

# BRITISH TAHU RATUM EXPEDITION

23 July - 31 September 2010

*Tom Ripley  
Luke Hunt  
Hamish Dunn  
Holly Mumford*

[www.tahuratum.blogspot.com](http://www.tahuratum.blogspot.com)

## ***With financial support from:***

- *British Mountaineering Council*
- *Mount Everest Foundation*
- *Nick Estcourt Award*
- *Shipton Tilman Award*
- *Mark Clifford Award*
- *Jeremy Willson Charitable Trust*

***Abstract*** - *An unsuccessful attempt, due to bad weather, on the unclimbed NW Ridge of Tahu Ratum, Hispar Region, Karakorum, Pakistan.*

*Report compiled by: Tom Ripley*

## Introduction

This expedition report details an unsuccessful attempt on the unclimbed NW Ridge of Tahu Ratum - a 6651m granite pyramid in the Hispar Region of the Karakoram. The aim of this report is to tell the story of three young climbers' first expedition. We hope that other climbers will benefit from reading this report, particularly young climbers planning their first expedition.



*Tahu Ratum's NW ridge is the left hand skyline. Photo: Mumford.*

The Team - consisted of Tom Ripley, Hamish Dunn and Luke Hunt, all university students in their early twenties. After having done a substantial amount of climbing together in the Alps they decided they were ready to embark on their first expedition. Holly Mumford, a friend of Tom's from uni, came along for the adventure and experience but went no further than base camp.

The Plan - Although this was our first trip to bigger mountains we wanted to build on our experiences in the Alps and tackle a technical objective in alpine style, which would hopefully push us to the limit of our abilities. Tahu Ratum's NW ridge was chosen, because it is a beautiful, technical looking, unclimbed line on a remote mountain.

*Some things we should have considered when choosing an objective.*

Basecamp - We spent three weeks camped on a moraine band on the junction between the Khani Basa and Khani Basa East glaciers. When selecting an objective it is worth trying to find out what the base camp will be like. After all BC will be your home for the duration of the expedition and three weeks camped on moraine in bad weather is not fun. I'll definitely be looking for a grassy base camp next time I go on an expedition.





*Our base camp - Moraine, moraine and more moraine. Photo: Mumford.*

Distance of walk in - In hindsight, we were quite naive when we choose our mountain, six days away from civilization. Choosing a closer objective might have been better for two reasons: it decreases the level of commitment and seriousness of the climb, not necessarily a good thing, but probably a good idea on your first expedition. More importantly, it also decreases the cost. Porter wages were our single biggest cost in Pakistan, a closer mountain would have been substantially cheaper.

The Porters - The porters in the Nagyr region of Pakistan have a reputation for being hard work and very expensive. Our experience of the men of Hispar Village was similar. I'd recommend avoiding this region of the Karakorum for your first expedition, if not all together. There are however plenty of fantastic looking unclimbed mountains in Pakistan outside of Nagyr region.

Other objectives - Ideally select a mountain with a number of smaller objectives in the surrounding area. This way if you get plagued with mediocre weather or your original plan is just too hard you can at least get some climbing done. The main problem with Tahu Ratum is that all the surrounding mountains are huge and made of very poor rock. Consistent bad weather left us confined to base camp with little to do other than play chess, cards and throw rocks at each other when it all go too much.

## **Weather**

Bad weather was the main factor that prevented us from climbing Tahu Ratum. The Monsoon travelled further north than usual in August 2010, which caused extensive flooding throughout Pakistan. This also meant that, during our time at Base Camp, we had no stable period of weather long enough to give the mountain a serious go. The weather log (Pages 4 and 5) gives a rough picture of what it was like each day. While at Base Camp, most days we would wake up to rain and cloud. The rain would gradually lighten throughout the morning, stopping around midday. The sun would then come out and it

would be reasonably clear from mid afternoon onwards. We'd often go to bed under a clear starry sky. It would then cloud over in the small hours and begin to rain around 4am.

Luckily we weren't left completely in the dark, Tom's dad was able to text our Satellite Phone with daily weather forecasts. We used the forecast for the nearby 7000m peak Kanjuit Sar, which was available for free online at: <http://www.mountain-forecast.com/peaks/Kanjut-Sar/forecasts/5000>. This forecast appeared to be fairly reliable, but as you can see below was rarely positive!



*Hamish peers out into the rain - a standard day at Base Camp. Photo: Mumford.*

### **Expedition diary and weather log.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Saturday 24 July	Guest House, Islamabad	Hot	
Sunday 25 July	Hotel in Chilas KKH	Hot	
Monday 26 July	Hilltop Hotel Karimabad	Hot	
Tuesday 27 July	Hilltop Hotel Karimabad	Hot and cloudy	
Wednesday 28 July	Goat Farm - Nagyr	Rain	TR and LH sick.
Thursday 29 July	Hispar Village	Rain	
Friday 30 July	Edge of Hispar Glacier	Rain then overcast	
Saturday 31 July	Bitanmal	Rain then sunny	HM altitude sickness
Sunday 1 August	Edge of Hispar Glacier	Fine	
Monday 2 August	Junction between Hispar and Kani Basi glaciers	Sunny	
Tuesday 3 August	First night at Base Camp	Sunny	
Wednesday 4 August	Base Camp	Sunny then cloudy	
Thursday 5 August	Base Camp	Rain morning clear evening	



Date	Location	Weather	Notes
Friday 6 August	Base Camp	Cloudy morning then sun	
Saturday 7 August	Base Camp	Cloudy with sunny spells	
Sunday 8 August	Base Camp	Rain and cloud	
Monday 9 August	Base Camp	Rain and cloud	
Tuesday 10 August	Base Camp	Rain and cloud clear evening	
Wednesday 11 August	Base Camp	Rain and cloud clear evening	
Thursday 12 August	Base of Tahu Ratum	Sunny all day	
Friday 13 August	Base Camp	Thick cloud and rain	
Saturday 14 August	Base Camp	Rain morning cloudy evening	
Sunday 15 August	Base Camp	Constant rain all day	
Monday 16 August	Base Camp	Constant rain all day	
Tuesday 17 August	Base Camp	Cloudy then rain	
Wednesday 18 August	Base Camp	Sunny and cloudy then clear	
Thursday 19 August	Base Camp	Some sun, rain and cloud	
Friday 20 August	Base Camp	Rain morning sun evening	
Saturday 21 August	Walk out	Sunny	
Sunday 22 August	Walk out	Sunny	
Monday 23 August	Walk out	Sunny	
Tuesday 24 August	Hispar Village	Cloudy then rain	
Wednesday 25 August	Hilltop Hotel Karimabad	Drizzle then cloud	All ill
Thursday 26 August	Hilltop Hotel Karimabad	Cloudy all day	
Friday 27 August	Rivera Hotel Gilgit	Sunny with clouds	
Saturday 28 August	Hotel Mirage Islamabad	Hot and sunny	
Sunday 29 August	Hotel Mirage Islamabad	Hot and sunny	
Monday 30 August	Hotel Mirage Islamabad	Hot and sunny	
Tuesday 31 August	Tom's Home	Cloudy	

## Travel in Pakistan

Getting to Tahu Ratum was a long, drawn out, complicated and costly process.

*Our basic journey was as follows. Fly Manchester - Islamabad. Minibus Islamabad - Karimabad. Jeep Karimabad - Huro. Walk Huro - Khani Basa East glacier.*

International Flights - We flew direct from Manchester to Islamabad with Pakistan International Airways (PIA). As far as we are aware PIA and Air Blue are the only airlines who currently fly from the UK direct to Pakistan. At time of writing PIA have very generous luggage allowances (40kg per person) so we had no problem getting all our gear into Pakistan. However the luggage allowances for the internal flights are half this, but a small bribe in the right pocket should solve any problems.

Return tickets were a reasonable £437 each, but I really don't recommend flying PIA and will avoid them at all costs when I return to Pakistan, for the following reasons:

- The flights were hot and crammed full of screaming children who neither their parents or the cabin crew seemed able to control.
- PIA have one of the most antiquated/dilapidated websites I have ever encountered. When I eventually managed to book the tickets, without their website crashing, the

confirmation email showed that the tickets had been booked on the wrong return date. After what seemed like hours trying to contact PIA by phone I was informed that only way to change the tickets was to visit Manchester Airport in person. So I had to waste a day of my time traveling to Manchester from North Wales to sort this. This would also cause us further problems later on...

- Due to bad weather we cut our expedition short by seven days. Changing the flights so we could come home early was one of the most difficult and painful experiences of the whole trip. Our previous change of booking, explained above, meant we had used up our one free change of booking. So PIA now wanted to charge us a £50 penalty charge per ticket to change our tickets. Hamish and I spent six stressful hours at the PIA booking office going from manager to manager until we eventually got the penalty fair waived.

Internal travel - Our original plan had been to fly north from Islamabad to Gilgit with PIA and then get a minibus to Karimabad. This would have cost about \$100 each plus a half fare for our guide. Due to water on the runway at Gilgit our flight did not fly, so rather than wait an extra day we opted to be driven up the Karakoram Highway in an air conditioned minibus, arranged by Nazir Sabir Expeditions. This cost roughly the same as flying. At time of writing driving the KKH goes against Foreign Office advice and therefore invalidates your travel insurance, so we can't really recommend it. However the bumpy ride is thoroughly enjoyable, despite going terrifyingly close to some huge drops, and goes through some amazing scenery. Although having an armed police officer in our vehicle, as we drove through the Swat Region, was a little bit too alarming!

On our return journey we had an equally exciting time. As we were short of cash and fuel shortages had nearly doubled the cost of hiring a vehicle and driver, we took the NATCO Bus from Karimabad to Gilgit. The journey was incredibly bumpy and, at times, painfully slow but only cost about £10 for the four us plus our guide.



*The cargo plane that flew us back to Islamabad like refugees. Photo: Dunn.*

Getting back to Islamabad was slightly more complicated. Flooding had washed away the KKH and although it had been recently repaired there was no way we were going to drive back down it. Thankfully Tom's mother had been in touch with the British High Commission in Islamabad. Through the Gilgit Tourism Secretary they arranged for us to fly out on the

return leg of a military aid flight. This was all very exciting and being crammed in the hold of a military cargo plane is as close to being a refugee as any of us ever want to be. Soon we were back in the sweltering heat of Islamabad and best of all the journey was completely free!

Karimabad to Hispar - Our plan had been to hire two jeeps with drivers and drive from Karimabad straight to Hispar. Unfortunately the road to Hispar had been damaged by rain and was impassable by jeep. This meant that we could only drive to Huro, a goat farm halfway between Karimabad and Hispar. This added an extra day to our walk in and out and four extra porter stages (two up, two down) at considerable expense. It's probably a good idea to take a 10% contingency of your in country budget to cover unforeseen events such as this.

Our internal travel was all organized by Nazir Sabir Expeditions. The only way considerable savings could have been made is by taking a NATCO bus from Islamabad to Gilgit, rather than flying. However as noted above driving the KKH goes against Foreign Office advice and therefore invalidates your insurance. Jeeps were booked locally in Karimabad. Two Jeeps with drivers, was enough for the six of us and all our gear and food. The journey from Karimabad to Huro cost 8000Rs on the way up, but due to fuel shortages the cost on the way down went up to 11000Rs.

The Walk In - The walk from Huro to our basecamp on the junction between the Khani Basa East and Khani Basa glacier took six days. The walking was mainly on grassy paths and steep mud slopes on the side of the glacier. The exception being day three, which involved crossing through a horrendous maze of crevasses on a dry glacier. This was extra stressful as we were unacclimatized at 4000m and the porters vanished, splitting into three separate groups. Other than that there were a couple of small glaciers to cross, the occasional hairy river to jump and lots of exciting, death-chess moraine to negotiate. With very weary legs we arrived at our basecamp on August 3.

### **The Porters - By Hamish Dunn**

The Hispar porters don't have a great reputation amongst climbers who have visited the area. Our guide described porters from the Nagyr area as, "very difficult people." Our first and lasting impressions of these porters are pretty much that. However, amongst the porters were some very kind men who made our trek down far more enjoyable than the trek up. There are national rates set for porters across Pakistan, but Nagyr porters set their own rates (expect to pay 50% more than the national rates); If you don't want to get ripped off go to Skardu.

The first problem was that we had to start the trek a days walk further down the valley than Hispar village, due to the track had collapsed in several places, rendering it inaccessible by jeep. The next morning while the porters bickered over loads, I negotiated a price with the bridge man. The bridge man's family built the bridge and charge expeditions a toll for each person that crosses it. We negotiated a price for the return journey, paid and even got a receipt; unfortunately this wasn't to be the last confrontation with the bridge man.

We didn't suffer any major problems on the first day of the trek, but the second was rife with incompetence. The porters had very little respect for their Sirdar (leader) and decided to split into three separate groups when crossing a very complicated glacier. It was on the fourth day of the trek that real problems began. One of the younger porters had taken a fancy to our mangoes and eaten not just one or two but all three kilos! Not only had he

eaten all our mangos, but his load was now three kilos lighter and we were paying him to carry a full load. We weren't too happy to say the least. The Sirdar resolved the situation by offering to bring up 3kg of mangoes on the return journey.

The second problem was over pay. We had agreed a number of stages with the village noble prior to leaving Hispar but the porters now wanted more money. The porters wanted two stages pay for the walk between the Khani Basa glacier junction and our base camp. In reality this distance is no more than one stage but a precedent has been set by previous expeditions to the area which is now impossible to change. We told the porters that we wouldn't pay them until we reached base camp and that we were not paying for all the men to walk to base camp. I.e. the ration porters and those now carrying next to nothing due to supplies being eaten on the way up. We effectively went on strike and told them we were in no rush. After an hour of discussion between themselves they decided that we would not have to pay for the ration porters for the last two stages. The ration porters weren't needed since the porters would be returning in the evening. We accepted this proposal and finally reached base camp all too happy to have some peace and quiet at last!



*Hamish high jumping against the porters at Bitanmal sports day. Photo: Mumford.*

The return journey involved fewer disputes and the porters were much friendlier. We had a different Sirdar who was a much better leader and was well respected by the other porters. There was a slight dispute over a porter that had carried up 12kg of extra supplies (when we had asked for 25kg) and was demanding pay for 25kg. We solved this by paying him for 25kg if he carried 12kg (or thereabouts) back down again.

We spent a very enjoyable afternoon with the porters playing games while camped at Bitanmal. We challenged them to rock throwing (they won), limbo (we won), running (they won) and arm wrestling (we won). Singing and dancing filled the rest of the afternoon and continued round the campfire that evening.

Once we had arrived back at Hispar Village, our final problem came not from the porters (who even brought us gifts of food from their homes) but from the bridge man. The evil bridge man brought along an older man who was allegedly his uncle. This older man did



not agree with the price we had agreed and paid four weeks earlier and therefore wanted more money. The amount of money he wanted was small (in western terms) but we refused to succumb to his dishonesty and would not pay. However, our guide, who is used to all expenses paid Japanese treks, tried to pay the extra fee out of his own pocket despite us insisting that he shouldn't. This left us in a very awkward situation, whereby we're forcing our guides' money back into his hands, whilst paying the evil bridge man.

My best piece of advice if you decide to go to this area is to ensure that your guide is very thick-skinned, is willing to tow the party line and that you are willing to play hard ball.

## Climbing

Tahu Ratum is situated 13km (according to Hamish's GPS) from our base camp on the junction between Khani Basa and Khani Basa East glaciers. The base of the mountain is approximately 5100m. The approach was quite flat to begin with and steepened up as we approached the mountain. In summer 2010 the vast majority of the approach was on wet glacier, but in previous years the approach has been entirely on dry glacier.



*The three of us snug as bugs in rugs below Tahu Ratum. Photo: Ripley.*

We made two forays up the glacier. The first was a reconnaissance and acclimatisation trip. We got up at around five and left around six. We walked up the glacier with lightish sacks. Our original plan had been to get onto the ridge, so we could get an idea of what to expect before descending back to base camp. However we set off too late and ended up wadding through the sun softened snow. Luke was also really struggling with the altitude. So we turned around just below the approach gully at about 5100m.

Bad weather thwarted any further acclimatisation trips. Eventually frustration got the better of us and with reasonable forecast we set off early on 12 August, with very heavy rucksacks. The snow was frozen and we made quick progress up the glacier. Our intention had been to get up on to the base of the ridge and camp there, before making a two day push to the summit. Unfortunately by the time we got to the base of the mountain the sun was out and we were sinking up to our knees in snow. Luke was also struggling with the

altitude. We pitched our bivi tent below the mountain and spent a very bored day hiding from the sun.

We got up early, brewed up and set off up the approach gully. The easy angled snow climbable, but it quickly became very soft and very, very hard work. We spent several hours fighting our way up. Eventually we got established on a tiny rock ledge beneath the rock section that would lead to the ridge. Luke set off leading up the very loose terrain. By this point Tom's Batura boots had completely soaked through and his feet were numb. The weather had also come in and looked as though it was about to turn. We made the decision to turn around. Luke abseiled back down to our belay ledge, thankfully managing to avoid knocking off any teetering blocks. We rigged an abseil and several hours later we arrived at base camp with our tails between our legs. Unfortunately we didn't get another stable period of weather to give the mountain another go.



*Tom climbing the snow couloir. Photo: Dunn.*

## **Equipment**

Clothing - We wore a similar setup to what we would wear in the Alps in summer. We also carried a proper belay jacket and proper waterproof jacket.

Boots - Luke and Hamish wore Nepal Extremes and Phantom Lites respectively and had no problems. I took Sportiva Baturas, which leaked like a sieve in wet snow. If I was going again I would take double plastics boots as they are easier to dry.

Sleeping Bags - We all used down bags with 600g of fill and they were plenty warm enough.

Rucksacks - OMM supplied us with their 45 litre "Villan" sack. These were generally well designed and a great size for our climb, but were let down by not having enough padding on the shoulder straps. This made them really uncomfortable when fully loaded with all the paraphernalia associated with Himalayan alpinism.

Rack - We took lots of gear to base camp in case we had abseil off loads during an attempt. On the route we planned to take a lightish alpine rack. We also took two pairs of 60m ropes in case one pair got chopped.

Tents - We borrowed Mountain Equipment Helios for personal tents at basecamp and a RAB Summit single skin tent for the route - this was very cosy for three! These worked well, except Tom managed to snap the pole of the RAB when pitching it beneath Tahu Ratum! Fortunately a section of walking pole and duct tape made an adequate repair.

Gas - We took 2 jetboil stoves for the route, but we also brought along a MSR XGK in case the canister gas didn't work. We acquired the gas through Nazir Sabir Expeditions, who tried their hardest to get us quality gas. Unfortunately most of our canisters had been refilled with a mix that didn't perform well at altitude. If quality gas is essential for your climb than consider getting it imported from the UK at considerable expense and hassle. Our cook, Nisar, used an inefficient kerosene stove with a double burner. If you want to save on fuel, and therefore portorage, take two MSR stoves for your cook to use at base camp.

Maps - We took the Swiss Alpine Club maps, which were useful for working out where we were and familiarizing ourselves with our surroundings, but weren't much use for navigation. The maps were surveyed in 1990 (the year Tom was born!) and by our reckoning some of the contour lines and spot heights were inaccurate. Hamish and Luke both had altimeter watches and we also had GPS unit.

Communications - Pete Benson lent us his Thuraya Satellite Phone and solar panel. A sat phone is a necessity for expedition climbing in Pakistan as it is required to contact Askari Aviation in event of rescue. Tom's Dad was able to text us daily weather forecasts, which were really helpful but mostly depressing! It was also great for keeping touch with Family. We had \$80 of credit at the start of the expedition and had spent most of that by the end, mainly contacting the British High Commission to arrange our flight out. The solar panel worked really well, charging even in mediocre light. It was also used to charge Ipods and cameras, as well as power our speakers.

Food - The majority of our food was bought in Karimabad, but we took out a load of freeze dried meals, cereal bars, energy tablets and gels from the UK. We managed to cram all of this into our hand luggage so we didn't have any problem with going over our luggage allowance. Our only real regret on the food side is not taking chocolate, thinking it would melt on the journey up. It would have, but it would still been better than no chocolate!

Headtorches - Tom, Luke and Hamish all took Petzl Myo XP torches with them for use on the route and around base camp. Early on in the trip Luke and Hamish's torches stopped working due to a faulty connection. Fortunately we'd brought along a spare good headtorch and Holly had a good one she leant us too. It is probably a good idea for each climber to take two torches to base camp.

## **Grants and equipment sponsorship**

The expedition was generously supported by a large number of companies and organizations. Without their help we would have been unable to go to Pakistan this summer. Thank you!

Grants - The expedition received financial support from the following organisations:



Nick Estcourt Award: £1500

British Mountaineering Council: £1800

Mountain Everest Foundation: £1750

Jeremy Willson Charitable Trust: £750

Shipton Tillman Award: \$4000

Mark Clifford Award: £500

### Equipment and Food

*A big thank you to the following companies who supplied us with gear and food.*

- Geobar
- Mountain Equipment
- Mule Bar
- Multimat
- Needle Sports
- OMM
- Rab
- Teko
- Tilley
- Yeti

*Thanks to the following companies who allowed us to buy gear at a generous discount.*

- Beyond Hope
- DB Outdoor
- DMM
- First Ascent
- Lyon Equipment
- Patagonia
- Rock + Run
- Vasque

## **Medicine and Jabs – By Luke Hunt (4<sup>th</sup> Year Medical Student)**

Preparing the first aid kit for the expedition was quite a challenge. We were responsible for ourselves, our guide and cook as well as a large number of porters in a remote location for an extended period of time. Deciding what to take involved balancing the likelihood of a condition occurring against its seriousness and cost. We'd compiled a list of what to take and had this checked by a family friend of Tom's: Dr Theo Weston, who recommended the addition of eye medications (chloramphenicol; and amethocaine) for snow blindness, which proved very useful.

We took a broad range of antibiotics; pain killers; anti diarrhoea medicine (including oral rehydration preparations); Intravenous fluids; plenty of dressings and wound cleaning materials; drugs for high altitude illness; topical preparations and the Oxford Handbook of Wilderness Medicine. I think we got it about right. Appendix 1 details the full list - though I must stress this is a record of what we took not a recommended list. We bought the entire contents of our first aid kit in the UK and spent £100 in total. It would probably be cheaper and easier to have bought the medicines over the counter from one of the large chemists in Islamabad.

On our return to civilization, we gave away what was left of our first aid kit to a charity hospital in Gilgit, an area that had been badly affected by the floods.

### Medical Conditions Encountered.

1. AMS. Both myself and Holly suffered from this on the trek in. Due to the low gradient during the approach trek descent was not a feasible option, so both Holly and I took Diamox and ibuprofen for this. I found myself acclimatizing at a slower rate than Tom and Hamish and developed AMS on both our attempts on the mountain. As well as going for extra acclimatization walks, I used Diamox prophylactically on our attempts. This was a last resort decision I did not take lightly. On balance I felt I would rather use it and have a chance of climbing the mountain than not.
2. Gastroenteritis. All four of us (and a few of the porters) got traveler's diarrhoea, and a few got gastroenteritis. We all used loperamide whilst traveling and a few loading doses of ciprofloxacin for the severe cases.
3. Impetigo. One of us caught Impetigo, possibly off the children at Hispar Village, and took a full course of flucloxacillin. I gave another course to a child with a severe bullous form in Hispar.
4. Snow Blindness. This was common problem amongst the porters, none of whom were equipped with glacier glasses. We used a variety of approaches including; giving our spare pairs away; fashioning emergency glasses, paracetamol; chloramphenicol; and in two cases amethocaine eye drops. I was not expecting such a high incidence of snow blindness amongst the porters. When I next go on an expedition I will try to acquire a large number of super cheap sunglasses to

give to porters. If doing this it is probably a good idea to issue the sunglasses as and when they are needed, as otherwise the porters will leave them in the village and still go snow blind.

5. Many of the porters complained of simple headaches and other minor complaints. I planned for this by taking a large excess of aspirin, ibuprofen paracetamol and plasters.
6. Gallstones. Two porters presented with a history indicative of this condition. I explained their options and gave them appropriate pain killers. Surgical management of these people was probably unlikely given their remote location and poverty.
7. Haematemesis. On the return trek one porter presented with a 2 week history of expectorating fresh blood. He was otherwise very well with no obvious cause. I checked up on him daily during the trek and strongly recommended he sought medical attention for this.

Jabs - It is recommended that travelers visiting Pakistan have a number of vaccinations including Rabies. Tom and Holly were vaccinated against this but Hamish and Luke were not. We didn't see any rabid animals during our stay and would question whether it is worth it. Taking anti malaria tablets is recommended below altitudes of 1800m (Islamabad and the KKH). Holly and Hamish did throughout the trip although we only saw a couple of mosquitoes.

### **Formalities and Red Tape**

There are fair number of formalities that need sorting before embarking on an expedition to Pakistan. We used Nazir Sabir Expeditions (NSE) to swiftly cut through most of the red tape. We found their services to be reliable and excellent and wouldn't hesitate to recommend them to any climbers considering visiting Pakistan.

Permits - NSE sorted our permits for us, which was a relatively simple process. Peak permits in Pakistan (outside of the Baltoro area) are currently running at 10% of their original cost as a way of encouraging climbers to come to Pakistan. Peaks below 6500m currently require no permit. Our peak fee was \$100.

Visas - Once our peak permit was sorted visa application was relatively straight forward. As Holly wasn't climbing her name wasn't on the permit, so NSE wrote a letter of recommendation to support Holly's visa application. The only disadvantage was that Luke had to spend a day in Pakistani Consulate in Manchester. Visas were £55 each.

Askari Aviation - All climbing expeditions in Pakistan are required to leave a \$6000 deposit in case of Helicopter rescue with Askari Aviation. The deposit is returnable, minus a \$200 handling fee. Don't worry, in the event of Helicopter rescue you won't lose your \$6000, all costs will be covered by your insurance. We were very reluctant to take this amount of cash out with us so we transferred it electronically via Barclays. This was very safe and secure, but Barclays gave us a very poor rate (1.46), making it a very expensive option. In hindsight I'd probably risk taking the cash out next time.



Insurance - We all took out a year long expedition policy with the BMC. This wasn't much more than a policy that covered us just for the duration of the expedition and covers year round worldwide. The BMC were the only broker we could find who would insure our expedition.



*Left to right: Baig, Luke, Holly, Hamish, Tom and Nissar, at Base Camp on our last day. Photo: Dunn.*

## Budget

The expedition accounts are detailed below, minus Holly who funded herself. Total cost for the three climbers was: £10,450.50. We were very lucky grants and equipment so personal contributions were only £1024.50 each.

Item	Income	Expenditure
Flights @ £625 each		£1875
Visas @ £55 each		£165
Insurance £507.40		£1522
Freeze dried food		£60
Gels + Dextros		£70
Sat Phone and Credit		£355
First Aid Kit		£90
Gear		£653
KKH Jeep Hire		£230
Cook's wages		£323
Guide's wages		£340
Porter wages		£2900
Porter Insurance		£95
Accommodation in Pakistan		£341
Kitchen Equipment Hire		£139
Gas - (We returned 18 of 20 unused.)		£7.50
Agent Fee		£143
Food in Pakistan		£250
Kerosene		£60
Jeeps Karimabad to Huro		£150
Gilgit to Karimabad		£50
Travel Expenses		£200

Item	Income	Expenditure
Permit		£60
Pollution Fee		£132
Currency exchange		£240
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>£10,450.50</b>
The BMC	£1800	
Mount Everest Foundation	£1750	
Shipton-Tilman Award	£2577	
Mark Clifford Grant	£500	
Nick Estcourt Award	£1500	
Jeremy Willson Charitable Trust	£750	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£8877</b>	
<b>Personal Contributions - (£3073.50 / 3)</b>		<b>£1024.5</b>

### Special thanks

Special thanks to the following folks who helped us with planning and throughout our expedition. Apologies to anyone who I have inadvertently forgotten.

- Ian Parnell
- David Falt
- Simon Yates
- Mick Fowler
- Chris Bonington
- Kyle Dempster
- Lindsay Abbotts - First Ascent
- Tim Nicol - KE Adventure Travel
- Pete Benson
- John Arran
- John Shirley - Complete Outdoors
- Stephen Reid - Needle Sports
- Manchester University Medical School
- Dr Theo Weston
- Duncan Campbell
- William Ripley

- Lucy Graham - Aramark
- Jim Lowther
- Suneal - British High Commision
- Stephen Barrat
- Nazir Sabir

### **Assistance and Info**

Anyone planning a climbing expedition may find the following useful.

**Contacts:** Nazir Sabir Expeditions - <http://www.nazirsabir.com>

*Lonely Planet - Pakistan*

If anyone would like further information on our trip we'll be more than happy to help:

Tom Ripley - [thesavoygrill@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:thesavoygrill@hotmail.co.uk)

Luke Hunt - [luketheape@hotmail.com](mailto:luketheape@hotmail.com)

Hamish Dunn - [hamdunn@aol.com](mailto:hamdunn@aol.com)



*No matter how desperate you are for alcohol do not drink anything that turns up in a Castrol Can. Photo: Ripley.*



## Appendix 1 - First Aid Kit.

Below is a list of what we took Pakistan. This is not a recommendation and anyone considering embarking on a similar trip should seek medical advice on what to take.

Use	Drug Name	Route	Dose	Quantity
<b>High Mountain</b>	Diamox	Oral	250mg	30
	Nifedipine	Oral (MR caps)	20mg	10
	Dexamethasone	Oral	2mg	40
<b>Pain Relief</b>	Codeine Phosphate	Oral	30mg	100
	Aspirin	Oral	300mg	30
	Paracetamol	Oral	500mg	80
	Lidocaine 1%	subcut inj.	5ml x 4	
<b>Antibiotics</b>	Ibuprofen	Oral	300mg	80
	Ciprofloxacin	Oral	750mg	2 course
	Flucloxacillin	Oral	500mg	1 course
	Metronidazole	Oral	200mg	2 course
<b>Other</b>	Loperamide	Oral		50 capsules
	Dioralyte	Oral		10 sachets
	Betadine		10ml x 5	
	Clotrimazole	topical	20g x 1	
	Hydrocortisone 1%			
	E45 cream			
	Amethocaine Eye Drops		2ml	8
	chloramphenicol		10ml	5
<b>Hardware</b>	Stethoscope			1
	Alcohol gel			1
	Thermometer			1
	Chlorohexidine 2% wipes			15
	Sterile adhesive dressings		various sizes	7
	Gauze			
	melonin dressings, various sizes			
	crepe bandage			
	Micropore tape			
	steri strips			
	suturing kit w/ sutres + sterile gloves			1
	Triangular bandage			1
	Tubigrip support bandage (knee + ankle)			
	5ml syringes			5
	water for injection		5ml	5
	green/ blue needles			10
	IV canula		18g	4
	Tourniquet			1
	giving sets			3
	normal saline		1 Litre	2
Gelofusine		500ml	1	