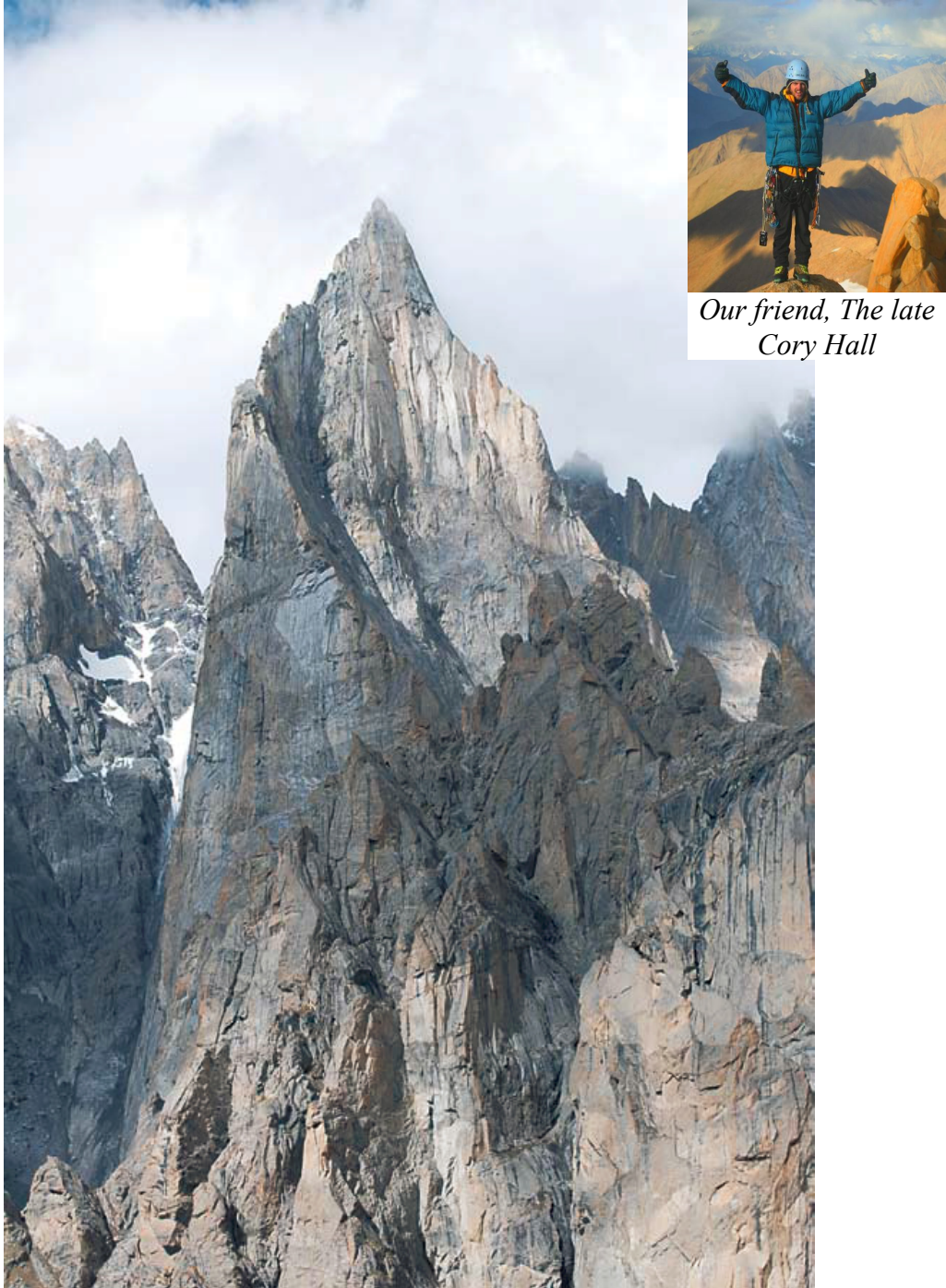


The Cory Hall memorial, Tangra tower expedition – Pakistan 2015

In September / October 2015 James Monypenny (UK) and Max Fisher (Canada) went to the Khane valley, Pakistan & attempted Twin Peak 2 & Tangra tower 5620m.



*Our friend, The late
Cory Hall*

*Illustration 1: The Unclimbed un-attempted Tangra Tower 5,620m,
(South face view) Khane Valley Pakistan.*

Summery

After arriving at the first terrace (September 18th), setting up BC and having one day to explore, I (James) became very ill with gardia, and we had bad weather (1 foot of snow) over 6 days. Day 10 I finally had recovered and we made an attempt on twin peak 2. After climbing around 1000m with lots of fresh powder and difficulties up to 90 degrees, Max my partner “lost his motivation” 150m from the summit. 3 days later the weather finally improved just enough to attempt tangra tower. Unfortunately, max never found his psych for climbing, luckily he did agree to have one tangra attempt. After climbing around 17 pitches, roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the face, over 5 days, in big wall style, encountering difficulties around 5.11, C2, we ran out of gas, therefore could not melt snow, and were forced to descend earlier than intended. We then left the valley earlier than planned October 6th, as my max did not want to try again. –scroll down for full article: “living in the spirit of”

Photo albums:

Any supporting organization i.e. gore-tex, bmc, MEF, v12, mountain equipment, MECoop may use any of these photos, and the article for their own purpose. Anyone else must ask permission.

Facebook:

https://www.facebook.com/james.monypenny/media_set?set=a.10156133123135175.506750174&type=3&uploaded=108

Dropbox:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/qo83n6w8tvtcjzj/AAA6Z3iPhSQBGcWYWTIR5RPRa?dl=0>



Figure 1 Day three on the wall

Khane valley: tangra tower

The Beautiful granite spire of Tangra Tower 5620m, lies on the northern edge of the Khane Valley, in the Karakoram Mountains of Pakistan. Very few expeditions have ventured into the Khane valley, most favoring Charakusa and Nangmah valley. Only three, out of 66 peaks that surround the khane valley have been successfully climbed. Pk 25, Levski Peak (5733m) and Grey Tower (5435m). There is a huge potential for new routes both Alpine and big wall in nature up many of the unclimbed summits. The beautiful and technically challenging peak of Tangra tower 5620m had never been attempted before. Only four expeditions have ever entered the Khane valley, and none have ever entered the glacial cirque surrounding tangra tower, let alone attempt the mountain.

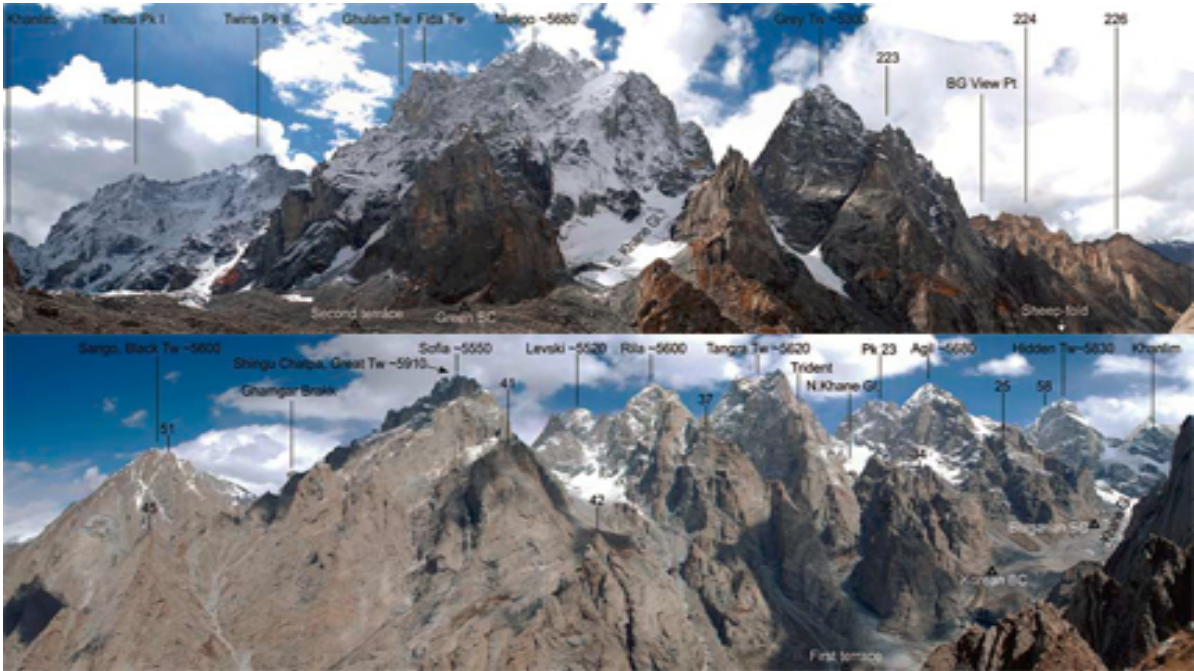


Illustration 2: Peaks of the Khane Valley: Top looking south, Bottem Looking North.

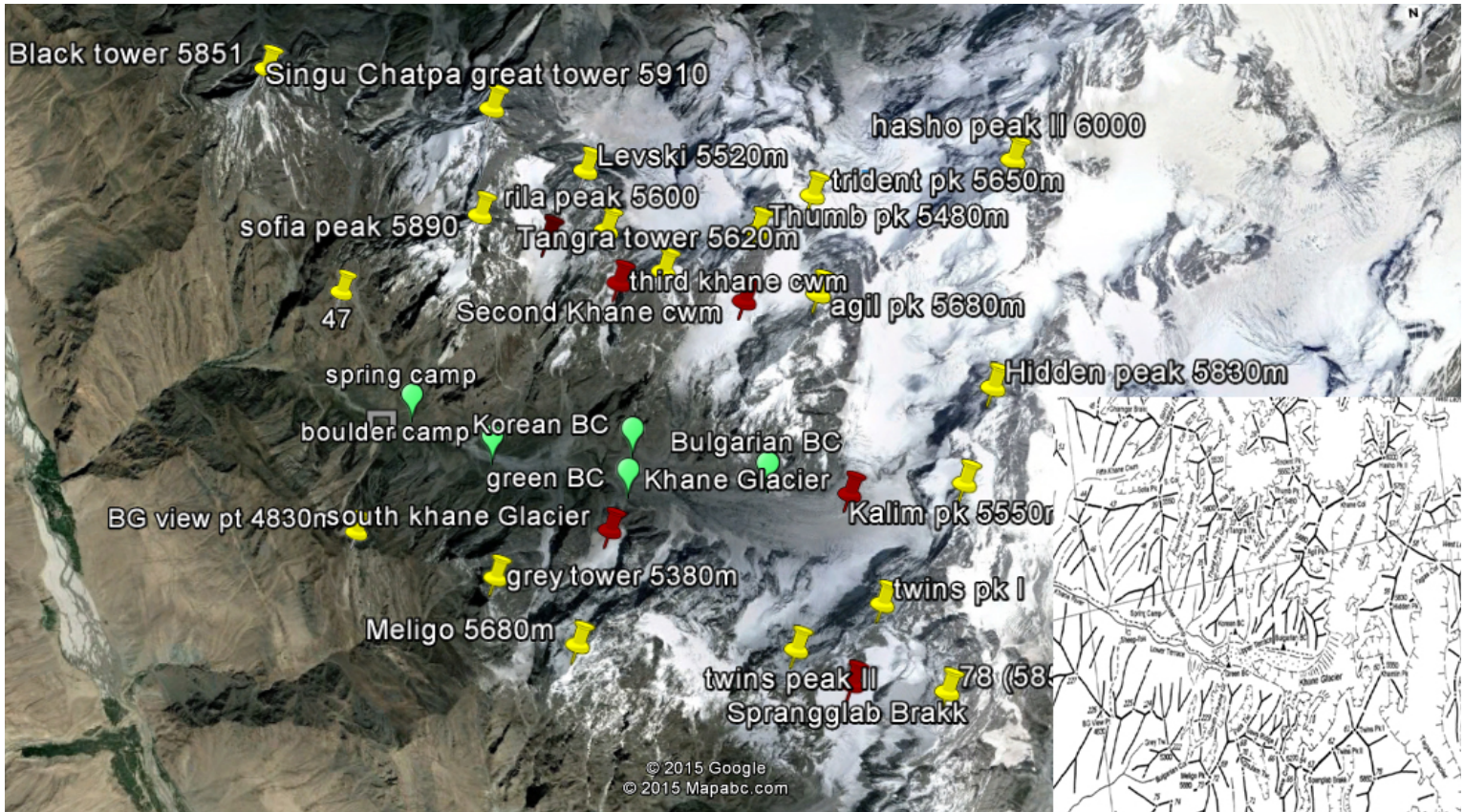


Illustration 3: Khane Valley Google Earth & Jeze Wala Map illustration Compared

Style:

We traveled overland from India my motorbike to the boarder, and then by public transport, all the way. We used 7 porters, organized in the khane village, to carry as far as BC on the first terrace. We used no high altitude porters, guides, security or cook. We climbed twin peak 2 in alpine style (to within around 150m of the summit). Making our advanced base camp on the glacier below, and climbing free, no fixed ropes etc. We abbed nearly all the way on "naked ablovs" threading the ropes directly in the v-threads, thus leaving no trace. We climbed tangra in big wall style with one hall bag and portaledge. We climbed approximately 90% free, mostly around 5.10, with some 5.11 and only used clean aid tactics. We managed to abseil leaving behind very little fixed gear, nearly all on spikes and only leaving tat, and mainly away from the route.

Rock:

The rock quality on our route up tangra was quite good. The lower slabs where pretty gritty, rounded cracks with dirt in, which made things more challenging. The upper head wall had nicer cracks. Lots of oatmeal style flaky crap in the off width. Lots of tactical trundling of dodgy boulders. No natural rock fall. Some ice fall. The rock through-out the valley is definitely variable, some towers looking better than others.

ICE:

The ice on twin peak 2, when not covered in thick fresh powder, was pretty good. We had 300m of dreamy 80 degree awesomeness. Other areas was a little brittle. There's a few dream lines waiting to go on the northerly slopes.

Weather:

We were late in the season: better to go earlier (august-early sept). The first 10 days brought a huge change to the look of the valley: i.e. around a foot of snow. Which sucked. After this the weather was ok. Some snow flurries, some sunny days. Most fronts approached from the south west. Rarely strong wind. Once the pressure increased the sky's where blue and at 3500m in the sun you could lie out toplless.

Getting there:

Most will fly to Islamabad, then fly to Skardu. Then private jeep hire to Khane village (Via Kaplu).

We took a rickshaw from the boarder to Lahore, then the Daewoo bus service to Islamabad (5hrs). Then the NATCO bus up the KKH to skardu (30hrs). Then the local shared jeep to Kaplu (3-4hrs). Then private jeep from Kaplu to Khane. We didn't prebook any transport. Returning on the KKH we took a bus from K2 tours (better condition, but more packed).

Food, fuel, supplies

All bought in Skardu. We bought gas canisters and kerosene here. Many markets and shops for all major food. There's even allot of left over expedition kit, if something needs replacing. Top tip: bring western lights & steel & flint.

Safety

Is Pakistan safe? This is the question everybody wonders before they go. An impossible one to answer. No-one can really properly predict the future, with the problems caused by the Taliban, al-Qaeda etc. The situation is complex (and interesting). But I think you're probably more likely to die in the mountains, earthquake or in a road traffic accident than you are at the hands of a terrorist. That said, personally I probably wouldn't go to a popular base camp e.g. Naga or K2 for a few more years. The people of Pakistan are surprisingly hospitable and generous. The army are limiting the movement of terrorists, and I believe that the collective consciousness of Pakistan will suppress the ignorance that gives life to extremist groups. We travelled by public transport, went out in cities at night. I never felt paranoid or un-safe. Take the same travelling precautions you would in any other Asian country.



Figure 2 Max climbing serracs on twin peak 2

Logistics and planning:

Google earth co-ordinates:

Tangra tower: 35°20'21.48"N 76°27'21.28"E

Twin peak II 35°18'24.37"N 76°27'52.72"E

Meligo 35°18'33.30"N 76°26'35.44"E

Hidden peak 35°19'36.64"N 76°29'9.87"E

Visas are more difficult than most other countries, as there is a lot more paper work. However you can apply by post and it only takes around 10 days. We used a company called "lost horizons" to organize the letter of invitation LOI for around \$75. You're also required to submit bank statements, work reference letter, specific photograph sizes, large application form, and itinerary. However: the authenticity of any of these are not checked, and once in the country you can go wherever you like.

Insurance

Max went with global rescue and myself the Austrian alpine club for rescue insurance. As well as having travel insurance.

Accommodation

A range of accommodation is available, things are normally more expensive compared to India, I think this is because tourists in Pakistan overly pre-book out of

Pakistan paranoia and drive up prices. Our accommodation costs varied massively from free, to 200RS (About £1.50), to 2500 RS per room per night. You don't need to pre-book everything with your tour operator, live a little. But just don't trust taxi drivers in big cities.

Porters

We arranged porters once in Khane village. No problem just turning up and arranging on the spot. Ishmal and his family / brothers are very friendly, and knowledgeable with the history of the valley and the climbing industry (ishmal works for blue sky trekking and tours). Their rate is 2000rs per porter per day for 25kgs. Which is think is above average price. But whatever, they need it more than we! We had a slight mis-communication with where we wanted BC. Be clear where you want to go before setting off.

Finance and funding

Expedition Budget:

Costs: Per person		Income:
Travel	£1500	BMC £600
Food & Stores	£600	MEF £1000
Peak Fees etc.	£0	Gore-tex £1800
Hire of Labour	£145	Total: £3400
Insurance	£300	
Accommodation	£250	
Visas & letter of invitation	£320	
Equipment	£1120	
Total	£4235	

Grants and support

Thanks goes to the following grants and organizations, without your help it would not have been possible:

The Mount Everest foundation, British mountaineering council and Gore-tex all helped financially.

Mountain equipment, Lowa boots, and Mountain equipment coop, v12 outdoors, all helped with clothing and equipment.

Political Requirements

No permits are required climbing in the Khane Valley. As the summits don't surpass 6,500m, no permit is needed.

There's many police check points up the KKH, but there mear formalities, half the time they don't even look in your passport.

Porters:

It is very easy to organize porters from the Khane village upon arrival. They are happy to get the work. They charged us 2000 pakistani rupees per porter for a 25kg

load. It is around 5 hrs of walking to get to the first terrace, a route well known by the local herds men.

Recommendations:

I'm already mentally planning the next trip to Khane valley, and I'll certainly be finishing off the route up tangra. So I hope you don't beat me to it. (it's crap, honest don't bother ☺). There's loads to go at, amazing place, can't wait to return. This time for longer, with a psyched partner, in better style.

Waste and refuse:

We believe in a leave no trace ethic. And therefore removed all non-organic materials from base camp. Some compostable material, such as uncooked vegetable scraps, was buried in a suitable spot, some cardboard burnt (and ashes spread. Rubbish left by other teams or locals was collected and removed.

Appendix

Name and Address of Leader:

James Monypenny, 15 brimshot Lane, Chobham, Surrey, GU248rn.

Telephone: (M) +44(0)7939114494 (H) 01276858696

Email: jamesmonypenny@hotmail.com

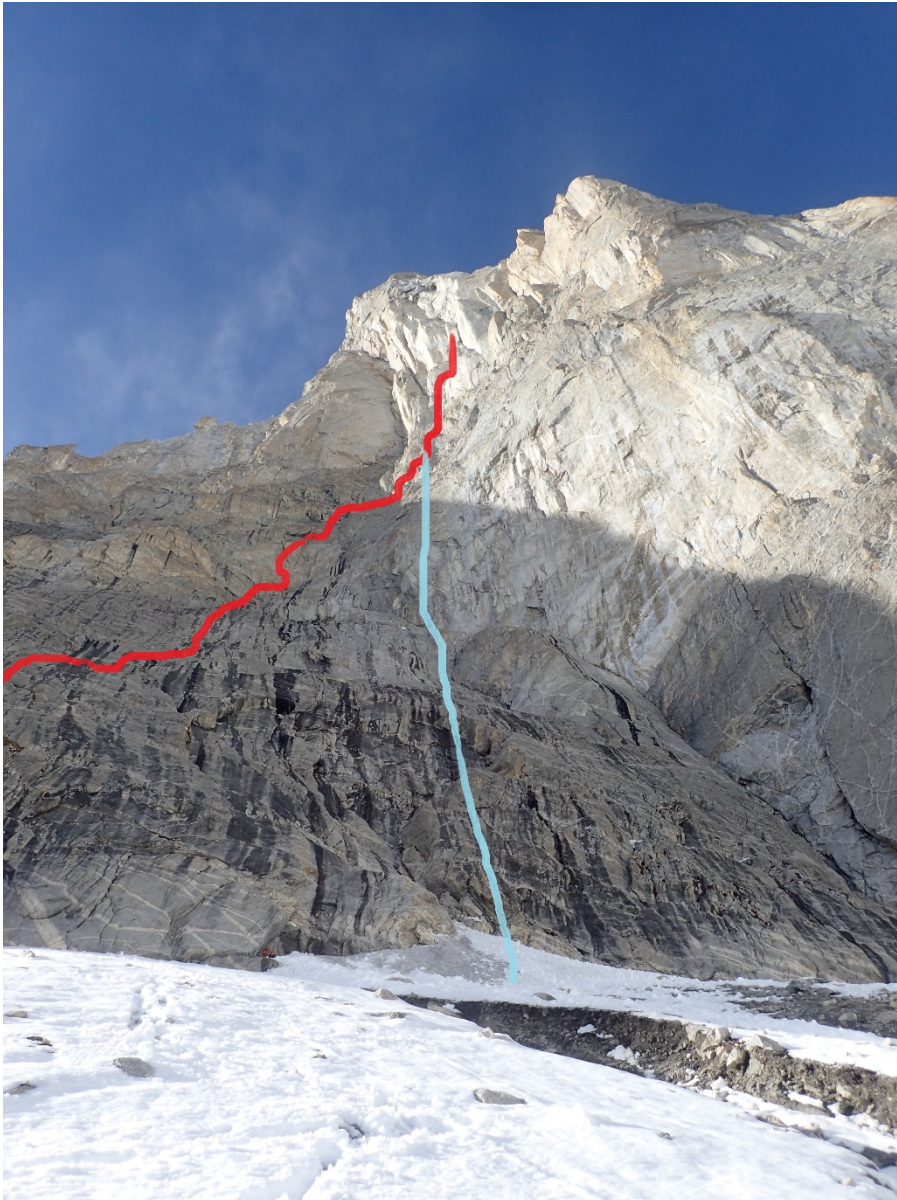


Figure 3 RED our ascent route. Blue our descent

Mountaineering History of the Khane Valley:

2001 two Korean expeditions failed attempts the west face of Agil 5680m

Black Tower (Sarigo) and Singu Chatpa (also called Singu Charpa and Great Tower) are both reported to have been climbed from the Nangmah Valley.

Doychin Boyanov, Tervel Kerelov, Michail Michailov and Nikolay Petkov completed exploratory expedition in 2011. Report here:

<http://jac.or.jp/english/images/vol13/JAPANESE%20ALPINE%20NEWS%20Vol13-30.pdf>

August 2012 a Bulgarian's Doychin Boyanov, Tervel Kerelov, Michail Michailov and Nikolay Petkov return and make the first ascents of Levski Peak (5733m)

and Grey Tower (5435m).

Article here: <http://www.planetmountain.com/english/News/shownews1.lasso?l=2&keyid=39995>

September 2012 American's Anna Plaff & Partner.

Climbed the west face of peak 25, and failed attempt on Peak 46.

Blog post here: <http://climbingmadness.blogspot.co.uk/2012/10/khane-valley-baltistan-expedition.html>

Article:

Living in the spirit of

-searching the edge....continued

Tangra tower (A Cory Hall memorial expedition)

Last year when my good buddy, climbing partner & fellow adventurer "[thee Cory hall](#)" passed away in a tragic climbing accident whilst on a motorbike-Pan-American climbing odyssey: I knew a memorial expedition with friend (and also Cory-partner), Max "[the bear](#)" fisher was in order. Cory was, and still is, an inspiration to many, not only in his impressive climbing career, but also in his care-free, fun loving, and adventurous life style.

The granite spires of Pakistan have been a long held dream, for Cory and myself: and I wanted to forge an uncompromising line, in good style, up a remote, untouched spire, in a rarely visited valley. Tangra tower fit the bill perfectly. After months of research, fundraising and preparation; the stage was set for a true adventure.

Early in September we met in the chaos & humidity of Delhi, bought royal Enfield motorbikes, and learnt to ride in the deep end. After three days of dodging traffic and cows through the foothills of the Himalaya we reached the Pakistan-India boarder. Try as we might, we were unable to bribe the bikes into Pakistan, and continued by public transport, up the infamous Karakoram highway.

In Skardu we bought supplies for a one month stay in the Khane valley. Entering the valley the psych was running high, surrounded by alpine & big wall objectives, with so much to choose from. However fate had other plans. After a reccy on our first day, we spent the next 9 days pinned at base camp whilst around a foot of snow fell, and I suffered badly with Gardia.

On day 10, only partly recovered, we moved our heavy big-wall kit into the base of tangra, however we were going to need allot more sun to melt all the fresh powder on the lower slabs. Instead, we opted to acclimatize on the alpine-style objective of "[twin peak 2](#)". The endless trail breaking through knee deep snow finally gave way to some great ice climbing. Taking the short-cut straight up serracs yielded good ice and less slog. A huge spindrift avalanche ripping down the tasty-looking chimney we were aiming for meant we had re-think, and romped-up an alternative couloir. We were initially slowed by powder snow sat on brittle ice and loose rock slow, then after a few hundred meters we re-joined our line, and were rewarded by 400 meters of excellent ice conditions.

In hindsight, after moving together for so long, and Max mentioning his fatigue, it was unwise not to take a break and refuel at this point. Pushing onward, we

reached around 150m from the summit. However Max was done, unused to the altitude and un-acclimatized, a deep fatigue had set in. Our rap-down through the night went reasonably well, and we stumbled back to our advanced camp after 20 hours on the go.

The following day high pressure arrived, and we enjoyed blue skies on the painful stumble back to base. Just as good weather arrived, max's psych departed.

Unfortunately the waiting game had taken its toll, thankfully he was willing to give Tangra an attempt.

After only one full day at BC we returned to Tangra, collected water, and got established on the wall. I lead up the lower slabs. Dirty, gritty, rounded cracks would finish abruptly, and I would continue into the unknown: hopeful. Friction combined with 30kg of water did not make hauling any fun, not that it ever is. Camp 2, in our orange ledge, produced almighty views, the rising and setting sun helped to re-warm max's psych, just a little. And he got stuck into some slow going awkward aid on pitch 1 of day 2. Several pitches later snow flurries and unprotected moves halted my upward progress and we set up camp in an awesome position.

Linking the grey bands on the morning of day 4 we reached the upper head wall.

Wild splitter cracks, which took a mixture of free, aid and pendulums to proceed lead us to the chimney pillar, where we spent the night. After an hour of trying to get the stove going, using cheap Asian lighters, we succumbed to a depressing meal of try noodles. Searching every pocket I found three matches, and we could continue to eat and melt snow for one more night, however lack of gas forced us to make a summit attempt on day 5. This did not go well. After taking two hours to achieve twenty meters, due to horrendous off-width climbing, loose rock, and tricky aid, I had to admit defeat. Despite the tips of my fingers being painfully split, my body tired, my motivation to keep going up was high, but this didn't change the fact we were out of water and gas, going down was the only logical choice.

We managed to get down leaving behind mainly just tat around spikes. This time, having done the majority of the leading, it was my turn to feel the deep fatigue. Stumbling, for the last time, back to base camp, the weather remained mockingly good.

Tangra put up a great fight. It's the unknown that beckons us back to the alpine, time after time. In this case there was no certainty of success, so many challenges to overcome. Whilst we didn't overcome them all, and we didn't stand on a summit, the trip was a success, because coming home to friends and family is the most important objective. Tangra will still be there, and I will be back. To my friends and family: thank you for your support, & sorry for the worry that my self-indulgent sport inevitably causes.

We would also like to thank Mountain Equipment (for supplying clothing), Lowa (for supplying footwear), Mountain equipment coop Canada (for supplying the portaledge and haul bag), V12 outdoors (various items of equipment), as well as the British mountaineering council, the Mount Everest Foundation, & Gore-tex for supporting the expedition financially.

Meet the team:



[James Monypenny](#), 27, British, Freelance Outdoor instructor / Expedition Leader.

Notable climbing achievements:

- ▲ **Indian Karakoram 2013:** First ascent of Jungdung Kangri 6160m (3 new routes, up to ED1) for which we earned a nomination for the prestigious Pilot d'or mountaineering awards.
<http://gripped.com/news/first-ascent-canadian-cory-hall-climbs-jungdung-kangri-6160m/>
- ▲ **Peru and Bolivia** (2012): Urus, Ishinca (solo), Cordillera Blanca. Huayna Potosi 6088m (twice, once French route, then normal route + paraglider).
-
- **Patagonia** (2012/13): Fitzroy, supercandelita. Aguja Guillaumet, Brenner-Moschioni. Aguja Poincenot, Whillans-Cochrane.
Cochamo: 3 best lines were: Al Centro y Adentro 5.11c 1500 feet, Bienvenidos a mi Insomnio 5.11a 3000 feet, Las Manos del Dia 5.11+ 1800 feet
- **Big wall**, Yosemite 2011: The nose (3 days), Regular NW half dome (2 days), SW face of Washington Column (2 days). + many free routes.
- **Expedition to Kyrgyzstan 2010;** <http://kyrgyzstanexpedition2010.blogspot.com>
3 virgin peaks + 1 new route
4 Alpine summers, 1 alpine winter trip
- **42 alpine routes** in the European alps PD-ED1.
Areas include: Mont blanc massif, Bernese Oberland, Swiss Valais, Ecrins, Grand Paradis national park. Notable routes include: The Shroud, Super Coulior, Central Pillar of Freney, Voie Suisse (grand cap), Hornli ridge, Frenedo spur.
- **On-sight grades approx.:** E4, F7b+, 5.12+, M6, WI 6, Scottish 6, A2+.



[Max Fisher](#), 31, Canadian, NOL's (National outdoor leadership) Instructor.

Fitz Roy: 3405m Supercanalata WI4 M4 5.9 1600m (with James Monypenny)

Cerro Torre: 3133m Ragni Route AI5+ M4 600m (with Cory Hall)

Mount Alberta: 3619m Northeast Ridge 5.10 700m (with Cory Hall)

Mount Colonel Foster: 2135m Into the Mystic 5.10- 1200m

Kooshdakhaa Spire: 2200m North Couloir AI3 M3 650m (First Ascent)

Email: fish_nbr21@yahoo.com