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# **Shingu Charpa 2007**



## **Expedition Report**

## **Abstract**

This expedition report describes attempts by a team comprising of John and Anne Arran to complete a free ascent of Shingu Charpa and to explore unclimbed peaks in the area between July and August 2007. Due to being only two climbers, just John and Anne Arran, we changed objective and were successful in freeing an aid route on Denbor Brakk (4800m) in seven days and establishing a new climb 'Welcome to Crackistan' on the granite spire of Zang Brakk (4800m) in 9 days.

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## Introduction

This report describes two successful climbs on Denbor and Zang Brakk as mentioned in the Abstract. This involved some of the hardest crack climbing in the region up to E6/7 and Fr 7c. The expedition is grateful for financial support from The Mount Everest Foundation and the British Mountaineering Council, UKSport.

## Expedition Members

### John Arran (expedition leader)

Age 43. UN aid contract worker, IT and photo-journalist. British.

One of Britain's most experienced and most accomplished rock climbers, with first ascents up to E10 in the Peak district and hard onsight new routes up to E7 throughout Britain. Has several seasons of winter climbing in Scotland and to a lesser extent in the Alps. His first expedition to Kyrgyzstan (1999) resulted in a first ascent of possibly the hardest traditionally-protected free-climb in the country. Has climbed to 5,700m in Kyrgyzstan and Nepal. Has since climbed in Iran, Egypt, China and led three expeditions to remote regions of Venezuela, each of which was successful in establishing major new free-climbs of the highest standard.

### Anne Arran

Age 38. Photo-journalist, contract international worker & coach. British.

A former British competition climbing champion, Anne was one of the first women in Britain to climb F8a. Subsequently she concentrated on traditionally-protected climbs, on-sighting routes up to E6. This wealth of experience has proved useful on expedition, where she has played a significant part in establishing major new big-wall routes in Venezuela, the USA's Grand Canyon, China and at altitude in Kyrgyzstan. Has several winter seasons in Scotland and summer and winter in the Alps.

**Raza:** Guide (only present for a couple of days)

**Hamid:** Cook (stayed in base camp with assistant cook Zakhir)

## Objectives

- To make the first free ascent of the unclimbed East Face of Shingu Charpa (5,600m) – This was changed due to Gareth Parry no longer being able to come with us.
- To explore any unclimbed peaks or rock towers in the Nangma valley, see map. To climb big walls on peaks such as Denbor Brakk (4800m) and Amin Brakk (5850m) according to time and conditions
- To explore neighbouring valleys

## Logistics

## Fund-raising

Financial assistance was obtained from The Mount Everest Foundation, the British Mountaineering Council. Excellent clothing was received from Arc'teryx and Boreal. We also received hardware from Lyon equipment and borrowed a ledge from First Ascent.

## Finances

The approximate expedition accounts for 2 British members share are as follows:

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>£</u>
Trekking company	1220	1240 x 2	M.E.F.	600
Food / gas	100			
Hotel	0		BMC	800
Total equipment	150			
Flights	1400		Personal Investment	1470
Total	2870		Total	2870

NB We shared transport in with a team of 4 Russian climbers.

## Insurance

- Two British expedition members were covered by a BMC trip policy.

## Travel

- **Overall dates:** 19 July–29 August

## Food and Accommodation

- Accommodation in Islamabad was provided as part of the Trekking company provision at the Regency hotel Islamabad, the Concordia Hotel Skardu and a private guest house on the way back. Unfortunately our digital SLR was stolen, probably in the Regency hotel on the way out. The Concordia has a very nice garden.
- Food of all types is readily available in Islamabad though in general it is quite expensive in Skardu for any western products. We used North Pakistan Treks and Tours who were generally good. Also worth a try is [www.karakoramagic.com](http://www.karakoramagic.com)

## Communications

- Mobile phone coverage is not possible once a little way out of Islamabad or Skardu. We used two-way walkie-talkies on the wall, which were extremely useful and had a 3<sup>rd</sup> radio to speak with our cook/guide at a set time each day that stayed at BC. Sometimes we also spoke to the Russian team.
- We didn't take a SAT phone because there was radio contact with Kande at our BC and someone could run for help. We paid \$6,000 helicopter deposit, shared with the Russian team and were able to collect our share on return, slightly earlier than they did. It would have been easier to have had the deposit in one of our names however.

## Specialist Equipment

- We uses a portaledge on both routes, which was very useful on the second route because the weather deteriorated.
- A full aiding rack, including bolt kit, was taken. Pegs were placed on the A3 section and trad gear used on the pitches. Three bolts were placed on the new route at belays over the 16 pitches.

## Risks and Hazards

- The risks associated with climbing in this area are considerable if the weather deteriorates for any length of time.
- The rock was generally excellent for climbing but sometimes the cracks had some vegetation lower down, but this wasn't as bad as some reports suggested. There was not much loose rock. Sometimes foot holds had a thin skin of granite and needed to be pressed against a few times to get a good foot hold.
- We judged the water to be safe to drink at BC but all water and restaurant food in cities should be treated with caution.
- Playing cricket! One porter injured himself getting a rock in the eye while playing at base camp.
- Probably the greatest risk is travelling by road to Skardu and beyond.

## Medical Arrangements

- A comprehensive first aid kit was carried and considerably trimmed down on the routes.

## Environment and Social Impact

- Naturally everything taken into the mountain environment was brought out again, and every effort was taken to minimise the effects of our passage. We donated some money to a local school. At BC and above we only saw 3 small Zo (cow) herders
- We replaced wood we found in a bivvy on the way up to K6. there was some trash, big metal cans, which had been left up there.
- Our cook was very responsible with rubbish.

## Photography

There is great photo potential here.

## Itinerary

Team members: John Arran, Anne Arran

- **Access:**

21-23 July - drive to Skardu

24 July – drive to Kande

25-26 July – walk to BC underneath Shingu Charpa

26-27 July - ferrying loads up to ABC

- **Climbing:**

28 July for 7 days for freeing Denbor Brakk

5-8 August – Rest at base camp

10-19th August – Climbed new route on Zang Brakk

20<sup>th</sup> August – descend to BC

21 August – collect bags from hill and rest

22 -23 August – Rest at base camp and exploratory walk to see Russians climbing on Shingu and look at probably unclimbed peaks. Went bouldering.

24 August – Walked up towards K6 and bivied out, took photos and returned to BC on 25<sup>th</sup>

26 August – leave for Skardu by jeep.

## **Conclusion**

The expedition was successful and enjoyable. Only not so enjoyable when it snowed on the wall and we ran out of food.

**Many thanks for the financial support of the BMC, UKSport, MEF and for clothing from arc'teryx, equipment from, Boreal, Petzl and Beal and ledge from First Ascent.**

**Appendix 1 images – Pakistan – a place of contrasts**  
**Appendix 2 Press release for climbing media**



**Climbing on Denbor Brakk**



**New route on Zang Brakk**

**Possible unclimbed peaks below near Shingu Charpa**

