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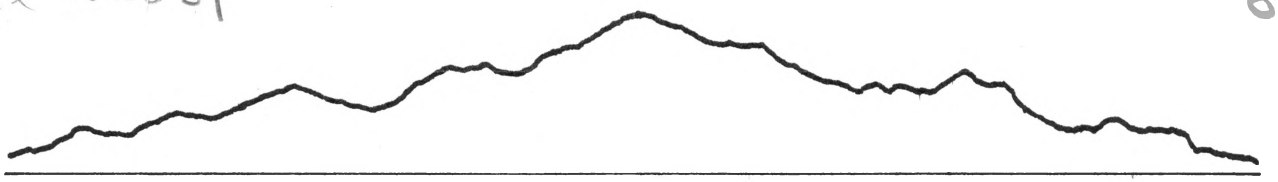

The Scottish Annapurna III Expedition 1985

EXPEDITION MEMBERS: CHRIS DALE, COLIN JAMIESON, EWEN TODD, WILLIE TODD
EXPEDITION PATRON: RAB CARRINGTON

1.9.85 Expedition leaves Aberdeen.

4.9.85 Expedition flies to India (New Delhi)

8.9.85 Expedition leaves New Delhi: by bus for Kathmandu.

10.9.85 Expedition arrives in Kathmandu.

The next ten days were spent sorting out things in Kathmandu. We had a number of problems caused by our finnancial situation. Over £900 was paid out to the Liason Officer, Sivdor and Cook respectively to cover equipment requirements. This left a considerable hole in our budget, which we finally managed to get round.

20.9.85 Expedition leaves by bus for Pokhara, and arrives that night.

21.9.85 Expedition leaves on day 1 of the walk-in accompanied by the Liason Officer, a Mr Tappa, the Sivdor,a LLapka Tseing, the Cook, Kaldin Sherpa, Cookbey, Rinzing Sherpa, and 17 porters. Also accompanied by the group of friends trekking to Annapurna Sanctuary. Reached Lanandathok at head of the Seti Khola Valley.

22.9.85 Expedition reaches last village in the Seti Khola Valley, Kurva, Days walk in pouring rain, through paddy fields. The first Westerners they've seen since 1983.

23.9.85 Day 3 of the walk-in. Uphill all day through dense jungle. Very vague paths, leeches and bad weather. Camped at approx 9000' in knee deep mud. Complaints of weather conditions from porters.

24.9.85 Day 4 of the walk-in. Uphill through Bamboo forest and out of jungle to small loch at 12,000'. Here the porters refused to go any further. They were scared of the uninhabited growed ahead, the difficulty of the tervain, and the weather. No way of persuading them to go on. They left us and returned to Pokhara, leaving us with one porter and our four Base Camp Staff and a large pile of equipment to move

25.9.85 Day 5 of the walk-In.. Weather prevented any movement today. Tentbound all day.

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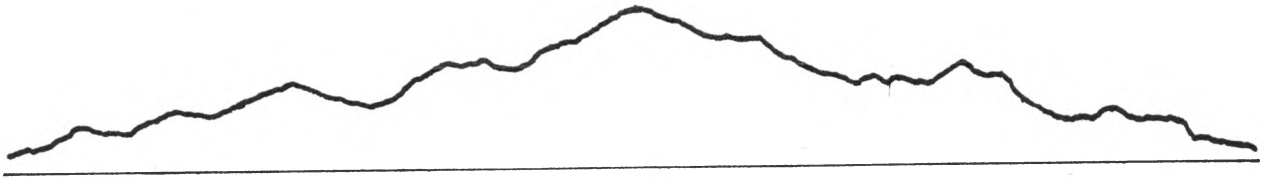

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26.9.85 Day 6 of the Walk-In. Decided we could move the loads curselves. Willie Todd left the Expedition at this point. He felt he could'nt go on, and obviously did not take to the place on his first visit to the Himalaya. Moved four loads about 3 hrs onwards on the walk-in Colin Jamieson returned with 2nd load.

27.9.85 Managed to hire six medicine pickers to porter for us for the day. Moved remaining loads and camp, to site at approx 14,000'. Trekking friends left us at this point to head round. Machapuchare to the Annapurna Base Camp in the Sanctuary, Bad weather.

28.9.85 Jim Kerr sent ahead to scout out route. Rest of Expedition followed behind with loads. Spent day traversing 60° grass slopes. Dumped gear in cave and returned to camp. Colin Jamieson found better route a 1000' higher up.

29.9.85 Moved all but 6 loads to Machapuchare Base Camp (15,000'). Expedition caught in severe blizzard but managed to set up camp. Returned for more loads, later in the day. No signs of improvement in the weather.

30.9.85 Weather prevented any movement in the morning. In the afternoon, Jim Kerr and Dave Cummings returned for remaining loads. Colin Jamieson and myself, went ahead to scout out the route ahead. Reached Machapuchare Glacier after one hour. Found route across glacier. Very dangerous, continually threatened by rockfall, Route continued on other side, under loose cliffs and across slabs to a grassy ledge on opposite side of the glacier. We continued for another 2 kin's, traversing 70° grass and rock slopes. Only method of traversing, was to crab crawl sideways, using tufts of grass for handholds. returned to Machapuchare Base Camp in worsening weather.

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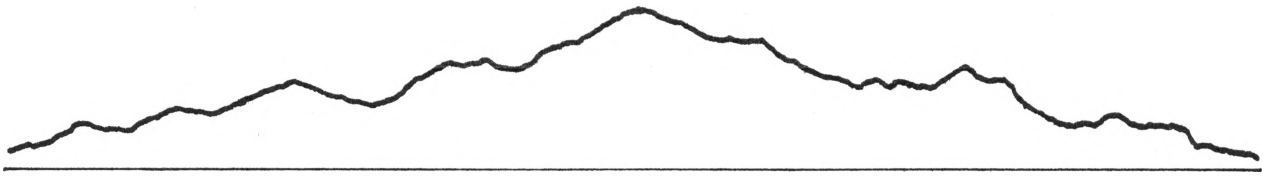

The Scottish Annapurna III Expedition 1985

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1.10.85 Day spent ferrying loads to tent at the side of the glacier. Weather still poor, and ground snow-covered. Jim Kerr ill.

2.10.85 Carried remaining loads to glacier side and dismantled camp. Fixed rope down moraine slopes, and lowered the Base camp staff and loads onto the glacier. Here our one remaining porter and our L.O. refused to go any further. They were too frightened to cross the glacier. The L.O. returned to Pokhara with the porter. Ferried all but two loads to grassy ledge and camp on the opposite side of the glacier.

3.10.85 Spent the morning enjoying the only four hours of sunshine on the Expedition. Day designated as a rest day. Everybody badly in need of one. Brought the remaining two loads across glacier to our camp.

4.10.85 All climbers and B.C. staff off with small loads to attempt to reach final high col. Traversed the grass slopes and continued over some easier ground. Reached high ridge to get our first view of the col. The next piece of ground had obviously avalanched recently. Extremely loose and snow covered. No way to fix ropes. Some sections about Scottish Grade III. Colin Jamieson nearly killed by falling block. I pulled ahead and descended down below high cliffs. Climbed 400' rock corner and continued up steep slopes in thick cloud to the col. Col found to be at 17,000' and not 15, 000' as previously thought. Cloud parted long enough to give me the only view of Annapurna III, that anybody got on the Expedition. I returned after dumping load. No sign of others until I reached the difficult traverse on the first ridge. They had dumped loads in tent here. I caught up and we returned exhausted in heavy snow to the glacier camp.

5.10.85 to 9.10.85 These days were spent tentbound, with it continuosly snowing outside. We now realize there is no way of getting our base camp staff into the mountain. We decided to recover what gear we could and abandon the Expedition.

9.10.85 All four climbers set off to recover equipment. Deep snow all the way. Jim Kerr and Dave Cumming returned to camp due to exhaustion and illness. Colin Jamieson and I reached the tent gear cache after an extremely hazardous crossing of the dangerous traverse. Impossible to recover loads on the col, and caches on route to the col. We returned to camp with extremely heavy loads. (60kg).

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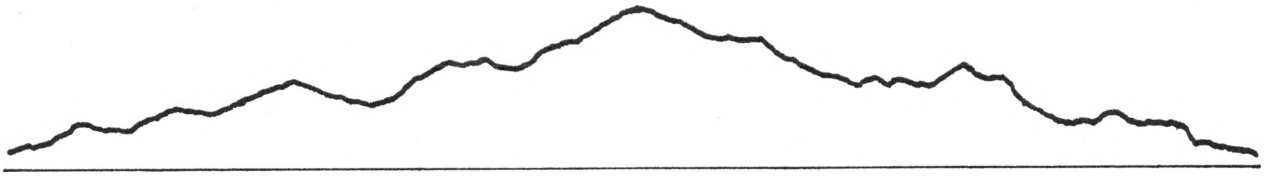

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10.10.85 Dismantled camp and burnt rubbish. Took only enough food & gear to get back to Pokhara. Crossed glacier and reached camp previous to Machapuchare Base Camp. Weather still bad.

11.10.85 Descended in one long push to Kurva, the last village in the Seti Khola Valley. Snow now even lying in the jungle. Heavy rain at Kurva.

12.10.85 Managed to hire 3 local porters and gave them each 30kg loads out of our own four rucksacs. Continued down the Seti Khola to Lanandathok with still heavy sacs.

13.10.85 Expedition reaches Pokhara in the late afternoon. Filled out final report after discussing possibilities of climbing Annapurna III from the north. Finances and the weather put paid to this idea.

14.10.85 In Pokhara.

15.10.85 Expedition returns to Kathmandu.

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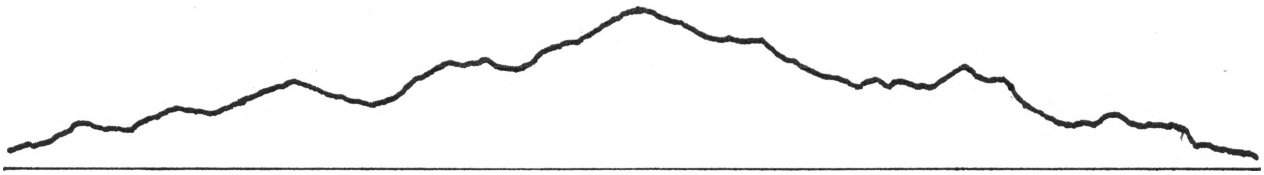

The Scottish Annapurna III Expedition 1985

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Postscript

I would like to emphasise that everything possible was done to try and reach AnnapurnaIII. No one was more dissapointed than ourselves in not reaching our objective. Luck and the weather, were against us all the way. It was obvious that the route had changed drastically since the previous Expedition. Also the weather seemed to be particularly bad in the Annapurnaregion this season. No "dry season" came at all. When I left India about five weeks later the weather was still bad in this region. Many other Expeditions suffered the same sort of problems. The porters left us as they were frightened, obviously they were used to trekking expeditions up the normal trekking routes. The load carrying slowed us down no end. On some days Expeditions members were returning to camp on their hands and knees with exhaustion. I don't think anybody else could have done any better or tried any harder under the circumstances. It was with the greatest regret that we had to give in after a year and halfs hard work and planning. Still it was a great experience.

Ewen Todd.

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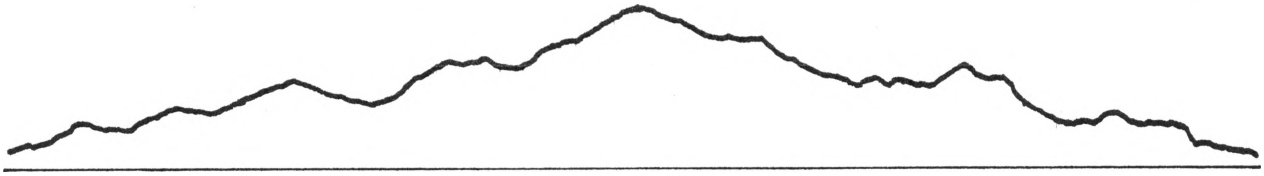

The Scottish Annapurna III Expedition 1985

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Acknowledgements

The Nick Estcourt Award, Red Baron Oil Tools Ltd, The Mount Everest Foundation, The Song Award, Comex Diving, Europa Sport, Phoenix Mountaineering, Javlin International, Berghaus, Troll, Snowdon Mouldings, Rab Down Equipment, Nick Estcourt Outdoor Sports, Marshalls Ltd (Aberdeen), Graham Tiso, Leutent (Aberdeen) The clydesdale Bank Ltd, Siddiqui Export/Import Ltd, Lakeland Mountain Sports (Penrith), Grampian Regional Council, the Mountaineering Council of Scotland, Grampian T.V, Aberdeen Journals Ltd, Ewan MacArthur of Artspace, Ronnie Wood, Mr & Mrs Jamieson, Mr & Mrs Todd, Ryvita, Raven foods, Horlicks, Alpen, Sanctuary Mountains Sports, and Mike Cheney of Treks and Expedition Services Ltd, and also Dr TalT of Fochabers and to anyone else that helped and for the support given to us by the Aberdeen climbers.

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Income

Nick Estcourt Award	£1000.00
Clydesdale Bank Plc Ltd	£ 50.00
Grampian Television	£ 20.00
Mount Everest Foundation	£ 550.00
Ryuita	£ 10.00
Mountain Council of Scotland	£ 500.00
Sang Award	£ 200.00
B.P. Employee	£ 50.00
Grampian Regional Council	£ 500.00
Leutart Engineering	£ 100.00
Comex Diving	£ 250.00
Red Baron Drilling	£ 500.00
Carruthers Town Hotel	£ 100.00
Fund Raising Dances	£ 188.00
Bank Interest	£ 7.24
Personal Donations	£ 2690.00
Total	£ 6714.24

Expenditure

Peak Fee	£1600.00
Flights	£ 2600.00
Agents Fee	£ 350.00
Bank Charges	£ 18.00
Freight	£ 26.70
Stationary	£ 30.00
Nepali Wages	£ 560.00
Kitchen Equipment	£ 100.00
Baskets, Transport	£ 100.00
Food	£ 400.00
Climbing Equipment	£ 1382.16
Total	£7166.86

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