

Hispar Expedition 2007

MEF Reference 07/28

Summary

A solo attempt on the first ascent of Haigutum Middle 6032m reached 5980m, by the north face and east ridge.

A reconnaissance was made of the approach to the west side of Tahu Rutum.

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Hispar Expedition 2007 – Final Report – MEF Reference 07/28

Summary

The objectives of this expedition to the Hispar Valley in the Pakistani Karakoram were to attempt the first ascents of Khani Basa Sar (6441m), Haigutum Middle (6032m) and/or Tahu Rutum South (c.6000m), and to make a reconnaissance of the unclimbed west side of Tahu Rutum (6350m). The expedition was unsuccessful, but an attempt on Haigutum Middle reached within 50m of the summit.

Unfortunately expedition members Alistair Meikle and Stuart Holmes dropped out due to unforeseen personal commitments and the only expedition member was Peter Thompson.

Base camp was established at the junction of the Khani Basa and Hispar Glaciers. Bad weather delayed any climbing for eight days. My first attempt on Haigutum Middle was thwarted by bad weather. Bad weather set in during my second attempt, but I carried on. Close to the summit I triggered an avalanche and fell 150m or more down the Kero Lungma side of the mountain. I was not seriously hurt, but I decided to retreat. On reflection, the route was alpine AD to the high point, not D as stated in the Summary Report, although sections of hard ice felt precarious.

I had broken the pick of one of my ice tools on hard ice earlier on the climb which prevented me from attempting the other objectives which were two-axe climbs. In any case the prolonged bad weather left little opportunity for further climbing before the porters arrived for the walk out. I was very disappointed as I was keen to attempt Tahu Rutum South next and I had come equipped for the abseil descent.

On the only fine day after the Haigutum climb I made a reconnaissance of the west side of Tahu Rutum and photographed the approach to this big rock wall. The altitude of Tahu Rutum is marked as 6651m on the commonly used Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research map. However according to Google Earth, the altitude is 6350m. I have noticed that some of the heights of smaller peaks seem to be inaccurate on the Swiss map.

To the best of my knowledge there are still a number of unclimbed peaks in the Hispar Valley which I have photographs of which I can send to anyone who is interested in climbing there.

Account of events

- 9/8 Flew to Islamabad from Manchester. PIA flight has a 35kg luggage allowance.
- 10/8 Flew from Islamabad to Gilgit.
- 11-13/8 Buying food and equipment in Gilgit.
- 14/8 Bus to Karimabad.
- 15/8 Acclimatization walk up the Ultar Nala.
- 16/8 Final shopping in Karimabad.
- 17/8 Jeep to Nagar. Another jeep to Hispar. Employed road gang to clear a landslide at Bانشa and porters from the road block before Hispar village. Arranged guide and porters.
- 18/8 Walked to Bitanmal.
- 19/8 Walked to Jutmau.
- 20/8 Walked to Hagura Shangla Lachung.
- 21/8 Walked to base camp on a grassy site with clear water at 4446m (36.06846N 75.39137E) at the junction of the Hispar and Khani Basa Glaciers. Porters and guide departed.

- 22-29/8 Changeable and bad weather with rain or snow most days. Made a few acclimatization forays above base camp and up the Hispar and Khani Basa Glaciers.
- 30/8 Walked across the Hispar Glacier in 2½ hours and bivouacked at about 4300m below Haigutum Middle.
- 31/8 I was ready to leave early but it started snowing and I called off the attempt. Walked back to base camp in a snow storm.
- 1/9 At base camp.
- 2/9 Walked back across to bivi below Haigutum.
- 3/9 Set off up the mountain at 2am. I climbed a direct line up to the plateau where Harrison and I had bivvied during our ascent of Haigutum East the year before. This was quicker and safer than the long traverse we had made the year before. The route followed the right-hand edge of an icefall and a couloir to the plateau. Bivvied on the plateau at 5200m.
- 4/9 Snowed during the night and I put off the attempt. Better weather in the morning and I set off at 9am. I started up the North Ridge of Haigutum East which Harrison and I had climbed the year before. While climbing a sheet of very hard ice I broke the pick of my ice axe. I also had an ice hammer, and not expecting great difficulties higher up I carried on. Leaving the ridge, I traversed below the cornices and seracs of the summit of Haigutum East through deep snow. Reaching the ridge which connects Haigutum East with Haigutum Middle I was on safer ground. I followed the undulating corniced ridge and continued up the East Ridge of Haigutum Middle. I managed to avoid a tricky rock step and continued up a snow ridges and slopes on the Kero Lungma side of the mountain. The weather was very changeable. Visibility was minimal at times, but when the sky cleared I could see I was well above Haigutum East and nearing the summit which I was determined to reach whatever the time as I was confident I could get down in the dark. The mountain was steeper and the ridge quite exposed. I passed a false summit and had to climb across a steep snow slope to another snow ridge which appeared to lead within 50m to the summit, although it was hard to be certain. A layer of fresh snow lay on top of the harder base, and I was aware of how dangerous the conditions were, treading very carefully. Just before reaching the ridge crest the slope gave way beneath me and I was suddenly falling down the mountain in an avalanche. I tried an ice axe brake, but when I started falling head over heels down the slope I realised that I was going to go a very long way with possibly serious consequences. Still, I persisted in trying to effect an ice axe brake and much to my surprise and relief I came to a halt. The ground dropped steeply below me, so who knows how far I would have ended up down the Kero Lungma side of the mountain. As it was, I had fallen between 150-200m judging by the three rock buttresses I had fallen past. I was not seriously injured, but I was shaking uncontrollably, more from the cold than shock because my gloves were full of snow. I had lost my glasses which was unfortunate because I have extremely bad eyesight. Luckily I had a pair of prescription sun glasses so I put these on which was fine except for the fact that it was now 5.30pm and it would be dark before long. I traversed across towards my line of ascent and followed my footsteps down to the start of the horizontal section of the ridge. I had left a stove here, and I had some food and drink before carrying on down. It was now dark, but fairly easy to follow my footsteps. I made the traverse across the face of Haigutum East. I was reluctant to down climb the ice section where I had broken my axe with only one good tool, so I climbed directly down the face. There was a line between crevasses which I had identified in daylight from the plateau. It was threatened by the seracs of Haigutum East and there was avalanche debris at the bottom but it was a quick way down and safe enough at night. I found a way down through the crevasses and steeper icy sections with some difficulty until I reached the bergshroud at the bottom. There was a way across this I had seen in daylight, but I was at the wrong end of the bergshroud. I found a narrow section, but it was still a bigger drop than I would normally choose to jump. I threw down my axes and rucksack, partly to test the deepness of the snow, but more to commit myself to the jump. I jumped harmlessly down and it was a short walk back to my bivi site which I reached at 11pm.

- 5/9 Snowed for the rest of the night until the next afternoon. It was rather claustrophobic inside my bivi bag. Descended following the line of my ascent and bivvied at the bottom of the mountain. A cold, clear night.
- 6/9 Walked back to base camp. More bad weather swept in during the afternoon.
- 7-8/9 Snowed day and night.
- 9/9 Sunny! Walked up the Khani Basa Glacier and found a way through the moraine onto the East Khani Basa Glacier in order to recce the West Face of Tahu Rutum. Clouds came in and I could see nothing. Walked back in a snow storm. Snowed all night.
- 10/9 Snowed all day.
- 11/9 Stopped snowing in the afternoon.
- 12/9 Sunny. Walked up East Khani Basa Glacier and photographed the easy approach to the West Face of Tahu Rutum which I had not been able to see before.
- 13/9 Porters arrived as planned. Short walk to Hagura Shangla Lachung.
- 14/9 Walked to Bitanmal.
- 15/9 Walked to Hispar village. Weather remained annoyingly fine, but it was good for the porters.
- 16/9 Got jeep to road block at Bancha with porters expecting to walk to Nagar, but a jeep arrived on the other side and I returned to Karimabad.
- 17-18/9 In Karimabad.
- 19/9 Bus to Gulmit.
- 20-21/9 Walked up Gulmit Glacier, crossed a pass, and down Ghulkin Glacier to recce peaks.
- 22/9 Bus to Gilgit.
- 23/9 Flew to Islamabad
- 25/9 Flew to Manchester.

Budget

Expenditure		Income	
Flights and visa	£650	MEF grant	£1550
Local flights	100	BMC grant	600
Accommodation, food	200		
Expedition food, equipment	260		
Other equipment	120		
Epigas	50		
Jeeps, local transport	120		
Porters, guide, porter insurance	650		
	<u>£2150</u>		<u>£2150</u>

Acknowledgements

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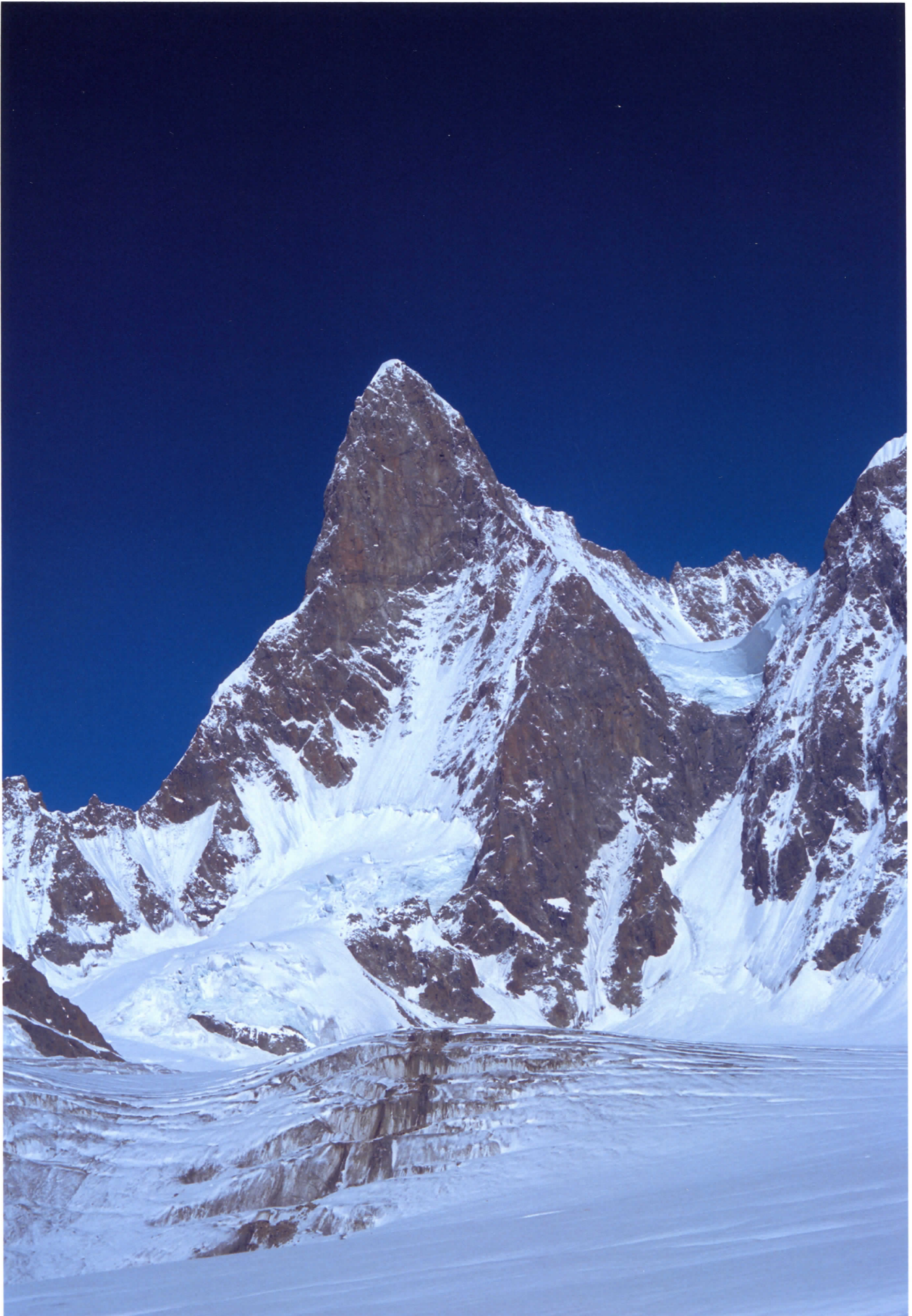
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The route on the north face and east ridge of Haigutum Middle 6032m (Lat/Long 36.03996N 75.32289E).



The unclimbed west face of Tahu Rutum 6350m (36.1213N 75.50764E) from the East Khani Basa Glacier.

1988 on the Hispar Glacier

In July Walter Phipps and Pete Thompson set up Base Camp at Daltanas at the junction of the Hispar and Kunyang Glaciers (Lat/Long 36.15409N 75.12329E). We attempted a number of climbs in the cirque northwest of Base Camp (36.1944N 75.0919E). This is the cirque above the last stream crossed before reaching Daltanas. The climbs are described below:

- a) We attempted Peak 5614m (Google Earth) on the west flank of the cirque (36.19957N 75.08458E). We climbed a couloir to the left of the peak, breaking right at two thirds height to reach a difficult 10m rock pinnacle on the summit. This was badly iced over and Walter was shivering uncontrollably, so we abseiled back down. Alpine PD to the high point.
- b) From a bivi on a plateau at 5230m we attempted the left side of the south face of Falolngkish 6134m (36.21439N 75.09029E), the highest peak in the cirque. At about 5950m we began to traverse towards the summit. Moving slowly and with no bivi gear we decided to descend. Snow and ice, alpine D.
- c) After resting at Base Camp, Pete Thompson returned to the bivi. Setting off at 12am, he soloed the central couloir on the south face of Falolngkish, reaching the summit at 8am. Ice, alpine TD. Descent was by the southeast ridge and a couloir.
- d) We climbed a rock peak 5526m (36.1923N 75.10098E) on the right flank of the cirque from a col to the south. The rock varied from loose to excellent granite, alpine D.
- e) After returning to Karimabad in the Hunza Valley we climbed a fifteen pitch rock route, Perfect Day, in the Ultar Nala above the village. The gully/chimney line starts 300m above the start of the top water channel (Lat/Long 36.2472N 74.6760E). Excellent climbing on granite at up to E2 5c was marred at the top by the final corner of loose rock, where we broke out rightwards across some slabs and up to a grass ramp which led to the shepherds hut. An unplanned night was spent on the route.



Perfect Day takes the obvious central line.



Routes on the south face of Falolingkish 6134m.