz

Permission & Permits

60 day visas for Peru are granted to citizens of most nations upon arrival, these can usually be increased to 90 days, both easily and free of charge. Current information is available in 'Lonely Planet Guides' or from the British or Peruvian Consulates.

Climbing permits are currently not required for climbing in Peru. However the payment of park fees may be required.

Finances

Fund-raising

The expedition was granted BMC, MEF and Alpine club funding for which we were most grateful; more information is available from their respective websites. More grants (dependent upon the expedition's aims and objectives) are also available; the Royal Geographical Society's website is probably the best reference for these.

We also managed to secure sponsorship from Mammut to get discounted ropes. These performed excellently throughout the expedition, we would like to thank the importers DMM for their support.

DMM also supplied us with other items of hard-wear at a discounted rate, for which we are most grateful.

Costs

The expedition used ATM's when in Peru, the Lonely Planet and other travel guides are best consulted for up to date advice.

Note- All Financial details are calculated for Carl and Graeme only. The other expedition members whom participated for periods of the trip, for the periods they were in the mountains had their transport, food, park fees and accommodation paid for out of the grants received. The funds for this are taken into account in the figures for food, accommodation and transport shown below.

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
MEF Grant	£ 850.00	Transport	£ 800.00
BMC Grant	£ 600.00	Flights	£ 1,500.00
Alpine Club Grant	£ 500.00	Insurance	£ 430.00
Personal Contributions (Carl & Graeme only)	£ 1,580.00	Food	£ 600.00
Total	£ 3,530.00	Accommodation	£ 400.00
		Total	£ 3,530.00

Insurance

Each expedition member arranged their own insurance through the BMC or the Austrian Alpine Club.

www.thebmc.co.uk

www.aacuk.org.uk

Accommodation

For our entire stay in Huaraz we found haven in Jo's Place [5]. This is a friendly and secure establishment run by an eccentric British expatriate (apparently he is Eric Clapton's nephew, has beaten Seb Coe and Steve Ovett in a long distance race and 'discovered' Chris Rea). The rooms cost 15sol (\$5) pp pn (not inc. breakfast) and offer very good value. The showers are hot (a miracle in Peru) and the cooked breakfasts good.

One of the main selling points for the mountaineer is the contacts available through the establishment's proprietors. We arranged all our mules, arrieros and camp guards through the hostel, and were delighted with their performance. This proved beneficial as it meant we didn't have to deal with the trekking agencies in Huaraz, many of which have a less than desirable reputation.

Food & Cooking

Food

There is little point in bringing food from the UK to Peru, as most things can be obtained very cheaply in the markets of Huaraz and anything else desired can normally be bought at European prices from the few large supermarkets in Lima.

Tinned food, fresh fruit and vegetables, powdered soups, margarine, bread, jams, herbs and spices, stock cubes, pasta, rice, instant potato, corned beef, breakfast cereals, dried milk, coffee, hot chocolate, boiled sweets etc are easily available cheaply in the markets.

It is best to buy most food in Huaraz, although many, but not all, villages have shops selling the barest essentials.



Huayhuash Base Camp inc. cooking shelter (white tarpaulin)

[5] Email josplacehuaraz@hotmail.com Tel +51 (0)43 425 505 Address: Jr. Daniel Villaizan No. 276, Independencia, Huaraz, Ancash, Peru.

Expedition's comments:

- Tins of tuna (atun) were not always what we expected. It appears that the cheap tins are 'fish bits' whereas the more expensive tins are what westerners would expect.
- Chocolate bars vary greatly in quality, many are a synthetic chocolate, which is ok but not quite the same. Snickers and Mars bars can be bought, but at a price.
- Buying a small quantity of food to sample before purchasing the expeditions supplies can pay off.
- To save weight we bought all batteries, cooking utensils, and wash kit in Peru.
- When buying batteries be sure to buy the brand names and be on the look out for fakes, which are easy to spot such as 'Durables' instead of Duracell's.
- Pans and cooking utensils were available easily and cheaply from markets. A very good investment was a pressure cooker which cost \$15-25, saved fuel and allowed us to cook rice and pasta at altitude easily.
- A pair of marigold gloves is a good investment to help reduce the pain of washing up in the cold glacial melt water.
- It can be beneficial to buy plastic bags and hessian sacks to bag or even double bag food stuffs for transportation. These can easily be bought from the market. Rope for tying the sacks and making guy ropes for the cooking shelter also proved useful.
- We invested in a tarpaulin, thin cord, and some 6" nails from the market to make a cooking shelter. We made a small enclosure by constructing a dry stone wall and used guy ropes to secure the tarpaulin roof, a walking pole provided support for the centre of the roof, as shown previously. This provided shelter from the wind and kept the heat in well when cooking allowing much more comfort.

Fuel

The expedition used two MSR and a Primus multi-fuel stove. These were run on 'Benzene Blanca' purchased from hardware stores (feriterias). A 5L plastic container was used to transport the fuel to base camp.

White gas is advertised in some trekking agencies, but we only found this after purchasing the benzene, and found no need to change as, although white gas would have been fractionally hotter, the Benzene burnt efficiently even at altitude.

The trekking agencies also stock screw thread gas canisters at European prices.

Water

When travelling in Peru we drank bottled water.

On expedition we purified our water by filtering it through silk to remove any large particles and then treating it with iodine. We used a saturated solution of iodine and water, adding 10ml of saturated solution to each litre of drinking water (see 'Pocket First Aid and Wilderness Medicine' for further details) [6]. This worked well, the only problem we had was that even inside the tent the solution would freeze overnight, sometimes cracking the glass bottles it was stored in.

Water was collected from streams, and it was found that Nalgene bottles were best for scooping it up, as their wide mouths allowed water to be collected from shallow and partly frozen water supplies. It was also easier to use the silk on a wide mouthed container. .

There were a couple of cases of suspected guardia, as we were very thorough in treating drinking water, we suspect this came from other sources.

[6] Pocket First Aid and Wilderness Medicines, Jim Duff, Peter Gormly, Cicerone, ISBN_13 9781852845001

Communications

Once in Peru we communicated with the UK via email and telephone. In any city or large town these facilities are cheap and very widely available. Calls to the UK could be made very cheaply. We took no satellite phones with us. Internet access is available for about 1Sol (16p) an hour, and is often quite fast. Some internet cafes can also burn CDs, useful for downloading photos from digital cameras, otherwise it is possible to get photos backed-up from digital cameras for 7-10 sol (£1.50) per CD in one of the many camera shops in Huaraz.

Language

Travel in Peru is undoubtedly easier and more enjoyable if you have some grasp of Spanish. Learning from CDs is a good way to pick up the basics while still in England, and a good phrasebook will be invaluable once in Peru (it is cheaper and easier to buy these in England than South America). Accents and words vary from country to country within South America, but it is generally not too difficult to adjust as you move around.

Medical

Vaccinations

Each member of the expedition consulted their doctor and received the necessary vaccinations (Rabies, Hep A, Typhoid, Yellow Fever and Tetanus).

Each member had a knowledge of mountain first aid, this was supported by the book 'Pocket First Aid and Wilderness, which we highly recommend [6]. The book is very small and light, well laid out, easy to understand, designed for expeditions and costs around £8.

The expedition took first aid equipment as recommended in most mountain / wilderness first aid books and iodine crystals for water treatment. We also took out a sterile kit each.

Acclimatisation

After flying into Lima at sea level we took an overnight bus to Huaraz at 3090 m. we therefore made sure not to over exert ourselves for the first few days. On our 3rd day in Huaraz we hired a taxi to take us to a high pass called Callan Punta (4225 m) which lie west of Huaraz in the Cordillera Nergo. From here we ascended to point Co Carachuco (4326 m). We then leisurely descended back down to Huaraz on foot over the course of 5 hours. Two days later we arrived in Chiquian, where we slept for the night before starting the Huayhuash trek. This trek is ideal for further acclimatisation as you walk to a high point in the day and sleep lower, also each camp is slightly higher than the previous ones, allowing you to gradually acclimatise.

Medication

The expedition took the following from the UK, provided by a GP with a covering letter in case of trouble at customs:

Altitude Drugs:

Dexamethasone injections
Dexamethasone tablets
Diamox tablets

Pain Killers:

Nalbuphine Injections

Anti Biotics:

Amoxicilin

The following drugs and medical provisions we obtained in Peru, over the counter, without prescription:

Pain Killers:

Codeine
Nurophen
Paracetamol
Aspirin

Other Medical Provisions:

Imodium
Sore throat sweets
Lip balm
Re-hydration sachets
Sun cream

Anti Biotics:

Ciprofloxacin
Metronidazole

Some pharmacies seemed more willing than others to sell us these drugs. Most were helpful when they knew we were on a mountaineering expedition. It was common for each pharmacy to be only willing to sell a small amount of each drug to us. It was therefore necessary to visit a few establishments to obtain the required quantities.

We estimate evacuation from base camp in the Huayhuash to Huaraz would take a minimum of 36 hours with an additional 7 hours required if it was necessary to get medical treatment in Lima. There is a very limited rescue service in Huaraz, although the quality of it is not known by the authors'. It is likely that evacuation would have to be organised by the expedition team.

The only instances where medical treatment were given were a couple of cases of suspected Guardia. The Guardia cleared up quickly with rest and a short course of antibiotics (2mg Metronidazole a day for 3 days, available over the counter in Peru).

During the ascent of Quesillo the whole team were hit by an 'electrical discharge', this rendered Martin Lane unconscious for 30 seconds. Upon returning to consciousness he was dazed and confused, however by the following morning he was back to full health

Equipment

All of the expedition members used plastic mountaineering boots for increased warmth and dryness. The ability to take the inners of the boots out and keep them within the sleeping compartment of the tent proved to be effective in keeping the inners dry over a long period of time. It is worth noting that on a previous expedition to the Bolivian Andes an expedition member with leather boots had no real problems with cold feet.

We brought ice screws with us, however they were infrequently used. Snow stakes which were bought from trekking agencies in Huaraz for \$4 each proved to be far more useful due to the snow conditions.

A set of 60 metre long, 8mm diameter, half ropes was taken for each climbing team of two. However, on a number of snow routes without abseil descents (or where both pairs were in close contact) each team would just take one half-rope to save weight.

Climbing racks were dependent on the route, but generally consisted of the following:

- 2-10 quick draws (a high proportion being 60cm in length or shock absorbing slings)
- 2-6 ice screws
- 2-4 snow stakes
- 2-4 slings
- 4-10 wires
- 0-3 cams
- 0-2 hexes

A solar panel and battery charger was used to charge batteries for head torches, camera and audio devices. The model of recharger we used struggled to fully charge the high capacity NiMH batteries we were using, but we believe better units are now available or additional solar panels may make a useful addition.

We had a pair of walkie talkies with long ranges, however they were only useable in 'line of sight', they could potentially have been extremely useful for some scenarios, however they received little use on this expedition.

Photography

The members took a digital compact camera each, Carl also brought a SLR film camera, which he used with slide film. This combination worked well. We had no problems with battery life in the digital cameras. This was largely down to the members disciplining themselves to keeping their cameras warm in an inside pocket, and thus not allowing the cold to degrade battery life.

Slide film and digital camera accessories such as memory cards are available in Huaraz at western prices, although it is hard to find more specialist film types. There are numerous shops offering film and digital processing in Huaraz, however the quality may not be to western standards.

Weather

Cordillera Huayhuash:

The weather seemed to follow a stable pattern of starting cloudy and then clearing up in the early morning. By 3-4pm however it was frequently seen that clouds moved over the peaks and precipitation was common.

During our stay in the Huayhuash we did not suffer any severe weather at base camp, only twice was there any form of precipitation (sleet).

However we did experience some 'inclement' weather whilst on the mountain, the worst obviously being the lightening storm whilst climbing the east ridge of Quesillo.

Cordillera Blanca:

The time we spent in the area was towards the end of the season. This was noticeable from the condition of the snowpack and the way the weather pattern of stable high pressure began to break more frequently. Up until this point the weather pattern had seemed to be more stable in the Cordillera Blanca than the Huayhuash. With the trend being for stable high pressure for the duration of the day.

These weather patterns allowed team members to climb in a relatively small amount of clothing, a thermal and thin mid-layer would normally suffice for the torso taking a down jacket for belay stations or any breaks. Wind/water proof trousers over some thin thermal bottoms were generally sufficient for the legs.

Risks and hazards

There were a number of potential risks the expedition faced, both through the inherent hazards involved whilst mountaineering in a remote area and the more general risks of travelling in an unfamiliar country. Below are a number of the key risks we identified on the expedition and how we aimed to limit these risks.

Risks in the Mountain Environment

We were aware of the potential health risks of drinking non-treated glacial melt water at base camp. As mentioned earlier water was purified with iodine.

Objective dangers such as rockfall, avalanches and serac collapse were all apparent in the mountain areas we visited. We limited the risk by choosing routes carefully and attempting to spend as little time as possible in zones susceptible to these potential dangers.

As there was no possibility of rescue from an external agency, an accident would have had to be dealt with by the expedition members. As referred to previously, walkie talkies would have aided us had an accident occurred.

Inherent risks whilst climbing in this environment such as falls, hypothermia, exhaustion and altitude sickness including pulmonary oedema were minimised through our previous experience and training, knowledge of our limitations and careful planning.

Political instability

Although we did not consider political instability to be a serious physical threat to ourselves it is worth noting that much of Peru was brought to a standstill only a week before our expedition. The political turmoil caused by the proposed introduction of an examination for all teachers meant protesters blockaded major transport links for a few days.

Risk of crime

Despite warnings to the contrary we found Peru to be extremely safe for travelling. However as with all cities in the world there was a potential risk of theft. This was generally felt by the group to be a much larger threat in Lima than anywhere else in Peru. Huaraz felt unthreatening.

We always tried to be as vigilant as possible when we had all our belongings with us, as the amount of equipment we had in our possession probably made us an easy target. Travelling as a large group made this easier as one person could stay with the luggage at all times.

We had read of other expeditions experiencing theft of equipment whilst in the mountains. We therefore stayed at recognised campsites in the Cordillera Huayhuash. These had low level security in the form of armed local officials who would occasionally walk around the vicinity of the camp. Here we also paid the occupant of a nearby dwelling a small amount of money (\$5 for a week) to keep an eye on our base camp.

At base camp we employed a camp guard whilst at the Contrahierbas base camp for security due to our proximity to the road.

During our short stay at the Ishinca Refugio we felt that the place was secure enough to leave our equipment unattended. This may not have been the case had the Refugio being full.

Environmental and social impact assessment

It was an important objective of the expedition to have as little environmental impact as possible on the areas we visited. We used biodegradable soap for all our washing needs in an attempt to have a neutral impact on the water quality of the streams. Our toilet area was located a suitable distance away from the water source and all toilet paper used was burnt. Any packaging was carried back out from our base camps and taken back to Huaraz. Huaraz, it was deemed, had more chance of possessing a reasonable waste disposal system than the Andean villages.

Many of the settlements we encountered on the expedition were used to foreign trekkers and subsequently aimed to make money from them by selling items such as alcohol and chocolate.

Upon leaving our base camps we always gave any surplus food or equipment to local people, although we did try and do this without giving the impression that foreign visitors had a limitless supply of money.

Much to the annoyance of the team (which consisted entirely of philanthropists of great joyousness) the children from dwellings in the locality of the trekking circuits have gained sweet teeth. They often approached the group requesting chocolate or sweets. With Peru's dental hygiene standards being of similar magnitude to the level of growth hormones frequenting Graeme's body it was deemed unwise for us to offer such items.

Travel, Transport and Freighting

Further current advice on this subject is available in guide books and tourist/travel agencies once in Peru.

Flights

The expedition travelled with KLM (Carl and Graeme) and Delta (Martin, Tom and Lewis) from the UK to Lima, Peru.

The Baggage allowance was 25Kg in the hold and 12kg hand luggage (Carl and Graeme); however the group managed to get more through by using a variety of tactics. Although the expedition approached KLM before the flight they were unwilling to give discounted excess baggage rates to the expedition. We are aware that other airlines have offered reduced rates or extra baggage allowance to expeditions in the past, but believe this is becoming less frequent.

Internal Travel

The internal coach network is cheap and reliable between all major towns and cities. Reasonable priced internal flights are available between major destinations and may be a good option for those on a tight schedule. These are usually available at short notice.

Smaller buses usually connect larger centres with smaller towns and villages and are commonly used by locals. They are very cheap but not always user friendly; with hard to find bus stops and ticket offices, irregular departure times and sometimes infrequent journeys. A reasonable grasp of Spanish will help. The comfort offered to be remembered. Having said this they are a fraction of the cost of jeep hire, are a good way to meet local people and offer some memorable experiences. Baggage allowance seems almost unlimited; however a small charge of around \$1 is made for each bag.

The Huayhuash base camp

The Huayhuash was entered through the town of Chiquian. A bus taking 4 hours and departing twice daily from Huaraz was used. After a night spent on the floor of our arrieros house we headed by privately hired minibus to Matacancha (3-4hrs) to start our trek in the following day. The bus from Huaraz to Chequian cost 20sol (\$7) pp and the mini bus 215sol (\$72).

Base camp was reached via a two day trekk following the classic huayhuash trekking circuit. To transport all our equipment an arriero and 6 mules were hired for the walk in at a cost of \$5 per mule per day and the arriero \$10 per day.

Our arriero, Sabino Obregon was arranged through Jo's place so to avoid the many un-reputable agencies in Huaraz. He can't be recommended enough, he was highly skilled, hard working, honest, friendly and spoke clear and slow Spanish. We would recommend other teams use him in the future if possible [7]. He is able to supply some equipment on request. He is willing to work as a camp cook, guard and/or arriero.

The return journey was the reverse of the entry, however this time with only 4 mules and no night was spent in Chiquian.



The private mini-bus to Matacancha

The Contrahierbas Base Camp

This base camp was reached by a 3 hour bus ride from Huaraz to Punta Olimpica using the buss bound for Chacas. The cost was 15sol (\$5) pp. we requested that the bus drop us off at the pass, however upon reaching the pass the bus carried on and dropped us some 300m lower at a lake. This was beneficial as we now had a water supply. We pitched tent between hairpin bends for lack of a more suitable sight. Luckily we had decided to hire a camp guard for security due to the proximity to the road. This was arranged through Jo's place once again.

It was decided to return the afternoon after completing the South East Ridge of Pt 5325m. however the vehicles which passed us whilst we were hitching on the roadside were all full and therefore did not stop. This meant we had to stay another night at the pass before catching a ride on the first bus through the following day.

The Ishinca Refugio [8]

A taxi from Huaraz to Colon was taken for 50sol (\$17). Here a co-operative is run through which mules and porters are available at the cost of \$5 per mule per day and \$10 per ariero per day. The walk from Colon to the Refugio took 3-4 hours. Midway you are required to pay a 65 sol (\$22) Park fee. This pass is valid for 7 days.

[7] Sabino Obregon, Huayhuash Aventuras, Huayhuash_adventura@hotmail.com, (043)44-7185; Jr. Figueredo No 613, Chiquian, Peru.

[8] www.rifugi-omg.org Tel: Peru 043-44-3061

Ishinca Refugio prices (approximate):

- Half board (bed, breakfast and dinner) \$30 pp pn
- Bed only \$10 pp pn
- Continental breakfast \$10
- Main Meal \$14 - \$20
- Drink \$1 - \$2



Ishinca Refugio

Expedition Log

(26th June – 20th August 2007)

July

- Sunday 22nd Fly from UK to Lima, Peru
- Monday 23rd Take overnight bus from Lima to Huaraz
- Wednesday 24th Take taxi into Cordillera Negro and undertake a brief acclimatisation walk
- Friday 27th Arrived in Chiquian (entry town to the Huayhuash)
- Saturday 28th Take Mini bus to the start of Huayhuash trek
- Monday 30th Get to Huayhuash base camp
- Tuesday 31st Tom, Carl & Graeme explore approach to likely routes, but got snowed off

August

- Thursday 2nd Whole group climb Quesillo East Ridge. Get caught in a storm 50m from summit, Martin rendered unconscious by ‘electrical discharge’ and spend night below summit in snow cave
- Friday 3rd Descend Quesillo by abseiling the North Face
- Monday 6th Two routes climbed on Huaraca (North ridge – Tom & Martin) (North East Face; Carl & Graeme)
- Thursday 9th Tom and Martin attempt rock peak at end of valley but back off after 1 pitch due to lack of protection. Carl and Graeme walk into Trapecio base camp for an attempt on its south face.

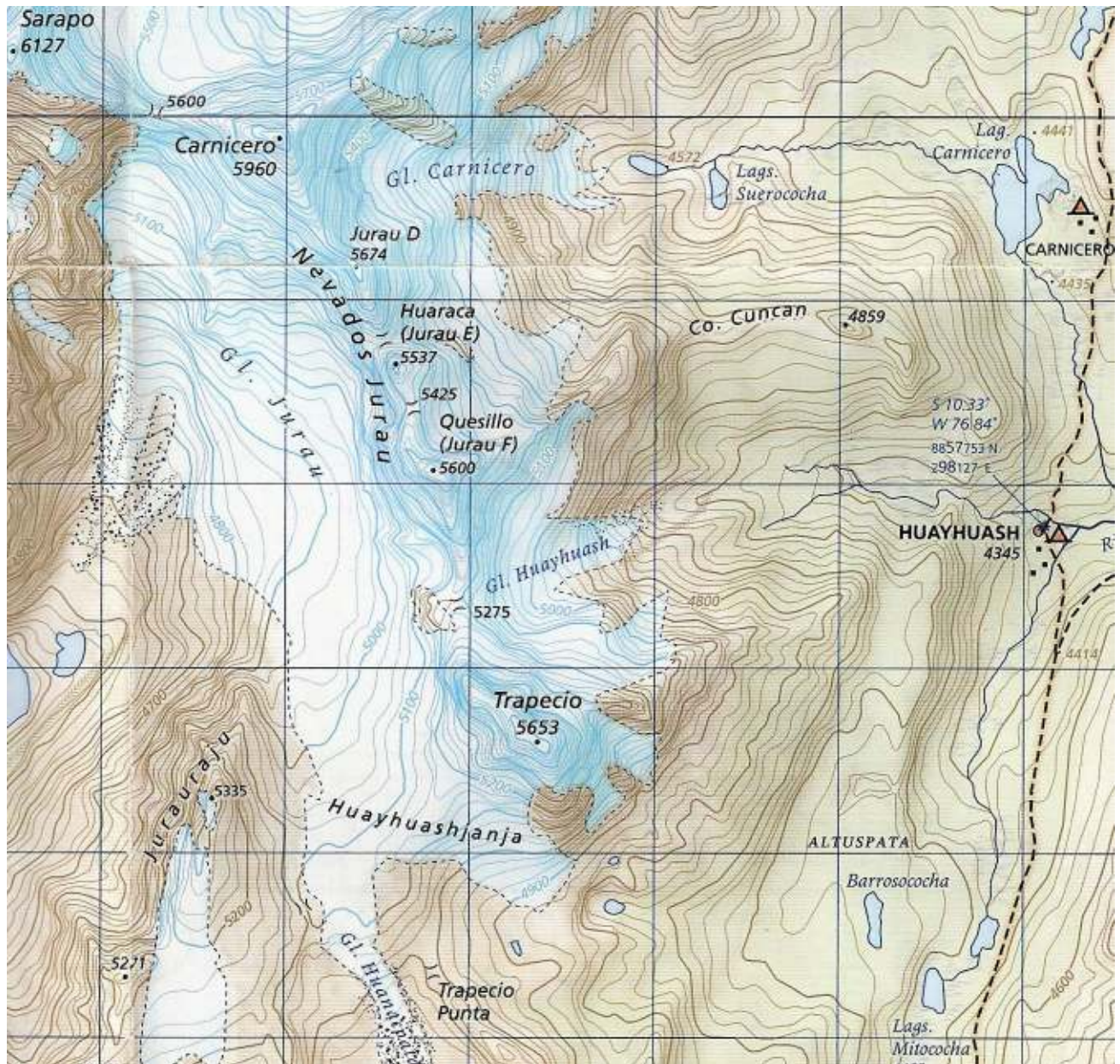
Friday 10 th	Graeme and Carl over slept so abandon Trapecio attempt but climb rock pinnacle instead.
Saturday 11 th	Start return trek to Matacancha
Sunday 12 th	Finish return trek
Monday 13 th	Return to civilisation in private mini bus to Chiquian, followed by public bus to Huaraz
Thursday 16 th	Martin Lane and Tom Bide return to the UK. Lewis Fogerty meets up with Carl and Graeme.
Saturday 18 th	Carl, Graeme and Lewis take public bus to Punta Olimpica with an eye on climbing Contrahierbas (Cordillera Blanca). Base camp situated 20m from road.
Sunday 19 th	Group explore the area.
Monday 20 th	Graeme is ill and stays in camp all day. Carl and Lewis Explore approach to South West Ridge of Pt 5325m.
Tuesday 21 st	Group climb route on South East Ridge of Pt 5325m. Group attempt to head back to Huaraz, however no bus picks them up. Spend night in abandoned Sheppard's hut.
Wednesday 22 nd	Return to Huaraz on Public bus
Thursday 23 rd	Lewis leaves Peru for the UK
Sunday 26 th	Carl and Graeme Take Taxi to Colon from where they trek to the Ishinca Refugio.
Monday 27 th	Attempt a new route up the southwest Face of Urus Oste. However the difficulty of the climbing meant they climb slowly and so decide to back off at mid afternoon only 1/3 rd of the way up the route, as they have no bivi kit.
Wednesday 29 th	Poor weather and time means any more climbing is extremely unlikely, so the pair trek out and get taxi back to Huaraz.
<u>September</u>	
Saturday 1 st –	Carl and Graeme Fly back to the UK.

Routes

Grades

Grading routes in the mountains is always difficult due to factors such as changing snow conditions. We given the new routes we climbed speculative grades based on the conditions we found the route in during our ascent, but would be very happy to hear how other people find these routes.

Cordillera Huayhuash

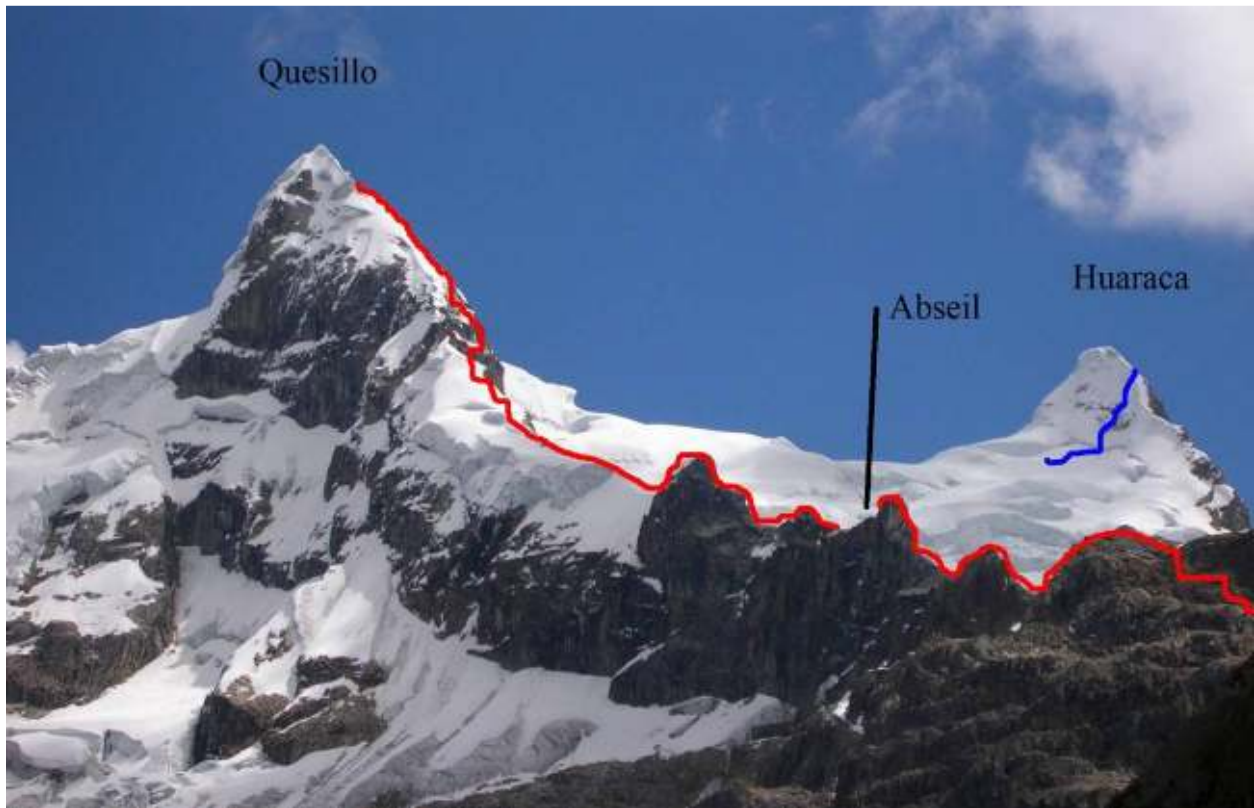


Huayhuash – ‘Southern Spur’ map [9]

[9] Cordillera Huayhuash Map (2nd Edition); 1:50,000; 2004; ISBN: 0-9758606-0-7

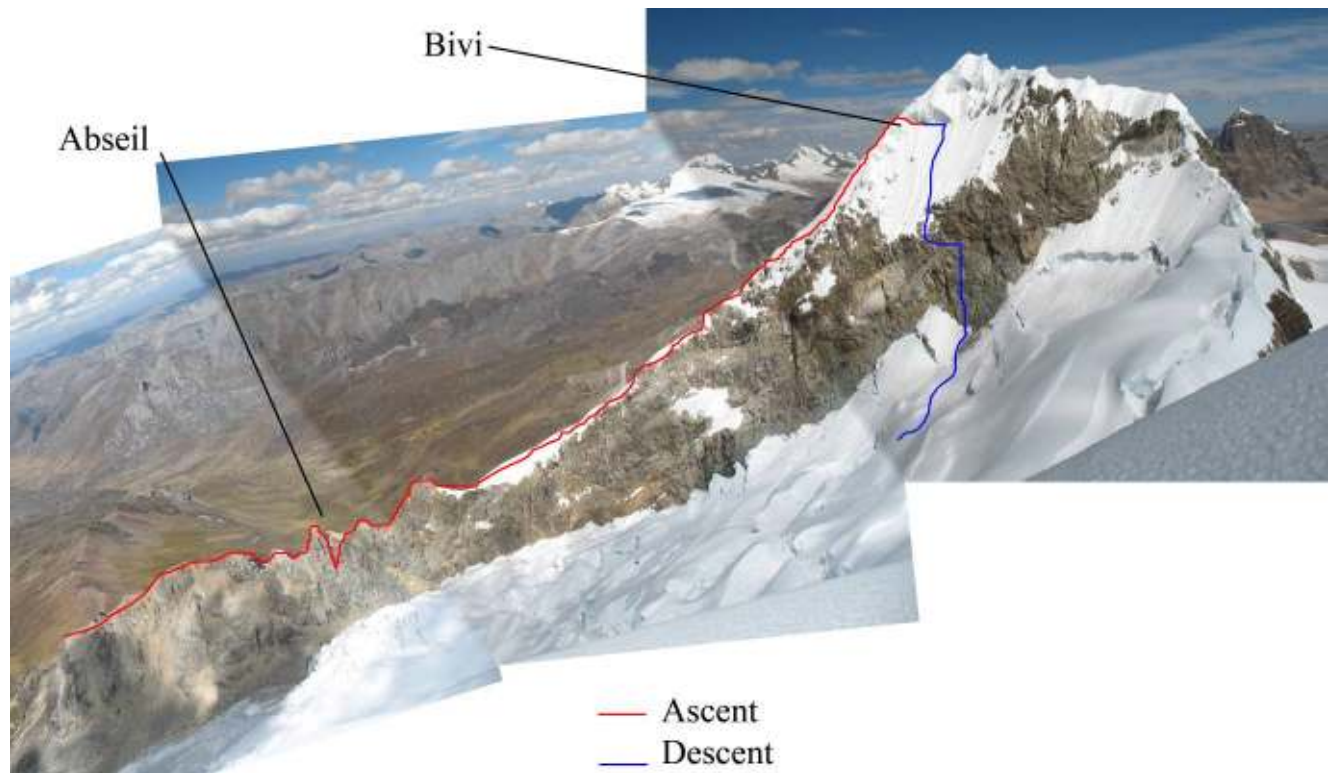
East Ridge of Quesillo (Electric Lane)

Grade: TD-
Length: 1000 m
Ascentionists: Tom Bide, Martin Lane, Carl Reilly, Graeme Schofield
Date: 02.08.07



Quesillo East Ridge from the summit of point 4859m with the Huaraca descent marked in the right of frame.

From Huayhuash base camp walk into the large bowl to the North of the camp with the Huayhuash glacier and approach to Trapecio's North face high to your left. Aim for the obvious col in the ridge by crossing a number of huge scree slopes. Stop just below the col and pass the first gendarme on its left by crossing a steep scree slope before scrambling up a loose gully to reach the ridge proper. The first 200 metres along the ridge is fairly straightforward climbing on a mixture of rock terrain (UIAA 3) and can be negotiated unroped. Little height is gained at this section of the ridge. The difficulties begin as the ridge becomes very sharp and a steep gendarme blocks the way. This is climbed via a steep jamming crack (UIAA 5+, but much easier in rock boots). Once at the top of the gendarme you are forced to make a long abseil down the other side before continuing the climbing on a series of pitches on the North side of the ridge before regaining the top. Easy climbing along the top of the ridge leads to a series of quality pitches of slab climbing (UIAA 5) which eventually join the snow section of the route.

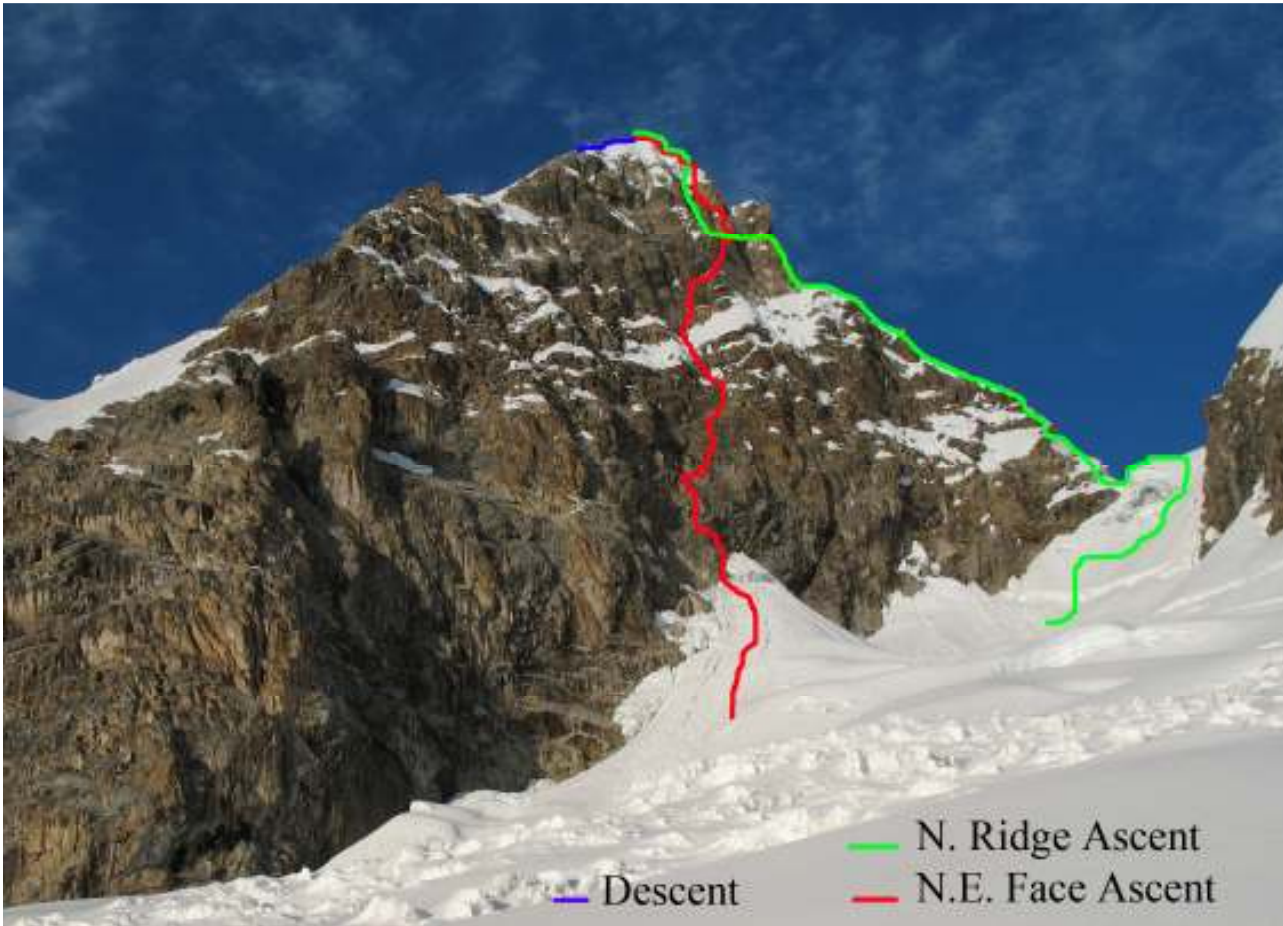


Quesillo East Ridge from the summit of Huaraca

The snow is, at first, gentle but gradually steepens the further you ascend the ridge. 200 metres of snow climbing (55-60 degrees) leads to a rock barrier which can be climbed via a variety of lines (line of ascent Scottish 3/4). Climb further up the snow ridge for 100 metres to reach a thin tunnel of ice through a small gully. This is climbed direct (Scottish 3). The ridge remains relatively steep from here (60 degrees) and the snow deteriorates, no worthwhile protection will be found. A notch on the ridge 50 metres below the summit was the team's high point. The ridge from the summit onwards was clearly in a terrible state and we could not justify continuing to the top, especially due to the rapidly deteriorating weather. The team managed to locate an ice cave high on the North face of the mountain and one by one climbed into the cave. It was during this process that the entire four man team was electrocuted through a lightning strike. One team member was rendered unconscious for roughly 30 seconds. After re-grouping within the ice cave, the worsening storm and rather dazed and confused state of the worst hit team-member made it impossible to descend that day. After a very cold, unplanned bivi in a snow-hole within the ice cave the team descended the next morning.

To descend we abseiled and down-climbed the heavily fluted North-East face. It may, however, be possible to descend the normal North ridge route if the conditions allow.

Huaraca



North Ridge and North East Face of Huaraca



South Face of Huaraca, descent down the east ridge, the heavily corniced summit and Jurau on the right can be seen

North East Face of Huaraca

Grade: D
Length: 300m
Ascentionists: Carl Reilly, Graeme Schofield
Date: 06.08.07

The climb takes a wandering line up the North East face of Huaraca. The route begins at the top of a large snow cone where a simple crossing of the bergshund can be made. Climb up cracks and chimneys (UIAA 4 and 4+) on sound but steep rock directly up the face for four 30 metre pitches to reach a more gently angled section of the face. Here it is possible to skirt around snow patches without donning crampons whilst being careful not to dislodge one of the multitudes of loose rocks onto one's partner below. From this gently sloping shelf, trend rightwards towards the North Ridge for a further four 30 metre pitches of varied climbing (UIAA 4+). This eventually leads to a steep right angled groove only 40 metres across from the North Ridge. The groove is climbed delicately (UIAA 4+/5) to reach a ribbon of snow stretching down a small gully. Crampons are used from here, as a pitch of Scottish 3 leads to the North ridge where 70 metres of moving together lead to the summit, which in August 2007, seemed to be on the top of a huge overhanging cornice.

Descent was via down climbing the Eastern ridge for roughly 100 metres before making two abseils down the South face to reach the glacier between Huaraca and Quesillo.

North Ridge of Huaraca (El macho hombre)

Grade: D
Length: 300m
Ascensionists: Tom Bide, Martin Lane
Date: 06.08.07

The climb ascends the skyline north ridge of Huaraca, viewed from the East the rock band described below can be seen as a large pinnacle. The route starts at the col between Huaraca and Jurau, ascends easy snow slopes avoiding seracs until the unstable cornice over hanging the Jurau Glacier is reached (a feature of the route). Climb the ridge for 4 rope lengths on easy angled but thin cornices (sometimes only a few feet thick, watch with interest as your feet go through) and with occasional rock sections until short rock wall is reached. Climb this direct (Scottish 4) and belay below a steep rock band above.

Climb this on the right hand side first up a snowy ramp then by cracks for 40m (UIAA 4+) with breathtaking views of the west faces of Carnicero and Sarapo. When the rock starts overhanging traverse leftwards along ledges for around 20m (crossing the North East Face route) until you reach a deep snow gully. Climb this on loose slabs and unstable snow (Scottish 3) for 100m to the summit, which in character with the route being another massive another massive cornice!

The route was descended as described in the 'North East Face of Huaraca' route description previously.



Tom Bide and Graeme Schofield down climbing the East Ridge of Huaraca during descent from the mountain



Martin Lane on the North Ridge of Huaraca

Rock Climbing in the Huayhuash

After being physically abused by scary mountain routes and aroused by donkeys one time too many Tom Bide and Martin Lane decided to try their hand at rock climbing. Surrounding the main Huayhuash range are numerous smaller peaks of clean (moderately) good limestone. The most striking feature of these as many seemingly immaculate limestone slabs 100's of meters high. Tom and Martin attempted to climb a prominent peak around 4600m high a few km east of Huayhuash base camp. After first spending a good deal of time persuading the very worried local park rangers they were competent and the mountain was safe they soon discovered both to be untrue. The slabs themselves would give fantastic climbing if you were either bold (mid E grades) or had a drill and a lot of bolts. The cracks although easier seem to be full of an inch thick layer of fine dust making climbing very unpleasant.

The more broken ground was found to be exceedingly loose with around half of the holds snapping off. Needless to say the hapless pair only managed a rope length up after trying several lines before they heeded the park ranges words of "moy peligroso" (very dangerous).

The pair also tried their hand at new routing on the 4859m peak overlooking Huayhuash base camp again they decided discretion was the better part of valour although there was plenty of clean solid compact limestone and potential traditional lines at possible around E1. Fantastic similar looking climbs were spotted though out the trek in and out and a suitable prepared and motivated party would probably have plenty to do.

Carl and Graeme also ended up rock climbing in the Huayhuash; however this was not through choice. After eyeing up a new ice line on the South-East face of Trapecio their incompetence was exemplified in its entirety after they managed to miss their alarms and over-sleep by a total of two and a half hours. Unable to attempt their chosen objective they explored some of the rock around the North of Sueroraju. Frimer, 2005 wrote about this area of rock:

"To the right of it's North face (Sueroraju) is a curling rock amphitheatre-acres of unclimbed rock. Not a single-rock route exists..... Half a kilometre North, along the divide from the Sueroraju playground, a lone 150m tall rock spire of moderate angle awaits its first visitor."

This rock spire became a half-day objective and after a diversion around the base of the South-East face of Trapecio to check out what they missed the pair wandered along to the foot of this spire via a truly unpleasant and steep scree slope directly below the climb. The spire was climbed via its North face in two long 60 metre pitches. The rock was exceptionally loose and the climbing would have been a great deal easier if the climbers had dared to use as-holds, many of the enormous boulders perched on tiny edges up the route. The 2nd pitch had a difficult (UIAA 5+) crack section which, thankfully, was on good-quality rock. Upon reaching the top of the spire a long sling was already in-place from a previous unknown ascensionist and therefore the pair are unsure whether there's was a new route. Regardless of this, Carl and Graeme thought that the spire made for rather uninspiring climbing. Descent was made via abseiling the route of ascent.

Cordillera Blanca



Contrahierbas base camp area [10]

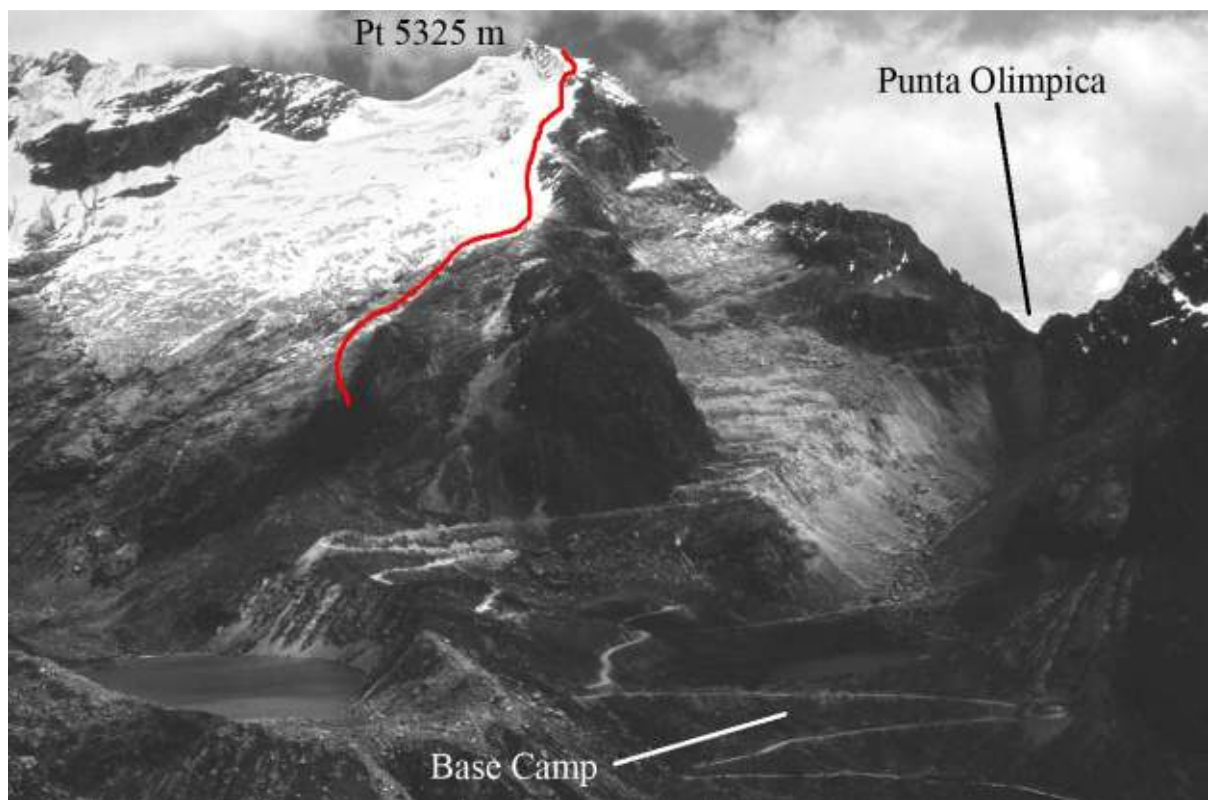
East Ridge Point 5325 m on Nev. Ulta

Grade: AD
Length: 350m
Ascentionists: Lewis Fogerty, Carl Reilly, Graeme Schofield
Date: 21.08.07

[10] Alpenvereinskarte, 0/3a Cordillera Blanca North (Peru); 1:100,000



East ridge of Point 5325m on Nev. Ulta.



Punta Olimpica base camp

From the 'Between two roads' base camp walk up the road towards Punta Olimpica before cutting up the scree and glacially polished slabs to the South of the East Ridge. The climbing begins once the rock turns completely to snow. Climb up the snow for 150 metres at a relatively modest but steepening angle (40 to 45 degrees). The slope then increases in gradient to roughly 55 -60 degrees, for 100 metres. The route is then blocked by a rock step where a reasonable belay can be created. The rock step is climbed via a mixed chimney and then a final pull over a steep bulge (Scottish 4/5). From this point the snow continues along the ridge at a moderate angle before reaching a final thin double corniced section just 40 metres below the summit. We decided that the summit was unjustifiable in the condition we found it and therefore turned back at this point.

Descend by down-climbing the route of ascent avoiding the rock step on the South side.

Note: The Scottish 4/5 mixed rock step can be avoided by sticking to the South side which was our line of descent.



Ishinca base camp area map [11]

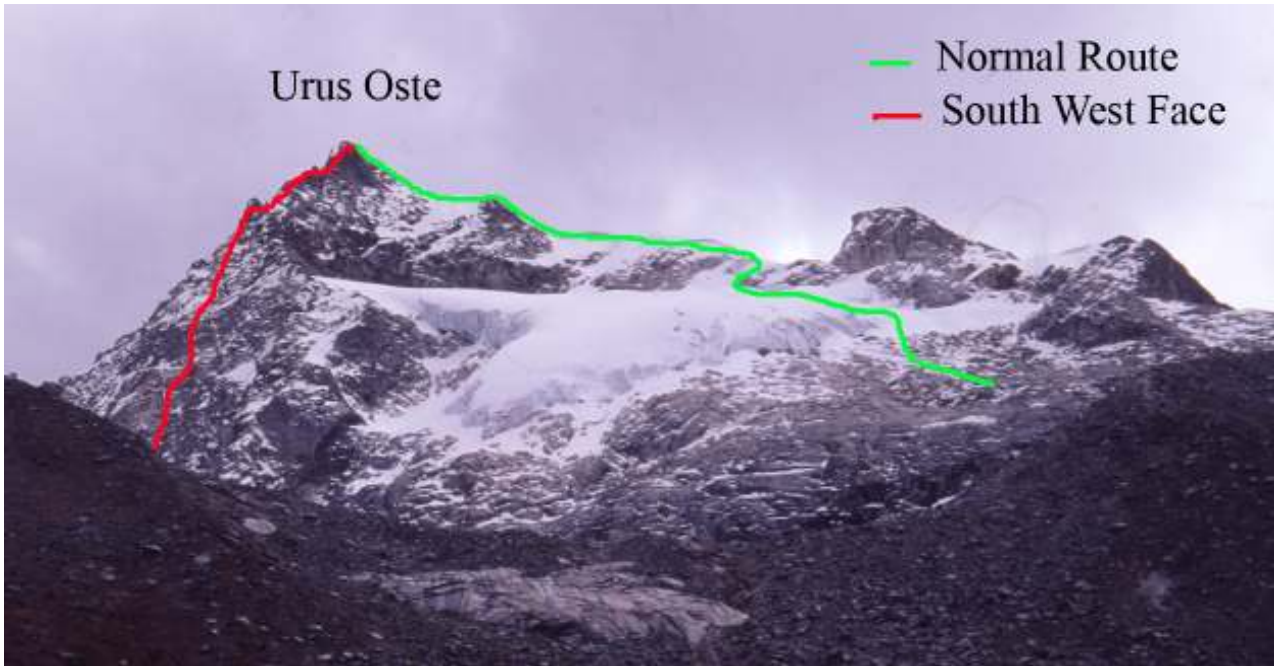
[11] Alpenvereinskarte, 0/3b Cordillera Blanca South (Peru); 1:100,000

South West Face Urus Oste (Unsuccessful attempt)

Grade: Suspected TD+/ED
Length: 500m
Ascentionists: Carl Reilly, Graeme Schofield
Date: Attempted 27.08.07



The Attempted line on Urus Oste



Urus Oste showing the proposed south west face route

The climb attempts to climb the steep South West face of Urus Oste. The line of the attempt starts at the right-hand side of the South-West face and follows a line of weakness slanting leftwards for around 70 metres on loose but easy rock and snow (UIAA 3 and Scottish 2/3). From a secure ledge in the middle of the lower headwall a pitch of mixed climbing cuts through a steep bulge and up a series of delicate slabs (Scottish 5). This leads to the first tier where 100 metres of easy snow climbing (Scottish 2) can be negotiated quickly before the ground begins to steepen again. The line now begins a gently rising traverse for 60 metres (one full pitch) across insecure snow and mixed ground (Scary Scottish 5) before straightening back up on the right hand-side of a prominent spur. From here the line is fairly direct, a long pitch of very difficult and loose mixed ground (Scottish 6) leads to a good ledge belay. From here a short traverse locates a vertical, ice-filled flake which is climbed with difficulty to a good belay (Scottish 6). The ground above this point looks reasonable at first but then steepens again and should provide very difficult mixed climbing for future ascensionists. Without bivi-gear and running short of time, despite still being a huge distance from the top, we decided to retreat diagonally down the face, and in a couple of abseils managed to meet the left-hand side of the 1st tier. From this point we found a way to walk down at the left-hand side of the first headwall.



Carl Reilly on the South West face of Urus Oste

So despite some good, hard climbing we didn't get very far on this route, largely because of our chosen line. As we discovered whilst descending, it would be easily possible to walk around to the first tier and then climb the face directly, in-line with our top two pitches. This would have saved an enormous amount of time, possibly as much as three hours all things considered. The line awaits an ascent from climbers comfortable on hard mixed ground, who take the time to view the face in the light on a day previous to their climb.

Future Potential

There is much new route potential in Peru for the future. Although it is suspected that there are now no virgin summits left in Peru, there are many unclimbed faces and ridges of all grades to challenge both the current and future generations of climbers. Many of these routes will be highly conditions dependent.

Below is a list of objectives which the team saw whilst in the mountains and are believed to be unclimbed, however much more research would be required to verify this. More details and further images of these objectives may be available from the team, please don't hesitate to contact using the details below.

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Swinderby
Lincoln
LN6 9LY

Tel: 01522 869187
Email: cxr225@bham.ac.uk

Cordillera Huayhuash

Below are a number of examples of possible new routes in the Huayhuash. There are countless more even in the area we visited, all of which are very conditions dependent.

Trapeccio – South East Face



Possible new route on Trapecio

Possible new route on Trapecio, South-East face.

The South East face of Trapecio has already been climbed via two routes, the 'Lowe route' and 'Rouflaguette Nationale'. However, there remains an obvious ice line on the left side of the face which would either join the South spur route at $\frac{3}{4}$ height or carry on direct to join with 'Rouflaguette Nationale'. Carl and I (Graeme) were to attempt this route at the end of our stay in the Huayhuash but somehow managed to sleep past our alarms and missed the chance as it was our last climbing day.

The face was rather bare in comparison to other pictures we had of the face but with binoculars the line still seemed possible, although the climbing would have been steep and technical ice. The face appeared to be relatively safe from objective danger by Huayhuash standards and is a very worthwhile objective. To complete the route to the top of Trapecio and descend safely a bivi would probably be needed, save for the fastest of teams.

Carnicero – South spur and East Ridge

The South face of Carnicero is a hulking mass of ice seracs, fluted gullies and rock buttresses. The face has, as yet, remained unclimbed. Two possible lines on the mountain are the South spur and the Eastern ridge.

The South spur looks to be at a reasonable angle and despite interesting snow formations seen high on the line it does look possible if a way can be found onto the spur in the first place as the glacier below the climb was, at the time of writing, utterly impassable for all those not on a suicide mission. This route would join up with the East Ridge.

The East Ridge would be a mammoth route requiring possibly three days to complete and descend (somehow). The ridge looks like most Huayhuash ridges, a nightmare of double corniced knife edges along protectionless powder. Commitment and a very cool head would no doubt be needed.



Possible new routes on Carnicero.

Sueroraju rock playground

There are vast amount of rock routes waiting to be discovered in the Eastern Huayhuash, many of these will be in the Sueroraju ‘rock playground’ as described by Frimer, 2005. As described previously the obvious rock pinnacle has been climbed, but it is doubtful whether anything else has yet been touched. There is a lot of loose rock around this area but vast swathes of solid sections do exist in and amongst the choss. A rock climbing team prepared to climb traditional routes as well as setting up bolted climbs could be very successful in climbing new routes in this area.

Cordillera Blanca

Contraheirbas area;

We originally visited this area after reading a previous team’s expedition report to the region [12]. However conditions made many of the routes unjustifiable. We feel however that a strong team earlier in the season may have good opportunities for new routes.

Contrahierbas, South East Ridge of Pt 5607m



Pt 5607, as far as the authors’ are aware nothing in this picture has being climbed.
Pt 5480 is on the left of frame. The glacial tong is clearly visible

[12] Rondoy West Face 2005; Gareth Hughes, Oliver Metherell, MEF Ref 05/46

There looks to be potential for new routes on the southern and eastern facets of pt 5607m. the south ridge looks to have a long approach up a steep scree field and may be heavily conditions dependent due to cornicing along the ridge.

There also looked to be potential on the south east face (the one above the glacial tongue on the previous page).

The skyline ridge from punta olimpica to Pt 5607m looked extremely difficult due to dangerous and unstable snow formations. Even with good snow conditions this looked to be too dangerous to contemplate.

Pt 5480 looked to be climbable given good snow conditions and an acceptable level of cornicing.. These were not present during our time there.



Possible new route on the south ridge of Pt 5607m of Contrahierbas

Contrahierbas, South West Face of Pt 6036 (above Laguna Yanaruja)



South West Face of Pt 6036 (above Laguna Yanaruja)

This face looks extremely steep and technically challenging. The approach up the extremely crevassed glacier will make this an early season venture, although the current large hanging serac may make many lines on the face extremely dangerous. Possibly lines to the left might limit this risk.



Q.Cancaraca Grande Valley, North Ridge Pt 5267, with Pt 5350 400m out of shot to the right

There are two peaks in the Q.Cancaraca Grande Valley which appear not to have been climbed. They both look technically easy and would make a good acclimatisation trip for a party wanting to do something exploratory.

Pt 5350 looked to be easily accessible from the Pt 5267, via a glacial walk.

Ishinca Area;

South West Face Urus Oste (also see description in routes section of this report)

The south west face of Urus Oste would make a potential good new route, however care is required due to the integrity of the rock. The route may require a bivi. We would recommend getting a good view of the face before starting the route. A bad decision of starting point meant we wasted much time and energy getting to gaining height which could have been achieved by walking round to our finish point.

Be aware that due to the orientation of this face there may not be much ice build up, but instead sugary snow.

Rock Routes in approach valley

The valley from Colon to the Ishinca base camp appears to offer much hard rock climbing. The rock appears to be of high quality though very compact. It is believed that the area has seen limited exploration and that the use of bolts is likely to be required.

Conclusion

All the team members agree the expedition was a great success especially considering that it was the first time in the Greater Ranges for some members. Although none of the expedition's original climbing objectives were met, the main objective of safely undertaking exploratory mountaineering was successfully completed. Each team member managed to participate in a minimum of one new route.

The whole team thoroughly enjoyed the experience and hope to head to the greater ranges soon to undertake further exploratory mountaineering.

There is still a lot of scope for new routes in the Peru, especially harder mountaineering lines which are particularly conditions dependent and rock routes of severe difficulty which are likely to require the protection of bolts.

Contacts

We found the following people and places useful for planning and carrying out the expedition:

Archive expedition reports:

BMC – www.thebmc.co.uk

Royal Geographical Society – www.rgs.org

Alpine Club – <http://www.alpine-club.org.uk/>

Grants:

BMC – www.thebmc.co.uk

MEF – www.mef.org.uk

Alpine Club – www.alpine-club.org.uk

Guide, Arriero, Camp Chef, Mule hire (highly recommended):

Sabino Obregon, Huayhuash Aventuras, Huayhuash_adventura@hotmail.com, (043)44-7185;

Jr. Figueredo No 613, Chiquian, Peru.