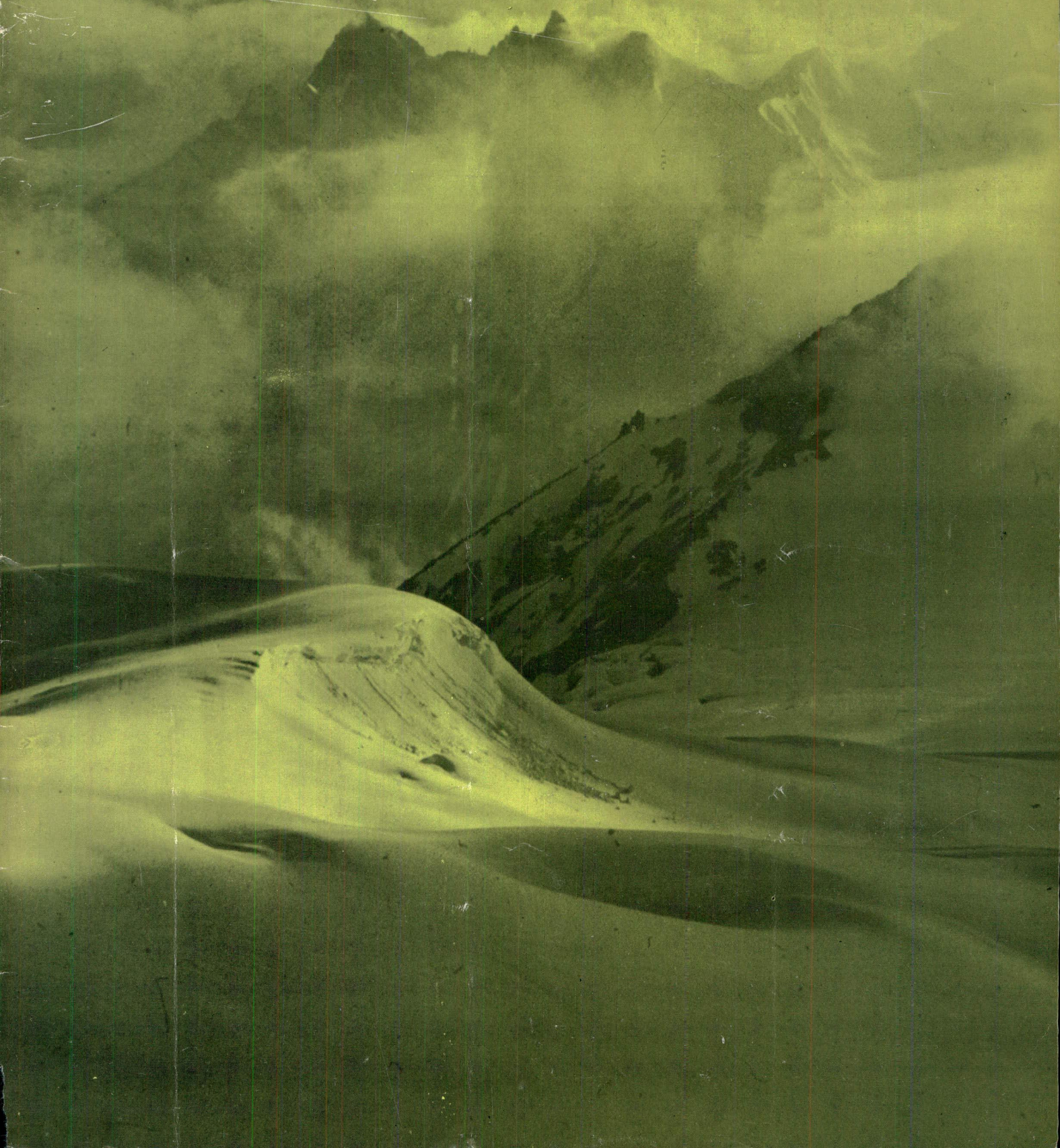


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KULU 1976





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*The Report of The University
of Bristol Mountaineering Club
Himalayan Expedition 1976*

PHOTOGRAPHS

Front cover - Evening, looking towards base from a camp on Tara Par.

Inside front cover (upper) - Advanced Base Camp.

Inside front cover (lower) - Crossing the Cleveland Glacier, the north face of "pyramid" peak behind.

Inside back cover (lower) - Base camp and "pyramid" peak.

Inside back cover (upper) - Jim approaching Advanced base.

Back cover (lower) - Dave on point 20300.

Back cover (upper) - Bernie on Doska Par

THE U.B.M.C. HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION 1976 — AN EVALUATION

The objectives of our expedition were two peaks of 19800 ft and one thought to be 19500 ft high. All these objectives were climbed and four other first ascents were made, the heights of these mountains ranging between 16000 and 18000 ft. This record must be regarded as one of unqualified success.

Despite a disparity of mountaineering experience we elected to be a leaderless expedition, relying on each individual to contribute as much as he could to any particular situation. This worked particularly well in the mountains, perhaps because personal and group motives had to coincide before we embarked on any course of action. With an average age of twenty four we formed an unusually young group and this led inevitably to some financial problems.

In this report, the main narrative is a collaborative effort which is then followed by individual accounts.

MEMBERS

David WADDINGTON

Peter John SINCLAIR

Charles Anthony SELF

Rowland Clive PERRIMENT

Clive David OWEN

Bernard Charles JONES

James Dominic BYRNE

Rinzing ANGDU

FIRST ASCENT DETAILS

Doska Par (Friends Peak): 17650 ft, S.W. Ridge (AD)
DW,RCP,CDO,BCJ,Rinzing

Dahr Par (Ridgeway): c.16000 ft, N.W. Ridge (F)
CAS

Bipreet Par (Deception Peak): 19800 ft, S.E. Ridge (F)
DW,RCP

Sovelli Par (Morning Peak): 17600 ft, N.W. Face/S. Face
(PD+)
PJS,Rinzing

Hyll Par (Lammergeir Peak): 17800 ft, N. Ridge (PD+),
descent via W. Ridge (F)
CDO,BCJ

Asti Par (Slowly Peak): c.18000 ft, W. Face (PD)
CAS,PJS,Rinzing

Tara Par (Star Peak): 19800 ft, S. Ridge (F)
CDO,BCJ

NARRATIVE

To describe the planning and organisation of our expedition is a difficult task, for we had no formal organisational structure. We were and still are just a group of friends who happen to be interested in climbing and caving. We shared the work and the responsibility between us, though in practice people would involve themselves more with one aspect of the work to be done than with another, as their interests and abilities directed. For official reasons we had to have a nominal leader and treasurer, but the spontaneity of the expedition was maintained by an easy-going co-operation.

As the planning progressed from the formless dream of 1974, the personnel changed and our official title "The University of Bristol Mountaineering Club Himalayan Expedition" became no more than a flag of convenience. We still maintained our friendly relations with the Club, but we were now an independent body. With the help of our patron, Bob Pettigrew, we chose the Tos Nulla glacier region of Kulu province in Himachal Pradesh state, northern India, as our destination and planning began in earnest. We received invaluable help from Paul Bean who visited the area in 1975, and his map is reproduced in this report with our own additions. Promises of grants from the British Mountaineering Council and the Mount Everest Foundation made the trip financially viable, and the generosity of British industry was a great encouragement to us. At the end of this report we have a list of our benefactors, a small tribute to a much greater goodwill.

On the advice of Bob Pettigrew, we wrote to Tara Chand who lives near Manali in the Kulu valley. Tara takes an active interest in all mountaineering expeditions to Kulu province, and with his help we arranged to hire a sherpa, Rinzing, for the duration of our stay.

At a very late stage Jim Byrne joined the team as our mechanic. Though lacking in mountaineering experience he agreed to accompany us and to look after Base Camp while the rest of us were climbing; once in the mountains, however, he took a much greater part in the expedition than his unofficial title, "Lord of Base Camp", suggests.

The team, with the exception of Rowland, gathered in Bristol towards the end of March, and the final dizzy round of getting everything together began in earnest. As always there were many delays. The one that caused us most concern was waiting to receive the Mount Everest Foundation and British Mountaineering Council grants. Eventually we decided that we could wait for them no longer and arranged for them to be sent on to a bank in Delhi: a touchingly naive action with most unfortunate consequences.

Rowland was working in Abu Dhabi and we had arranged that he should fly out to India and stay with Tara to await our arrival. The remaining six of us left Bristol on the 9th of April in the overladen Land Rover, determined to make up for lost time. Six days later we drove into Istanbul having had a fairly uneventful journey through Europe. Istanbul is a city that overwhelms the senses, and we vowed to spend more time there on our return.

Once over the Bosphorus we stopped by the road to cook some food while there was still daylight. We were parked by an army barracks, thinking little of it until a squad of soldiers approached us out of the gathering darkness. They cocked their rifles and the commander stepped forward and politely asked if there was anything he could do to help us! We explained our actions and nervously assured him that we would be moving on soon. We were heartily relieved to see them march off into the night.

The five day crossing of Turkey blurs into a sequence of long hard days of jolting travel on the increasingly potholed roads, and of seedy hotels. The morning of our last day in Turkey saw us sitting in a mile long queue of traffic, waiting for four Turks to shovel rocks into a quagmire that once passed as the road, to make it passable again. Next to them, blocking half the road, was a massive T.I.R. truck buried up to its axles in mud. There was a large crowd round about proffering advice, so we joined them. At length the road was improved sufficiently for one or two cars to pass through, incurring the navvies' displeasure. We ran for the Land Rover and then got it stuck in the worst of the mud. This left the driver sitting between a gang of shouting Turkish labourers trying to push our vehicle backwards and our own stalwarts shoving the other way and yelling encouragement. We won through just as the army arrived to curtail the activities of the likes of us.

At the border post there was another enormous line of wagons, but we got through into Iran smoothly. What a country it was: excellent roads, cheap petrol and friendly people. The previous week had taken its toll of the Land Rover. The steering was damaged, the exhaust broken in half, the timing was out and the engine overheating. A long repair session was necessary in Tehran before we could go any further.

From here on the vehicle behaved itself. The border posts now became more awkward: crossing into Afghanistan was time-consuming until a bottle of brandy changed hands. Most of the through route crosses desolate rocky plateaux dotted with fantastic mountains and peopled by nomads. At the Pakistani-Afghan border the official looked crestfallen when he learned that we had nothing worth confiscating and no lists in triplicate of all we were carrying. He grudgingly let us through without bribery or excessive bureaucracy.

We crossed the Khyber Pass down into the steaming heat of the plains, leaving behind the lands of camels and donkeys for those of oxen and water-buffalo. We drove into the night to reach the Indian border so exhausted that we had just enough energy to distribute ourselves in and on top of the vehicle before collapsing into sleep.

The main obstacle to our entering India was the amount of food that we were carrying. A protracted session of roundabout arguing eventually won the young customs man over and we were through. We drove slowly and in the evening drew up outside the government rest-house at Khoti. The chaukidar welcomed us enthusiastically and we passed the time sitting around amazed by our surroundings, which seemed untouched by time since the days of the Raj.

Breakfast was served punctually at 7 am, and then we began a superb day's drive to Manali. Slowly we climbed from the luxuriant forests to an area of terraced cultivation with views stretching across to beautiful snow-covered peaks. Finally, a tortuous passage through the enormous Beas gorge brought us into the Kulu valley, the aptly named "Valley of the Gods". We arrived in the dark and camped by the side of the road, sleeping well on the accumulated exhaustion of three weeks travelling.

We had arrived, but what next? Fortunately Tara Chand was at home when we visited him, and staying with him was Dawn Bean (Paul Bean's wife). Rowland was in the village, having arrived some ten days previously, and was living in a room lent to him by Tara's brother. We all moved into Rowland's room, luggage as well, and the next five days were spent in holiday mood as we repacked everything from the van into pony loads.

Our sherpa, Rinzing, was introduced and we were worried at first by his apparent difficulty with English, but this was soon resolved when we got to know each other better. Rinzing took Clive to Bhuntar, a village further down the Kulu valley, for an afternoon of bartering for the hire price of pack ponies: a fee of 23 rupees/pony/day was eventually agreed. Tara's hospitality converted us to the Indian style of cooking, so we bought quite a lot of the local produce to take with us into the mountains: flour, rice, dhal and ghee in particular.

Packed and ready, we left Manali by local bus and disembarked at Bhuntar. For 10 rupees we hired coolies to transport the bags across a bridge to a ramshackle bus depot on the other side of the river. We loaded a ramshackle bus and then began the most painful journey I have ever experienced—25 km in about 4 hours—to the roadhead at Kasol where we camped for the night. The ponies arrived in the morning and we set out on what turned out to be a long first day's walk, carrying our own rucksacks with our personal gear inside: the surest way to cut luxuries down to a minimum. On the second day we left the Parbati river which we had been following for the tributary Tos valley. The third day was very short for the late-departing winter caused the snow-line to be much lower than usual, and a wide steeply-sloping bank of snow blocked the path to the ponies. That afternoon we set to with ice-axes and cut a track through the 100 yard blockage. Raw onions eaten that night with the evening meal made Rowland very ill with wind and diarrhoea, incapacitating him for several days. Next morning, the ponies were only able to go one more mile before the snow again stopped their progress, so Retarded Base Camp was established. Four of us, with Rinzing and one of the muleteers, continued to the site of Base Camp, carrying stores and spare tentage.

Base Camp was supposed to be at about 11000 ft altitude. My altimeter had read 10650 at Retarded Base and a suspicion which had been lurking at the back of my mind became concrete as we plodded up rise after rise of damp snow, climbing up the valley to the skyline. An abrupt change of gradient to a desolate snowy plateau, still enclosed by the valley walls, and behind a small morainic bluff we established Base Camp. The altitude was 12350 ft and we were six miles from our

well-earned supper. The pattern was now set for the next six days as we sherpaed our stores to this wilderness, usually in a good imitation of English winter weather conditions. Forty man-loads and Base Camp was complete. Plans for mountaineering were now in order.

Having established Base Camp with so much effort, we balked at the prospect of an immediate resumption of load-ferrying up the Tos glacier. It was agreed that if we could climb a peak at this stage group morale would be given the boost it so obviously needed. Common choice fell upon one mountain and after two days of rest, six of us set off on our attempt (*). A day later, Charlie's sunburn had recovered sufficiently for him to climb the outlying peak on the ridge to the south-east of Base (*). From this vantage point he was particularly keen to study possible routes up the intimidating "Pyramid" peak which dominated Base Camp. (It remains unclimbed.)

On the general rest day that followed Clive cooked the highly popular "spotted dick". It was held in such great esteem that it was declared to be the only fitting celebration of the ascent of a virgin summit. This contributed in no small way to our climbing enthusiasm. Early the next morning Rinzing left for Kulu to fetch further supplies of paraffin, sugar and cigarettes while Bernie, Jim and Rowland trekked up the glacier to establish Advanced Base. The rest of us were suffering minor ailments from our previous exertions: Charlie's sun-scorched face had blistered badly again. The energetic Rowland made one more trip to stock the higher camp while our sedentary rearguard bandied ideas of forthcoming action.

The next clear afternoon saw all of us on the tedious grind to Advanced Base. As the shadows lengthened Jim descended alone, leaving six men to contemplate a fine sunset. This camp always seemed a haven of peace and contentment where one could enjoy a well-earned rest and savour the exploration to come. Our paths split from here. Rowland and Dave left to climb the peak east of Angdu Ri (*) while others continued up the glacier with intentions on the twin summits overlooking Roberts col. As Bernie, Clive and Pete waited for Charlie at the foot of Roberts Peak, he staggered up to them gasping alarmingly. Even sitting down did not greatly improve matters. The equipment for the assault was dumped, and they retreated quickly to a lower altitude. At Advanced Base they rested and had a brew. Charlie's breathing was once again normal but it was considered prudent to continue down to Base. Two hours after dark an exhausted party stumbled into camp by the light of a single torch, awakening Rinzing and Jim.

After a day's rest Bernie, Clive, Pete and Rinzing set out once again for the same objectives. Rinzing led them by a different route along the side of the glacier and they crossed the tracks of Rowland and Dave's descent without ever meeting them. This time success attended their efforts (*).

On the morrow Charlie and Jim ventured forth to inspect the south side of "Pyramid" and to survey Roberts glacier. Jim returned soon after, complaining of a headache. Charlie continued up the pleasant valley until he could see along its whole length. He took some

bearings and returned home satisfied. Jim recovered overnight and accompanied Rowland up to Advanced Base from where the latter hoped to climb the nearby peak on the north side of the valley. They had made themselves comfortable in camp when the other four arrived with news of their success. Bernie, Clive and Rinzing then continued down to Base: a very long day for them.

Early the next morning Rowland began the ascent of a 3000 ft high snow gully on the south side of his peak. Above this, on the ridge, he was confronted by a very steep rock buttress. A precarious traverse to the right on bad snow brought him to more unclimbable rock, and he retreated carefully to the ridge. He followed a spectacular rock ledge out onto the South Face. After some tricky rock pitches, negotiated in crampons, the rock steepened once again and he realised that this was as far as he could go on his own. He returned to the head of the gully and basked contentedly in the sun. A mammoth glissade brought him back to the valley and he tramped wearily up to Jim and Pete. After a long rest they all returned to Base, kept going by thoughts of Clive's spotted dick for tea.

That same morning Charlie and Dave awoke early planning to attempt the first unclimbed peak to the north-west of Base Camp. Alas, Charlie was suffering acutely from intestinal wind caused by the near-lethal combination of soya and dhal that he had cooked the previous night, so Dave set off alone. He enjoyed a pleasant walk across the lateral moraine and up the undulating hanging valley above. There were fine views to the north of the giants White Sail and Papsura, and the neighbouring unclimbed Point 20300 which had not been visible from the valley. A rising traverse across the steepening snow of his mountain's east face led to mixed ground, which would have been highly enjoyable if the snow conditions had been better. A mere two hundred feet from the summit, progress was barred by a steep patch of disintegrating snow topped by a vertical block of rock. There was no alternative but for him to retreat. The high spot of the descent was an exhilarating glissade down the entire length of the side of the Tos valley.

To compensate for yesterday's disappointment Charlie left us all sleeping to try to bag the summit north of Nalgil. He crossed the river with difficulty and struck out for a ridge coming down from the peak. A long scramble up boulder-strewn terrain then followed. At one o'clock he stopped beneath the slope of rotten snow leading to the summit, 1000 ft above. Stormclouds were rolling in across the valley, and he considered 4000 ft of climbing was enough for one day. A long glissade speeded the descent. Opposite Base he tried to ford the river but was swept off his feet and deposited on the opposite bank. He appeared, dripping wet, at the door of the palace and his shocked comrades quickly dried him and bundled him into his sleeping bag. He was sufficiently recovered to take part in a rousing sing-song after tea.

In a period of seventeen days at Base we had climbed five new peaks and had attempted three more. We were naturally very happy with the way things had gone. There now followed two further days of bad weather—mostly rain, which was worrying. It was becoming too warm.

Once again there was the early morning bustle of activity as Bernie, Clive, Rowland and Dave made their last-minute preparations before departing. Bernie and Clive left quickly to make a cache of equipment as near to the Cleveland Glacier as they could. They returned to Base that evening, and two days later set off again and climbed the imposing mountain to the west of Roberts Peak (*). Rowland and Dave moved up to Advanced Base for the night, heading for 20300. Two more days of trekking through the majestic scenery of the upper Chota Shigri saw them established beneath the south-west face of their mountain (*). Even though the attempt was unsuccessful, the feeling of real exploration and their involvement with the intricacies of the climbing made this a most memorable exploit. They retreated to Advanced Base to await Bernie and Clive.

Meanwhile Charlie, Pete and Rinzing had been busy. Pete had designs on the summit north of the one Charlie had attempted earlier. It was not an encouraging sight from down in the valley, but after some debate they picked out a route and a suitable campsite and then climbed the mountain (*). Two days later Jim, Pete and Rinzing returned to Bhuntar to arrange horses for our descent and then start work on the Land Rover. Charlie had a day on his own before the jubilant Clive and Bernie arrived. Rowland and Dave sat out the deteriorating weather at Advanced Base. When it finally rained they realised that the action was finished and they descended through the murk to rejoin the others. After four days of enforced idleness Base Camp was struck and we sadly turned our backs on the mountains and followed the horses down into the beautiful green valleys.

We descended from Base Camp to Manali in just two days, and were housed by Rinzing and his family. Pete and Jim had gone down earlier to mend the Land Rover: a burnt-out exhaust valve and chamber had been discovered when Jim was checking the vehicle after our transcontinental drive. With a new valve sent from England, the job was done by the time the rest of us arrived and the vehicle road-tested up to the Rotang Pass. After a hot spring bath at Vashist temple and a party at Tara's house, it was time for farewells and with reluctance we left the Kulu valley. On our lapels we sported badges of the Himalayas Mountaineering Institute Manali, given to us by a friend of Rinzing, who thought us "Top Ho' Chaps". And so down to the plains, the heat and Delhi.

At Delhi we found to our horror that no money had arrived from England, or so the bank officials informed us, so we telegraphed our bank in Bristol to forward the £500 that we needed to be able to return. We continued south towards Agra, determined at least to see the Taj Mahal, but had to spend the midday hours removing a split wheel in the blazing sun (for the monsoon had not yet reached the plains). We spent the night in a government tourist camp (good value). Having viewed the Taj Mahal, and Akbar's mausoleum, we returned to Delhi. The bank still had no money for us, but suggested that we tried a bank in New Delhi as mistakes often occurred. New Delhi branch had indeed received some of our money (£250), had changed it into rupees, and had sent it to the bank we had just come from. Back at Delhi branch we demanded our 4109 rupees, to be told that it had been forwarded to Kulu (230 miles away) and

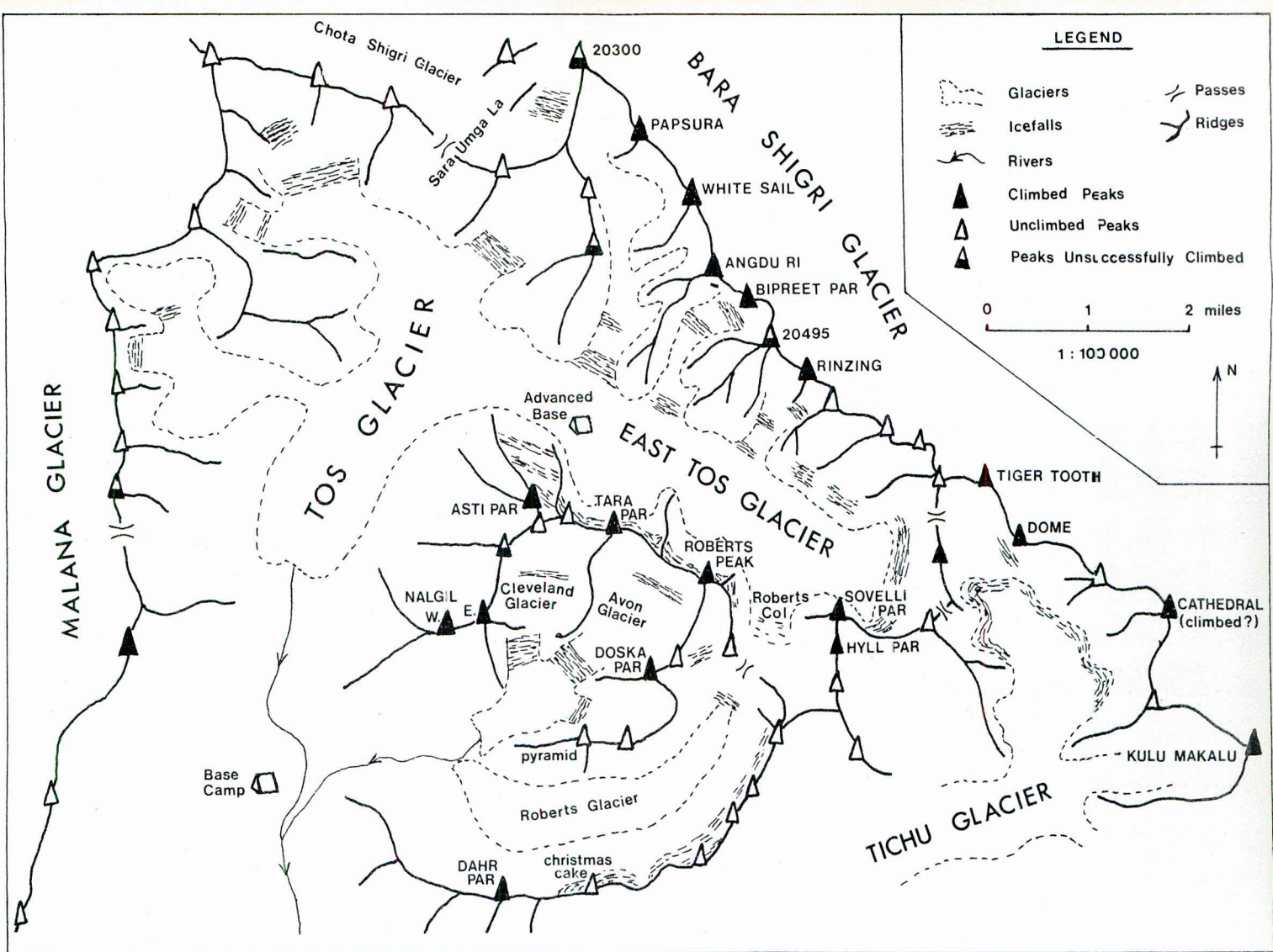
couldn't be given to us until it had returned. Meanwhile the monsoon was overdue and the Indians were themselves complaining of the heat and the humidity. We stayed at tourist campsites, living as cheaply as possible, waiting for our money. In the meantime we amused ourselves as best we could, visiting the antiquities of Delhi and the local bazaars. We had a shock absorber mounting welded back onto the Land Rover, and bartered successfully for a replacement wheel, while Rowland sold a dud watch to a hustling Sikh. Barclays Bank in Bristol refused to help us but finally, seven days after our first arrival in Delhi, and after further bank incompetence (Kulu branch this time), the Delhi branch took pity on us and we were given our money back as sterling travellers cheques. Though there should have been two grants of £250 awaiting us in Delhi, we realised that we had to get home on only one. We set off, vowed to frugality.

The long hard slog had begun, and there were now seven of us in a Land Rover with six seats. One person sprawled on top of the luggage at the back, and with the tailgate raised this was the prime position inside the vehicle. Better still, however, was roof-rack riding and this greatly relieved the strain of bodies inside. Calculations had proved that our £250, with private funds (mainly held by Charlie and Rowland) added, was more than we needed to get us home, provided nothing went wrong. So we all bought souvenirs on the return journey: small carpets, Afghani shirts, leather goods etc. Perhaps we were rash, but could you travel 13000 miles and only bring back photographs? Acquisition madness ended when we left Afghanistan, but we had inadvertently picked up in that country a flagellate parasite, and so we suffered protozoan dysentery for the rest of the journey (recurrent attacks are still troubling some of us at the time of writing this report).

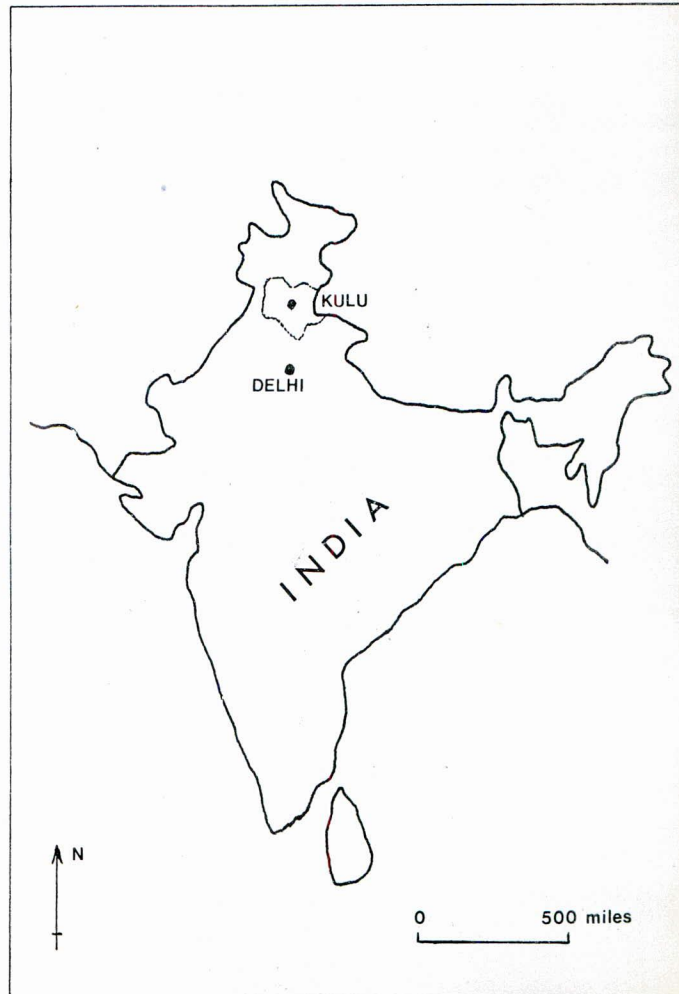
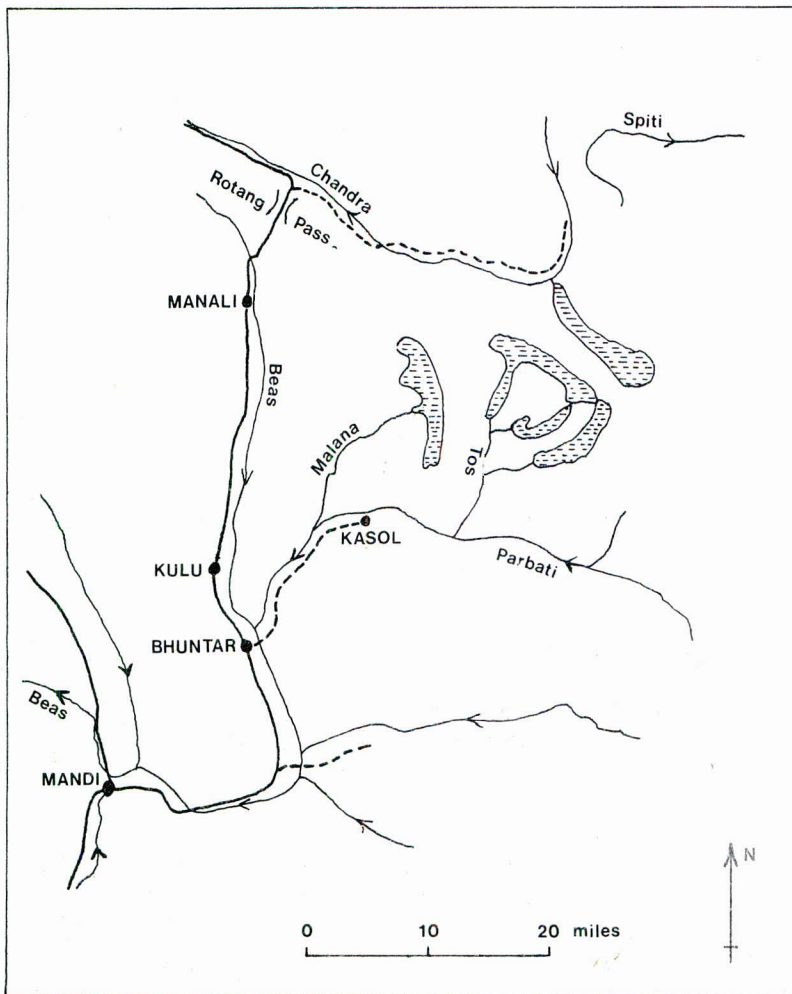
Our tyres, recut when we began the expedition, were now in a bad way. Our spare tyre was ruined after the sidewall blew out for the second time (it was vulcanised in Afghanistan on the outward journey), and one of the tyres we were driving on had the tread flapping loose. We reached Mashad in Iran, sold two cameras and a dictionary, and covered the cost of two new tyres. From Mashad we travelled day and night, and a new technique was developed for sleeping while travelling, on the roof-rack inside two sleeping bags; unfortunately there was only room for two at a time on the roof. We stopped for a day in Tehran to replace a spring leaf, and then continued to Turkey. The Turks had done extensive repair work to their roads, and a quicker and less painful crossing was made than we had feared. We stopped in Istanbul and bedded down for the night a few miles to the west. Up again in the morning, and we drove to Calais in 71 hours, stopping in Beograd to stock up with food. Bank cards paid for our channel crossing on the hovercraft and we arrived back in Bristol on Thursday 22nd July.

Why the mad rush? It wasn't simply that we had no more money to buy food with. Clive had realised while we were still in Asia that it was possible, with good fortune, to be present at the wedding of his best friend (who was part of the original expedition team). We did our best and he got to the wedding in Birmingham with enough spare time to have a bath first.

(*) indicates a separate report.



The Tos Nalla Region



THE ASCENT OF DOSKA PAR

Whilst I was incapacitated at retarded base by a dose of the old Delhi Belly (diarrhoea) the rest of the members were making great efforts carrying all our gear and provisions to the site of base camp. This may seem like a good set up at first but the one thing that I did not like was that they had seen what was up on the glacier and I hadn't. Every night I was goaded by tales of soaring peaks and huge rock faces. Routes up these peaks were being discussed and planned and I was always the uninformed onlooker. Rumour had it that there was a peak up there resembling the Matterhorn and this received more than its fair share of discussion.

A few days later I had not only seen it but was one of the members of the party out to climb it. Bernie, Clive, Dave, Pete, Rinzing, and I set off on the morning of 22nd May to attempt our "Matterhorn".

What was intended to be a reasonably early start ended up in a departure at 11 am. A quick dash over a rapidly disappearing snow bridge across the stream, then a long slog up a moraine ridge that led past the base of a mountain we nick-named the Pyramid and on towards the "Matterhorn". Two hours up the moraine ridge then a rest and a couple of mouthfuls of halva. Pete was suffering from pains in his back but decided to go on. We continued up the moraine ridge for another half hour then had to negotiate a steep and very loose descent onto the glacier. Everyone was beginning to suffer from the accumulative effects of not being acclimatised and the heavy packs. Pete was having more trouble with his back and when he reached us on the glacier he announced that he couldn't go on and would have to go back. It must have been a moment of bitter disappointment for Pete but everyone, although we knew how he must have felt, was too shattered to express their true feelings. Hence a parting phrase of "so long Pete" or "see you Pete" was all we could manage.

As we continued I think everyone was wondering if he would be the next one who would be too shattered to carry on. At the far side of the glacier beneath the icefall which we planned to ascend we stopped for another rest. Everyone was dreading the slog that was shortly inevitable. Second thoughts of what the "Himalayan Game" was all about and whether I wouldn't be happier on a nice sunny sea cliff or a small crag back home. Surely this was just too much physical effort to be enjoyable. Rinzing put the situation in a lot better light when he suggested the camp site should be on a shoulder about 500-600 ft above us, also that the summit could be reached in 3-4 hours next day. This was fantastic news to us in our shattered state, one last big effort then we would be rid of that heavy pack and could have a brew—what luxury. Thoughts of drink and rest were the only things that kept me going for those last couple of hundred feet.

The weather clouded up as we pitched the two tents. We were not unduly concerned with the weather because it clouded up most afternoons but usually cleared by evening. As soon as the tents were pitched we all squeezed inside and then started the long brewing and cooking session. It took about three hours to melt snow to give us a couple of brews each and a meal. We melted enough water to give us a brew in the morning.

After the meal I was just lying in my sleeping bag listening to the drone of the others talking. This was when I realized that this was the main thing I had come for—complete peace of mind. Throughout the day we had been putting in a lot of physical effort which had produced tiredness, hunger and thirst in abundance. On reaching the camp site our thirst had been quenched, our hunger satiated and physical effort had ceased, added to this the comfort and warmth of a sleeping bag and good company and what else could anyone wish for. Peace of mind and satisfaction, the things everyone is looking for but how many ever experience them?

Anyway back to the tale of our "Matterhorn". The alarm made its presence heard at 4 am. After a brew and some halva we were ready for the off at about 5.30 am. Whatever had gotten into everyone I don't know but we climbed the first 1000 ft of the icefield in less than 45 minutes. The first hour or so was quite straightforward then we had to find our way through seracs and across crevasses. Here Rinzing did his bit. He had taken it upon himself to lead on our first climb. Above the seracs we emerged onto a large snowfield which we ascended diagonally to the final ridge. We gained the ridge at a height of about 16800 ft and everyone was again suffering from the altitude. That confounded fight against gravity, the effort of following one step with another upwards, upwards forever upwards, on and on, up and up until finally after a couple of tricky steps in the ridge we reached the summit.

The main feeling was one of relief that now we could go no higher, wherever we went now it must be down. The weather was clear and after a few minutes on the summit we began to take in our situation. Although we were on a summit most of the mountains around us were higher. To the north was the dominating mass of one of our main objectives—19800 which Clive and Bernie were later to climb. Further north and across the upper Tos Glacier was the chain of the biggest mountains in the area culminating in Papsura and White Sail, both well over 21000 ft.

Clive and Dave took bearings of all the surrounding peaks as part one of the survey we did of an unmapped area to the northeast of where we were.

The descent should have been quite straightforward but was made tedious because our crampons kept balling up. A comic rhythm of two to three steps then knock the snow from one's crampons was necessary for safe progress. An abseil over a rock step put the major difficulties behind us. We unroped about 1000 ft above the camp because the icefall was now a uniform snow slope and everyone was left to their own devices for descent. The snow was too soft for glissading but Rinzing overcame this by sliding down on his backside.

Back at the camp the shade in the tents was welcome relief for our sunburnt faces and our tired persons were given the full treatment of food and drink from the indefatigable Rinzing. Two hours rest and then we packed up the camp and made our weary but very satisfied way back to base camp.

We named the peak Doska Par, which means friend's peak, in an attempt to say thank you to everyone who had helped us with the expedition.

RCP

DAHR PAR (RIDGEWAY), c. 16000 FT (F)

As I sat with Jim in the main tent at Base Camp, I watched the rest of the team depart for Doska Par. I could not go with them, for my face had sun-blistered on the last carry from Retarded Base Camp.

To the south-east of camp was a snow-covered ridgewalk, gently inclined to a small summit, but dwarfed by the peaks of the ridge behind. My blisters were almost healed, so I decided to risk a single day outing on this ridge. Next morning, after a late and protracted breakfast, I went for a walk. By midday I was still floundering up soft snow (which, characteristically, was worst on the steepest gradient), feeling the effects of altitude now, and finally reached the summit at 2 pm. The mountain architect had played a cruel trick, for although Dahr Par is an independent massif, the col to the next peak (the serac-laced "Christmas Cake") was only one hundred feet lower. I contented myself with the magnificent panorama of the other quarters of the compass.

CAS

BIPREET PAR (DECEPTION PEAK), 19800 FT

Rowland and I set out from Advanced Base in leisurely style to place a camp on the tributary glacier running down from the unclimbed peak 19800 lying between Angdu Ri and Point 20495. The ranks of seracs threatening its lowest section forced our route onto the surprisingly amenable moraine on its west side, then up a smooth snow band running alongside the glacier. We gained height steadily until we could pitch the tent just as the afternoon weather deteriorated. As dusk approached the clouds lifted to reveal the col at the head of our valley alluringly close. In the peace of a beautiful evening our spirits soared and we speculated cheerfully on the promise of tomorrow.

A fierce and bitterly cold night wind decorated the inside of our tent with hoar-frost and prolonged our early morning preparations, but it did give fine crisp going to the foot of our mountain's west col. The steep snow slope leading up to it was unduly soft for the time of day, so we elected for the longer and easier-looking route via the east col. Two hours of toiling through soft snow got us there, and we rested and ate.

Crampons had now become superfluous and the ensuing steeper section to the shoulder seemed interminable. Digestive problems rendered me a half-willing passenger gasping at the end of a permanently taut rope. The view from the shoulder was crushing. An elegant snow pyramid reared up impossibly high and distant, but eventually we realised it was the beautiful White Sail merging into our own peak. "Half an hour's more purgatory" were Rowland's encouraging words. We carefully skirted the spectacular cornices on the north side of the ridge and shook hands in mute relief on the slender summit at 12.30 pm.

There was little time to linger over the views as the sun was rapidly thawing the snow. The only incident of the descent was Rowland falling through into a crevasse that I'd just stumbled over. He managed to bridge across it, and was sufficiently calm to request that I take a picture of his head peering out of the resulting hole. At length we could cool our faces in the blessed shade of the tent once again. We slaked our raging thirsts until we could eat and then drifted off to sleep.

In the morning we savoured a slow breakfast before glissading rapidly down to Advanced Base, where we found a cryptic note about Charlie's illness left by Clive on their express descent. We stowed our mountain gear and continued wearily to Base. All worries were instantly dispelled when we caught sight of Charlie pottering around the "palace" as we approached camp. Three feet of snow had melted during our absence and the mountain tents were sprawled drunkenly around the old site, while the big tent had been moved onto luxurious grass nearby.

Our peak, which had looked so fine from the glacier, had proved surprisingly straightforward in ascent, and so we named it Deception Peak.

DW

THE ASCENTS OF HYLL PAR AND SOVELLI PAR

One attempt had already been made by us on the two peaks lying east of Robert's Col at the head of the East Tos Glacier. It had been foiled by an attack of acute mountain sickness but this time we were determined to climb at least one of the peaks, which we believed to be about 19500 ft high. Our assault camp was made at 15500 ft, below the slopes leading up to Robert's Col, the march up the glacier from advanced base taking some five hours. The West Ridge of Sovelli Par runs down to Robert's Col while another ridge joins the summit to that of Hyll Par, a little to the South and overlooking the Tichu Glacier. The northern side of the West Ridge is a snow slope at an angle of 45° and in the prevailing (good) snow conditions seemed to offer a better proposition than the badly crevassed slopes of Robert's Col.

We reached the ridge at an altitude of 17200 ft and it became clear that the mountain was well under 19500 ft high because we were almost on the summit! Crossing the ridge we traversed the south face for a few hundred feet before splitting into two parties. Pete and Rinzing climbed directly to the summit of Sovelli Par by the South Face while Bernie and Clive made their way to the ridge linking the peak to Hyll Par. This ridge was followed to the summit of Hyll Par via a lower subsidiary peak. Both parties descended independently by the West Ridge of Sovelli Par and Robert's Col since picking a route through the crevasses presented less problem from above.

The actual heights of the peaks were: Sovelli Par 17600 ft (estimated from Hyll Par); Hyll Par 17820 ft (measured with an altimeter).

CDO

ASTI PAR (SLOWLY PEAK), c.18000 FT (PD)

Asti Par is the peak at the junction of the Tos and East Tos glaciers. The circumnavigation of its north-west flank had seemed interminable to us when carrying stores up to Advanced Base, and from Advanced Base the north wall rises almost sheer to the summit, any point of lesser steepness being covered with seracs. This peak fascinated Peter Sinclair and he resolved to climb it. After my abortive solo attempt on the adjacent peak to the south, I ventured my opinion that better peaks were available, but Pete is a man of strong resolve.

On Tuesday 8th June, Pete, Rinzing and myself set out to climb Asti Par. Using a high traverse line on the west side of the Tos valley we had our first clear view of the west side of the mountain, the side from which our attempt was to be made. Rinzing stopped, sat down and declared, "No-good route". Even Pete was moved to comment, "I seem to have dropped a bollock here". We had set out late in the day with two days food, so the only feasible alternative was the peak I had attempted. I spotted a possible camp site beneath Asti Par and when the obvious route was described up the west face (straight up the *** middle), Rinzing was mollified and we proceeded to our original objective. We camped on snow in a small valley on the south-west side of the mountain.

After the usual mountain breakfast of tea and halva, which occupied the first hour and a half of the day, we set out at the sensible time of 5.30 am. The snow was crisp and the air not too chill. Two short gullies gave access to the west face and we followed a devious trail of snow through the rock bands of the lower part of the face. My familiar anoxia became apparent at 15500 feet, as I had expected, but Pete was having difficulty due to simple fatigue. Painfully slow progress was made frenchstepping up the huge upper snowface, engulfed in cloud, before an awkward final move gained the summit rocks. The final three hundred feet had taken us an hour, an average rate of ascent of 5 feet/minute, which is an unenviable statistic for plodding up a 30° snowslope. We lazed on the summit rocks for another hour, then headed down through the mist. Pete and Rinzing roped up for the descent, but they belayed from an ice-axe stuck "conventionally" into the snow, so I stayed well clear. We decamped and returned to Base Camp that evening very tired.

CAS

THE ASCENT OF TARA PAR (19800).

"We can save a day if we make a dump," said fearless leader.

A quick piece of mental arithmetic and I agreed. This was what it was all about, spontaneity. I never managed to figure out how we saved a day again.

As I slithered down the rock and delicately ran across the six foot tongue of snow a few inches above the foaming jaws of the river, I thought, "I'll only have to do that another three times, once again today and once on the ascent, then down, hopefully; tragedy always strikes at the end, you know."

We trudged up the moraine ridge, then groped our way up to 16000 ft and dumped the gear. A quick sweet and a smoke, then we traversed across the mountain to a broad gully which Clive glissaded down gracefully, while I followed on my rear.

On the next day we rested, setting out the following day carrying just sleeping gear. An uneventful river crossing led us up the moraine ridge and then to the dump, laughing nervously as we noticed the large avalanche tongue that had settled across the previous site of camp one on Doska Par. We reached the dump and repacked the sacs. They felt terribly heavy and clumsy as we moved on, crossing bottomless couloirs of powder snow, adrenalin rushing through our systems. If the peak on our left (Nalgil) had not been previously climbed, another 200 ft would have given us a first ascent. All of a sudden we were on the crest of the ridge, showing us the Cleveland Glacier in its simple glory and the simple glissade into it. Camp One was pitched a few hundred feet away from the ridge. I sat down outside the tent and thought that this exploration game isn't too bad; the glacier wasn't littered with orange peel and frenchmen.

The following day we strolled across the glacier and ascended the easy slopes to 17000 ft, where I felt very nauseous after attempting to erect the tent, so Clive erected and I brewed. (I must also say that he generously cut out the platform as well). We pitched the tent under a large rock which afforded some protection from the elements.

The next day was spent watching the monsoon engulf us, and planning what we hoped would be "Waddingtons" most popular game. There was one short respite from the clag, when the sunbeams pierced the cloud and the snowflakes twinkled in the pink light; certainly worth coming 6000 miles for.

On the second day Clive, during one of his periodic weather checks, announced, "We can do it if we've got the guts." I thought as I lay in my warm cocoon of thermolactyl fibre, dirt and down, "Marlon Brando should be here, not me." I struggled out and followed in his slipstream, across the bergschrund and onto the shoulder, where we left the sac. Then we zig-zagged up the corniced ridge. He graciously waited just below the summit for me and we walked to the summit side by side, where we laughed, posed and talked of missing friends and the weather.

We arrived back at camp two at 9 am, breakfasted and left, across the glacier and up a snow slope past Nalgil, descended the other side in a white-out. We discussed the merits of going to Advanced Base or Base. Base won.

BCJ

POINT 20300.

A camp at 18000 ft! Two weeks ago I wouldn't have believed we were physically capable of the three day carry from Base Camp to here. We were on the broad snow basin below the south-west face of the highest unclimbed peak in the area. It was a striking mountain, dominated on this side by an enormous diamond-shaped rock buttress. There were three possible routes: the west and south ridges and a big couloir running up the right-hand side of the buttress. We retired undecided.

The weather had been slowly deteriorating during the past week, and it was cloudy when I peeped out of the tent at half past three. An hour later there was no change. We decided to try our luck on the south ridge. We crossed the glacier bowl and gained the foot of the ridge by a narrow snow bridge over the bergschrund. A traverse above this on steep snow led to easy mixed ground.

At the first rock step Rowland led up a steep corner, escaping left via a small overhang. After much struggling I was landed on his belay ledge like a stranded fish. We continued near the crest of the ridge to a second step and then traversed onto the east face on powder snow and slabby rock to reach a gully. The snow was terrible and we climbed in a series of thrashing motions using every possible point of contact to maintain an erratic upward progress.

We emerged below the great upper rock buttress of the south ridge, and crossed over into the huge couloir which ran alongside the ridge for its whole length. It was fine at first but as it steepened, the layer of snow overlying its icy bed became more unstable. Moving together without belaying was steadily eroding my confidence, so I asked Rowland to move across to the potential security of some nearby rocks. The smooth snow-plastered slabs in fact were even worse.

The altimeter read 19700 ft and the main difficulties were almost certainly behind us. It was eleven o'clock. I reasoned that some of our dubious snow passage might not hold us on a descent in, say, two hours time. Then Rowland pointed out a storm front which had been approaching from behind us unnoticed. That settled the issue. We retreated carefully to a rocky platform at the head of the subsidiary gully and sat down for our first rest of the day.

It proved impossible to retrace all of our path down the gully as the snow was no longer capable of bearing our weight. Rowland hacked out an icy platform and I joined him. We eventually arranged an ice screw belay as the clouds arrived and with them the snow. A rope length of appalling traverse led back to the safety of the ridge. We retreated slowly, with occasional pitches, to the top of the rock step. One short abseil and some tricky mixed ground gave way to the more amenable terrain where we had first joined the ridge.

The traverse above the bergschrund seemed surprisingly solid and Rowland tiptoed neatly across the remains of the snow bridge to stand safely on the snow basin once again. I slithered after him and was relieved to land on solid ground.

We should have been home and dry at this point, but the clouds stole in and all was white. In the absence of footprints from the morning we set off on a long sweeping path round the perimeter of the basin. We rambled around, trying to guess what was horizontal and getting vague impressions of features to our right—the bergschrund again, the south-west buttress, west ridge, and col, and now another rock buttress? We began to get cold and worried. Out came the compass; it was reassuring, if not particularly useful. At last Rowland spotted the tent and we dumped our gear and frozen hawser outside and dived inside to warm up. The clouds lifted towards sunset as we were eating.

We were keen to leave this isolated spot but our departure was a slow one. We were well below the Sara Umga pass before we dropped beneath the cloud-base. A short glissade into the East Tos valley and we encamped on the first suitable site. The three hundred feet of ascent to Advanced Base only a mile and a half away could wait until tomorrow.

DW

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Transport

Although we had decided to buy a long wheelbase diesel Transit, we found that the only vehicle we could afford was a long wheelbase petrol Land Rover. The hard suspension of the Land Rover gave us an uncomfortable ride and the potholed roads of Turkey caused considerable damage to the suspension mountings and bent a steering track rod. However, by the end of the trip we were all irrationally fond of the "Green Machine", unsuitable though it was.

Accommodation

In Turkey on the outward journey and in Afghanistan we slept in cheap hotels. As a result of this action a Turkish flea was transported to Base Camp. In India (outside Kulu province) we stayed at government camp sites and a resthouse; apart from the camp site in Delhi itself they were excellent and extraordinarily cheap. Elsewhere on our travels we either camped or slept "rough".

Our mountain tentage consisted of a canvas palace (bought), Vango Force Tens (privately owned), Blacks Mountain Tents (hired) and MOAC tents (donated). All the tents stood up well to the conditions, though the palace collected considerable quantities of snow on its roof when the monsoon started and shaking off this snow spoilt the waterproofing. The benefits of the palace outweighed the disadvantages, and it was by far the most popular of our luxury items.

Catering

Paraffin Primus stoves were used for cooking; they were slow due to the altitude, but we had brought pressure cookers with us so a balance was effected. Pete Sinclair cooked separately since he is a connate vegetarian. Unfortunately for him even the textured soya protein (minced beef flavour) proved unpalatable (and we had a donation of one hundredweight) so to him was allocated our small supply of dried vegetables. The catering budget of 40 pence/man/day proved to be adequate rather than luxurious.

Halva is mentioned several times in this report so here is the recipe: 2 parts ghee (fat) are heated and 2 parts flour added; when you can smell the flour cooking add 1 part sugar and cook till the sugar goes syrupy; water is then added to make a stodge. Hot it is delicious; cold it is filling.

Medical

No member of the expedition had any formal medical training, so no serious illnesses were diagnosed. On the return journey we all contracted a parasitic infection of the intestine, giardiasis, and are able to confirm the low standard of hygiene in Afghani cafes.

Geology

In the mountains, the geology to the west of Base showed schistose gneisses while to the east were augen gneisses; a major fault along the Tos Nulla seems likely.

Ornithology

A lammergeir, or bearded vulture, patrolled our valley, cruising effortlessly in the thin air with its seven foot wingspan. The first we ever knew of its presence was when it buzzed us with its shadow, making us jump every time.

Meteorology

Unlike in other mountain regions, the weather is very predictable in the Greater Himalayas. However, a late winter and an early monsoon gave us a short climbing season in 1976.

Cartography

Our map is based on that of Paul Bean with our own additions. It is necessarily subjective in that minor culminations on ridges and even ridges themselves are not always clearly defined.

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FINANCIAL REPORT

Income	£
Members' Contributions	2300
Sale of Land Rover	500
Donations: British Mountaineering Council	250
Mount Everest Foundation	250
Mr. C. Gilley	65
George's Bookshop	20
Bristol Evening Post	10
Marks and Spencer Ltd.	5
	3400
Expenditure	£
Land Rover	550
Vehicle Tax	40
Vehicle Spares	90
Insurance: Vehicle (4 drivers)	134
Medical	175
Baggage	50
Carnet de passage	54
Carnet Documentation (AA)	7
AA Membership	10
Visas	59
Equipment	182
Administration	92
Ferries	104
Medical kit	15
Rinzing (Sherpa)	100
Pack Ponies	112
Living Expenses	
(Food, Accommodation, Spares and Repairs)	676
Food purchased in England	204
Petrol	460
Cash Balance (To be set against cost of report)	286
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