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Spantik 1987

The report of an expedition by members of the North London Mountaineering Club.

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Report editor. Victor Saunders, 1988.

SUPPORTED BY:

Nick Estcourt Award

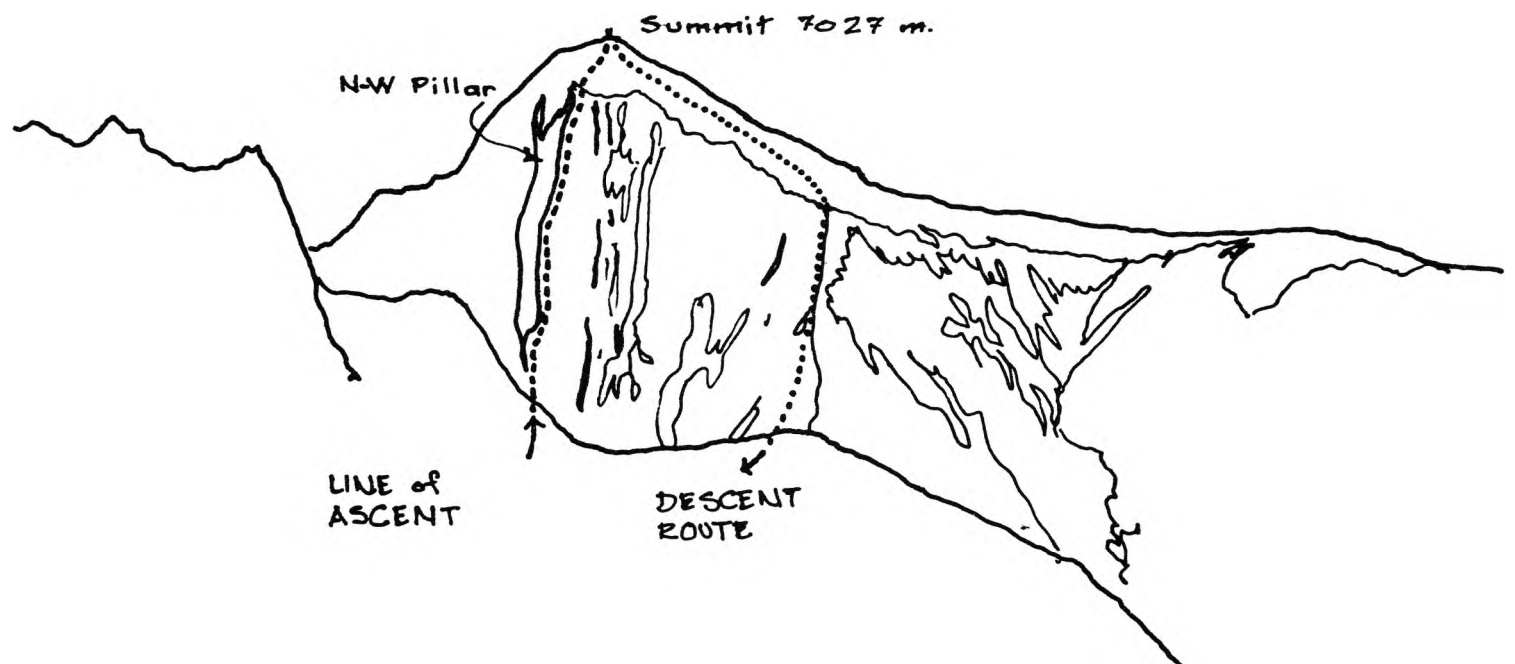
MOUNT EVEREST FOUNDATION



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1. ABSTRACT

Spantik 1987 was an expedition by members of the North London Mountaineering Club to the Pakistan Karakoram. The stated aims of the expedition were to make the first ascent of the NW pillar of Spantik, the Golden Pillar, and the first British ascent of Spantik (7027m). These were successfully accomplished on 11th August 1987. The team was based on the Golden Peak Glacier from 14 July to 22 August. Members also completed the (probable) first crossing of the Yengutz Har pass, and reconnoitred approaches to the unclimbed Girgindil and Chokutans group of peaks.



2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 THE KARAKORAM

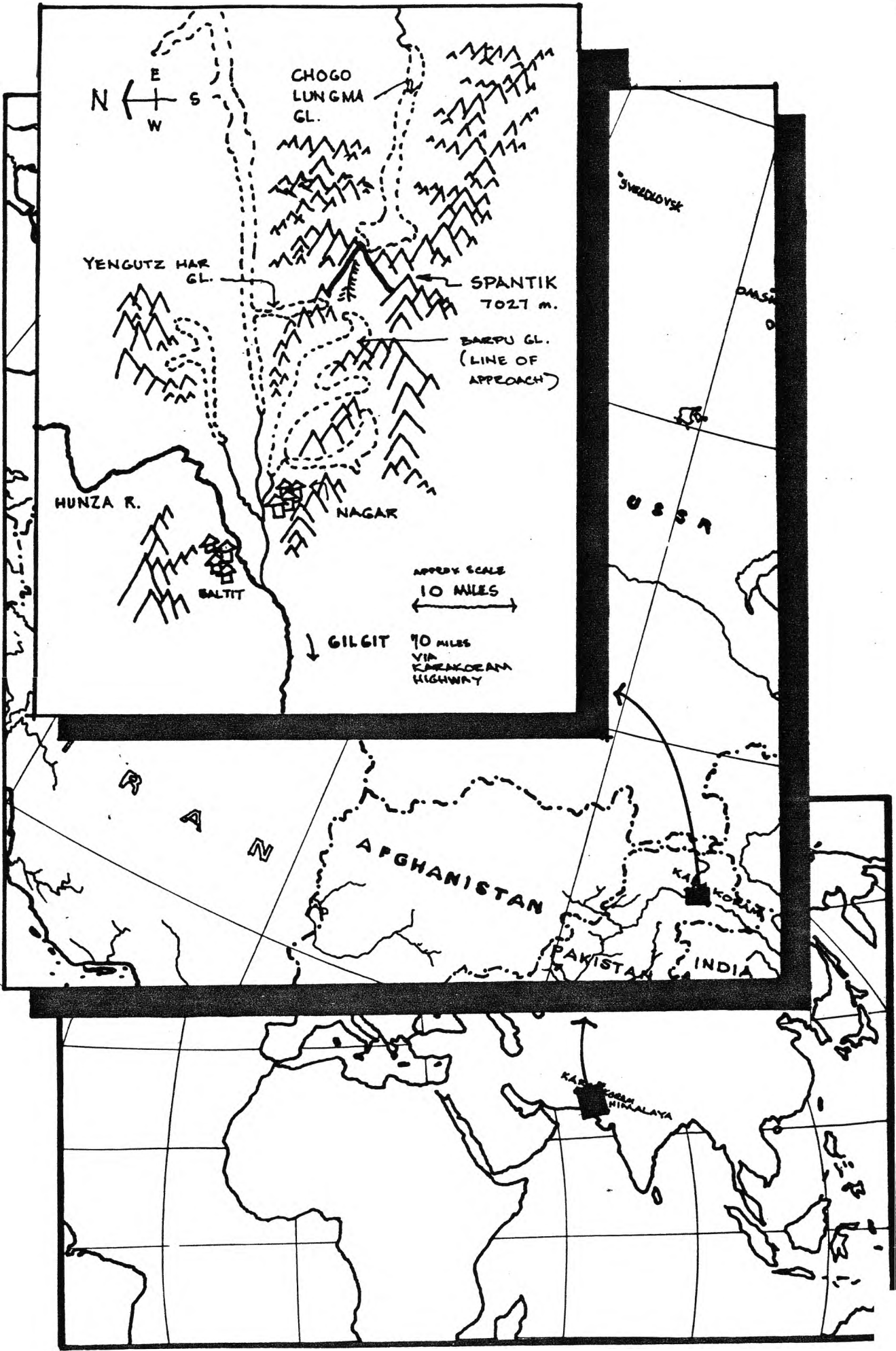
The Karakoram Range forms the western wing of the the great Himalayan chain. Although the bulk of the range is in Pakistan, important parts lie within China and India. Our expedition took place in Pakistan. It is easy to be superlative about the range, it contains the greatest concentration of high peaks in the world; the greatest area of glaciation outside the Poles, etc. For us, the real attraction is the classical beauty of the Karakoram aiguilles and their remote setting. Surprisingly, most expeditions visit a few, well known, valleys. For example, of the 56 expeditions granted permission to climb in the Pakistan during 1987, no less than 35 were devoting their efforts to the 6 most popular peaks! As a direct and fortunate result, there are still magnificent opportunities for exploration in the range. The NW pillar of Spantik was one such opportunity.

2.2 SPANTIK

Spantik is the main peak of the Chogolungma group, and the source of two major glaciers; the east flowing Chogolungma, and the west flowing Barpu. It is 7027m high, and was attempted in 1903 by the Americans, Fanny Bullock, and Dr William Hunter, Workman. They followed the laborious Chogolungma glacier, and probably reached a height of c6000m. The first ascent took place 57 years later in 1955, and was the work of a German party under the leadership of R. Sander, probably following the route pioneered by the Workmans. Further ascents of the peak were based on the Chogolungma glacier. Ours was the 5th recorded ascent of the mountain, but the first from the Barpu side.

2.3 PERSONEL

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Victor Saunders (UK), Architect. | Climber |
| Michael Fowler (UK), Civil Servant. | Climber |
| Phillip Butler (UK), Motorcycle Courier. | Climber |
| Bruce Craig (NZ), Duct Erector. | Climber |
| Elizabeth Allen (UK), Industrial Designer. | Climber |
| Dr JSC English (UK), Dermatologist. | Doctor / Climber |
| Dr. Iqbal M Ahmed, (Pak), Physician | Liaison Officer |
| Rajab Zavar (Pak), Cook. | Cook |
| George Fowler (UK), Printer(ret) | |



3. ADMINISTRATION

3.1 PERMISSION

For 1987, the last date for submission of applications to the Embassy of Pakistan was 30 October 1986. The procedure and the amount of peak fee payable are clearly set out in the "brown book" of regulations and rules for mountaineering in Pakistan. This invaluable guide is available from the Embassy .

As a result of administrative dysfunction, three British expeditions were prevented from paying the peak fee, even though the completed application forms were accepted by the Embassy before the deadline. The embassy staff insisted that our money would only be accepted when we received permission. In December word came through from Islamabad that the three applications had been refused because the fee had not been deposited on time. The Ogre N face expedition turned to other plans, but the Gasherbrums and Spantik expeditions embarked on a campaign of letter writing. The Alpine Club was invaluable in the support it lent to our efforts. George Band (President) and Lord Chorley (ex President AC, current President RGS) kindly wrote diplomatic letters on our behalf.

These efforts bore fruit in January '87 when an official letter of permission was received by the Ogre N face group. (Presumably because, since changing their plans, they had not made a nuisance of themselves). The two leading members of the Gasherbrums expedition decided the only way forward was to marry each other and invite His Excellency the Ambassador for Pakistan to the wedding. This finally did the trick, and although His Excellency was unable to personally attend the Gasherbrum's wedding, he was able to confirm that permission for the climb was forthcoming. The Pakistan government decided at the same time to allow us permission for Spantik, saving us any unnecessary marriages. (Phew!) The point is, the "brown book" should be studied carefully and followed meticulously.

3.2 VISAS

Visas were much less of a problem, but it would be best to obtain the visas well in advance, and allow 4 to 6 weeks from application. The Visa section of the Embassy is overwhelmed and understaffed. In 1987 the cost of a single entry visa was £25, but this will not permit the visitor to reenter Pakistan even after a short excursion. This could catch out those wanting to visit China via the Karakoram Highway. The NZ member of our expedition had considerable difficulty obtaining his visa from the Pakistan High Commission in Canberra, Australia. From a purely visa point of view it would have been easier if he had said he was "trekking" on the form. Because the magic word "expedition" was used, we had to send various telexes and eventually a copy of the permission document by special air courier to Canberra, who were, if possible, more dysfunctional than London.

3.3 PAKISTAN

Once in Pakistan, the main elements of bureaucracy were dealing with;

(1) the helicopter bond. This \$4000 deposit must be made at a specified bank in Islamabad. It probably safest and best to take out the money as dollar travellers cheques. The deposit is returned as travellers cheques if the expedition concludes without mishap.

(2) the Liaison Officer. He must see that the equipment brought out for his use is satisfactory. (The full list is in the "brown book"). He will also help an expedition, where necessary, with purchases, transport etc. Our Liaison Officer was a civilian, a physician and a member of the Pakistan Alpine Club.

(3) Insurance. A very modest policy must be taken out in favour of the Liaison Officer, porters and expedition cook.

(4) briefing and debriefing. These are meetings with the Ministry of Tourism. The first takes place when the formalities above have been completed. The entire team is expected to be present. The team is also expected to be present for the debriefing, when the receipt for the helicopter bond is returned.

4. LOGISTICS

4.1 RESEARCH

We found the following source material invaluable;

1. The Himalayan Handbook by Joydeep Sircar, privately published Culcutta 1979, is a concise survey of Himalayan history above 20,000 feet.
2. Mountaineering and its Literature by W.R. Neate, published by Cicerone Press, 1978, is "the" mountaineering bibliography.
3. The Trekkers Guide to the Himalaya and Karakoram by Hugh Swift, pub. Hodder and Stoughton 1982. Although it is faulty, the Burushaski glossary is the only published guide to the language of Hunza/Nagar we found. For a mountaineer the worst mistakes are Valley, the Guide gives "bar", correct is "Har", and Pass, the Guide gives "haguts", the locals say "duasum or duasas" and that they have no idea what "haguts" could possibly mean.

There are various maps, perhaps the most useful are

1. the American Army Map Service "Series U502". We used sheet NJ 43-14 "Baltit". Scale 1:250,000. Contour interval 500 feet. Commercially available at Stanfords, London.
2. the Polish orthographical map of the Karakoram, privately published by Jerzy Wala, Krakow 1973. Scale 1:250,000. Can be seen at the Royal Geographic Society or the Alpine Club, London.

Landsats for the area exist, and can be viewed at the British Library, Map Library. These can be used to gauge the approximate position of the snowline (the date appears on the photograph) and may help in planning a route march.

We are indebted to Doug Scott, Zbigniew Kowalewski, Nazir Sabir and our expedition member John English for excellent (and frightening) photographs of the Golden Pillar. Probably the best collection of Karakoram photographs published under a single set of covers is the Polish "Karakorum" by Kowalewski and Paczkowski, Warsaw 1986, well worth a visit to the Alpine Club Library for. Also worth looking at is the Japanese picture book "Mountains of the World" c.1980, which has some pretty obscure (and interesting) mountains, as well as the usual.

4.2 FUNDRAISING

We were fortunate to win the Nick Estcourt Award; the Mount Everest Foundation and the British Mountaineering Council both made generous grants, Barclays Bank made a welcome donation and the North London Mountaineering Club a somewhat smaller one.

Berghaus supported the expedition generously, we used their Cyclops Roc rucksacks, which were near perfect for our purposes, (no frills, very hardwearing), as well as the functional clothing.

The North Face very kindly loaned us 3 of their excellent base camp tents. Rab Carrington supplied our down equipment, including a lightweight gortex covered sleeping bag to our own strange

dimensions. We also received generous support from Alpine Sports, London.

It is a major problem for small expeditions going to unfamous peaks to raise funds, other than through members personal contributions. Mention the name Everest and sponsors fall over themselves trying to give away their money, but Spantik? It seems the economic climate is not now (has it ever been?) conducive to generous sponsorship for exploratory mountaineering.

4.3 AIRTRAVEL

PIA (Pakistan International Airlines) had written to all British expeditions receiving permission for 1987, and we availed ourselves of the offer of (slightly) reduced prices together with an increased baggage allowance. It is preferable to fly direct to Islamabad if possible. Our NZ member, Bruce Craig flew to Islamabad by Singapore Airlines. Saunders and Butler flew out on 28 June, a week in advance of the main party, with the idea of fixing the bureaucracy, road travel and provisions.

4.4 INSURANCE

We purchased team insurance to cover travel, baggage, medical expenses, photographic equipment, and rescue costs. It has been the practice to insure the \$4000 helicopter deposit separately for each member. It might reduce costs if the deposit was insured once only. We have used various firms over the years, and in 1987 we found the BMC brokers offered the best deal.

4.5 FREIGHT

We found it necessary to freight out some 100 kg of food and equipment, as well as our entire supply of Epigas. Our gas was airfreighted to Karachi, where we collected it and sent it up to Rawalpindi by rail. This was inefficient, and was forced on us because we had not found a firm that that would freight the gas direct to Islamabad. The 100 kg were air freighted direct to Islamabad. Customs clearance cost us a day and about £30. It is important to have a complete packing list for each package, the Ministry of Tourism will sign the list as being for expedition purposes only, and the signed list must be presented to the customs authority. For our small amount of freight we found it cheaper (and simpler!) to avoid freight agents. On PIA there is a cheap rate for "sporting goods", ask for it.

4.6 HOTELS

It was decided to stay in the overpriced Flashman's Hotel, Rawalpindi, because of the resident's swimming pool. This facility enabled the advanced guard to maintain some measure of fitness in the oppressive heat of the subcontinental summer. By 7 July the remainder of the team had assembled in Flashman's. The work of the advanced party had gone well, though not to plan, (everything seemed to wait till the last minute), with the result that the entire entire team was able to leave Rawalpindi for Gilgit within

24 hours of the main party arriving in Pakistan.

On our return from the mountains, we found it more convenient and cheaper to stay in the Hotel Sherazad, Islamabad. This is fairly close to the Ministry of tourism, and the (helicopter deposit) bank. This hotel has an atmosphere of Faulty Towers about it, and was (in 1987) well worth a visit. It has no swimming pool, and the air conditioning needs attention.

4.7 ROAD TRANSPORT

We hired a 12 seater van from Sargan Services, (offices opposite the Novelty or "Newalty" Cinema, Rawalpindi), for a very reasonable rate. The van took us to Gilgit in 14 hours, overnight, then on to Hunza in a further 3 hours.

From Hunza we hired 4 jeeps for the 20km dirt track road past Nagar to Hoppar. These were expensive, as jeeps in the Karakoram tend to be, but there seems to be little alternative. We left Rawalpindi on the afternoon of 7 July, and arrived at the Hoppar rest house in the evening of the 8th. If the rest house is not available, there are camping facilities. Hoppar is the name given to a clutch of five hamlets above Nagar, the rest house is, in fact, in the hamlet of Holshal.

On the way back, because we no food to transport, we were able to travel by public transport from Hunza to Rawalpindi. This was very cheap. (About £10 per person from Gilgit to "pindi)

4.8 PORTERS

We spent 9 July hiring our 30 porters. The daily rates of pay are set out by the government, leaving the expedition to agree the distance the porters are contracted to walk, with the men. We agreed to the following stages from Hoppar.

| STAGE | AGREED MARCH | ACTUAL MARCH |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Hoppar to Barpu Giram | 5 hours | 5 hours |
| 2. Barpu Giram to Chokutans | 5 hours | 4 hours |
| 3. Chokutans to Girgindil | 5 hours | 3 hours |
| 4. Girgindil to Melangush | 5 hours | 1.5 Hours |
| 5a. Melangush to Yakazina | 5 hours | 2 hours |

We found the last two stages unsatisfactory, and persuaded the men to carry on free of charge;

| | | |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| 5b. Yakazina to Suja Bassa | 1 hour | 1 hour |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|

We feel the trek could reasonably be accomplished in 3 days. On the return journey, we had 9 porters (3 members had descended early with 2 porters) and it took 1.5 days to reach Hoppar. As agreed, we paid the men 5 days. At 1987 rates of exchange, the cost per porter-day was approx £6.

4.9 LOCAL FOOD

At base camp we maintained a supply of fresh vegetables such as potatoes, indeterminate greens (turnip tops?), apricots, as well as hard boiled eggs. This we did by keeping on two porters after the walk in, who would be sent down with our shopping list every 10 days or so. Learning from previous experience we did not attempt to have fresh meat sent up. The actual cost of fresh vegetables and fruit is negligible, the main cost of the supplies being that of the porters. It makes sense to use fewer porters on the walk up, using the ballance of necessary portorage for fresh supplies.

4.10 WATER

Below base, it was never possible to be sure that streams had not been polluted. We took care to boil or sterilise all water. Once at base our main problem was the shrinking snowfield from which our water supply drained. We just made it, the field shrank to nothing as we left the camp.

4.11 COOK

We went to great lengths to secure a suitable cook. In Rawalpindi, Gilgit and Nagar we asked the same question; who is the best cook in Nagar? Among the many answers we received, one name cropped up again and again, Rajab Zawar of Nagar. He had worked as a cook in Gilgit, and made the most delicious chips outside Yorkshire. It was a mark of his ability that not one of the expedition members ever complained of his cooking...we even looked forward to his dhal and rice.

5. CLIMBING

The Golden Pillar is marble. The rock is crystalline, almost sugary in parts, but generally sound. The Pillar is the coup de grace of a vertical outcrop of metamorphic limestone, which leapfrogs the glaciers from above the vilage of Hopper. Looking out from high on the Pillar we were able to see the cream-yellow rock arcing from galcier to glacier for fifteen miles, like a series of rainbows.

The Pillar is the clear, unavoidable challenge of the mountain, it soars from the glacier for 2,200 m. The summit is about 300 m higher and set back, perhaps, 3 km from the Pillar.

We saw the Pillar in 1984 while attempting to climb Bojohagur Duonasir, a 24,000 ft mountain directly above the Karakoram Highway. Not only did we fail to climb the mountain, but a Japanese walking club made the first ascent while we were there. They used five camps and several kilometres of fixed rope, while we were attempting an "Alpine Style" ascent. In spite of this obvious difference in attitudes, when Phil Butler and I met them on Day 10 of our gruelling 14 day climb, they were very decent. They offered us food and had kind words about our effort.

The 1984 Bojohagur Expedition was an NLMC (North London Mountaineering Cub) affair, and it was much the same team that seeing the Golden Pliiar in 1984, knew they would have to return. Even though Golden Peak was on the horizon, it was clear that something remarkable, very nasty even, decorated it's North Face. At first the Pillar reminded us of Cenotaph Corner.

In England, further enquiries revealed a little of the mountain's history. From Poland the encyclopeadic Kowalevski sent us some photographs taken from Kunyang Chish. Nazir Sabir, Doug Scott and Tadeus Piotrovski (who perished on K2 during the awful summer of 1986) all kindly donated "front on" prints, which all but persuaded us to cancel. At about this time we began to compare the Pillar to the Walker Spur, just a little higher, and perhaps a bit harder.

Also during 1986 the team gelled. it was to consist of the Bojohagurites Phil (Lobby) Butler, Mick Fowler, Dr John English, and myself, together with two NLMC members new to this sort of thing, Liz Allen and Bruce Craig. George Fowler (Mick's father), our Liaison Officer, Dr Iqbal Ahmed and Rajab Zawar our Nagari cook completed the expedition team.

We established our Base at a place known to the locals as Suja Bassa c 4000 m. on 14th July. The march from the road head at Hopper had taken five days, though it could easily have been done in three. The porters had originally wanted to make six days of it, but we comprimised on five and a goat. (It is "traditional"

for expeditions to give their porters a goat). Visitors to this region should note that the daily rate of pay to the porters is not excessive, but the "traditional" day stages can be as short as one and a half hours. This makes Nagar the most expensive region of the Karakoram for expeditions. We found the Hoppar men honourable. Having struck a bargain, they invariably stuck to it.

We made a dump of gear two hours above Base at a place we called Hewitt's Camp, (There was evidence that the Canadian Geologist had used the same site in 1986). Hewitt's was directly across the small Golden Peak glacier from the base of the Pillar, at c 4,500 m. From here we could see the Pillar was divided into four sections. First, a four hundred metre pinnacle, the First Tower, barred access to the long serpentine Snow Arete. The Snow Arete ended in a small step, which led to the third section, a tiny Hanging Glacier. The fourth part was the point of the excersise. 1,200 m of wall, like a great spear thrust into the sky.

On the 19th July, Fowler and I made a preliminary reconnaissance of the approaches to the Pillar, (it took three days to reach the Hanging Glacier). Meanwhile, English and Allen made a start on the Descent Ridge. They were stopped by deep snow and indifferent weather, but not before they had climbed the initial 400 m Prominence, a sort of pyramidal tower. Butler and Bruce inspected the the Yengutz Pass, which had not, so far as we knew, been crossed. This initial flurry of activity was followed by a period characterised by various attempts to climb either the Pillar, or the Ridge which failed in outbursts of appalling weather.

On the evening of the 5th August Fowler and I walked up to Hewitt's Camp knowing this was our last chance to try the route. Fowler, a Civil Servant, was due back at his desk on the 23rd, 18 days time. If we allowed 10 days for the climb, he would just make it.

We had packed carefully after lunch, checking and rechecking each detail. A great sense of fate hung in the afternoon like an impending storm. We packed and repacked our sacks, tidied the tents, laid out our clothes in order until there were no displacement activities left. Then we shouldered the enourmous loads, and wordlessly began to walk. The weather was variable in the extreme, there was even a minor snow storm while we were walking.

During that night we climbed the 1000 m to the Hanging Glacier, and spent the remainder of the 6th praying for good weather. On Day 2 we were fortunate, and starting at 4.00 am, were able to climb 10 pitches of slabs and walls to reach the Amphitheatre by 5.00 pm. It was important to reach the Amphitheatre, there would have been no possibility of finding a bivouac ledge on the Slabs.

We had thought, when we started, that the main difficulty on this

day would be the little walls which crossed the slabs, and a larger wall that barred access to the Amphitheatre. In fact, we found the reverse was true, there was no ice on the rock, and the blank surfaced slabs offered precarious climbing with no protection. The walls, however, contained cracks which could be cleaned of snow to provide the occasional runner.

On Day 3 the weather was not so kind, and we stopped at midday for a brew which became a bivouac, as it began to snow heavily. We had climbed out of the Amphitheatre by a steep system of chimneys and grooves. This was one of the few parts of the route we had not been able to examine with binoculars, so from a route finding point of view we had passed one of the two cruxes. This day also included some of the most technically demanding climbing of the route. The first pitch out of the Amphitheatre was a groove with an overhanging section. Mick managed to place two wobbly pegs above his head, then began to swear loudly and forcibly...for a long time. He could not, it seems, clip the pegs because the sling was stuck under his hood. The belay was on black shale, and Mick was grinning like a cat with two tails, as he pointed to the shale chimney that continued in the direction we wanted to climb. It looked coated in inches of thick inviting ice, but we were deceived. The pitch was horrible, verglas on shale fragments.

Although it snowed overnight, the next morning brought visibility, if not clear skies. As the mists receded we recognized the features that would act as land marks. It was enough to go on with. We began to follow lines on the right wall of the Pillar. By midday we reached a large flat ledge, the top of a giant jammed block. Here we made tea and relaxed, until it occurred to us to look up. We were surrounded by overhangs, completely blocked in. Fowler led an aid pitch to gain the lowest of a series of ramps, using a technique that had been developed in Europe in the days of Heckmair. I had never seen anything like it, but Mick was not prepared to learn new tricks just then. The lower ramps lead to a Shield which was the other area of uncertainty for us. From Base camp there appeared to be no line round this feature, but a hidden chimney revealed itself at the end of the ramp. It was blank sided, and there was no belay at the top, so I was forced to belay Mick by wedging my body across the Chimney, and asking him not to fall off.

I do not remember having a more miserably bivouac than the one we had that night. We were benighted, something we said we would avoid at all costs, and there was no ledge, nor any possibility of cutting one, on the thin ice. We used the tent as a hanging bag, inside which Mick spent the night hanging in his harness, while I stood in my rucksack. It snowed all night.

The 3.30 alarm was greeted with relief. It was Day 5, looking up we could see the final ramps. When we reached them, they looked easy, as we climbed the truth dawned on us. They were covered in a layer of powder snow, which when swept off, revealed blank

rock, no runners, and the impending side wall pushed you off ballance. We had hundred foot run outs, and lots, and lots of fear. These ramps in turn led to the final corner, a vertical bookshaped corner under an earshaped serac. Mick made short work of the difficulties, banging in the pegs with care. (I had asked him not to disturb the serac above us.) And then we found the the snow leading to the plateau so deep, we began to have horrible thoughts of being forced down the way we had got up.

The next day, Day 6, was to be our summit day. At 6.00 am we started out from the tent, leaving all but our clothes and a stove behind. At 12.45 pm, we stood on top of the Golden Peak. It was the 11th August 1987. We could see Bojohagur, Batura, Diran, Trivor and other large peaks, but from Kunyang Chish black clouds were invading the sky. The storm overtook us within the hour. First the electric shocks, we hid, trying to bury ourselves and axes in the snow; then high winds swept in from the South. We began to have fears for the tent. We could imagine it flying down to base camp in advance of us. The winds brought drifting snow and white out. Our tracks dissappeared. We were high on the plateau, surround by precipices. We found, after a bit of experimentation, that if we got down on all fours, we could feel the softness in the slope where our tracks had been filled in. So we crawled down towards the tent.

By the morning of Day 7, the weather had regained its composure. It was clear, and very, very cold. Below us a sea of cloud filled the valleys. This was worrying, because we could not be sure where we were to leave the plateau if we could not see the descent ridge. During the climb, we had noted a Tongue of plateau stretching out over the ridge. On on this Tongue, lay some ice blocks, which we referred to as the "Crumbs" on the Tongue. After three worrying hours of crossing the high plateau, with its crevasses large enough to swallow a battleship, we arrived at the top of an ice fall. There below us were the Crumbs. The valley fog was receding and the Tongue was revealed, but where on the edge of the Tongue was the descent? We knew that if we picked the wrong spot, not only would we miss the Ridge, but also be abseiling over large seracs into space.

Descending the icefall involved making our first ever snow bollard abseils, but these lead to the Tongue, where we found the "crumbs" were 40 feet high. Guessing that the ridge would be near the tip of the Tongue, we pitched the tent and waited for the mist to clear down to the valley. We made brew, and dozed. We were feeling mentally tired, and needed to get down. At 5.30 pm the mist cleared. We had no "dead men" for snow belays, and so we dug a large hole in the soft plateau. I got as deep into the hole as possible, and we had a "live man" belay. Mick gingerly stepped towards the edge, then got on his stomach and crawled towards it. It was an easy cornice, and he descended a few feet before coming back to the belay.

"Well Mick, How is it?"

"You try." was all he said.

I looked over the edge of the cornice, and saw the Descent Ridge snaking down to the English-Allen Prominence. Surely we were going survive this climb. Already I began to debate the value of it all. What is the point of mountaineering? It seemed to me in that moment that the nature of the goal did not matter. We are driven to reach for goals, but we can learn no lessons from them. There is no pot of gold, only the rainbow.

"I suppose it's because we live in an achievement orientated society." I said to Mick. He looked at me as if I had just announced I was stark staring mad.

In the tent we discussed our plans should we get down safely. Over to the North I could see the Yengutz Har Pass. I decided that after a days rest I would try with the others to cross that pass. Fowler said that if we could get down the next day, he would walk out to Hopper the next morning, take the jeep and bus to Gilgit the following day and hope to catch his plane to London from Islamabad on Sunday.

"Why the great rush?" I asked.

"Because it means by Monday the 16th I shall have parked those Civil^{Service} Shoes shoes under that Civil Service desk and saved a whole week's annual leave, know what I mean Vic?" He tapped the side of his nose.

Iqbal, Lobby, Bruce and myself did eventually complete the traverse of the pass. it took us four hard days for the round trip - much longer than we anticipated. We made the mistake of selling our rope in Hispar then descending the the Hispar Gorge on the wrong bank. We found ourselves soloing across difficult rock climbing ground above the roaring Hispar River. The other three showed great patience, waiting for me, tired and emaciated.

As for Fowler, I don't know where he got the energy from, but he caught the flight. By Monday morning, 9.30 sharp, those Civil Service shoes were under that Civil Service Desk.

6. CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to draw any conclusion, positive or otherwise from our experience. We had this experience, next time it will be different, and that's it. I suppose it shows that it is possible to mount a successful expedition to a 7000m peak during an office worker's holidays, but then we were fairly lucky, we could easily have failed. As members of the NLMC we have climbed together for several years, this makes for safety, we are happy with each other's mountaineering decisions. Our trust is based on experience, and so we went out friends, tried hard (the only sin in mountaineering is not to "try"), and came back friends. That we actually got up the route is merely a bonus...it would have been an excellent trip anyway.

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8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

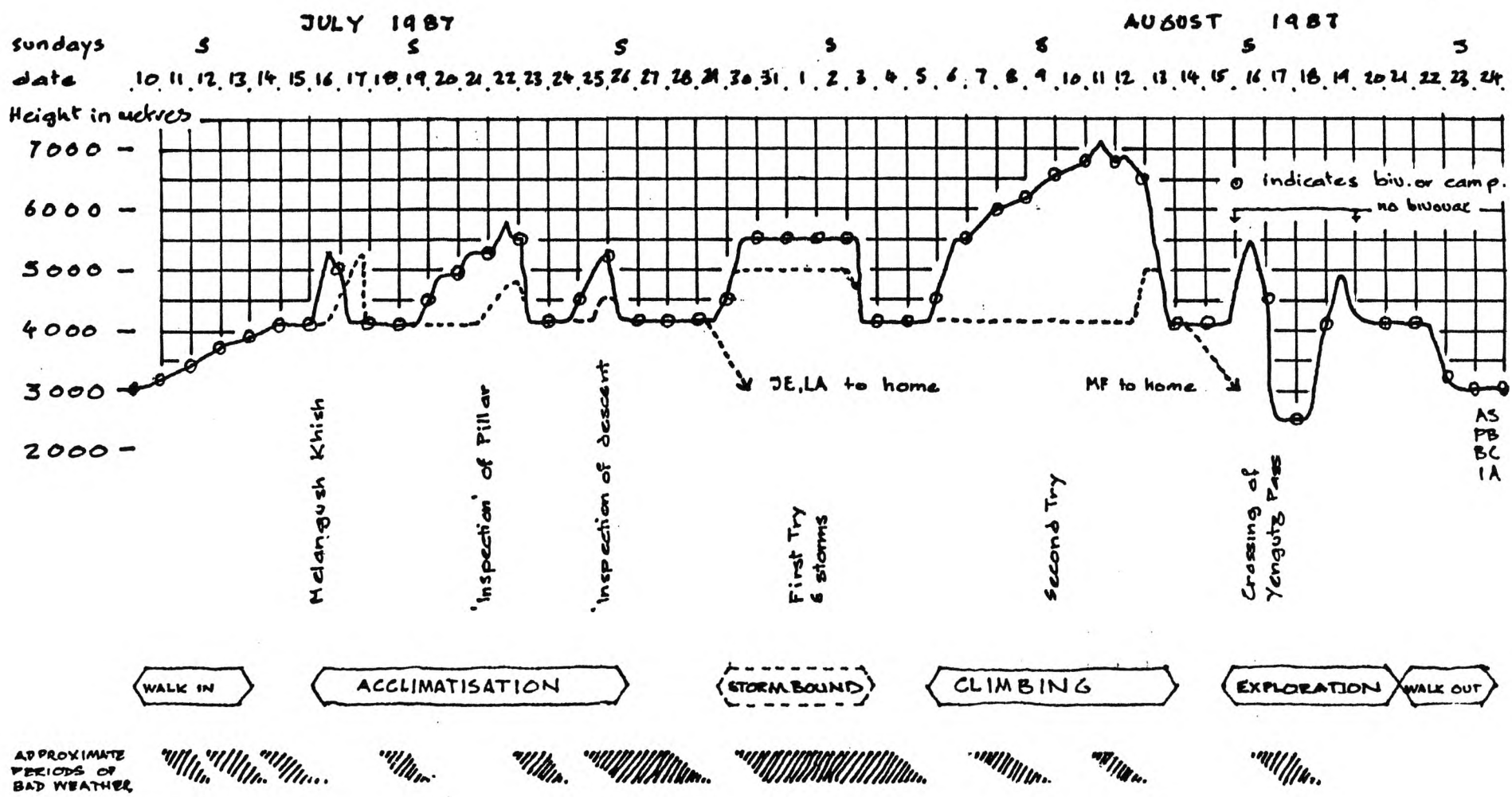
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 Marion Lawrence of PIA
 Janusz Majer
 Mount Everest Foundation
 Nazir Sabir
 Doug Scott
 Dr.Mike Searle
 Siobhan Sheridan of The North Face
 Margaret Urmston
 Christopher Watts

We thank them all.

APPENDIX 1. EXPEDITION LOG

15.10.1986 Letter to Pakistan Embassy, London.
 22.10.1986 Letter to Ministry of Tourism, Pakistan.
 28.10.1986 3 copies of application handed in to Embassy. Cash deposit refused.
 15.12.1986 news from Embassy that the application has been refused.
 16.12.1986 Letter to Ministry of Tourism, Cheque enclosed.
 19.12.1986 Letter from President AC to Ministry of Tourism.
 19.12.1986 Letter from Ogre Expedition on behalf of all the stranded expeditions.
 14.01.1987 Letter to Pakistan Ambassador on behalf of the stranded expeditions.
 26.01.1987 Letter from President RGS to British Council in Islamabad, asking for intervention if possible.
 30.01.1987 Letter to Pakistan Ambassador, after the Ogre expedition had received permission.
 14.02.1987 Letter from Gasherbrums Expedition, inviting His Excellency to wedding
 17.02.1987 News from Embassy that we have permission at last.
 26.03.1987 Official Permission, granted to Gasherbrums and Spantik expditions.
 29.07.1987 AS and PB arrive Rawalpindi.
 02.07.1987 BC arrives Rawalpindi. First contact with IA (L.O.).
 06.07.1987 MF,LA,JE arrive Rawalpindi.
 07.07.1987 Briefing meeting. Minibus to Gilgit, collect GF.
 08.07.1987 Minbus to Hunza, 4 jeeps to Hopper.
 10.07.1987 Walk-in Day 1.
 14.07.1987 Walk-in Day 5, arrive base camp.
 16.07.1987 MF,IA,AS climb Melangush Chish, bivouac at 5000m.
 17.07.1987 PB,BC,LA,JE climb Melangush. All return to BC.
 19.07.1987 AS,MF begin "inspection" of Pillar. Kitchen collapses, narrowly missing Rajab.
 20.07.1987 PB,BC inspect the Yengutz Har Pass.
 22.07.1987 LA,JE climb the "prominence" on the descent ridge. IA, GF climb Melangush Chish.
 23.07.1987 MF,AS set off avalanche on Snow Arete, all return to BC.
 24.07.1987 MF,AS climb the Enlish-Allen Prominence.
 29.07.1987 JE,LA,GF walk out to Hopper with 2 porters. MF,AS,PB, BC set out for the Pillar.
 03.07.1987 MF,AS,PB,BC, return to BC after 4 days bad weather.
 05.07.1987 MF,AS leave BC for the Pillar.
 11.07.1987 MF,AS reach summit of Spantik 7027m.
 13.07.1987 MF,AS return to BC.
 14.07.1987 MF walks out to Hopper.
 15.07.1987 IA,PB,BC,AS cross Yengutz Har pass.
 20.07.1987 IA,PB,BC,AS return to BC after circumnavigating the Girgindil Group.
 22.07.1987 Team walks out to Hopper in 2 days.
 27.07.1987 Team arrives Islamabad, for debriefing etc.



DIAGRAMMATIC HEIGHT RECORD

APPENDIX 3.

MEDICAL REPORT by Dr JSC English

The decision to take a light-weight medical kit (see table 1) was only justified by the fact that no serious medical problems occurred among the members of the team. However, the kit was totally inadequate for providing health care for the local people. It is difficult to provide comprehensive medical aid as part of a small "alpine style" expedition, when tight restraints are imposed by the amount of money available for medicines and the weight of such a kit.

A wide range of conditions were encountered (table 2) mainly in the local population ranging in their seriousness from tuberculosis to keloids. The main worries were from parasites (goat flees and intestinal worms) and infective diarrhoea. Three members and several porters caught flees ("ques" in Burushaski) and one porter left a surprisingly large round worm (*Ascaris Lumbricoides*) in a pile of faeces adjacent to our proposed kitchen. As yet no member is aware of having worms!

No serious consequences of Acute Mountain Sickness occurred, only mild headaches. This was probably due to the gradual acclimatisation achieved on the walk in and several excursions to 5000m on local peaks (with the use of Diamox by some) before attempts on Spantik.

We thank the following for kind donations of medical products;
Kirby Warrick
Lederle
Roc Laboratories

Table 1; medicines taken

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| paracetamol | |
| aspirin | sutures |
| temazepan | needle holder |
| pethidine | Steristrips |
| codeine phosphate | needles |
| DF 118 | syringes |
| Canesten HC | sunscreen and lipsalve |
| flucloxacillin | |
| metronidazole | |
| Netillin I.V. | |
| chloramphenical eye drops | |
| Streptotriad | |
| erythromycin | |
| chloroquine | |
| frusemide | |
| nifedipine | |
| Diamox | |
| Aludrox | |
| metoclopramide | |
| crepe bandages | |
| lignocaine | |

APPENDIX 4

PREDICTED AND ACTUAL EXPENDITURE

| EXPENDITURE | Planned £ (4 members) | Actual £ (6 members) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Flights (5xUK + 1xNZ) | 1800 | 3181 |
| Freight, Gas, Customs etc. | 276 | 628 |
| Road transport, 'pindi to Hopper | 500 | 284 |
| Hotels, taxis, restaurants, etc. | 1000 | 456 |
| Food for walk, base & climbing | 1260 | 576 |
| Porters up (30) + 2 goats | 640 | 1026 |
| Porters down (9) | 384 | 276 |
| Printing, stationary, 'phones etc | 300 | 274 |
| Liaison Officer equipage | 500 | 81 |
| Liaison Officer cash allowance | 150 | 75 |
| Cook and mail runners | 200 | 268 |
| Insurance for LO, cook, & porters | 50 | 83 |
| New (or renew) equipment | 600 | 1016 |
| Radios (walkie-talkie) | 200 | 153 |
| Film (15 rolls each(6) @£6.00 | 240 | 540 |
| New tents & ropes | 600 | 420 |
| Peak fee, visas, helicopter bond | 800 | 1106 |
| BMC insurance | 500 | 979 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | £ 10000 | £ 11422 |
| INCOME | | |
| Nick Estcourt Award | 1000 | 1000 |
| Mount Everest Foundation | 900 | 900 |
| British Mountaineering Council | 700 | 700 |
| Barclays Bank plc | 450 | 450 |
| North London Mountaineering Club | 50 | 50 |
| Expedition members | 6900 | 8322 |
| TOTAL INCOME | £ 10000 | £ 11422 |
| Cost to each member | £ 1725 | £ 1387 |