

Kichatna Spries 2010 expedition

Climbers –

Adrian Nelhams



Dean Mounsey



Many thanks for all the fantastic support we had for the trip –

The Mount Everest Foundation

The BMC



Mountain Works



Marmot UK



Objectives

A new mixed/ice line on the West Face of Mount Jeffers - Kichatna Spires region.



A new mixed/ice line on the NW Face of Middle Triple Peak – Kichatna Spires.



Itinerary

Fly to Anchorage – Delta Airlines www.delta.com

Overnight in Anchorage – The Puffin Inn, Anchorage www.puffinn.net

Equipment shop – REI, Anchorage www.rei.com

Food Shop – Carrs, Anchorage www.carrspc.com & Walmart, Anchorage www.walmart.com

Taxi to Talkeetna – Go Purple Shuttle www.gopurpleshuttle.com

Overnight in Talkeetna – Talkeetna Air Taxi have a free bunkhouse in Talkeetna for climbers using the TAT air service into their mountain destinations www.talkeetnaair.com



Flight into the Kichatna Spires region, landing on the Tatina Glacier – Paul Roderick at Talkeetna Air Taxi www.talkeetnaair.com



National Park Ranger station, check-in and weather forecasts – Denali National Park Service www.nps.gov/DENA

Satellite Phone communication for weather forecasts, return flight and emergencies – Peter Hoar at All Road Communications www.allroadcommunications.com

Another useful weather site – www.arh.noaa.gov



Equipment

Camping

2x tents – 1x 2/3 person mountain tent & 1x 2 person superlight Gore-Tex single skin tent

Heavy duty plastic bags to help pitch the tents on the glacier

2x Snow shovels

2x Stoves – 1x Jetboil stove & 1x free standing burner with legs (both run on gas)

2x 250g Butane/Propane gas cylinders per day

6x 125g Butane/Propane gas cylinders to fit inside Jetboil when on the move

1x 1½ litre non-stick pan with lid

1x Large non-stick frying pan

Insulated mugs, bowls and cutlery for the both of us

Lighters



Hardware/equipment

2x Snowshoes

2x Avalanche transceivers

Avalanche Probe

Binoculars

3x 60m 7.8mm climbing ropes

Old rope for using as abseil tat

16x Ice screws

16x Quickdraws (half of which are 4ft slings shortened)

6x 8ft slings

3x Sets of Wires

2x Sets of Friends

10x Selection of Pegs

Spare ice axe pick

First Aid Kit

Duck Tape

Spare sunglasses

Wands

Personal

Ruc-sac

Double boots & rock climbing shoes

Ski poles

Harness complete with belay plate, prussiks, ropeman etc

Helmet

Knife

Crampons

Technical Ice axes

Headlamp & spare batteries

Abolokov ice threader

Compass & map

Water Bottle

Gaiters

Sunglasses

Basic wash kit, anti-bacterial hand wash, wet wipes and toilet roll

Clothing

Insulated Jacket & trousers

Softshell Jacket and trousers

Warm layers

Selection of gloves & warm hats

Travel clothes



Food

Plenty of zip lock plastic bags

6 days of dehydrated food

Plenty of BC food including fresh meat which can be buried in the glacier to freeze and keep fresh

Tea bags and instant smash take form the UK

Lunches – Muffins/Bagels with individually wrapped single cheese & ham/chicken, chocolate, fruit & nuts

Breakfast – Instant porridge/muesli and on days off, eggs and bacon

Dinners – Rice/pasta/smash, fresh meat, peppers/onions etc, tuna, herbs & spices

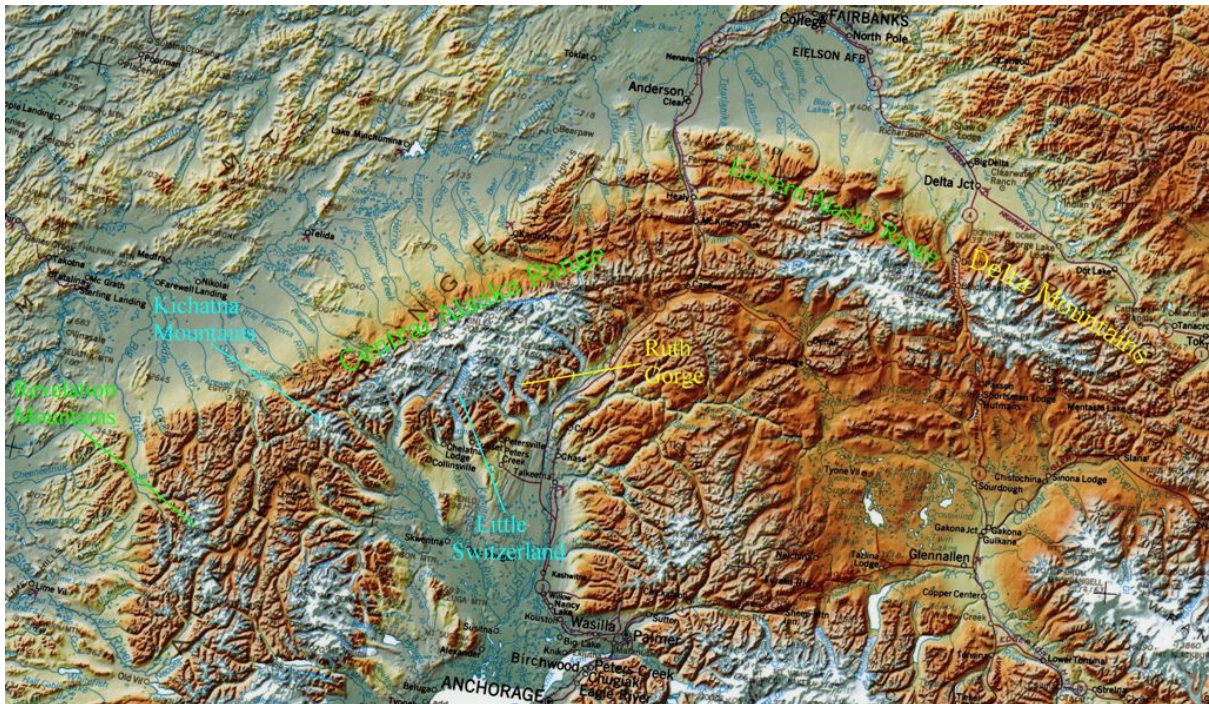
Cooking oil

Powdered fruit drinks

Tea & coffee

Powdered milk

The Kichatna Spires is a region South West of Denali & West of Talkeetna - 40mins by light aircraft



The Kichatna Spires act like the bow of a ship for most of the prevailing weather systems, getting more than its fair share of harsh weather and strong winds.

However this year we found the weather to be exceptionally warm - no overnight freezing & 30 degree daytime temperatures.

Having been to the region before, it was clear that the winter had just come to an end and with the flick of a switch, summer had arrived.

We were hoping for more typical late Spring, early Summer conditions with warm/moderate daytime temperatures & a good overnight freeze - this would have started to transform the snow, created ice & given us more favourable climbing conditions.

The snow was rapidly transforming and ice had formed albeit thinly, but it didn't freeze the whole time we were there.

Our chosen mixed/ice lines continually avalanched, shedding their winter coats and with no window of freeze, we realised over time that climbing these routes was out of the question.

In the end, we had to opt for safer objectives on other aspects.

We did however climb two new routes during our time on the Tatina Glacier

Attempting one of our objectives - The West face of Mount Jeffers



Dean attempting a steep pitch of ice which quickly petered out into deep overhanging, unconsolidated snow.

The overhanging tube of deep unconsolidated snow had built up over this period of exceptionally warm weather.

The route continually avalanched with the releases only slowing between 4am and 5am.

Above, fresh snow still laid thick and heavy on the rocks, ledges and couloirs all funnelling down our route.

The exceptionally warm weather was cleaning out the winter snows, with no overnight freeze to allow us any major push on the line.

A view of North Triple on the left & Middle Triple on the right from the Tatina Glacier



We spent two days walking across from the Tatina Glacier from where we were camped, to set up an ABC the other side of the Col below our second objective, a mixed/ice line on the N/W face of Middle Triple Peak.

Unfortunately, we found the same conditions as we had been experiencing on the Tatina Glacier below Mount Jeffers - very warm, exceptionally warm temperatures and still a lot of fresh snow high up avalanching and continually washing down our intended route.

We returned to our BC on the Tatina Glacier and set our sights on a couple of other objectives which we felt were less threatened and on very different aspects.

Our first New Route



Our first new route was a beautiful line to a summit of around 7550m as seen from our camp on the Tatina Glacier.

We set off early & climbed the initial easy snow slopes up to the base of our route.

After roping up at the base of the gulley, we climbed 10 pitches of easy snow and ice slopes - Scottish grade 3 to where the gulley abruptly ends with an overhanging chimney/corner crack system. We climbed this for 2 hard pitches at ED 2 with crampons.

More awkward rock scrambling & climbing lead to the summit.

The route was around 800m in length

We called the route **Beat Surrender** and graded it for the 2 hard pitches high up the route at **ED2**

Two thirds of the way up the easier lower slopes of **Beat Surrender**



Our second New route



A beautiful curving line up to a summit of around 7740m

Metronome

We climbed easier snow slopes interspersed with very awkward and steep chock stones to where the gully narrowed and steepened.

Steep & thin ice capped with more awkward chock stones, overhanging in places, lead to continually difficult awkward pitches interspersed with steep unconsolidated snow.

Drier steep rock pitches and then easier mixed climbing lead to the summit.

The easier climbing lower down was Scottish grade 3 but the awkward and hard mixed/ice pitches & hard pulls through the chock stones was ED1.

We named the route **Metronome** and graded it **ED1**

The route was around 1000m in length.



Half way up Metronome ED1

We attempted another route but were turned back by very warm weather, unconsolidated snow and avalanches.



You can see the line of Beat Surrender on the left of the picture & our attempt on another lovely line just right of centre.

Home

Paul Roderick arrived to pick us up 2 ½ weeks later.

We flew all our toilet waste back out with us - in canisters the Denali National Park Ranger Station gave loaned us & disposed of back at the Ranger station.

All our rubbish was collected in plastic bags and disposed of when we got back to Talkeetna.

Empty gas cylinders were bagged up separately & also disposed of back in Talkeetna.

All we left behind was the rigged abseil stations on the routes which we'd climbed (wires and pegs linked together with old rope/tape).

Wildlife

Bizarrely all we saw was a Bumble Bee!

Although on the flight back to Talkeetna we did see a bear, many bear prints and empty dens from where the bears had been hibernating.

It's interesting that as the bears dig their way out of their dens, the soft wet mud makes their paws dirty which in turn leaves muddy paw prints all over the spring snow and older snow patches, making the bears tracks easy to spot 500ft off the deck in a light aircraft.

All in all a fantastic trip which was very successful & inspiring.

The Kichatna Spires is such an amazing, inspiring place with so few people visiting the region each year, a true wilderness & adventure climbing there.

We'll be back next year to try again.

Many thanks

Adrian Nelhams

Accounts

Income

MEF Grant	£950.00
BMC Grant	£1000.00
Total	<u>£1950.00</u>

Outgoings

Adrian train to the airport	£31.50
Dean taxi to the airport	£18.00
Adrian Flight	£726.89
Dean Flight	£840.00
Excess baggage	£37.45
Excess baggage	£39.49
Satellite phone	£245.96
Satellite phone postage	£10.00
Puffin Inn	£102.50
National Park Permits	£20.00
Talkeetna Air Taxi flights	£1350.72
Carrs/Walmart food shop	£174.80
REI gas cylinders/maps etc	£131.20
Tent	£338.70
Other hardware for the trip	£275.00
Total outgoings	<u>£4342.21</u>

Total cost of our trip minus £1950.00 in grants was

£2392.21