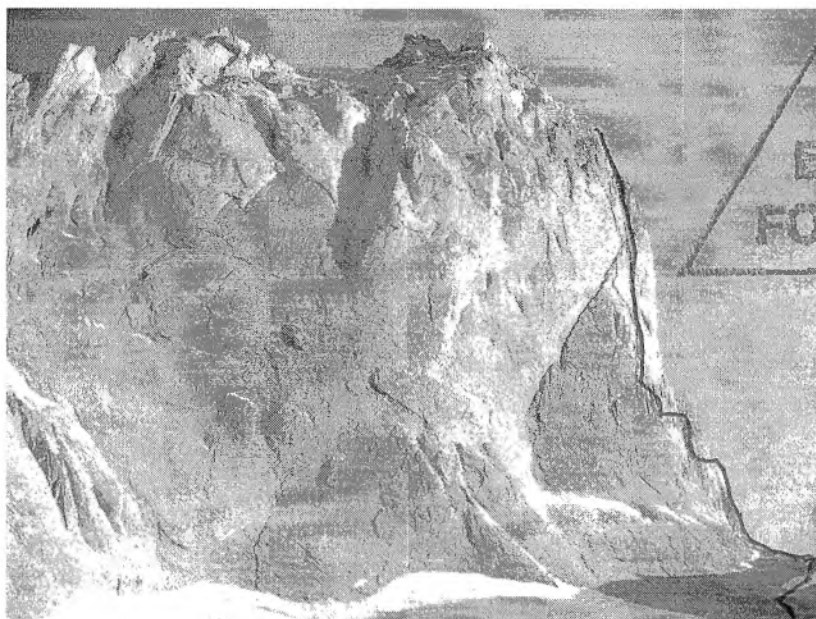


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13/13

# THE WALL OF PAINE 2013!



**MEF EXPEDITION REFERENCE:** 13/13

**COUNTRY/REGION:** Torres Del Paine National Park - Chile – Southern Patagonia

**EXPEDITION OBJECTIVE:** First ascent of SE Face of The South Tower of Paine (2500m.), Torres Del Paine

**EXPEDITION DATES:** 14 October – 10 November 2013

Walk-in to Base Camp: 17 October

Between Base Camp and on the Wall: 17 Oct – 08 Nov 2013

Return to UK: 09-10 Nov 2013

## EXPEDITION MEMBERS

**Calum Muskett:** 20 – British – Instructor, Professional Climber

Five years alpine climbing experience including a free ascent of Paciencia on the North Face of the Eiger and Divine Providence on Mont Blanc. Six years winter climbing experience up to grade VIII. 7 years trad climbing experience up to E9.

E: [calum\\_muskett@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:calum_muskett@hotmail.co.uk) T: +44 7790513511 W: <http://www.muskettmountaineering.co.uk>

**Mike 'Twid' Turner:** 48 - British - Mountain Guide

21 years alpine climbing experience including 30 major Big Wall expeditions. Piolet D'Or Nominee 2001. Arguably one of the World's top 10 most experienced and successful extreme alpinists

E: [twidturner@aol.com](mailto:twidturner@aol.com) T: +41 799588412 W: <http://www.themountainguidingcompany.co.uk>

**Jerry Gore:** 52 - British - Owner of AlpBase - Type 1 Diabetic

37 years of expedition climbing including 25 expeditions to The Greater Ranges.

E: [jerry@alpbase.com](mailto:jerry@alpbase.com) T: +33 689197563 W: <http://www.alpbase.com>

**Raphael Jochaud:** 35 - French – Owner of Camacro Productions

15 years alpine climbing experience including 5 years of alpine winter climbing and 10 years of alpine summer climbing up to grade ED and Fr. 7b. A very experienced international cameraman with 8 years of video documentary experience.

E: [raphaelcamacro@gmail.com](mailto:raphaelcamacro@gmail.com) T: +33 619847572 W: <http://www.camacro.com>

## **SUMMARY:**

The Wall of Paine Expedition was a great success. British Climbers Mike 'Twid' Turner, Jerry Gore, Calum Muskett and French cameraman Raphael Jochaud climbed to the top of the Big Wall of the SE Face of the South Tower (at 2,500m. the tallest of the 3 famous Towers of Paine) to complete their climb – The Wall of Paine, 1000m., A3+, 5.11. Certainly the last great problem of the Patagonian region of Torres Del Paine. Unfortunately, after climbing 900m to our high point at the top of the wall, on the final climbing day of the expedition, a ferocious storm (150kmph winds) prevented the team from standing on the elusive summit. Literally the top was only a few hundred meters of easy mixed climbing away.

## **SUPPORT AND SPONSORS**

The team would like to thank the BMC, MEF, Alpine Club, Montane, Scarpa, English Braids, DMM and LIFESYSTEMS for their valuable support on this expedition as well as Cristian from Fortaleza Patagonia for his invaluable in-country help and support.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The South face of the South Tower of Paine was clearly “unfinished business” following Mike 'Twid' Turner and Stuart McAleese's 2006 attempt on the wall. It is, perhaps, the biggest unclimbed face in Patagonia stretching over 800m high vertically as well as being approximately one kilometre wide. After seven years it was felt that the time was right to attempt to climb the face once again and Twid and Jerry gathered a team together which included Frenchman Raphael Jochaud and Welshman Calum Muskett. The team decided in advance to use a combination of fixed ropes and/or capsule style depending on the conditions they faced. In the end fixed ropes were used throughout due to the extremely poor weather that was experienced - a total of 3 good days in the entire climbing period. The team's primary objective was to reach the summit. But the secondary aim was to make as free an ascent as possible.

## **TRAVEL**

The team travelled to Base Camp in the Bader Valley, Torres Del Paine National Park from separate locations spread out between Britain, France and Switzerland. Jerry, Twid and Calum met at Heathrow airport. Calum flew to Madrid, then Santiago de Chile and finally to Punta Arenas. Jerry and Twid flew to Sao Paolo, then Santiago de Chile and finally to Punta Arenas. Raphael was travelling from Paris via the US but unfortunately turned up at the airport with a non-biometric passport; so he was unable to fly via the US. Raphael booked flights for the following day and met up with the team at Base Camp.

From Punta Arenas the team hired a private taxi bus to reach Puerto Natales, stayed the night in Natales, then travelled by bus to the park. five horses were hired to transport supplies from the road end near to Base Camp (approx 3 hours).

On the return journey four horses were hired to transport supplies and waste products back to the road head and the team travelled by private transport back to the international airport at Punta Arenas. The team flew from Punta Arenas to Santiago de Chile followed by Sao Paolo. From here Raphael flew back to Paris and the British contingent flew back to Heathrow before travelling back to their respective homes.

## **ENVIRONMENT:**

### *Rock*

The rock is almost entirely granite, ranging from good to poor quality. In the Cuernos del Paine area there are also large areas of very loose black rock, perhaps a black diorite? The South Face itself consists of the Apron slabs on good quality granite, a central section on poorer quality and very friable grey granite, and an upper wall of good quality golden granite bisected by a black (diorite?) band.

### *Weather*

Patagonian weather is, by its nature, unpredictable. One thing that can, however, be predicted on a regular basis is that the wind will exceed 100kph in the mountains. October/November is a colder and yet more settled time of year (generally) for climbing. The weather can change from warm sunshine to blizzards within a couple of hours. Unfortunately the weather during this expedition was sub-optimal and there were only a couple of days that consisted of blue skies and no wind.

## **EQUIPMENT (SEE APPENDIX 1)**

Each member of the team took B3 boots, rock climbing shoes, harnesses, personal self rescue and jumaring kit. Altogether, 800m of fixed rope was taken out, two 60m single lead lines, a triple set of wires and cams, 30 quick draws, a selection of pegs (blades, lost arrows...), peckers, bird beaks, ice axes, peg hammer, one hand drill, 20 bolts, slings, screw gates, crampons, old 'biners and abseil tat.

## MEDICAL AND SAFETY

Torres del Paine is an area with very basic mountain rescue services or any guaranteed helicopter evacuation. For this reason the team had, first and foremost, to be self sufficient medically, and be careful not to take any unnecessary risks. Four team members meant that there were two people available to rescue at all times. The team also carried a satellite phone with spare batteries and a solar charger. Numerous LIFESYSTEMS expedition first aid kits were also taken out including strong pain killers, antibiotics and various other medical appendages.

Jerry is a Type 1 diabetic and had all his own appropriate medicines and energy bars to control his blood sugars. Jerry also was careful to store his medicines in a suitably warm environment to prevent his insulin from freezing.

## CLIMBING REPORT

On October the 14th Mike 'Twid' Turner, Jerry Gore and Calum Muskett met at Heathrow airport to depart for Chile. The fourth member of the team, Frenchman Raphael Jochaud, was departing from Paris, but unfortunately had to re-book his flights for the following day due to passport issues.

The British contingent arrived in Punta Arenas airport and travelled direct to Puerto Natales to a climber-friendly hostel organised with the help of Twid's friend **Christian Oyarzo Fierro** director of the trekking/climbing agency Fortaleza Patagonia. Raphael contacted the rest of the team via SMS to update them on his travel situation and the decision was made to continue to the Torres del Paine National Park and set up Base Camp whilst he travelled out to join them. After a big shop in Puerto Natales, where copious amounts of noodles, smash and dulce du leche were bought, the team caught the bus into the park. Provisions and climbing gear were shuttled ahead by two porters to a ranch where several horses were laden with the expedition food and equipment. Twid and Jerry joined the porters on the walk into the Bader Valley whilst Calum travelled to the parks administration to secure climbing permits. He joined Twid and Jerry that evening as Base Camp (BC) was being set up at the 'Welsh camp' on the lower fringes of the valley.

The following days were spent ferrying provisions up to Advanced Base (ABC) in bad weather. Raphael arrived in the valley bringing with him some va va voom and an extra set of legs for shuttling gear. Calum was nearly blown from ABC to Base Camp whilst putting up the tent and the team walked up to the foot of the wall to scope out possible lines. Conditions remained poor. The air temperature was below 0°C throughout most days and the winds must have been in excess of 100kph for a good deal of the time. The decision was made to try and follow the line previously attempted by Twid and Stu McAleese in 2006. On 22<sup>nd</sup> October, after several days of bad weather Twid and Calum managed to get on the wall and made good progress up the apron slabs. The climbing was straightforward but, being around E1-E2 slab climbing and a little bold, it required rock boots which were very uncomfortable to say the least in the sub zero temperatures! Twid and Calum continued to the ridge line and fixed ropes up to the first steepening of the main wall.

The following day the same pair returned up the wall, did an abseil/pendulum down and to the right, then followed a bold but straightforward chossy groove to a good ledge. Twid then traversed out left and set up a belay on better rock beneath a difficult section. Raphael and Jerry took over on 24 October, the following day, straightened out the fixed lines but made little vertical headway due to inclement, icy conditions.

On 26<sup>th</sup> October, after several days of bad weather, Calum and Twid returned up the wall, despite feeling in need of a more varied diet than just noodles and porridge! Twid made a good lead up a very spicy aid pitch on poor rock (A3+) before a shivering belayer and poor weather brought him back down to the belay, within a whisker of easier ground.

Calum returned a few days later with Jerry and Raphael, top roped up to Twid's high point on the A3+ pitch and continued through to the belay by free climbing. The pitch went free at about Fr.7b+ with three rests due to cold hands. The team continued up the next pitch at E1 to a good belay beneath another tricky aid pitch.

Twid and Raphael then made good progress, making short work of another A3+ pitch and Jerry and Calum took over in the second part of the day leading the following pitch which went at A3+ with free sections up to E4.

On 30<sup>th</sup> October, Jerry and Twid headed up the wall, and Jerry then led a lovely A2 pitch before the weather moved in and the two climbers descended. The next day, 31 October, good weather returned to the Valley at last! Calum and Raphael headed back up to the high point and climbed three long pitches on good rock. Temperatures were a little too cold for free climbing, hence progress was made by a combination of French Free and aid climbing. The ropes were now fixed to above the black band and the summit seemed only a short 3 pitch climb away. The team was hopeful of a summit finish given the fact that there was still a full week of climbing to go before the end of the expedition.....

On 1<sup>st</sup> November Twid awoke at 03.30am feeling nauseous. He immediately dashed out of the tiny ABC bivvy tent and vomited – tuna poisoning! Twid and Jerry waited until 06.00 and then headed up onto the ridge only to be beaten back by high winds and snow. The weather deteriorated further the next day and so the team returned to Base Camp for a number of days whilst the weather went AWOL. Raphael perfected his chapatti-making techniques and the Base Camp mouse had a healthy diet of crumbs.

When the weather abated the team headed back up to ABC. Unfortunately, once again, the weather turned. After several days of reading, melting snow and eating even more noodles, Twid and Calum headed up the ropes which now felt like a very long way! Calum had forgotten to tie down a section of slack fixed rope on the last descent which had blown over a flake several metres to the side of the belay over the previous day. Backed up by a separate rope belayed by Twid, Calum made the scariest jumar of his life to free the rope. By this point it had begun to snow and as Calum led the next pitch the weather really moved in. Verglassed rock made this steep pitch hard going and when Calum reached the belay, spindrift was pouring down from above. The decision was made to bail – with several days remaining surely there would be some half decent weather to reach the summit?

Again the weather worsened for several days and the team headed back up the wall on 7<sup>th</sup> November, the final available day. Twid led a long corner pitch in extremely cold and blustery conditions up to an easy angled ramp which the team knew would lead to the summit ridge; perhaps 200m of scrambling/easy climbing to the summit (100 vertical metres?). Unfortunately the weather was rapidly worsening and, with conditions becoming very dangerous, especially for descending in such strong winds, the team headed down. On reaching the glacier they were caught in white out conditions and the descent tested the exhausted climbers to the max.

Everyone was disappointed with not reaching the summit but pleased with their combined efforts spread out over the previous three weeks of bad weather. It was felt that all the difficult climbing had been completed, and that climbing above would probably not surpass VS in difficulty, most likely it would be even easier than that!

The team trudged back down to Base Camp with the rest of the supplies from ABC, ate some celebratory/consolatory chapattis with dulce du leche and walked out the following morning, the 8<sup>th</sup> November. Once again they hired horses to shuttle supplies back to the Park entrance. It was the end of a very long road which had started in September 2012!

## BUDGET

EXPEDITION COSTS	£	EXPEDITION INCOME	£
Air Travel	£6,200	Member contributions	£4,306
Travel in country	£450	BMC Grant	£1,900
Park Permit/fees	£155	MEF Grant	£1,350
Hire of labour	£760	Lifeventure Sponsorship	£2,000
Food/Accommodation in country	£1,636	Montane Sponsorship	£2,000
Insurance	£650	Alpine Club Grant	£800
Technical equipment inc. haul bags, stoves and gaz	£414		
Horses In and Out	£629		
Freight for fixed ropes	£312		
Satellite Phone	£350		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£11,556</b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>11,556</b>

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### Cristian Oyarzo Fierro

Our agent Cristian from Fortaleza ([www.fortalezapatagonia.cl](http://www.fortalezapatagonia.cl)) based in Puerto Natales, was of invaluable service. He helped organise bus tickets to the Park entrance, accommodation in Puerto Natales, taxis to/from the airport, porters, horses, fixed rope freight, sat phone coverage in the Park, and Park permits through CONAF.

The team owe him and his company staff a big debt of gratitude.

Cristian Oyarzo Fierro

E: [cristian@fortalezapatagonia.com](mailto:cristian@fortalezapatagonia.com)

E: [monofortaleza@gmail.com](mailto:monofortaleza@gmail.com)

T: +56 61 613395

Cell: +56 9 9480 7381

W: [http://www.fortalezapatagonia.cl/index\\_eng.html](http://www.fortalezapatagonia.cl/index_eng.html)

### John Rees

It is always worth writing to John Rees in Punta Arenas. He is Welsh, and is the British consulate for Southern Chile. He is a great help and is always available to sort out any big problems. Plus he is always up for a brew!

Address: British Consulate in Punta Arenas,

Chile Cataratas del Niagara

01325 Punta Arenas

Chile

T: +56 61 211535

E: [reesking@tie.cl](mailto:reesking@tie.cl)

Further details on this page: <http://www.consulate-info.com/consulate/12343/United-Kingdom-in-Punta-Arenas>

## USEFUL ADVICE

### Food

All food provisions were bought in Puerto Natales from local supermarkets in a hectic day of frenzied activity! We found that we could buy most things that we have in the UK in the local shops. Prices were also similar to UK prices. We lived off noodles, smash, rice and pasta as staples. We also supplemented this with dried meats and cheeses, and soups and hot drinks for each day. For hill food we had biscuits, cereal bars and chocolate bars. We also bought Birds Instant custard powder out from the UK. We also topped up with pasta and rice at the Refugio Campamento at the bottom of our valley, 2 hours walk from our BC. But it was very expensive so we bought very little.

If you did run short there is also a small shop at the Hotel Las Torres, at the start of the walk in, close to the park entrance.

All cooking was done on JETBOIL stoves – they worked really well! We took in 25 gas cartridges bought in Puerto Natales. They are about the same price as in UK.

### NATIONAL PARK ADMINISTRATION

We pre-arranged, through our agent Christian, to get our permit with CONAF - the National park organisation that owns the Park. We collected our permits from the Park Head quarters at the end of the road! They required photocopied forms from us with personal details, insurance details and our proposed route, Base Camp location etc.

To enter the Park everybody pays a standard fee to stay in the park. All are checked in and out by Rangers and all park visitors are required to attend a briefing session at the entrance to the Park. All CONAF staff were very helpful and approachable. Fire is the biggest hazard and the Park officials made this point very clear. The potential fines are huge!

### RESCUE SERVICES

CONAF will organise any rescue in the Park with the help of local climbers. They have stretchers but not much big wall experience. They would help constructively with any rescue. A helicopter is available from Punta Arenas available free of charge via the military authorities. But we understand such an operation would take a day to organise.

## **INSURANCE**

We all had different insurance schemes. Jerry and Raphael had expedition insurance from Club Alpine Francaise for less than €100 each! Twid had a Snow Card; Calum had expedition insurance from the BMC.

## **AIR TRAVEL TO CHILE**

DO NOT use LAN or Tan airlines – They provided us with the worst example of customer service we had ever experienced!

## **TOPO INFO**

If you need any climbing topo info for The Bader Valley try these two contacts:

**Andrew Bascue** in America. He is currently writing a guidebook to the Torres Del Paine National Park:

E: [andrewbascue@gmail.com](mailto:andrewbascue@gmail.com)

**Cristian Oyarzo Fierro**, our agent in Puerto Natales. See details above

## **POSSIBLE FUTURE OBJECTIVES IN THE AREA**

The Bader Valley, indeed, Torres del Paine as a whole, has many unclimbed walls throughout. The climbing is very much Big Wall in size and large multi-pitch affairs with little to offer in terms of traditional alpinism, unlike the Fitzroy Massif in Northern Patagonia. There are very few free climbs in the area and many, many unclimbed lines. Many routes still await second ascents and even more await complete/integral ascents. Possible future objectives are too numerous to note – perhaps it would be easier to await Andrew Bascue's guidebook to the area!

## **APPENDIX 1 - EQUIPMENT LIST**

### **PERSONAL KIT**

#### **Technical Climbing Equipment:**

Helmet, harness, crampons, Mtn Boots, trekking boots, insulated rock shoes, 2 daisy chains, etriers, belay plate, 5 screw gates, 3 prussic loops, 3 x 1.2m slings, chest harness, insulated rock boots, pen knife, jumars, 20 light snap gates, sleeping bag (-20C) + Bivi bag + Karrimat or Thermarest, S/B liner,

#### **Rucksacks:**

Haul Bag, 40Ltr alpine sack (hand luggage), Montane Holdall, walking poles

#### **Mountain clothing + travel clothing:**

T shirt, 2 thermal tops, Thin fleece top, Thick fleece top, Fleece trousers, Climbing trousers

3 pair of thick trekking/climbing socks, 2 prs of thin socks, 3 pair of underwear, 1 x pr of breathable underwear

Wind stopper top, Waterproof top and bottom.

2 x synthetic duvets

Warm hat + Sun hat + Sunglasses + ski goggles + yellow eyewear

2 pair of thin gloves and one thick

#### **Base Camp/Travel Accessories:**

Toiletries – toothbrush etc.

Head torch + spare batts.

Finger tape, pain killers, LIFESYSTEMS travel towel

2 x good books

1 x compact camera + spare batts, SD discs, charging unit, camera bag

1 x Exped plastic mug/pouring jug for use with JETBOIL

1 x I phone lead

1 x ltr water bottle (Nalgene) plus insulated case

Dry sack stuff sacs inc. large one for spare kit at BC

### **GROUP KIT**

**Tents:** Hanging TNF I Tent, Gore-Tex Bivi Tents, Base Camp tents

**Expedition Accessories:** Jet boil stoves, HD video camera + SD card, 120Ltr. Ortlieb Expedition bags, First Aid kits, haul bags assorted sizes, Sat Phone

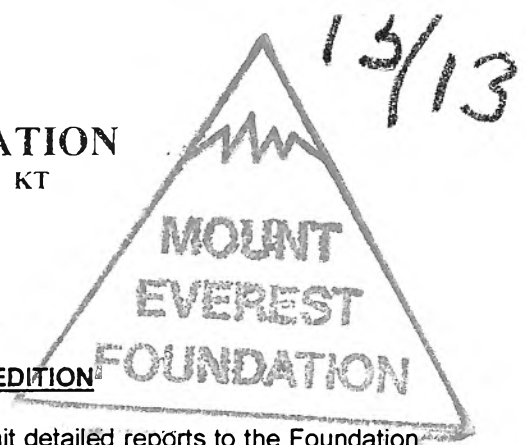
**Technical Climbing Equipment:** Crag hammer, technical axes, bird beaks, assorted pitons, copperheads, skyhooks, screw-gates, quick draws, funkiness device, Mini Traction, bolt drivers/bolts/hangers, DMM micro cams, 800m x 10mm English Braids fixed rope, 2 x 60m. x 10mm lead lines

**The compilers of this report and the members of the expedition agree that all or part of it may be copied for the purposes of private research.**



# MOUNT EVEREST FOUNDATION

Patron: HRH The Duke of Edinburgh KG KT



## SUMMARY REPORT FROM AN MEF - SUPPORTED EXPEDITION

MEF support for an expedition is offered on condition that you submit detailed reports to the Foundation. To assist in fulfilling the initial part of this commitment, it is requested that you fill in this form and return (preferably by E-mail) to the MEF Hon Secretary within six weeks of return from the expedition. Please feel free to continue on additional sheets if necessary.

1 - Name of Expedition: The Wall of Paine 2013

2 - MEF Expedition Reference: ... 13/13 - Country/Region: Chile – Southern Patagonia

4 - Names of all expedition members, indicating leader, climbing and support members:

1. Jerry Gore - Leader
2. Mike Twid Turner - Climber
3. Calum Muskett - Climber
4. Raphael Jochaud - Cameraman

5 – Name of Leader/Organiser. Jerry Gore

Address: L'Acacia, Chemin Des Horts, 05290 Vallouise, Southern French Alps  
Home Tel: +33 689 19 75 63 Work Tel: +33 492 23 45 69  
E-mail Address: jerry@alpbase.com

6 - Objective(s) of expedition – mountaineering / scientific / medical, include location of objective (or study area) with indication of special points of interest (e.g. first ascent of NW Ridge) and heights of peaks: First ascent of SE Face of South Tower of Paine (2500m.), Torres Del Paine National Park, Chile.

7 - Overall dates of expedition (e.g. March-June 2010) and if possible, details of dates spent on access, on the mountain and on return:

Exped Dates: 14 October – 10 November 2013

Walk-in to Base Camp: 17 October

Between Base Camp and Advanced Base Camp and on the Wall: 17 Oct – 08 Nov 2013

8 - Brief comments about expedition, with technical details of route and maximum height reached:

The Wall of Paine Expedition was a great success. British Climbers Mike 'Twid' Turner, Jerry Gore, Calum Muskett and French cameraman Raphael Jochaud climbed to the top of the Big Wall of the SE Face of the South Tower (at 2,500m. the tallest of the 3 famous Towers of Paine) to complete their climb – The Wall of Paine, 1000m., A3+, 5.11. Certainly the last great problem of the Patagonian region of Torres Del Paine. Unfortunately, after climbing 900m to our high point at the top of the wall, on the final climbing day of the expedition a ferocious storm (150kmph winds) prevented the team from standing on the elusive summit, only a 100m of easy mixed climbing away.

The 18 pitch climb was continuously difficult with many taxing A3+ pitches. There was plenty of loose difficult expanding pitches of granite on the lower/middle section to negotiate. The upper pink granite in contrast provided some excellent rock and some fine sections of free climbing. Young Welshman, Calum Muskett, on his first Big Wall trip to Patagonia, produced some sterling free climbing efforts in freezing cold conditions while Twid and Jerry shared more of the challenging loose and scary aid pitches.

The South East Face of the South Tower of Paine has been one of the most sought after faces in the whole of Patagonian region. It is one kilometre wide and high, of compact granite and has no obvious continuous crack systems on its smooth face.

Our climb initially followed Twid's previous route, climbed in 2006 with Stuart McAleese, but this time continued to the top of the rock wall. With only easy climbing remaining to the summit, hopes were high. However true to Patagonian form on the final day the extreme weather and cold prevented any final steps to the actual mountain summit

9 - Weather conditions, and if appropriate, reasons for retreat:

Over three weeks the team climbed the steep rock wall in a variety of weather conditions. Storms raged throughout the duration of the Expedition with only 2 days of perfect weather in the entire venture. In all the weather was generally awful, and in total we only got 2 really good weather days. Mostly it was high winds up to 150MPH, temperatures down to -15C and sleet, spindrift and snow. Luckily we only got one day of rain!

10 - Note of any accident to expedition members or to porters; also cases of serious illness, especially oedema - pulmonary or cerebral:

None

11 - Any other relevant comments (permit, LO etc):

None.

12 - Brief financial details, with income and expenditure:

**Expedition Costs:**

Air Travel - £5,200

Transport in country: £450

Food and accommodation in country: £1636

Exped eqpt. inc. haul bags, stoves, gaz: £414

Park Permit and entrance cost: £155

Hire of Labour - £760

Insurance - £650

Horses in and Out: £629

Freight ropes - customs duties etc: £312

Satellite Phone: £350

**TOTAL: £10,556**

**Expedition Income:**

Amount of Personal Contributions: £6,506

Expedition Grants:

BMC - £1900

AC - £800

MEF: £1,350

**TOTAL: £10,556**

13 - Approx date when Final Report will be submitted: 01.01.14

MEF/Z (2013)