

‘Inspired Alaska 2012’

Expedition Report



Team

Mike'Twid'Turner

Dave Gladwin

With Stu Inchley and Kim Ladiges

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Acknowledgments

All members of the Inspired Alaska expedition would like to thank the following charities, organisations and businesses for their financial support; without which this expedition would not have been possible. Thank you.

The Mount Everest Foundation

British Mountaineering Council

DMM

Mountain Equipment

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Objective

Our aim was to climb the Middle triple peak via one of two routes. We successfully climbed one of these lines a fine first ascent was made by the team. The Expedition was very successful and very enjoyable. It was a blend of ice and mixed climbing rock and aiding. We had many days on the face some in good weather but generally poor weather. The conditions were terrible with a 50 year record of snow stuck on the face.

Venue-Middle Triple Peak -The Kichatna Spires –Alaska



Arial View of the Kichatna Spires

The Kichatna Spires or also known as the Cathedral Spires are situated at the far western, left hand, end of the Alaska Range. The mountains have many similarities to the Patagonia Spires of Fitzroy and Paine. Made from good quality granite the spires rise up from glacial level for around 1200m. Many of the Summits are about 9000ft above sea level. The general layout is a Spire from the highest Peaks of Kichatna Spire and the Triple Peaks.

The range is very remote and only generally accessed by light aircraft from Talkeetna. Walking to the Range is very difficult as many huge Alaskan rivers bar the way never mind the hungry bears that patrol the river banks. This remoteness along with its reputation of receiving all the worst weather that the Alaska Range gets has kept the stunning area relatively quiet and unexplored in comparison to the Ruth Basin for example. In 8 Expeditions Twid has only ever seen 2 other Expeditions in the area. Long may it stay quiet and back water as the feeling of total remoteness and commitment are the crowning jewels of the 'Patagonia of the North'

The Team

Twid and Dave planned the trip and arrived on the Tatina Glacier to find two other climbers Stuart Inchely and Kim Ladiges. After an initial day scoping the line it was clear that the conditions were pretty poor and the 4 climbers decide to climb as one team on the Middle Triple Peak line. This worked really well and made for a very sociable trip.



Dave, Stu, Kim and Twid

Mike Twid Turner IFMGA Mountain Guide and Mountaineering Instructor



Twid on summit of Cathedral Spire

Professional Life

Mike has worked in the outdoors all his working life. **Over the 25 years** he has worked with a wide range of groups and clients. Starting off working in

Mountaineering and Outdoor Consultant **Management Centres** mostly based around North Wales. Also in his early Professional life he worked for Private outdoor companies, Mountain Guides and in **Local Education Outdoor centres** with young people of all ages.

Mountaineering has always played a major part of Mike's work whether it is guiding clients/groups up rock or ice climbs in Wales, Scotland in winter, in the Alps or on **Worldwide Expeditions**. For 18 years he worked for **Plas Y Brenin**, The National Mountaineering Centre, 15 years of which as Senior **Instructor** and fronting up Rock Climbing (**Head of Rock climbing**) and the Mountain Instructor Certificate. Much of his work was directing all of the National **Governing Body** courses, training trainer's leaders and instructors. He has been a member of the Association of Mountain Instructors (AMI) since its creation.

As a **Mountain Guide** he has worked extensively around the Alps mountaineering on foot and on skis, **since 1993**. For three years he partnered a small Guiding Company '**Alpine Guides**' which he helped start. For the last 3 years he has run his **own business** Mountain Training and Guiding, based in the Alps. For the last 6 years he has been involved with **training Mountain Guides** to become fully qualified for the British Mountain Guides.

Personal Achievements

started mountaineering with father at an early age. Mike has climbed at a high standard on Ice, Rock, Big Walls and Alpine Summits for over 20 years. He regularly climbs to E6 and has climbed over 75 E7/8 graded routes, many 8a graded climbs made. Winter climbing has been a major part of Mikes Climbing. 20 years working /climbing in winter both in Scotland and the Alps. Mike has climbed many of the worlds classic Hard Ice Climbs. Climbing in the Alps from 14 years old, Mike has made many Major ascents including : North Faces of Eiger, Grand Jorasses, Mont Blanc, Dru, Doites and Marmalada.

He has climbed major Expedition New routes around the world. Countries he has climbed in over the last 20 years include: Pakistan (3 Expeds), Alaska (7 Expeds), Patagonia (7 Expeds), Baffin, Venezuela, Borneo, Norway, Mali (2 Expeds), Madagascar, Mexico, Extensively in the US/Canada, Australia, China, Caucas, Morocco, Peru and most European Countries.

In 2003 he was nominated for the prestigious 'Piolet D'Or' for making a first ascent in Alaska, of the 'Super Dupa Couloir'.

Achievements as a Climber and Mountaineer

Rock Climbing

Rock climbed from an early age first leading Extremes at 16 yrs of age. Have climbed E7 British grade for 20 years. Enjoys pushing his mental and physical boundaries. Climbing serious trad routes and Red Pointing to 8a French grade. Highlights:

- 100'S E6 and 75+ E7/8 graded climbs all around UK. Included. Vitalstatics E8, Super Calabrese E8, Hard back Thesaurus, E8, Hollow Man E8 (all North Wales), Perfect Monsters E7 (Mingulay)

- Many 8a Red points in North Wales and Mexico. 'Statement of Youth' 23 yrs ago.
- Over 12 new long routes in Mali, Africa. 1ST British Team to visit area
- New routes in the Tarasorno Massif, Madagascar. 1st British Team to visit.
- Climbing on a remote Tepui (Rock Tower) in Venezuela.
- Climbing 'The Nose' in a day on El Cap, Yosemite.
- Early Repeat of the 'Fish' on the Marmalade in the Dolomites. One of hardest Alpine Rock routes of the day.
- 1st British Team to Visit the Super route area of Taghia Morocco.
- 1st Ascent of Big Wall out of 'Lowes Gully' Borneo. 1st Expedition to live stream to the web.

Ice Climbing

From a hill walking background and climbing in the Scottish Mountains in winter with his father Mike developed a love for Snow and Ice climbing. Mike has extensively climbed in Scotland in winter for most of his life. Climbing many grade 7 and grade 8 (VIII) routes on ice as well as mix climbs. For 20 winters was based from Glen Coe in Scotland during the winter running ice climbing and winter mountaineering courses. He has climbed many new routes across Scotland. Ben Nevis being one of Mikes favourite Mountains to climb on. Mike has also cascade climbed extensively in the Alps over the last 7 years. Running Guided trips in the Italian, Swiss and French ice climbing areas. Mike regularly climbs at French grade 6 and often Guides at this standard. Highlights:

- 1ST Ascent of 'Scrabble' VIII Corrie Nan Lochan Scotland.
- 'Octopussy' Colorado M8. One of the hardest mixed routes in the world at the time.
- 'Ames Ice Hose and Bridal Vail' VI Colorado.
- 'Pilsner Pillar' VI Canada.
- 'Super Dupa Coulior' Alaska. 3 days of climbing.
- 'Repentance' Cogne Italy VI.
- Crack Baby 6 Kandersteg Switzerland

Alpine Climbing

Alpine climbing combines the best of all the mountaineering pursuits. Rock, Ice and mixed climbing techniques combined with the seriousness of being in the 'Bigger hills'. Mike's apprenticeship was with his father and Merseyside Mountaineering club. He started climbing major routes in the Alps from 18yrs old and enjoys still adventuring around the many Alpine regions. Through is Guiding he has been able to inspire many young climbers and climb with some of the best British Mountaineers of his generation. Stuart McAleese, Nick Bullock, Neil Brodie, Mark Thomas and John Bracey. In the past he has teamed up with British Climbing Celebrities like Dai Lampard, Phil Thornhill, Shaun Hudson, Andy Perkins, Gerry Gore and his Wife! He has learnt about having fun, commitment, enjoying camaraderie as well as living 'The life of the Climber'. He has enjoyed every minute and will do so in the future! Notable ascents in the Alps

- Schasplana 3600m Austria with parents at 12.
- Badile North Face 18yrs.

- Walker Spur, Bonnatti Pillar, Freney Pillar, Divine Providence, Attack du Choc- 1990.
- 'Croz Spur' in winter Grand Jorasse.
- 'Fish' free climbed. Point Marmalada in the Dolomites.
- North Face of the Eiger in Winter

Big Wall Climbing and Expedition Climbing

- 1987 Caucus reaching 5800m on Mount Elbrus
- 1989 'Caveman' Torres Del Paine, Chile Patagonia. ED 700M E5. 2 days alpine style
- 1990 Attempt on Cerro Torre. Retreated from high up. Argentina free climbing nr Baraloche. Salethe, Nose in a day El Cap. Regular route Half Dome
- 1991 'Halucagen Wall' Black Canyon of Gunnison US.5 Days on route A4+.800m
- 1992 'For a Fist Full of Dollars' Torres Del Paine, **Chile** Patagonia, ED 800M 12 days Big Wall.
- 1993 'Shield' El Cap A3 5 days on route. 'Moon light Buttress' Zion. US
- 1994 'Umweltern', Nalamortorsaq, **Greenland**. 700m 3 days , E5, A1. Free Route. 'Moby Dick' 1200m ,Greenland, 2nd ascent Greenland. First time climbed in one day..
- 1995 'The Excellent Adventure' Beatrice, Hushe **Pakistan**. ED 850M 14 days Big Wall
- 1996 'Endless Day' The Citadel, **Baffin Island**. ED 1000m 18 days on climb. Big Wall.
- 'Grains of Sand' Hands of Fatima, **Mali**. 650m E4. Free route.
- 1997 'Nawas' Nawas Brak- Amin Brak , Hushe , **Pakistan**. ED 1300m 18 days on Wall
- 'Always the Sun' . **Madagascar**. 500m 7c+. Free route. Many repeats
- 1998 'Norwegian Pillar' Greater Trango, **Pakistan**. Stopped 500m from top. 21 consecutive nights on portaledges after 2000m of big wall climbing at 6000m.
- 1999 'The Crucible' 850m New route in Lowes Gully **Borneo** E4 ,A4 (12 days on route)
- 2000 'For a few Dollars more' Torres Del Paine, **Patagonia**. 800m, E4 A1. Free route. Alpine style 3 days on route. Attempted a new line on the Central Tower of Paine (5 weeks!)
- 2001 'The Land that time forgot'Acapan. **Venezuela**, 700m , E5. Free route.
- 'Off the wall Bonkers' Kitchatna Spires, **Alaska**, Big Wall ED 850m. Big Wall. 7 days on route
- 2002 'The Supa Dupa Coulior' The Citadel, Kitchatna Spires. 1000m ED , 5+ French Ice. **Alpine.Piolet D'or nominated.**
- 2003 'The Perfect Storm' Mnt Nevermore, Kitchatna Spires, 1000m ED E4, A2. Big Wall 12 days. Alaska. **Mexico** . Free climbing Puchero Chico.
- 2004 'Storm Pillar', **Lofoten**, Storen Pillar, 800m. Big Wall. 5 days on route. Norway
- 2005 Attempted a new line on East Face of Fixroy (7 week trip!)**Patagonia**
- 2006 'Biff Bash Bosh ED2 M71000m', 'Artist Coulior TD 800m', 'Cool Coulior 1000m' Kitchatnas. **Alaska** 'The Good The Bad and the Ugly' Paine. South Tower. Patagonia, 1000m Big Wall ED E3 A4. 24 days.
- 2007 Taghia **Morocco**. repeats of major routes, first British ascents of Big Walls 16 pitch 7c.
- Climbs in Cordillera Blanc.**Peru**. Alaska , Kitchatna Spires. Snow patch spire
- 2008 'Like a Pig in Shit'. **Sardinia** 500m new free route 7c. A1. 12 pitch sport

route 'Devil Rides Out' Torres Del Paine.800m E4, A4, 12 Days on route.

Patagonia

2009 'Big Lips' 500m E56b new route. 6 new routes. 1st Brit ascent of 'Black Mamba' 10 pitch 7b **Mali**

2010 Artic Monkeys 1400m 23 days on wall, Stewart Valley, Baffin 36 pitches very hard!

2011 Exstasy, Similstock, Engelhorner, 300m 7c new route.

Piolets d'Or Nominee 2003 : 'The Supa Dupa Coulior' ED 4 VI,M7,1000m.

Kitchatna Spires

The purpose of the Piolets d'Or awards is to raise awareness about the year's greatest ascents across the world. They aim to celebrate the taste for adventure, the bravery and sense of exploration that lie behind the art of climbing in the world's great mountain ranges.

Sponsors

- **DMM** – providing climbing equipment
- **Mountain Equipment-** Mountaineering clothing

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David Gladwin



32, British, Snowsports Instructor;

- Rock Climbing all over UK and Europe (up to E5 and sport 8a, 14 yrs)
- British winter climbing up to VIII (6yrs)
- Alpine climbing up to ED4 and continental ice up to WI 5
- Alpine climbing in the greater ranges up to ED2

Notable Ascents : North Faces of Eiger, Matterhorn, Droites, Cima Grande, Piz Badile, 3 routes on the NF Grande Jorasses, Freney Pillar, Divine Providence, Solo Ascent of American Direct (to end of difficulties)

Greater Ranges – FA ED2/3 North Ridge of Kyzyl Asker (Tien Shan Kyrgystan)

- 4 FA's in Kyrgystan up to ED 2
- FA's in Tajikistan up to D solo
- Cassin Ridge on Denali

David was born in Newcastle which is where he spent his youth exploring the sandstone buttresses of Northumberland. He now lives in the Alps so that he can be closer to his passions.

In the winters he teaches skiing and snowboarding in the Portes du Soleil 'the greatest skiing area on earth' and the summers are spent free from work commitments climbing whenever possible .

He really loves exploring the greater ranges and the cultural diversities they have to offer. Whether putting up New routes in the Tien Shan and Pamirs up to ED2/3 or climbing classics such as the the Cassin on Denali

His best week ever week of climbing he had the week of all weeks. In 7days he did the Colton Mac and the Croz on the Grand Jorasses and also climbed his first 8a.

The Climb 'Hard Arteries'



Route: NW pillar on Middle Triple Peak, Kichatna Spires, Alaska

Hard Arteries - 1000m of climbing up to A3 and Scottish V

Duration : 6 days

Climbers: Twid Turner, David Gladwin, Stuart Incheley, Tasi Kim

Description: The climb started with 500 metres of snow and ice, that led via a precarious traverse to the base of the pillar. This was a big wall of superb granite,

topped by some amazing snow ridges. We chose a direct line linking perfect cracks and icy corners that needed a combination of steep aid and mixed climbing.

Descent: Abseil back down the route of ascent

Grade: A3 and Scottish V

Diary

- 6 days in Talkeetna awaiting a clear weather window to fly into Tatina glacier. Other parties could fly in to the Kahiltna glacier(for Denali) but due to different weather patterns and the remoteness we had to wait longer.

- Day1

Finally the weather cleared enough for us to fly into the Tatina Glacier, the whole flight the peaks surrounding the glacier were in cloud so wasn't until the last minute that we were sure that we could land.



After landing the weather cleared and we established base camp in the deep, deep, deep fresh snow.

We then shuttled some of our gear up glacier

- Day 2

Blue bird

This was a tough day of breaking trail again due to fresh snow falling over night. Shuttling gear further up the glacier



- Day 3

Due to high winds the night before we had to break trail again from base camp. Due to a wind loaded slope up to the col we decided to join two ropes together and fixed them.

We then moved the remainder of the kit up to the col and establish ABC. This was the first time we had seen the whole NW face of Middle Triple peak which was exciting but also a little disheartening due to the volume of fresh snow and ice plastering the face.

- Day 4

We woke to a clear sky at ABC on the col.

We crossed the glacier and then the bergschrund and climbed the initial 50 deg ice sheet to the base of the Wall fixing ropes as we went. We then abseiled back to ABC.

The glacier was well filled in so passed with ease but once the sun hit the nearby walls constant avalanches were triggered.

The bergschrund was a small step which didn't cause any major issues



- Day 5

We started from ABC in clear weather and completed the move of all our kit up the ice slopes, across a traverse and established a camp below the main wall. Clearing the fixed ropes as we went.

We slept in a portaledge and the others cut a ledge for their tent. Unfortunately during the night due to worsening weather we were pummelled by spindrift which resulted in our friend's tent collapsing and filling with snow so they managed to descend the face a little and dug a snow hole which turned out to be pucca accommodation



- Day 6

We started climbing the main wall which consisted of beautiful granite cracks which were unfortunately plastered with snow and ice.

We had to aid all of these sections but it was definitely featured enough to be free climbed in drier conditions

4 pitches



- Day 7

We jumared to the high point of the previous day and continued aiding through icy cracks and roofs with a section of mixed climbing around Scottish V.

Again I feel that this could have been freed in better conditions with a mix of rock and mixed techniques

3 pitches



- Day 8

Jumar to the high point of the previous day

This day had some of the hardest climbing on it which consisted of very delicate mixed climb with barely adequate protection and a very steep but well protected corner capped by a roof which I doubt could be free climb but would be happily proved wrong.....



- Day 9

Jumar to the high point of the previous day

Climbed the final wall and the ridge to the top of the NW Pillar. From here the pillar is joined to the main summit of Middle Triple via an airy ridge. We started up this but due to worsening weather and bad snow conditions we decided to head back down.

We abseiled clearing the ropes as we went as far as the camp



From here we packed up camp and continued abseiling, but due to high avalanche risk on the lower slopes (it was late in the day) we decided to climb back up and slept in a snow hole.

- Day 10

Was spent sitting in the snow hole in a storm whilst our descent slopes were getting loaded with loads of fresh snow

- Day 11

Blue Bird

Packed up and descended the snow slopes quickly before the sun hit them.

Packed up ABC and descended back to Base Camp

- Day 12

Blue bird

Arranged pick up from the glacier. Flew back to Talketna just in time for a well earned beer or ten.

Flying to Anchorage

In the past we had used the flights into the American hubs from the UK major airports. But after following up a lead we flew from Frankfurt directly to Anchorage with Condor. It was a very cheap flight and you fly direct in 10 hrs. This saves lots of time with changing flights and less chance of lost luggage. The flight was really great and arriving early in Anchorage meant we had a whole day to buy provisions and get to Talkeetna.

Condor are a subsidiary of Thomas Cook and offer a good service. We had to buy a second piece of luggage which wasn't too bad compared to paying lots of excess luggage fee. The hand bag allowance was only 6kg and was strictly adhered to. A lady got charged 200€ excess just on her hand luggage in front of us at boarding gate.

We drove 5hrs from Villars to Frankfurt by car and left the car in the long stay car park at Frankfurt. Not an easy place to find, but once there the transfer went every 20 minutes throughout the day and night.

Getting to Talkeetna

From the airport we took a Taxi to the shopping area around The Mountain Coop. It's a great central place to get all your provisions and any gear you might need. We shopped in Cars for all our food. A good shopping centre with all your food needs. It has a great cafe also and you can get a Cars Car which will give you a good discount. From here we hired a taxi bus to Talkeetna. This was quite expensive but after lots of effort we couldn't get a cheaper price. I researched 5 different shuttle buses. Most don't start up properly till later in the season as does the train. The shuttle bus takes about 2-3hrs to get to Talkeetna including a half way stop at a town for a coffee. The shuttle buses offer a return rate but for flexibility I would just get a single and shop about on the return leg. Not all buses go every day.

Staying in Talkeetna

On arrival in Talkeetna we dropped our bags directly at TAT. They have a store room which is dry and reasonably safe. TAT offers a service which includes free use of one of their bunkhouses. The best and most mossy free being the town house in the centre of Talkeetna. It's basic, clean, got a shower, has bed frames, cooking facilities, living space and plenty of covered space to sort and repack gear. Most folk stay in the bunkhouse and eat in town. Breakfast at the roadhouse is preferred and dinner at the Roadhouse or other restaurants. The food is excellent and a great place to carb up before the suffering of the trip.

There is plenty of fun to be had including drinking fine beer in the 'Fairview Inn'. It's a typical old Alaskan drinking den with plenty of charm, good humour and live music. We certainly did the BMC and MEF proud with our dancing. Especially 'Dancing Dave' and his back flips! Not just a talented climber but he can break dance like no other member of the British climbing fraternity! The Fairview is a wonderful place to meet climbers from all over the globe and gain important conditions reports.

Permits, CMC'S,Rangers base

On arrival in Talkeetna we went to the Rangers station to get our permit to climb n the Kichatnas. For this area you just pay \$20 each for permit and sign a form. It's unlike the permit system to climb on Denali. You also need to leave your passport and contact details and its handy if they have your Sat Phone details. On Exiting the Mountains you just call in and sign out. It's a safety concern and very reassuring. We also picked up our CMC (Clean Mountain Can). This is a free service. They provide a plastic resealable container with poly bags to line the can. You crap into the can the seal the bags. This means all waste is brought out by plane. It's a requirement to take these. On the way out of Talkeetna just drop the can and bags back at the Ranger station, they handle the waste from then onwards.

The Ranger base offers good weather forecasts for the Mountains, advice on routes and conditions. There a large library of reference books and photos to look at also. A great place to do some further research before you head into the mountain

Flights into the Mountains



Dave starting the plane



Paul Roderick

There are many companies that fly climbers into the Mountains. But TAT (Talkeetna Air Taxis) have the climbers market on the whole. They offer a great service and its run by Paul Roderick an experienced climber himself. They are very relaxed but totally professional. We booked a flight be email and paid by credit card on arrival. TAT has many planes 6+ including 3 Otters. It's a big operation but still very personal. They provide many extras:

- **Free bunkhouse**
- **Free transfers from bunkhouse for kit in their vehicle**
- **Wands for the glacier**
- **Sledges**
- **You can buy fuel from them**
- **You can hop on flights from one glacier to the next**

Things to consider when travelling by plane in Alaska:

- Pack for the glacier in Talkeetna! We always use the 120 litre Ortalieb bags to keep our kit dry.
- Reduce you weight as much as possible, get rid of any unwanted packaging.
- You get 120lbs free after that it's a \$1 a lb.
- Dress for the mountain before leaving.
- Get ready as early as you can and be ready to suddenly jump on a plane
- Buy the office staff chocolates, not only do they look after you valuables but they are the contact point for any problems and man the phones.
- Stamping out a runway before the plane lands 500m x 10m
- Carry a Sat phone

Contact TAT

Paul Roderick

14212 E Second Street Talkeetna AK 99676

Direct Line: (907)733-2218

Toll Free: (800)533-2219

FAX: (907)733-1434

Email: info@talkeetnaair.com

Food

There are three areas to our Expedition. Eating while in Anchorage and Talkeetna , eating in base camp and food for hill. While in the Mountains we budgeted for 15 days of hill food and 7 days of base camp food. All food was bought at Carr's in Anchorage or the Mountain Coop. We did bring some instant custard from the UK as it seems unavailable in US. All excessive packaging was removed before heading into the mountains. All glass was let behind and things put in bags or plastic tubs.

Food in base camp

We took staples of noodles and pasta. A few tins of fruit, cinnamon buns, pancake mix, wraps, tinned chilli, etc. We took some fresh meat into the glacier and buried it immediately in the snow. Weight is quite an issue but some fresh meat is worth taking.



Typical luxury cooking conditions on the route

Food for the hill

We made up meal bags while we waited in Talkeetna. In each bag we aimed to have about 4000 calories per person. It offered variety and some treats. It consisted of:

- Breakfast: 2 pkts each of instant porridge; muesli bar, hot fruit drink.
- Day food: nuts and sweets, 2 chocolate bars each; 2 muesli bars each; pkt of dried meat.
- Evening meal: staple(either mash,noodles,rice, couscous); 2 dehydrated meal bags;instant soup;fudge brownie;pkt custard.

Maps

The American alpine club have produced a 1: 50,000 map for Alaska. This is clear and easy to read and contains basic information on the Kichatnas.

Many of the peaks are not defined, especially on long chains of peaks.

Insurance

Take some! But in reality you will get rescued either by TAT or by the Rangers which are free. It's the medical bills that will be bonkers. We have used BMC for Expeditions.

Communications

In Alaska's towns and cities English mobiles worked no problem although at a higher cost than in Europe.

There were multiple internet cafes / shops. These were relatively inexpensive,

Satellite phone

We hired a satellite phone from a shop in Anchorage opposite the REI store. The basic package for the phone was quite expensive but calls were relatively inexpensive and both members decided it was a worthwhile investment in case of potential issues on the glacier and to organise pick up from TAT.

The phone was small and easy to use, a modern type, little different to an every-day mobile phone. The phone came with a charger. However on our expedition where charging was not an issue we requested a spare battery which was permanently kept in a dry warm area to preserve the charge.

However by switching the phone on for short periods only we managed to conserve the battery for two weeks with little problem.

www.anchoragesatellitephones.com

Weather

The **weather was much** worse than we had anticipated. Upon arrival in Talkeetna we were unable to fly into the glacier for 6 days due to constant storms. After arriving on the glacier after these storms we soon realised that the pure volume of snow and with temperature changes avalanche activity was very high so safe travel practise was required for the duration of the trip

After doing our research we discovered the prevailing flow of weather is from the west which carries huge amounts of moisture from the arctic oceans, Chukchi Sea, Bearing sea and Pacific Ocean. When this moisture is carried inland it is elevated by the mountain ranges, cooling and leaving enormous amounts of precipitation in the ranges.

Unfortunately for us upon arrival in Alaska we discovered that they had a record snow fall over the winter for 50 years although this did make the glaciers easier to cross.

Medical Considerations

Travelling to such a remote location is amazing but you have to consider what happens if you have an accident. Firstly we were both First Aid Trained and hold a recognised first aid in the Mountains qualification. We also carried a big first aid kit for base camp including strong pain killers and plenty of bandaging. On the wall we carried a smaller first aid kit with pain killers. We find the white zinc oxide tape very useful. It's easily got from climbing walls. It's also handy for taping up for jamming. It's worth considering what to do in case of an accident before you go. We talked about:

- Pain relief
- Phone calls from Sat phone. The ranger station and TAT. Plus any Doctors you know. We took numbers of Doctor friends for advice.
- If the weathers bad ad you cannot fly
- Splinting legs and applying traction
- Use of sledges to move injured folk
- We took a mountain medicine handbook.

As far as things to do with first aid we were lucky and nothing was of need except for the odd pain killer for headaches and painful joints.

Environmental Considerations

'Take it in and bag it out' was our moto. We carried all waste out including bog paper and human waste. The CMC's are essential and work really well. We took big rubble bags in for our rubbish. We tried to take everything out and leave the tent site as flat as possible.

It's a remote area and we didn't see any wildlife birds or animal. All the plans where covered in snow. The South facing summits seem to be covered in a black lichen which obviously grows well in the damp summers.

All climbing gear and ropes were brought back to base camp. Only rappel anchors were left.

On arrival in Talkeetna the rubbish was left with TAT in their rubbish trailer for sorting and disposal. The CMC's handed back to the Rangers station.

Kit



The ago old debate on what gear to take! In our experience take it all from your portaledge, aid gear, various tents, snow shoes, skis and party shirts! Here are some ideas of what to take:

- Essential snow shoes and skis, we only had skis mind.
- Hire a couple of sledges and probes from TAT
- We used gas rather than liquid fuel. Bought in Mountain Coop in Anchorage.
- Take portaledges with rainfly (expedition type fly), Haul bags two
- Rope as much as possible. 2 half ropes, a single rope and 100m of static
- 25 pegs ,Mashies, Hooks, Bird beaks, Wall hauler, ropeman, prussiks
- Slings
- 20 quickdraws
- 4 sets of wires, micro wires
- 2.5 sets of cams
- Large base camp tent, small bivy tent.
- Sleeping bags 4-5 season, bivi bag
- Shovel, probe, transceivers
- Stove –jet boil, frying pan, one gas cylinder per day.
- First aid
- Sat phone
- Full clothing plus spare set
- Leather gloves, 2 pairs of spare ski gloves
- Helmet
- Lots of good books

Other Potential Routes

The Kichatna's is a huge area of long glaciers and endless jagged granite spires of great quality granite. It's a stunning place and a real wilderness experience. It's hard not to have a good time climbing new routes. The potential is endless. Unlike Patagonia its quiet back water with only a few Expeditions a year. Whether it be rock, ice or Big Walls there's plenty to go at. The weather and conditions plays a major part. Only once in 10 years have I found good conditions and when we did it

was exceptional. I generally keep in touch with Paul Roderick over the winter and see how the temperatures and snow fall is doing. Also TAT fly all the time and know the conditions pretty well. The climbing is low relatively for Alaska which is good and bad. Good you don't get the big snow mushrooms in gullies like the Ruth also the rock walls can clear pretty quick. Bad is that the weather can be bad and you can get lots of windslab crossing the cols between glaciers. Some things to consider:

- Don't climb in gullies after major snowfall
- Don't climb ice gullies in the Sun, wait for the sun to move.
- Consider fixing a few pitches then go light and fast for summits.
- Take lots of gear. I generally take 4 sets of wire and lots of tat and pegs for abseils. Generally 20 abseils per route.
- Take sledges to drag kit.
- Take snow shoes and if possible skis. You can hire skis from Alaska Mountaineering Services in Anchorage or off TAT.
- Take all the toys. Go prepared to ice climb, Mix climb, free climb and aid climb. Then you will get something done. We climbed in appalling conditions but only because we had all the gear. Our initial aim was to go lightweight alpine but condition and routes didn't allow.
- You will need many options.
- Don't think crossing cols it's easy. They can be very dangerous with avalanche conditions. This year our col was totally fine. Carry transceivers, probes and shovels.

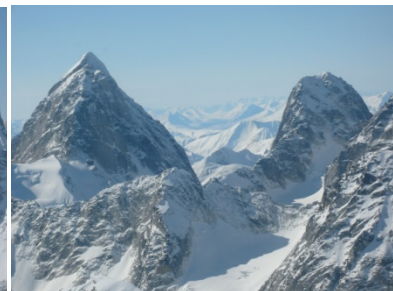
There is a good run down on all the Kichatna routes at the ranger station recently compiled by Mark Westman. The local guru who works at the ranger station.



Tatina Glacier



Shadows glacier



Contacts:

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