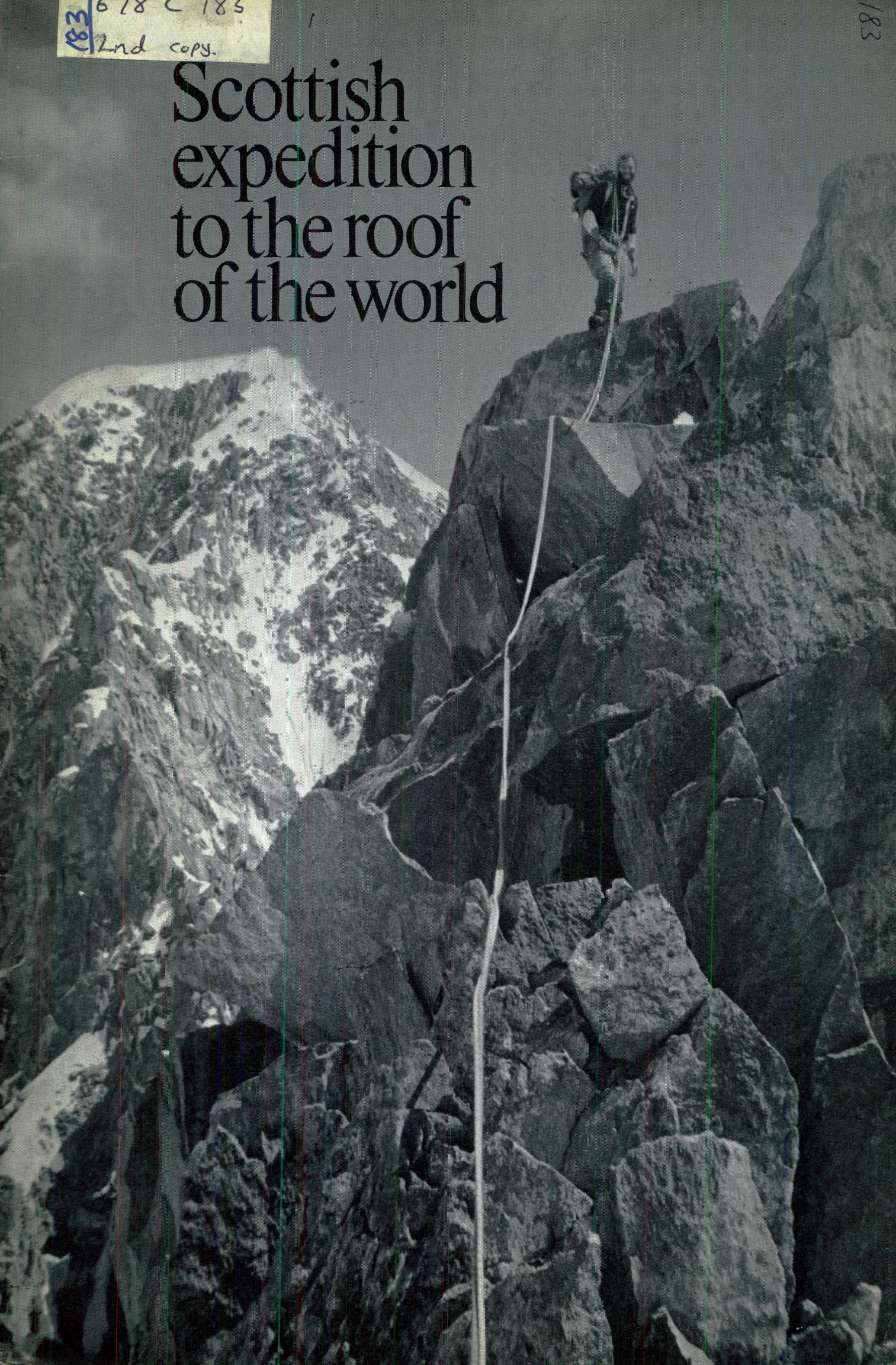
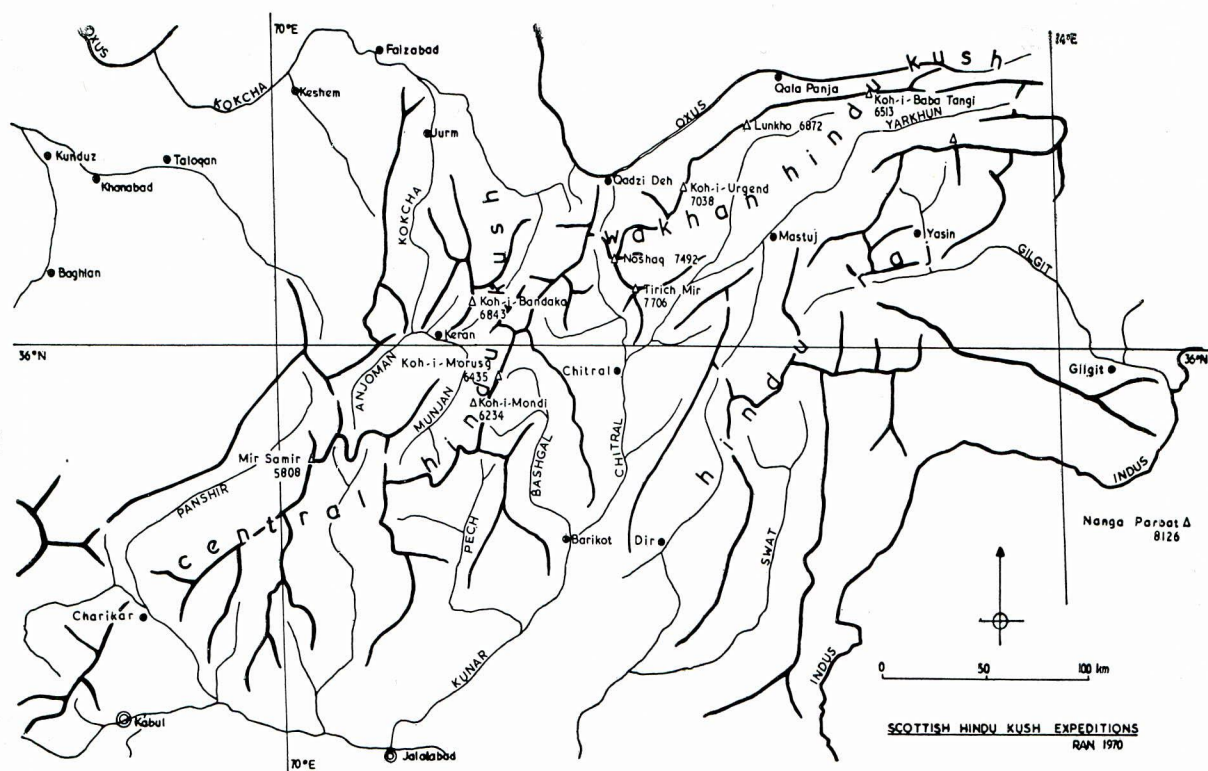


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Scottish expedition to the roof of the world



183



The Hindu Kush

Scottish Hindu Kush Expedition, 1970.

Patrons: Baron Balerno of Currie
Professor Sir Robert Grieve

Members: R. Alan North
Ian G. Rowe
William M. A. Sproul
Wilfrid J. A. Tauber

Introduction

Four young Scots drove to the Hindu Kush in 1965 and entered the hitherto unexplored headwaters of the Bashgal valley. Theirs was a small mobile Expedition, planned and executed in the traditions of the Corriemulzie Mountaineering Club, taking little precedent from previous Himalayan exploration. The party set up its basecamp above Panajir ($35^{\circ}53'N$ $71^{\circ}31'E$) and ascended the Shoshgal valley. Carrying food and equipment with them, they crossed a low col on the east ridge of Koh-i-Chrebek and descended the Suigal. Throughout this excursion the whole party moved together, splitting up to ascend mountains from each of five individual camps. They claimed several fine summits, the most notable of which were Koh-i-Chrebek (6290m), Koh-i-Morusg (6435m) and Koh-i-Sisgeikh (6130m). The team also crossed the ridge which falls east from Koh-i-Morusg and looked southwards into the "lost valley", which they did not realise to be the northernmost tributary of the Schurigal. They noted a host of attractive 5000m peaks in the south and resolved to return to them.

Philip Tranter, the leader of the 1965 Hindu Kush Expedition, was killed in 1966. This tragedy occurred in northern France in a motor vehicle accident when he was returning from a climbing holiday in Turkey and the Alps: thus Scotland was deprived of a promising engineer and explorer. His friend, Ian Rowe, took over the organisation of the next Expedition. With a party of six, Ian Rowe applied for permission to visit Wakhan and attempt Lunkho (6872m) — in 1967 the highest unclimbed peak in the Hindu Kush. The British Embassy in Kabul regarded the likelihood of this application being favourably received by the Afghans as very low and did not submit it. Therefore, another application was forwarded to Kabul, detailing the Suigal and Schurigal branches of the Bashgal as the main objectives.

In Kabul, in July 1968, the Afghans intimated it might after all be possible to visit Wakhan, and after a week on tenterhooks the Expedition received permission to attempt Lunkho from the Ishmurgh valley. They did not know that the Japanese had already made the first ascent from the south, from Pakistan, in 1967. After many repulses with bad weather the team succeeded on Lunkho in early September, about three weeks after Austrian and Yugoslavian parties had reached the top from the adjacent Khandud valley.

There was much scope remaining in the Ishmurgh valley, including the unclimbed Lunkho-i-Kuchek (6345m), and further within the Wakhan in the region of Koh-i-Baba Tangi. In 1969 Alan North and Jim Tancred began plans to return to Wakhan in 1970. Ian Rowe threw in his lot, and Bill Sproul was recruited. When Jim Tancred had to withdraw for professional reasons, Wilf Tauber took his place, so completing the final four man team. From the outset, it became clear that re-entry to Wakhan might be difficult. Polish friends, who usually had no problems with obtaining permission, had been refused in 1969. We learned in due course that the Wakhan was closed to us, and only in May 1970 resubmitted our destination as the Darrah-i-Toghw of the central Hindu Kush, a tributary of the Munjan. This was accepted only on our arrival in Kabul in July.

Central Hindu Kush

There has been intense exploration of the whole of the Hindu Kush chain within the last fifteen years. It is now the best known and best chronicled of the major Asian ranges. The most prominent historians of the region are the Pole, Boleslaw Chwascinski¹ and the Germans, Wolfgang Frey^{11,12,13,26} and Adolf Diemberger^{9,20}. Frey, in conjunction with Deutsche Naturfreunde, has established an information centre to help parties wishing to climb in the Hindu Kush³⁰. The chain of the Central Hindu Kush runs southwestwards through Badakshan and curves westwards to the Anjoman pass, before rising again to join the Kohe Khwaja Muhammad range. An important spur runs northwestwards from just south of the Dorah pass, and contains Koh-i-Bandaka, the highest peak in the Central Hindu Kush.

More specifically, we were interested in the mountains forming the watershed east of the

Munjan and west of the Bashgal valleys, approximately within the area limited by 35°00' and 36°40'N and 70°00' and 71°30'E. On the Munjan side of this part of the chain, there are several tributary valleys: in sequence from the north these are the Shahran, Deh Ambi, Wilo (very small), Mulaw, Youmeh, Khaaik, Panam (very small), Chaur, Parshui, and Parun (leading to the Woran pass). Of these valleys, only the Shahran, Mulaw, Parshui and Parun give access to peaks on the watershed. The following survey of recent climbing expeditions to the Central Hindu Kush is not comprehensive, and relates principally to the area defined above.

Date	Expedition, leader	Reference	Comments
1956	British H. Carless and E. Newby	1, 2, 3	Failed to climb Mir Samir.
1959	German H. Biller	1	Climbed Mir Samir and peaks around Khawak pass, Dasht Ribat and Galamastan.
1960	British E. Baillie and J. Dunsheath	1, 4	Minor peaks around Anjoman pass.
1970	German Hindukush Expedition, 1960 von Hansemann	1	Koh-e-Bandaka and six 5000m peaks in Paghar valley (off Anjoman).
1961	German Bremen DAV J. Ruf	1	Koh-e-Krebek and three other peaks from Munjan side.
1961	German Traunstein DAV	1	Deh Ambi valley (off Munjan) climbing seven peaks, and Shahran valley climbing Shak-e-Kabud and Koh-e-Marchech.
1962	German Bamberger Hindukush Expedition, 1962 S. Ziegler	1	Koh-e-Mondi and Koh-e-Joumeh (Jumi) from Chaur or Parshui valley and several peaks south of the Weran pass.
1962	German Rosenheim-Hindukush Expedition, 1962 W. Kaesweber	1	Climbed thirteen 5000m peaks around upper Anjoman valley and Pt. 5953 near the Rangul pass.
1963	German Garmish-Partenkirchen DAV	1, 5, 6	Koh-e-Bandaka, and first ascents of Koh-e-Bandaka North peak and Koh-e-Bandaka Sakhi.
1963	German R. Reiser	1	Bologron valley, east of the Anjoman. Climbed twenty-two peaks over 5000m.
1963	German Akademische Sektion, Munich, DAV A. von Hillebrand	1	Koh-e-Muhammad range, northeast of the Anjoman-Kokcha rivers. Climbed forty-two peaks including Koh-e-Piv.
1964	German (Munich) E. Haase	1	Koh-e-Muhammad range, Rakhuy and Ushnu valleys. Seventeen peaks, most over 5000m. E. Rinkl and W. Strasse murdered by porters.
1964	German Kempten-Munich Hindu Kush Expedition, 1964 B. Diepolder	1, 13	Pagar valley, off Munjan. Crossed Kantivo pass into Pech valley.
1964	German Bremen DAV J. Ruf	1	Sanglich valley, between Koh-e-Bandaka and the peaks north of Koh-e-Krebek, from the north. Climbed seventeen peaks around 5000m.
1964	Japanese Nagoya University Prof. Matsui	1	Minor peaks near Koh-e-Bandaka.
1965	German Eisenerzer Hindu Kush Expedition, 1965	1	Third ascent Koh-e-Bandaka. First ascents Koh-e-Bandaka Tawika, Koh-e-Bandaka Uris and Koh-e-Akher Sakhi.
1965	German Deutscher Naturfreunde Hindu Kush Expedition M. Keierleber, W. Frey	1, 7, 9, 11 12, 13, 14, 15	
1965	Italian R. Varvelli	1	Fourth ascent of Koh-e-Bandaka, by a new route on the north face. Also climbed Punta Torino on north side of Bandaka.
1965	Japanese Oita Hindu Kush Expedition R. Nishi	13	Chaur valley, off the Munjan.
1965	British Scottish Hindu Kush Expedition, 1965 P. N. Tranter	13, 17, 18, 19, 20	Koh-e-Krebek and nine peaks at the head of the Suigal, a tributary of the Bashgal. First expedition to use the Bashgal approach.
1965	German (Munich)		Koh-e-Muhammad range, southern part.
1965	American Sierra Club, California	9	

1966	German	13	Mir Samir, third ascent.
	Allgauer Hindu Kush Expedition		
	P. Albrecht, H. Pritschet		
1966	German	1, 7, 9, 11, 12,	Completed exploration of Parshui valley. Climbed
	Bayerische Naturfreunde	13, 14, 15	twelve peaks over 5000m. Mapped area.
	Hindu Kush Expedition		
	W. Frey		
1966	British		Peaks around Munjan pass.
	(Manchester)		
1966	French	23	Failed on Koh-e-Bandaka.
	(Marseille)		
1966	German		Northern Koh-e-Muhammad range. Climbed
	Kartner Hindu Kush		eight peaks at head of Kesem valley.
	Expedition, 1966		
1966	Japanese		Fifth ascent of Koh-e-Bandaka.
1967	British	21, 22, 23	Climbed many peaks in Shahrān valley, and
	Midlands Hindu Kush		seventh ascent of Koh-e-Bandaka by new route
	Expedition, 1967		on south face.
	D. Scott		
1967	Japanese	13, 22, 23	First ascent Koh-e-Yajun near Abi valley,
	Hiroshima University		Anjoman-Munjan junction.
1967	Italian	23	Second ascents of several peaks in Shahrān
	L. Ratto		valley.
1967	American	23, 13	Second ascents from Bashgal.
	J. & J. Dozier		
1967	Japanese	23	Sixth ascent of Koh-e-Bandaka, fifth ascent of
	Chuhoh University, Tokyo		Koh-e-Ka-Safed.
	K. Itakura		
1968	American	25	Skurigal, tributary of Bashgal. Climbed Koh-e-
	Sierra Club, California		Tundy Shagai Shah by southeast face.
	E. Goldfarb		
1968	Japanese	24	Failed on Koh-e-Iblar, in Bandaka region.
	Rissho University		
	M. Matsuura		
1968	Japanese	25	Eighth ascent Koh-e-Bandaka, one member
	Aichigakuin University		killed.
	M. Namikawa		
1967	Japanese	25	Climbed in the Pagar valley, making first ascent
	Ogaki Expedition		of Shai-i-Anjoman — the last unclimbed 6000m
	Y. Muto		peak in the area.
1969	Austrian	29	Koh-e-Muhammad Range, Koh-e-Ka-Laghn,
	Oesterreich Touristan		and nearby peaks.
	kub Expedition		
	W. K. Stangl		
1970	Swiss		Koh-e-Bandaka.
1970	German or Swiss		Shahrān valley.
1970	Japanese	27, 28, 31	Mulaw valley, Koh-e-Barph, Koh-e-Mulaw and
	Akita Hindu Kush Expedition		Koh-e-Cousin.
	K. Hirasawa		
1970	Japanese	27	
	Four expeditions		
1970	American	27	
	J. Dozier		Koh-e-Marchech by west ridge.
1970	British	27	Failed on east face of Koh-e-Bandaka Sakhi.
	British Hindu Kush		
	Expedition, 1970		
	B. Whybrow		
1970	British	27, 31	Skurigal tributary of Bashgal, Shak-e-Kabud
	Imperial College, London		and fourteen other peaks.
	I. Staples		
1970	British	31	Ten peaks in Mulaw valley.
	Scottish Hindu Kush Expedition, 1970		

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General report

1. Travel by vehicle

The Expedition left Scotland on 27 June in a 30 cwt. Ford Transit van. It was a pouring wet day and an ignominious beginning: the van battery was quite flat for an unknown reason and we could not start. Having not been able to obtain visas in London our immediate objective was the Royal Afghan Embassy in Kensington. We went there on the 29th and after some hard talking we were granted visas — the problem arose from the fact that permission for us to climb in the Central Hindu Kush had not yet arrived from Kabul. The visas were issued after the customary two day delay: we left Britain on 1st July. Things were going badly in every way. We had been delayed four days over the visas, we had already crumpled a mudguard and wrecked a tyre, and the battery was mysteriously losing charge every night. Worst of all, our large consignment of duty-free beer had not arrived at Dover.

We entered Belgium just before midnight, ate a pavement breakfast in Frankfurt, bought crampons in Munich, and sought an elusive Diemberger in Salzburg. Somewhere in the middle of Austria in the pitch-blackness and pouring rain the van stalled on a double bend across both tracks of a level crossing. The battery had drained flat whilst waiting for the train — not a side-light was showing. Wilf rushed down the road in his underpants waving a red triangle into the lights of an approaching truck. Alan, Bill and Ian leapt out and struggled to push the laden van out of danger. This problem with the battery was getting to be a nuisance.

We lunched in Belgrade, leaving hurriedly with a Yugoslavian parking ticket, and entered Bulgaria at midnight. The road from the Dragoman pass into Sofia had been greatly improved and we were searching the capital for petrol at 2.00 a.m. Speeding out of the town on deserted roads we collected a fine of 5 Lev for going too fast, and then settled down across the dull rolling country of east Bulgaria. After entering Turkey at breakfast time, we arrived at our primary destination in the early afternoon — the Sea of Marmara.

Later, cooler, we drove into Istanbul and were entertained for an evening. The MoCamp was comfortable and not crowded and we spent a leisurely morning, not leaving the city until noon. The road from Istanbul to Ankara is probably one of the most lethal highways in the world with its high density of high-speed imbecile-driven vehicles; it was relaxing to reach the quieter roads over the Anatolian plateau to the Black Sea. Slowing up now, we spent the day in an idyllic setting of sun, sands and sea and only moved on in the afternoon coolness. Nine o'clock saw us in Trabzon, prelude to an exciting night drive over the passes to Erzurum on a narrowing road but almost all surfaced. We were at the frontier under Mount Ararat by noon after a few hours sleep and 200 miles of rougher unsurfaced road.

After drinking tea and whisky with the customs' men — their tea, our whisky — we pushed on through Maku and only stopped late at night in the hills before Tabriz. Foul omelettes in a Tabriz cafe introduced a long, sweaty, headachy day moving on towards Teheran — but the roads were first class and we were at the Camp Site near Teheran by tea-time. A good night's sleep, a morning swim, free petrol coupons from the Iranian Oil company and then an escape from the raucous dangerous cacophony of Teheran traffic — over the hills and away to Babol Sar. Once

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25. Alpine Journal 74, 195.
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28. American Alpine Journal, 1971.
29. Alpine Journal 75, 179.
30. Wolfgang Frey, 07031 Gultstein, Tailfingerstrasse II, Tübingen, Germany.
31. This report.

more, good metalled roads carried us along the Caspian sea coast only running out of tarmac beyond Gonbad. There is a pleasant gorge a little further on where the road begins the long climb up onto the East Persian salt plateau, and we slept for a few hours in the middle of the night. Now it was 10th July, and the worst day's travel between London and Kabul. On unmade roads, but close beside an almost completed highway, we pressed on through Bojnoord to Meshed and camped there on a small hill near the town. It was a pity not to have more time for such a beautiful city.

The roads to the Afghan frontier were atrocious, but a good road is now open. Alan increased the score of wrecked tyres in his haste to get to Afghanistan, and Wilf became the leading punster when he noted that the damage occurred at Tayyebat (pronounced Tiabad). It took three hours to enter the country: the policeman at the Afghan passport office had not lost his pathological love for pens and pencils, nor found his sense of humour. The river at Turpul where it goes under the old six-arched bridge was a welcome swimming place; our next stop was at three in the morning at the hotel near Daulatabad. Dawn saw us in the swimming pool — we left at 5.00 p.m. — another good day's progress. The van was set towards Kabul for the last overnighiter and the city arrived at 9.00 a.m.

It took four days to obtain the necessary permission to climb in the Central Hindu Kush (Appendix C); meantime we were encamped near the Qargha dam north of the city. We were glad to leave Kabul at dawn on the 17th July, heading north over the Salang Pass. The good asphalt road, built with Russian aid, continues to Mazar-i-Sharif and beyond, but we turned eastwards at Alibad. This was an error. We should have gone on to Kunduz before turning off to Khanabad for that road is much better than the atrocious section from Aliabad to Khanabad. Khanabad itself was industrious and picturesque with its horse-drawn carts gaily bedecked with flowers clattering along the dusty streets. The road continued unmade but mostly reasonable for a few miles when we stopped for the night. Subsequently the road was worse than it had been two years before and our laden Transit made heavy weather of the poor surface between Taloq-an and Keshem. A little north of Keshem we entered the valley of the Kokcha, whose waters we expected to follow all the way to our base camp, and the road improved somewhat. Some of the worst of the bridges had been rebuilt or bypassed but there were still some spectacular sections remaining. We came close to Faizabad that day, wrecked another tyre and washed the dirt and sweat off with a mad water-fight when we stopped for the night.

There were customary delays in Faizabad with the traffic and passport police. Ian was deathly looking with gut-ache, ear-ache and squitters and the long wait in a stuffy fly-ridden office did him no good. Setting off upstream we found that roads which had been negotiated two years before were almost impassable, and another puncture swayed us not to push our luck . . . we decided to return to Faizabad and hire a high-clearance truck. It was fortunate that we turned back that night for the heavens opened and the road was washed away.

On the 20th we left Faizabad again in our second attempt to get upstream, this time in a guadily painted robust Russian lorry. It was 2800 Afghanis worth, and at the first point where the road was blocked by a huge mud-slide it became clear that it was money well spent. The 80 mile journey to Hazrat-i-Sayet took up a day and a half because there was a delay of several hours whilst a section of the road was reconstructed. We rolled into the roadhead village on the morning of the 21st, a pretty, shaded settlement surrounded by poppy fields and set on a broad fertile terrace above the roaring Kokcha river.

2. Travel by horse and donkey

In the centre of the village is a grassy meadow, well-watered and shaded by large trees. The gear unloaded and under guard, we sat on the grass and commenced the long haggle. We learned that the bridge at Sar-e-sang had been washed away, and as our plan was to stay there for a few days and climb from there, we required porters only for the one day's march from Hazrat to Sar-e-sang. Such a day's journey would be long but quite feasible. We thought that it might be possible to employ more men at Sar-e-sang to continue our journey — in fact, this is impossible and it was necessary for us to telephone up the valley and request men to come down from Ishkaser. The bargaining continued all afternoon, interpreted by the local school-

teacher. They insisted that thirty donkeys would be needed to transport all our gear, whereas fifteen could manage it comfortably. Eventually we settled on the extortionate rate of 3,200 Afghanis for the journey to Sar-e-sang — they could use as many animals as they wished.

A motley collection of beasts arrived on the green on the morning of 22nd July — they were several hours late, so jeopardising our chances of reaching Sar-e-sang that day. Chaos reigned! Men fought each other for the lightest loads, we raced about trying to stop gear disappearing, and Wilf struggled to keep a count of the number of animals and, optimistically, what each was carrying. In fact, none of us had been involved with animals before, our previous expedition experience being only with porters, and we had neglected a most important thing. This is the provision of large donkey-bags. These could be made up very cheaply at home, and could be made to hold a large number of food boxes or whatever. There is no doubt that this would assist immensely in loading animals, for the donkey bags could be packed by the Expedition members themselves and it would prevent the squabbling over weights and obviate the need to provide cord and rope to tie things together. It was a strange procession which left Hazrat, some animals carrying little more than a foam mattress, others reasonably laden. They were very reluctant to carry tea-chests on the donkeys because the path is sometimes narrow.

The valley remains broad and poppy-fertile for five or six miles and then closes down. The road takes to the water's edge except where it is forced by crags to climb high on the valley side. A truck was going as far as the end of the motorable road at Camp and Alan took a lift. Camp is no more than two sheds at the end of a road passable only by jeeps. The cavalcade reached Camp soon after midday. We were a little annoyed to see them unload our gear and very angry when they loaded up with flour and continued up the valley. Unable to protest physically, we were left sitting in the road beside our gear as they left! We were outraged, and not much appeased by their assurances that they would return for us next day at dawn. They returned indeed, and took away more flour. Again we were furious and powerless, beginning to regret having no liaison officer. It was the 24th before we began to move up the valley again.

Five miles from Camp and Ian and Bill were out in front. Wilf and Alan bringing up the rear driving along an emaciated donkey carrying about 80lbs. of climbing hardware. When a horse caught up with us we employed him on the spot and lifted the heavy rucsac onto its back. After a short distance the donkey loads fell off again, and whilst they were being restored the horse wandered off alone. Alan and Wilf next saw it in the river. At this point the water was about 30 yards wide and very fast flowing — the horse was being swept rapidly downstream. By good fortune or innate judgment the beast escaped onto the far bank just above the next rapids — our precious rucsac was still on its back. With the bridge at Sar-e-sang collapsed it would not be so easy to cross the river and retrieve the gear.

Alan and Wilf only caught up with the others at Sar-e-sang. We remembered the contents of the sac — all our slings, karabiners, pitons, Jumars . . . the lot. Wilf, Ian and Bill returned down the river at once with ropes and tried in several places to effect a crossing but the current was too strong. Down at "horseland", which we had come to call the crossing place, they saw that the animal was lying on its back with its legs in the air. We hoped that it might be dying but suspected that it was trying to get the rucsac off its back. Wilf was anxious to get back to Sar-e-sang that night and sped off in front only to be beaten by the dark a mile from home: the others stumbled over him bivouacked on the path as they picked their way along by torchlight.

On advice from Mr. Mujadidi, a government official on a visit to the mines, Bill and Ian set off upstream on the east bank in search of a crossing place. After some abortive attempts they found a widening in the valley where the river ran amongst islands and was about a mile wide. They forded it at chest depth. Once on the west bank they returned northwards on the good track to the other side of the broken bridge. A rope was flung across and bivouac gear passed over. The following day, the 26th July, Ian and Bill continued down the west bank of the river, often being forced to climb high to avoid steep rocks, whilst Wilf and Alan descended the path on the east bank and tried to indicate the best way by gestures. Ian and Bill eventually arrived at horseland — a small area of rocky shrubland where the horse was confined. There was no sign of it. Only a bridle and bloodstains remained . . . there was no sign of the horse, or the gear. They searched the area for an hour, but there was no escaping the conclusion

that the horse had re-entered the river and had been swept away. By arranging a horizontal rappel across the surface of the river and using a five gallon plastic bottle as a bouyancy bag Ian and Bill were hauled across to the east bank — attached to the rope by our solitary karabiner. We were totally despondent. With no gear whatever except ropes and axes, what climbing could we do?

It had been our plan to enter the valley east of Sar-e-sang where two 5600m peaks stand unclimbed, but Mr. Mujadidi told us that access from this side was forbidden because of the government lapis lazuli mines. In any case, with no equipment, these peaks would be quite difficult. Mujadidi sent a man downstream to search the river banks and telephoned up the valley to arrange porters. Meantime we festered and watched the beautiful blue lapis lazuli being cleaned and cut in the glorious sunshine.

On 28th July Wilf and Alan went up to the ford and returned to the far side of the bridge, and made a ropeway across the river. The gear was passed over, and we were ready to leave when the animals arrived early on 30th. Exhortations, threats and stone-throwing from our new found friend Mr. Mujadidi succeeding in acquiring the services of five horses and five donkeys at 100 Afs/horse/day and 60 Afs/donkey/day, with 15 Afs per man for food. In the beginning, it was a beautiful walk with apricots and tea on the green at Parwara; but on account of the late start it was dusk as we crossed the stony pass over to the Anjoman valley and quite dark before we stopped for the night.

The usual horde of curious Afghans gathered early, awaking us soon after dawn. We discovered ourselves in an idyllic spot on thick grass beside the Anjoman river. The men slowly appeared from wherever they had spent the night and we got moving at about 10 o'clock. Wilf and Ian accompanied the donkeys round by the bridge at Ishkaser whilst Alan and Bill went with the horses and forded the Anjoman downstream from the camping place. We were in Keran-o-Munjan by lunchtime and were surprised when the drovers unloaded the animals and prepared to return to Ishkaser. We only realised later that the policeman at Allakoradee, the police post near Keran at the end of the telephone line, had told them that they must return. This was so that the men of Keran could have the work for themselves. This meant for us a day's journey totalling three hours walk, and yet another long drawn out haggle over rates of pay — this time without the help of Mujadidi. We agreed a rate of 125 Afs/horse/day and 75 Afs/donkey/day and slept on it.

Their demands increased in the morning and only telephoning down to Sar-e-sang resolved the situation. We settled on 250 Afs/horse/trip and 125 Afs/donkey/trip, one horse equal to two donkeys, not more than five horses and seven donkeys or their equivalent. In general it is better to pay for the journey than the day as this is the only way of getting a good day's march out of the drovers. Unfortunately this presupposes that one knows one's destination. We left at 10.30 am. Bill was looking quite grey with an uncomfortable dose of squitters but luckily he was able to ride on a horse most of the day.

The path runs on from Keran across cultivated land as far as the village of Rabat, with exciting views to Koh-e-Bandaka in the north. Then it climbs over the Pajuka pass, a dry stony area of land rising to about 10,000 feet, and drops down to the Borish river. The leading horsemen all turned up the Borish valley instead of following the Munjan and Wilf had a hectic chase to catch up with them. There had been a total lack of understanding about our destination and they believed that the journey was over. The lovely village of Shahran, which we entered that evening, is the prosperous head town of the upper Munjan valley. The purdah is less severe and women folk came to us to sell lapis lazuli. Cheese, chicken and eggs were all available. We ate well and slept on the village green, the four of us on each side of our pile of gear.

More problems presented themselves in the morning. Put succinctly the trouble was this: the men from Shahran, wanting the work for themselves, refused to allow the Keran men to load up and leave, whilst we refused to pay the Keran men until they completed the journey and reinforced our point by sending Ian and Wilf upstream to Shah-e-pari. Stalemate ensued. Alan and Bill kept the peace between the rival villagers and only got away at noon, after promising to employ Shahran men on the return journey. It was a beautiful walk along a good path

through fertile green fields through which murmured the crystal blue waters of the Munjan. High mountains were beginning to surround us.

Ian and Wilf were sitting dejected on the green at Shah-e-pari. Much of our confusion with the porters had been caused by the fact that the correct name for our valley was the Darrah-i-Mulaw, whereas we had asked to be taken to the Darrah-i-Toghw. However, there was no doubt that this was our chosen valley — we learned that ten days earlier a Japanese party had entered the valley. Could we have any more misfortune? But we did not take long to realise our eventual good luck . . . the presence of the Japanese meant the availability of equipment, we could beg, borrow or steal some gear and could do some climbing after all.

The porters had no shoes and would not work for at least a day. Wilf in his turn was ill and Bill and Alan were selected to go up the valley. They left early on the 3rd August with enormous loads, whilst Ian organised the porters for the morrow. After its steep narrow neck, the Mulaw valley is long and open, running right up to the watershed between Oxus and Indus. It is filled with four lakes which have been dammed by large tongues of moraines from subsidiary valleys, and the hardest going is around the sides of the water. Base camp was set up by the head of the highest lake. We had arrived.

3. Mountaineering

Our first objective was to find the Japanese party, the second being to bring everything up from Shah-e-pari. After five weeks of travelling, no time could be lost. On the 6th, Bill returned to the village to restore communication with Ian. Alan and Wilf went Nippon-hunting and after a short search found the Japanese base camp perched 1,000 feet higher up on the last piece of grass before the jumble of moraines and glacier took over. The leader of the Akita Hindu Kush Expedition was at home with his Afghan interpreter, cooking pancakes. They soon got over their surprise at meeting fellow mountaineers and were most hospitable and helpful. Kenji Hirasawa, the leader, told how he and his four man team had climbed three of the higher mountains at the head of the Mulaw valley and how the other four were even now attempting a fourth peak by a steep ice face. He broke off occasionally to talk with the "attack team" over the radio: they were having difficulty with steep ice at the top of their face. So there was plenty of scope remaining for us. After the good news came better: the Japanese were moving out in two days time and would gladly leave all their climbing gear for us.

Alan and Wilf returned to base-camp in a rather different mood from when they had set out. Ian soon arrived with a string of porters, having met Bill on the descent and the air of elation was disrupted only by Alan's splitting headache. A day was spent in partially exploring a subsidiary corrie due south of base camp and then we were united and ready to greet our Japanese friends with tea and shortbread on the following morning. Time was precious, and that same afternoon saw the establishment of a high camp at 4,750m, set on a level piece of moraine in the southern half of the basin. The situation was exciting, not only because of the vista of fine peaks, but also on account of a large slope of unstable moraine which moved from time to time, sending large boulders to within fifty feet of the tent.

The first rays of sun on August 8th discovered us high on the glacier, splitting into two pairs. Bill and Ian went directly across to their chosen mountain which they ascended by a route reminiscent of an Alpine north face. They crossed the gaping bergschrund where it was partly bridged by a rock buttress and then climbed steep ice and mixed ground onto the mountain's south ridge and a bivouac. Meanwhile, Alan and Wilf approached the mountain on which the Japanese had been attempting the ice route. Easy ground led to a long laborious north ridge, unstable rocks glued together with the odd bit of ice. By late afternoon they were within striking distance of the summit but, the weather being brilliant and stable, there was no need to rush. So both parties had their first night out, up at 18,000 feet, lit by shooting stars which seemed close enough to touch and by flashes of distant lightning from over Pakistan.

The next day dawned cold and clear, and shortly afterwards two tiny black dots mounted the highest point of the gleaming icy whaleback and the Expedition's first virgin peak was climbed, Marble Cake Mountain, so called after the bands of quartz which seamed its face. A mere half hour afterwards, two duvet clad figures unfurled a small St. Andrew's flag on the second

summit, Koh-i-Corner. Ian and Bill were down first after a short steep descent culminating in a hairy abseil over the big schrund. Alan and Wilf returned to their precarious bivouac site before roping off down a steep cliff leading to the Japanese attempted ice face. The ice was steep, soggy and insecure as they front-pointed carefully downwards pitch after pitch, to arrive thankfully at the bottom without having been bombarded.

Our little orange tent resounded with high spirits and hilarity despite four of us being crammed into it — five weeks out from home we had at last begun to justify ourselves. Alan and Bill were off again next day, August 10th, moving across high tottering moraines to Koh-i-Farda, Mountain of Tomorrow, so called because they waited until the following day before ascending by a fine rock face to its summit. Their attempts to traverse westwards to the summit on the main west side of the valley were thwarted by a huge gash in the ridge. Meantime, general body weakness had confined Ian and Wilf to the high camp, but the following day they turned their attention to the graceful wedge of rock which towered above the tent. A spur of rock rising directly from the south-east corner promised a challenging route but proved to be easier than expected. Four hours of leapfrogging up three thousand feet of warm rock brought them to the snow capped summit — they called it Koh-i-Crystal. Four miles away Alan and Bill were scuttling down a gully, raising a puff of dust on the surface of the screes. The broken west face provided an easy means of descent, and both parties were in camp together well before nightfall.

It was time to return to base camp for supplies before shifting our attack camp to the opposite, eastern, side of the Mulaw glacier basin. The relatively less austere basecamp was welcome, as was the improvement in food which included two fresh chickens from Shah-e-pari, and the abundance of fuel and water. The journeys up and down the valley above base camp were slow, punctuated by numerous halts to inspect and collect botanical specimens for the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh. But the idyll of basecamp was upset by the development of new problems — Alan was febrile and acutely ill with a large abscess on his right heel: Ian filled his buttock with penicillin day and night for a spell and things slowly improved.

On the 14th August a second attack was established in an ideal spot above the eastern edge of the glacier, facing south and sheltered by a huge boulder. Flowers and running water abounded, and the continuing perfect weather lent the spot an absolute peace. Especially at night, for it was the time of the full moon, was the full beauty of our environment revealed to us — across the valley, profiled in soft tones of light and shade, lay the four peaks which we had already ascended. Alan was still at base camp nursing his heel: the others rose at dawn and split up. Ian made a solo ascent of a snow-draped summit which, either because of its appearance or his impending marriage, he called Bride Peak. He was so quickly at its summit at 5555m that he was tempted to traverse onto 5590m, but thought the intervening ridge too laborious.

Bill and Wilf chose the mountain whose west face rose directly behind the attack camp, a striking rock rib offering access to the summit crest. Again, technical difficulties proved less than anticipated and the rope stayed in the sack. Steep and enjoyable climbing brought them on the summit snowfield, with its reward of a fine view into the headwaters of the Bashgal. They were on the watershed again between Oxus and Indus. The summit snow proved tedious going by virtue of its "playing-card" structure — the high unmelted flakes of snow standing two to three feet high and very unstable — and only two of the peak's three summits were reached before they decided to return to camp directly down the east face close beside the rib of ascent. Abseils led them into a series of ice-filled couloirs, running with water and quite unstable. A football-sized boulder decided at the last minute to spare Wilf and scored a gash in the rock beside him instead. Somewhat unnerved, they crept down into increasing darkness. The water stopped flowing and the rope froze. Several times it refused to run from the abseils, calling for heroics from one of them in climbing back up. It looked as though a cold wet bivouac was inevitable when suddenly the face relented and they found themselves free to stumble back to the attack camp through the dark fields of boulders.

Alan had arrived, his abscess opened and draining. On 16th August he and Ian set off at dawn to attempt the traverse of a twin-peaked ridge to the south of the camp. They gained the ridge at its lowest point, at the col visible from a long way down the Mulaw valley and which

appears to afford the easiest route over the watershed. In fact, on the direct approach which they took, the ascent to the col was quite difficult. The easiest way into the Bashgal, and one which was quite often used by the Afghans lay over a low glacier and boulder-strewn pass north of 5590m peak. From the col, technically absorbing climbing led them westwards along the watershed. At two o'clock in the afternoon they reached such an idyllic bivouac place that any further progress was discounted. The afternoon was spent soaking in the sun, stripped to the waist at nearly 19000 feet. The bivouac was perfect in every way, sheltered, south facing, yet almost on the very watershed of Asia. Later that night, when the bright moonlight lit the glaciers below as clear as day, the hordes of rocky spires in the south-east were discharging orange streamers high into the night sky — a bizarre electrical phenomenon which neither of them had ever seen before. In continuing fine weather they completed the traverse of the peak the next day, descending from the col between their peak, Koh-i- Jumjumma, and Koh-i-Mulaw, climbed by the Japanese.

In the same spell, Bill and Wilf moved north-eastwards to prospect an ascent of Shak-i-Kabud, the only twenty thousand foot peak within reach. The Japanese had made a brief attempt on its western ridge, but called off for lack of time. Wilf and Bill sought to approach from the southern side, and went up to make a reconnaissance before returning to base camp for further supplies. There were several callers at basecamp during the spell of fine weather, mostly Nuristanis crossing into Badakshan, and as Wilf and Bill were reascending towards Shak-i-Kabud they discovered a well-cairned path for much of the way and met a party with a goat.

August 18th saw the first attempt on Shak-i-Kabud by a complex rock route involving rotten cliffs and a ridge of crumbling gendarmes. They stopped for a rest at eight in the morning and surveyed the long ridge ahead which soared up to a high summit pyramid. But clouds were scudding over from Pakistan, obscuring the neighbouring hills and encircling the summit with a halo of mare's tails. Faced with the unenthusiasm for the task ahead, the first snowflakes and increasing wind convinced them that to retreat would be no more than prudent. The next day was again fine, but now being short of food they snatched a small rock peak, Koh-i-Sassi, before returning to basecamp to replenish stocks.

The expedition was together, Ian and Alan having returned from Koh-i-Jumjumma the day before. Alan's abscess was not resolved, and he planned to join Ian in making a reconnaissance of the Jombeh valley, next southwest to the Mulaw. Wilf and Bill went back up to their small camp on 21st August leaving Ian and Alan to evacuate basecamp and explore the Jombeh valley. The pairs would be entirely alone until the arranged meeting at Shah-e-pari in six days time. The same evening Wilf and Bill established a bivouac higher than their original camp, about 17000 feet up. It was a very cold night, an inch of ice in a mug of water bearing out feelings.

They were away at six after a hot breakfast and entered a long thin couloir of ice which split the southeast face of the mountain from top to bottom, breaking through a barrier of monolithic rock. Climbing solo after the bergschrund, they cramponned delicately up the steepening ice, occasionally taking to the rocks to avoid a bottleneck, until the cornice finally arrived. Here the rope went back on, the angle steepened and Bill thrashed and floundered up the last vertical step onto the summit ice-field. Only combined tactics, precariously unprotected, succeeded in putting him onto the top. After three easy pitches they reached the top of a slender, graceful snow cone, 20,427 feet up. Koh-e-Bandaka, the highest peak in the central Hindu Kush, dominated the northern view; eastwards, Marcheche, Moruisg and Sisgeikh told of the Scots five years before. Our own previous ascents filled the southwest, whilst across the Munjan valley hosts of unknown, unnamed and unclimbed peaks rose. It was a unique moment and it was savoured. Four hours later Bill and Wilf were back at their bivouac, and two days later they arrived in Shah-e-pari — having knocked off 5590m for good measure by its northwest ridge.

Alan and Ian had cleared base camp, and with a single porter, had penetrated the Jombeh valley. This was in complete contrast to the Mulaw. It had probably never before been entered by Europeans, and was seldom visited by the Afghans. Only the first mile or two were fit for pasture, and then the valley narrowed, the stream being subterranean, and became rocky. A long day's march enabled them to set up a high camp on the glacier moraines, and the following day a further two hours brought them out onto the broad high glacier basin. Directly opposite, the north face of Koh-i-Mondi rose six thousand feet from the glacier — a magnificent under-

taking for any climbing party. The place bristled with mountaineering interest; but Alan's heel was a large crater of pus and climbing was debarred. Ian made further reconnaissances whilst Alan wandered alone and disconsolate down the valley on the next day. Perhaps a good rest at Shah-e-pari would help things. Bill and Wilf went up to meet Ian on 26th August and that evening we were assembled at Shah-e-pari.

4. Homeward journey

The expedition left Shah-e-pari on 27th August. There were the usual difficulties in arranging terms, and the matter was clinched only when Ian and Bill left to recruit men from the next village. The load was much lighter and the volume greatly reduced by the lack of food. Three horses and three donkeys were required, and we believed that we had persuaded the men of Shah-e-pari to remain with us for the four days which it would take to reach the road-head at Hazrat-i-Sayet. This was a great advantage to us, though the men experienced verbal and perhaps physical harrassment from villagers on the way. This certainly happened to Sharif, a powerful man who was turned back at Allakoradee by the policeman there, presumably for some previously committed offence.

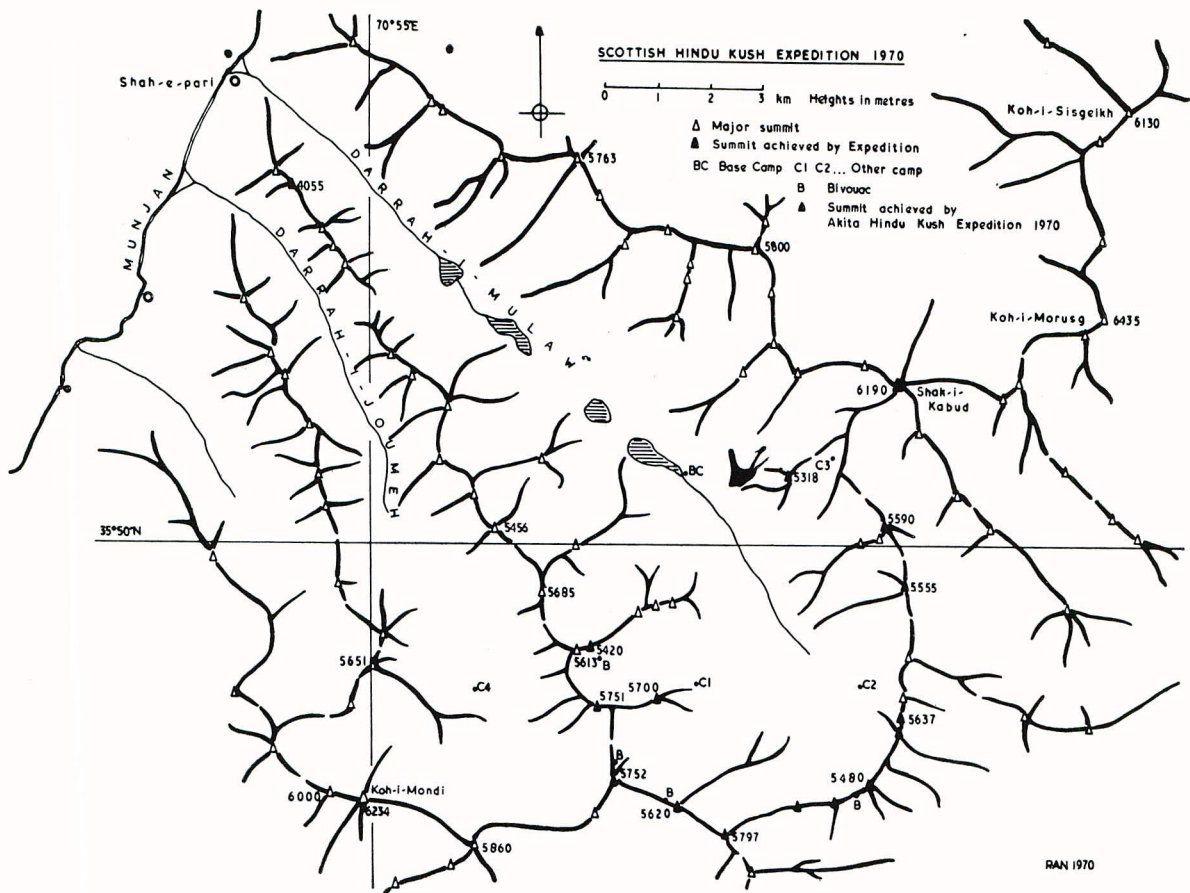
We were back at Sar-e-sang on the 29th, glad to find that the bridge had been repaired, and annoyed to discover that some of the food and equipment had been pilfered from our dump there. Needless to say, Mujadidi had returned to Kabul; there would be no thefts had he been there. The party finally arrived at Hazrat-e-Sayet on 31st August. Here we suffered growing hostility from the headman of the village, Rahim. He expected us to pay for the horse which had been lost in the river on our approach to the mountains, we refused to pay even for its hire on the grounds that it had not completed its journey and safely delivered its load. Rahim tried to extort money from us on any pretence. Firstly, he refused to allow us to use the field telephone, which is inside his compound, to summon a truck from Jurm or Faizabad. Secondly, we had left some food in his compound on the journey in, this he refused to release without payment of 'storage' charges! Thirdly, a condition of his obtaining a truck for us was that he would receive 1000 Afghanis commission.

At this late stage we were in a poor mental state for argument, and were not as tactful as the situation demanded. The friction between ourselves and the headman was extended to the school teacher, who was acting as interpreter — although by now our Dari was as good as his English. Later, all the villagers were involved, even the children whose entertainment we provided at considerable cost to our own nervous energy. There were some consolations for our capitulation to Rahim's blackmail. His least shrewd move was to ask us for a written testimonial. We successfully gambled on the paucity of the teacher's knowledge of English, and typed a reference which we hoped might minimise his profits in the future. We had not fully realised that a headman's power should never be underestimated. He was a feudal autocrat whose authority in Afghanistan is still absolute, especially in the more remote mountain valleys.

When the truck rolled in late on 1st September, it was music in our ears. Everything was hurriedly loaded, Rahim did not get his 1000 Afghanis commission and we left in the hope of getting to Jurm that day. We bumped into the truck 'station' there long after dark. Next day we said goodbye to the men from Shah-e-pari, who had taken a lift with us to Jurm, and travelled on to our own vehicle at Faizabad.

The total cost of the journey back to Faizabad was 9000 Afghanis. The three horses and three donkeys were paid at the rate of 700 Afs/horse/trip, and 400 Afs/donkey/trip, the trip requiring four days. The truck cost 5000 Afs, and sundry payments for extra porters and extortion charges to Rahim cost a further 1700 Afs. We were happy to have the friendship and reliability of our men from Shah-e-pari for the whole journey — without them the bill would undoubtedly have been more. We later learned that Rahim had once charged, and been paid, 700 Afs/horse/day from a naive or rich Swiss expedition. In general, we paid for donkeys at a rate which varied from 80 to 150 Afs/day, and horses from 130 to 400 Afs/day. In general donkeys are the better hire.

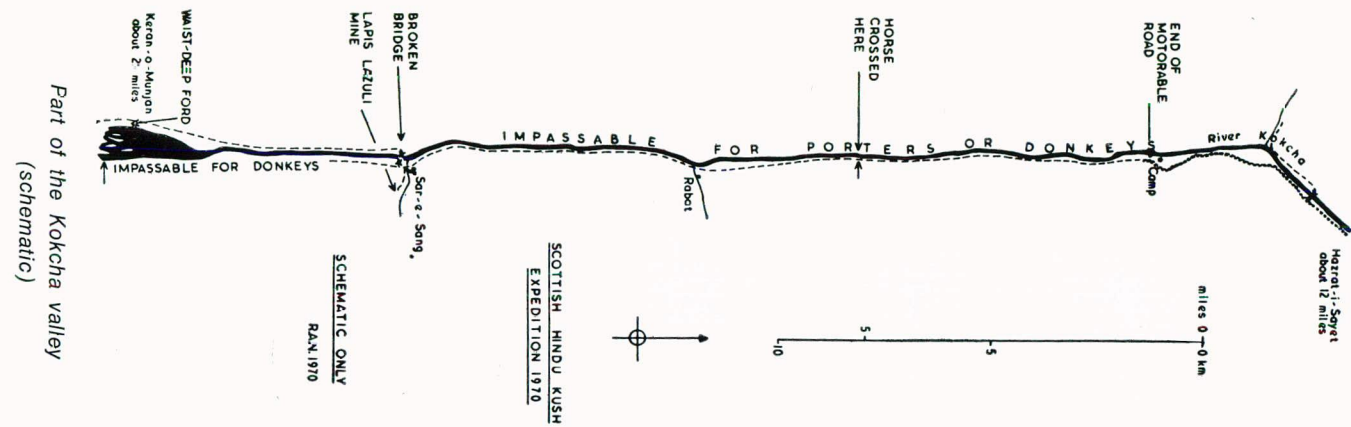
We arrived in Kabul on 4th September, and after a week of overwhelming hospitality set off for Scotland late on 11th September. Three weeks later we were home.



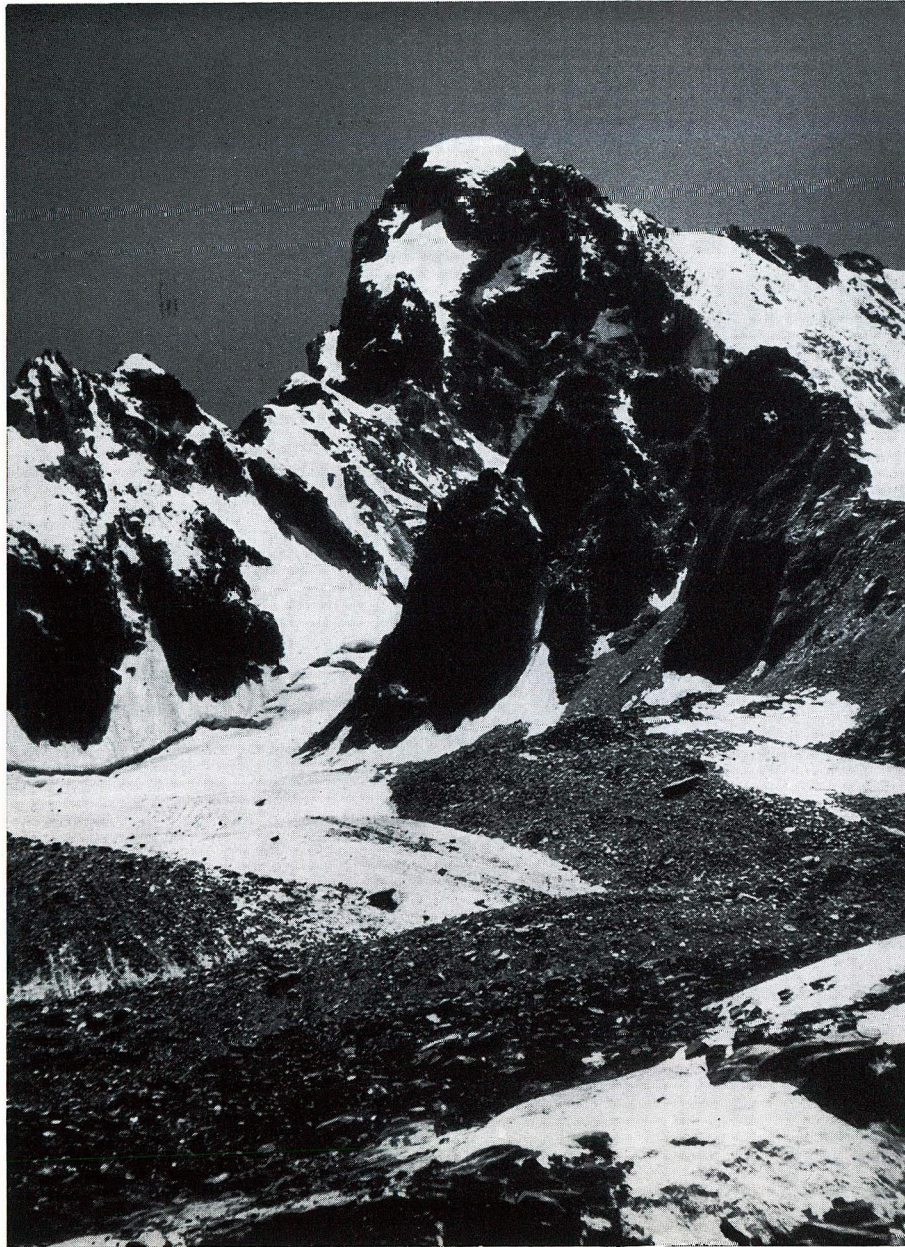
The Mulaw valley



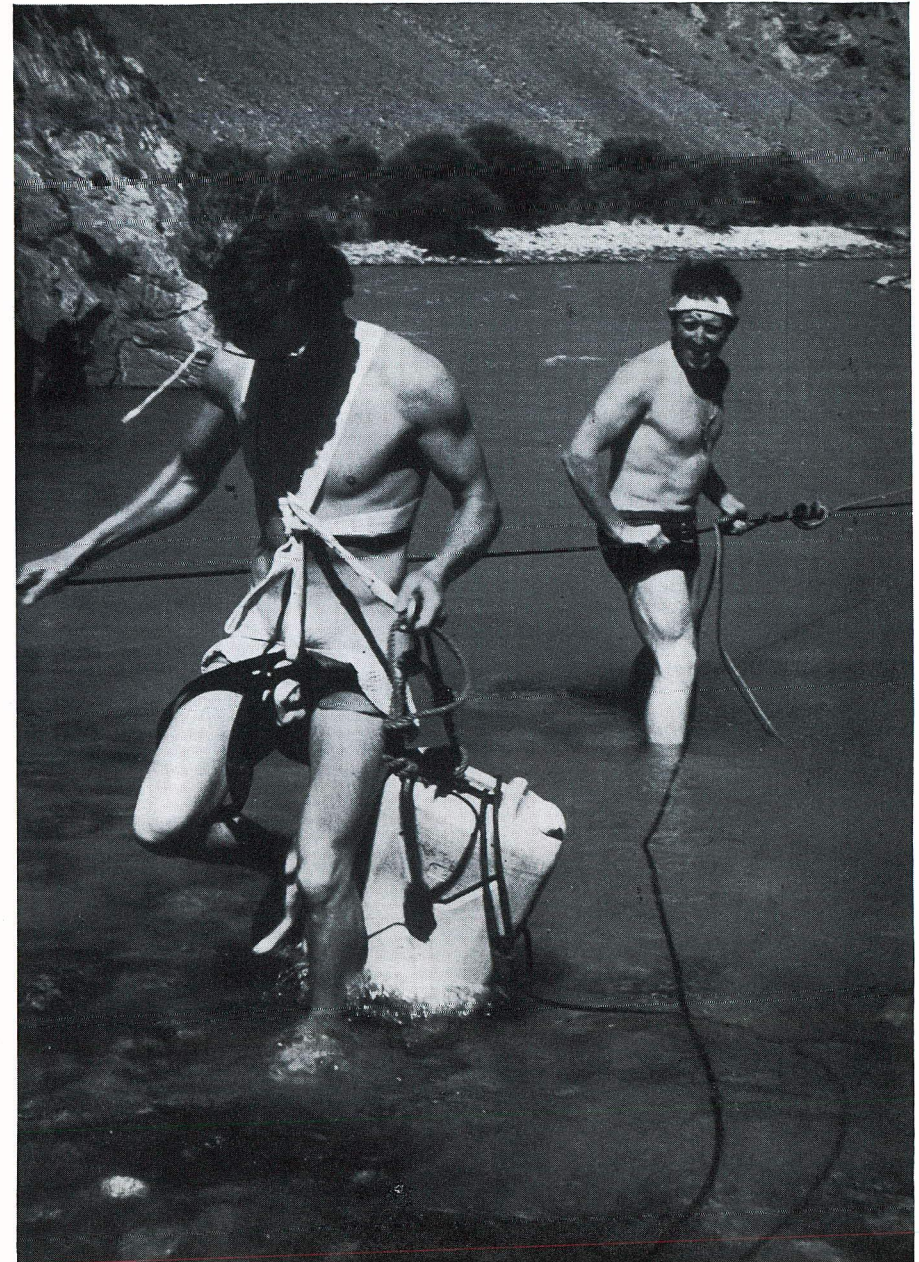
Rock peaks in Noristan



Part of the headwall of the Mulaw valley



Marble Cake Mountain



The recovery of Ian and Bill from "horseland"

Specific reports

1. Mountaineering

- 9th August, 1970 — Koh-i-Kurj (Corner Peak). 5752m. First ascent. R. A. North and W. J. A. Tauber, by the north ridge. AD.
- 9th August, 1970 — Marmar-koh (Marble Cake Mountain). 5620m. First ascent. W. M. A. Sproul and I. G. Rowe, by north face and west ridge. D.
- 11th August, 1970 — Koh-i-Crystal (Crystal Peak). 5700m. First ascent. I. G. Rowe and W. J. A. Tauber, by southeast rib. AD.
- 11th August, 1970 — Koh-i-Farda (Tomorrow's Peak). 5420m. First ascent. W. M. A. Sproul and R. A. North, by south face. AD.
- 15th August, 1970 — Koh-i-Parrendah (Bird Peak). 5637m. First ascent. W. M. A. Sproul and W. J. A. Tauber, by west face. PD sup.
- 15th August, 1970 — Arrcos-koh (Bride Peak). 5555m. First ascent. I. G. Rowe, by south west flank. PD.
- 17th August, 1970 — Koh-i-Jumjumma (Skull Peak). 5430m. First ascent. I. G. Rowe and R. A. North, with traverse east to west. AD sup.
- 20th August, 1970 — Koh-i-Sassi. 5316m. First ascent. W. M. A. Sproul and W. J. A. Tauber, by northeast ridge. PD.
- 22nd August, 1970 — Shak-i-Kabud. 6190m. Second ascent. W. M. A. Sproul and W. J. A. Tauber, by couloir on south face. D.
- 23rd August, 1970 — Unnamed. 5590m. W. M. A. Sproul and W. J. A. Tauber, probable second ascent. PD.

In general terms, the climbing was Alpine rather than Himalayan. Few of the routes were longer than 5000 feet, and all the peaks were climbed from a high glacier camp within one or two days. Good bivouac sites abound and the weather is usually predictable one or two days in advance. The northern faces in this part of the Hindu Kush often provide snow and ice climbing of great character, whilst the southern slopes tend to be more broken and entirely of rock. Glaciers are small and seldom present major difficulties though bergschrunds can be troublesome.

2. Equipment

A detailed list of personal and communal equipment is to be found in Appendix A. The amount and nature of the equipment taken was based on the expectation of long and difficult climbs in the region of Koh-i-Baba Targi in the Wakhan corridor. In the event, it would have been more than enough for the peaks of Darrah-i-Mulaw, which proved possible with the little equipment which we borrowed from the Japanese after the loss of our own.

The frequent bivouacs were made comfortable with thermal insulating mats, and sleeping bags were always carried. Duvet boots were a luxury, duvet trousers unnecessary and duvet jackets a comfort. It was seldom necessary to wear down-filled clothing whilst climbing. Double boots are not essential, but advisable. Windproof trousers and cagoules were always carried but seldom worn in the prevailing fine conditions. Long sleeved string vests and "long johns" were widely used. Woollen mitts proved adequate, with nylon and leather overgloves: silk gloves and fingerless mitts

were not needed. Relatively simple snow glasses are sufficient, sweat bands helping to keep perspiration from the face and eyes. Karrimor rucksacks proved satisfactory as load-carrying and climbing sacks, though in their former role the overloading caused frequent failures of stitching and straps. Sack-hauling was not required.

Salewa adjustable crampons were used with self-locking and spring-loaded quick release bindings. All were satisfactory. (Alan's crampons required modification to fit his shortened left boots. The crampons were first analysed, Salewa and Grivel both using a 1% chrome/1% molybdenum alloy steel, though Salewa plate the metal to restrict corrosion. The fore part of each crampon was suitably cut and lap welded by the tungsten/inert gas method using argon and matched filler wire. The crampons functioned satisfactorily.) Personal ice-axes were taken, each person taking those of his choice. In addition, prototype Clog metal axes were used but found to be unsatisfactory on hard ice. No other ice equipment was used as it was all lost in the river and not replaced from the Japanese.

Kernmantel ropes in 150 foot lengths were satisfactory. No fixed rope was used. Camps were made on moraines and ingenuity was often required. Tent pegs were invariably useless, and all tents had been adapted for ease of pitching with boulders. Sewn in groundsheets were frequently weighted with rocks at each corner. Tents need not be expensive, and for short stays at a high camp fly-sheets are not necessary.

The area is accurately mapped by Frey, and our own prismatic compass did little more than to confirm his findings. The head of the Mulaw valley itself was more accurately mapped by the simple means of compass and altimeters.

3. Food

In overall content and composition, the diet differed little from previous expeditions. If anything, there was a surfeit of food, but much of this was left behind at various stages of the march in and eaten on the journey out.

All the food was prepacked into four manday boxes, which meant that for that part of the expedition when all four members were together, the rate of consumption was one box per day. When split up, the box could easily suffice for two men for two days as none of the items were indivisible and single.

Three types of boxes were prepacked.

1. High altitude boxes. These were packed on the assumption that four men would spend twenty-eight days at altitude, an expectation that was not fulfilled. They contained large amounts of high carbohydrate foods in the form of chocolate and sweet, and large amounts of beverages such as coffee, tea and soft drinks powder. In addition they contained soup and a simple meat dish which could be eaten cold. Their contents therefore required no preparation other than hot water. After four or five days of eating from high altitude boxes one was usually ready for something more substantial. Each high altitude box weighed about six pounds.

2. Standard boxes. These formed the basis of the expedition's diet and were complete in all requirements. They were never designed to go much

above base camp and were accordingly heavier, each box weighing some ten or twelve pounds. The food content of the box was extremely varied, and for convenience these boxes also contained pan scrubs, cleansing fluids and matches.

3. Luxury boxes. About a dozen boxes were taken which were packed with such delicacies as quail in red wine, whole pheasants, hams, short-bread and cakes. Whilst a good idea in theory, these boxes were very heavy. Three or four such boxes would probably suffice to introduce the necessary variation in the diet.

All boxes were made up complete in Scotland immediately prior to our departure, the whole being sealed in stout polythene and then placed in a cardboard box which was taped up. Even so, several boxes burst under the strain of transportation. The cardboard boxes proved very useful for packing the food supplies in the van in a manner economical of space, but were a disadvantage when it came to loading the supplies onto donkeys. The best solution would be to seal the food even more stoutly in such boxes, and to make and take donkey bags suitable for carrying a certain number of the boxes. This would greatly facilitate the transport of the boxes, would ensure their careful handling and would bring extra pressure on the drovers to carry a reasonable load for they would be deprived of a major excuse that they could not get everything to stay on the animal. In addition, the bags would be valuable 'baksheesh' material at the end of the expedition.

It is essential to have everything watertight. Our journey involved several deep fords which involved baggage becoming wet. With a long march-in thought should be given to the likelihood of supplementing one's food with locally available food, or even living entirely off the land. The latter course is not recommended as it will almost inevitably lead to severe bowel disturbances if not acute dysentery in the whole expedition. The former course is desirable, especially when the foods available are those which require long cooking. We supplemented our diet on the march-in with chickens and eggs, and chickens were occasionally brought up to basecamp. At Shah-e-pari we were made a handsome gift of a piece of sheep which stewed well.

Most of the expedition's food was obtained direct from manufacturers in Britain at wholesale prices or less. The expedition expresses its sincere thanks to all the many suppliers of food who might have escaped acknowledgement in section 6.

4. Medical

1. Prophylaxis.

Travellers to Afghanistan should be immunised against

- Smallpox (International certificate essential)
- Cholera (International certificate essential)
- Typhoid fever (International certificate desirable)
- Paratyphoid fever
- Tetanus
- Poliomyelitis
- Yellow fever (optional).

Several months before departure from Scotland, the members of the expedition were asked to arrange immunisation as necessary with their own doctors.

Blood was taken for grouping of expedition members.

2. The journey.

All members lost weight on the overland journey to Afghanistan. In Kabul, drinking water was obtained exclusively from the British Embassy. With care, a good supply of drinking water can be found away from the centres of population at least once during the course of a day's travel. Despite these precautions three members of the party developed severe diarrhoea during the course of the march-in; Ian at Faizabad, Bill at Allakoradee and Wilf at Shah-e-pari. Of these cases, Bill was the most seriously ill and had to be transported by horse for a day. After these attacks, the party remained free from severe gastro-intestinal upset for the remainder of the expedition.

3. Local population.

There is a small hospitable at Faizabad, and a doctor, who does not enjoy a very high reputation, at Jurm. Unfortunately, any means of transport is so expensive that for families outside these settlements there is essentially no medical care. Even at Hazrat-i-Sayet people died because they could not afford transportation to Jurm or Faizabad. During the course of the march-in, the party made close contact with the local populace and Alan was frequently called upon to treat them. In the absence of a working knowledge of their language, medical treatment is difficult to institute. A large variety of similar drugs, e.g. mild analgesics, is useful to avoid people with different ailments believing that they have been given the same medication.

4. Morbidity at altitude.

There were virtually no problems with acclimatisation, base camp being situated at about 4000m, and everyone remained in excellent general health. Alan developed a large abscess on his right heel, arising from a blister which became infected which caused an acute systemic disturbance with high fever and generalised lymphadenitis. This responded to high doses of parenteral penicillin but the abscess itself required opening and proved an embarrassment to his further climbing. This illustrated how disabling can be the consequences of a simple blister left untreated. Apart from the usual crop of minor cuts and bruises there were no other injuries. There were no psychiatric disturbances and the party enjoyed good sleep.

Climbing in the heart of the central Hindu Kush in such a small party extends lines of safety to a maximum. From an accident at glacier level it would take two or three days to reach the site with sufficient Afghans, travelling fast in ideal conditions. A fit man could walk from there to the roadhead in about six days, and even then there may be a long wait for a vehicle. Consideration should always be given to the possibility of evacuation by a route other than that of approach — for example, in the case of the Mulaw valley either by going over the Weran pass into the Pech valley or by going over the Anjoman pass into Panshir.

A complete list of the medical and surgical supplies carried by the expedition is available on request.

5. Vehicle and roads

Impressed with the performance of the Ford Transit van in 1968, the expedition decided to use the same vehicle again. Once more they were helped in the purchase of a new vehicle by favour-

able terms offered by Harry K. Brown (Motors) Ltd. of Kirkcaldy, Fife. This was a 30 cwt. double rear wheel van, and was slightly modified for the journey. A bulkhead was fitted reaching to two-thirds height sufficiently far behind the front seats to permit people to sit or sleep in comfort. The bulkhead prevented the baggage from moving. Everything went inside the van fairly comfortably and the small roof-rack was seldom used. Two quartz halogen driving lamps proved very useful when travelling east of Istanbul, for unlit vehicles frequently block the road and loud air horns were a valuable addition to the vehicle's own horn. One problem which was troublesome in 1968, boiling of the petrol within the pump, had been eliminated by Ford Motor Company who had fitted a heat shield.

In favour of the Transit one can list its comfort, its economy of petrol (overall 20 mpg), its large load carrying capacity and its ability to cruise comfortably at 60 mph. Against these one must consider its low ground clearance and lack of four-wheel drive which make it very difficult and slow to drive on rough roads. Fortunately the first gear is very low and the vehicle only baulked at one very steep long hill (one in three). It is a vehicle ideally suited to the 6000 miles to Kabul, but not at all suited to the going thereafter. Its reliability was again testified in 1970, only two problems arising. The first was irritating in that it had also occurred in 1968, the studs on which the road wheel nuts fit became worn: new studs had to be pressed in. This problem may be due to the fact that a torque spanner was not used to tighten the road wheel nuts — though as it only occurred on the rear double wheels there may be a design fault. Secondly, an electrical problem plagued us throughout the journey despite attempts at its solution by Ford agents before leaving Britain. This appeared to be an intermittent fault in the alternator which permitted the battery to discharge very rapidly when the van was standing; this proved a nuisance at best and a danger at worst. It eventually caused the alternator and battery to burn out on the German autobahns on the return journey, the delightful ignominy of receiving a tow from a female mechanic and a bill of £35.

Whilst in 1968 the Michelin tyres came in for just praise, in 1970 they proved disastrous. We wrote off one on a kerb edge before leaving Britain, and despite carrying two spares, we eventually had to buy two tyres in Kabul for our return journey home. The total score was three tyres written off and eight or nine punctures. The standard reinforced Michelin ZX allow high speeds on the overland journey and last for the necessary 20,000 miles, but they are inadequate for the rougher roads in Afghanistan.

In 1970 only about two hundred miles of unsurfaced road remained between Britain and Kabul, some in east Turkey and some in northeast Iran. The latter section has since been replaced by a good asphalt highway. In contrast, some of the asphalt road in eastern Turkey is now badly broken and harbours large potholes. Despite long stops through the day for sightseeing and swimming, the party drove from London to Kabul in 12 days — driving most nights but stopping some. Customs delays increased as we travelled east, and it is as well to allow three hours on the Turkey/Iran border and five hours on the Iran/Afghanistan border, though this latter figure may well come down now that a new Iranian post is in operation.

A comprehensive kit of spares and tools were carried but few were required. There are good but cheap garages available in Kabul, several having agencies for, or fair experience of, major British makes.

6. Botanical

By arrangement with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, a collection of botanical specimens was made in the Mulaw and Joumeh valleys. These specimens were subsequently identified, and the more interesting ones preserved at the herbarium of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh.

All specimens were found between the altitudes of 4000m and glacier level (about 4400m).

1. *Saxifraga hirculus* L.
s.l.
2. *Carex*
3. *Sedum*
4. *Inula*
5. *Lonicera*
6. *Cousinia*
7. *Euphorbia*
8. *Dionysia*
9. *Juniperus*
10. *Nepeta glutinosa*
Benth
11. *Rosa*
12. *Oxyria digyna*
13. *Artemisia*
14. *Ephedra*
15. *Rosa*
16. *Lagochilus*
17. *Astragalus*
18. *Chrysanthemum*
19. *Nepeta*
20. *Psychrogeton*
alexeeenkoi
21. *Carex*
22. *Pleurospermum*
23. *Astragalus*
24. *Nepeta*
25. *Draba*
26. (Compositae)
27. *Cicer*
28. *Artemisia*
29. *Carex*
30. *Nepeta*
31. (Gramineae)
32. *Sedum*
33. *Aster*
34. *Epilobium*
35. *Chrysanthemum*
36. *Waldhemia*
37. *Draba*
38. *Delphinium bruno-*
nianum Royle
39. *Nepeta*
40. *Geranium*
41. *Carex*
42. *Pleurospermum*
43. *Lazula*
44. *Sedum*
45. (Gramineae)
46. *Primula macro-*
phylla D. Don
47. *Saxifraga hirculus*
L. s.l.
48. *Delphinium*

Income	£	
The Cross Trust	800.00	
Mount Everest Foundation	450.00	
Scottish Mountaineering Trust	150.00	
Bank of Scotland	25.00	
R. James Tancred, Esq.	25.00	
Burgh of Cumbernauld	20.00	
Fettes College, Edinburgh	15.00	
Grampian Television	10.00	
		1495.00
Members' contributions (note 1)		
R. A. North	109.08	
I. G. Rowe	102.31	
W. J. A. Tauber	108.05	
		219.44
		<u>1814.44</u>

Expenditure	£	
Motor vehicle, at cost and interest on loan, less proceeds of sale (note 2)	381.23	
Petrol and oil	174.40	
Accessories, maintenance and repairs (note 3)	101.76	
Ferries	53.13	
Tolls and taxes	8.19	
Insurances	93.91	
		812.62
Climbing equipment	75.01	
General equipment	33.08	
		108.09
Food bought in Britain	137.16	
Food bought abroad	109.85	
		247.01
Film and photographic expenses		62.08
Hire of local labour (note 4)		139.92
Loan to W. M. A. Sproul (note 1)		9.31
Organisation (note 5)	131.21	
Printing and publicity	42.20	
Loss on exchanges, bank charges, sundries	29.16	
		202.57
Balance in hand (note 6)		232.84
		<u>1814.44</u>

1. These figures represent the net contribution of each individual to the expedition: that is, the difference between the payments to the expedition in cash or equipment and payments made by the expedition for that individual's personal expenditure.
2. The motor vehicle proved impossible to sell until eight months after the expedition's return to Scotland, thus the large loss on capital depreciation and interest on a loan of £800.
3. Several Michelin ZX tyres were wrecked and had to be replaced. There was a large bill following failure of the alternator in Germany.

4. Local porters were required for a much greater distance than would have been necessary had the Expedition been allowed into Wakhan.
5. Organisational expenses rose particularly because of journeys to London in an attempt to obtain Afghan visas.
6. The balance on hand will be used to repay an outstanding debt of £50 to the Akita Hindu Kush Expedition 1970 for sale of equipment, to meet the cost of a report, and to eliminate discrepancies between the eventual members' contributions. The residue will be returned to the benefactors.

Appendices

A

Personal Equipment

- 1 helmet
- 1 balaclava
- 1 cagoule
- 1 pr. overtrousers
- 1 duvet jacket
- 1 pr. duvet boots
- 6 pr. stockings
- 2 pr. breeches
- 2 pr. long johns
- 2 shirts
- 2 string vests
- 3 sweaters
- 2 pr. goggles
- 1 sweat band
- 1 high altitude sleeping bag
- 1 pr. gaiters
- 1 pr. double boots
- 1 pr. single boots
- 2 ice axes
- 1 pr. crampons
- 1 compass
- 1 head torch
- 2 prs. wool mitts
- 1 belt and holster
- 1 hammer
- 1 rucksack
- 1 water bottle

Plus numerous spares, e.g. mitts, torches, crampons, hammers, cagoules, water bottles, etc.

Communal Equipment

Ordinary living equipment, primus stoves, eating utensils, tents, etc., are not listed.

- 4 pr. Clog or Heibeler prussik clamps (L)
- 2 altimeters
- 6 insulating mats
- 5 11mm. 150ft. kernmantel rope
- 2 11mm. 300ft. kernmantel rope
- 4 9mm. 300ft. kernmantel rope
- 1 9mm. 150ft. kernmantel rope
- 44 assorted chromolly pegs (L)
- 12 assorted chromolly pegs (J)
- 42 soft steel pegs (L)
- 6 soft steel pegs (J)
- 18 large carabiners (L)
- 2 high tensile carabiners (L)
- 51 alloy carabiners (L)
- 1 alloy carabiner
- 20 alloy carabiners (J)
- 7 tape etriers (L)
- 8 Salewa ice screws (L)
- 9 Stubai ice screws (L)
- 8 assorted ice screws (J)
- 4 dead men (L)
- 26 rope slings (L)
- 7 tape slings (L)
- 80ft. 1" tape (L)
- 24 marker flags
- 1 snow saw
- 2 snow shovels

L = lost in river mishap

J = borrowed from Japanese

B

Peaks climbed by the Akita Hindu Kush Expedition, 1970, in the Mulaw valley.

- 5751 4th August Koh-i-Cousin.
- 5750 27th July Koh-i-Mulaw.
- 5797 31st July Koh-i-Barph.

Peaks climbed by the Imperial College Hindu Kush Expedition, 1970, from the Skurigal valley.

- 5630 22nd August Koh-i-Parrendah. First climbed by SHKE 70.
- 5797 29th August Koh-i-Barph. First climbed by Akita HKE 70.
- 6190 10th August Shak-i-Kabud. Third or fourth ascent.
- 4703 15th August
- 5560 19th August
- 5590 21st August
- 5055 25th August
- 4870 25th August
- 5207 26th August
- 5250 27th August
- 5550 5th September
- 5460 13th September
- 5107 14th September Koh-i-California.
- 6400 14th September Koh-i-Marchech First ascent by south ridge.

C

Procedure in Kabul

The procedure to be followed by foreign climbing expeditions appeared to have been slightly formalised since 1968. British parties are advised to proceed as follows.

1. No matter what arrangements have been made from Britain as regards permission to climb in any specific area, or in Afghanistan in general, first visit the British Embassy. British subjects spending more than a few days in Afghanistan are advised to notify the Consul. On request, the Embassy will provide a formal letter (in triplicate) requesting that permission be given to this particular expedition to climb in its particular area. This should be accompanied by relevant maps (in triplicate) and contain full details of the number and occupations of the members, their names and passport numbers, and details of the proposed itinerary to and from the selected area with dates estimated. It is unusual for the Afghans to allow parties of less than five persons. This application should be presented as soon as possible at the Cultural department of the Royal Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2. If satisfactorily presented, and this is important, the application will be accepted or refused by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. If the application is successful, four letters will be prepared: after a delay of about two days these will be handed to the expedition.

The first is to the Ministry of the Interior. This authorises a letter of permission to be written. This letter of permission, for which one may have to wait a further day or two, details the itinerary and lists the members. It must be preserved and presented at checkpoints en route to the mountains.

The second letter is to the Customs and Excise Office. The expedition should present the letter

with a full list of all items imported into Afghanistan (some parties had much of their material stamped on entry to Afghanistan and a list made, but this treatment appeared to be the exception rather than the rule). Duty will then be charged on all dutiable goods imported, the rates being fixed somewhat arbitrarily for items of no real value (e.g. mountaineering equipment) but rather high for foodstuffs. In 1970 expeditions were having to pay from £30 to £70 in duty.

The third letter is to the Cartographical Institute. This will authorise the expedition, if it so wishes, to consult maps held in the Institute, the best of which are based on a recent aerial survey. However, they are of value only for the approach marches, much of the high mountain detail being incorrect. One may not be allowed to consult maps of certain restricted areas such as the Wakhan.

The fourth letter is to the Police department.

This authorises the Police department to issue the necessary 'stay' visas which are necessary if the country has been entered on a shorter term 'tourist' or 'transit' visa.

After attending to these matters the expedition is free to leave Kabul. On return from the mountains one should visit the Police department to obtain 'exit' visas; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be thanked. The British Consul should be notified that the members of the expedition are leaving Afghanistan. If they are not already held, it will be necessary to obtain visas for an overland return through Iran; these can be obtained at Herat.

In general, patience in dealing with the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs results in one's receiving courteous and attentive cooperation. The staff of the British Embassy in Kabul changes quite frequently but have always been extremely helpful.

D

A simple phonetic vocabulary of important words in Farsi, as spoken in the Central Hindu Kush.

One — yak.	Ninety — nawad.	Bread — nun.
Two — do.	Ninety-one — nawad-o-yak.	Water — ow.
Three — se.	Hundred — sad.	Fruit — maywa.
Four — chor.	Hundred and one — sad-o-yak.	Milk — sheer.
Five — panj.	123 — yak-sad-o-beest-o-se.	Egg — tukhum.
Six — shash.	187 — yak-sad-o-hastahd-o-haft.	Meat — gohsht.
Seven — haft.	200 — do sad.	Salt — namak.
Eight — hasht.	6000 — shash azore.	Chicken — mourg.
Nine — no.	1000 — yak azore.	Medicine — dawa.
Ten — da.	1549 — yak-azore-panj-sad-chil-o-no.	Pain — dahrt.
Eleven — yasda.	Yesterday — de reuse.	Blood — khon.
Twelve — duosda.	Today — imreuse.	Police — polis.
Thirteen — seysda.	Tomorrow — farda.	Soldier — ascar.
Fourteen — chorda.	Day after tomorrow — pas farda.	How many — chand.
Fifteen — panzda.	Week — haftah.	How much — chand.
Sixteen — shanzda.	One day — yak reuse.	3 kilometres — kuru.
Seventeen — haftda.	Before — kabul.	ca. one metre — gaz.
Eighteen — hastda.	Again — borse.	ca. half kilo — pow.
Nineteen — noseda.	Here — injo.	16 pow — sair.
Twenty — beest.	There — onjo.	4 pow — charah.
Twenty-one — beest-o-yak.	Man — mart.	Half — nim.
Twenty-two — beest-o-do.	Person — nafar.	Good — khoup.
Thirty — see.	Women — zan.	Bad — karop.
Thirty-one — see-o-yak.	Young women, girl — dochta.	Stupid — amakh.
Forty — chil.	Wife — khanum.	Very — besyor.
Forty-one — chil-o-yak.	House — khana.	Thank you — tashekur.
Forty-two — chil-o-doo.	Path, track — rah.	Hello — salam.
Fifty — pinjo.	Road — sarak.	Greeting, may you be long lived — zynd-a-bochee.
Fifty-one — pinjo-yak.	Is — ast.	Reply, may you be long lived — monda-na-bochee.
Fifty-two — pinjo-doo.	You have — doridh.	Bridge — pul.
Sixty — shasht.	Donkey — khar.	River — darya.
Sixty-one — shasht-o-yak.	Horse — asp, yoboo.	Yes — balley.
Seventy — haftahd.	Porter — hahmal.	No — ne.
Seventy-one — haftahd-o-yak.		Valley — darrah.
Eighty — hastahd.		Mountain — koh.
Eighty-one — hashtahd-o-yak.		When — chewacht.
		Hour — saht.
		Minute — daqiqa.

Acknowledgements

DIPLOMATIC

Mr. J. S. Jasper, South Asia Department, The
Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London.
Mr. J. James, The British Embassy, Kabul.
Mr. Aziz, Cultural Department, The Ministry of
Foreign Affairs, Kabul.
The Royal Afghan Embassy, London.

FINANCIAL

The Mount Everest Foundation.
The Scottish Mountaineering Trust.
The Cross Trust.
Mr. J. Tancred.
The Bank of Scotland.
The Burgh of Cumbernauld.
Fettes College, Edinburgh.

EQUIPMENT

Mr. G. Tiso, Edinburgh.
British Ropes Limited.
Mountain Equipment Limited.
Salewa Limited, Germany.
Karrimor Products Limited.
Edelmann and Ridder, Germany.
Galibier Boots.
Polaron Equipment Limited.
Vitafoam Equipment Limited.
Clegwyn Climbing Gear.
Vango (Scotland) Limited.
Arthur Ellis and Company Limited.
General Time Limited.
Diack Limited.
Kodak Limited.

FOOD

Our thanks are extended to the many companies
who helped the Expedition by supplying foodstuffs
either free or at reduced prices. In particular we
acknowledge the help of

Crosse and Blackwell (Peterhead) Limited.
Marshall's (Aberdeen) Limited.
Farm Products Limited.
Dorset Foods Limited.
Cadbury Limited.
Ryvita Limited.
Batchelors Foods Limited.
Smedleys Limited.

MEDICAL

Smith and Nephew Pharmaceuticals Limited.
Parke Davis and Company.
Farrillon Limited.
British Drug House Pharmaceuticals Limited.
Fisons Pharmaceuticals Limited.
Roche Products Limited.

MISCELLANEOUS

Dr. Malcolm Slessor.
Herr Wolfgang Frey.
Mr. Ian Hedges, Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh.
Herr S. Walcher, Osterreichische Alpenzeitung.
The Iranian Oil Company.
Mr. Mujadidi, Kabul.
Mr. Saaed, Kabul.
Mr. David Yar, Kabul.
Mr. and Nessar Miakhail, Kabul.
Harry K. Brown (Motors) Limited.
The Shetland Knitwear Company.
Mr. Kenji Hirasawa.

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