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Ama Dablam South Ridge 1987.

Expedition Report.

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Team Members.

Martin Mandel	Henry Todd
Andy Cave	Pete Swift
Andy Perkins	Burt Simmonds
Dr. Jane Richmond	Dave Green
Dr. Ian Barton	Mac Battersby

Introduction.

In November 1986 the opportunity arose for an expedition to the South Ridge of Ama Dablam. A team of 10 members was quickly formed and during the next 8 months arrangements were made for the trip to Nepal. The aim of the expedition was to make a lightweight Alpine style ascent of the S.W. Ridge of the mountain, operating independently in groups of two or three climbers. This would have been the first ascent of the mountain by a British expedition although Martin Boysen had previously made an ascent as part of an American expedition.

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Acknowledgements.

The expedition members gratefully acknowledge the financial support of:

Chromagene  
The Mount Everest Foundation  
British Mountaineering Council  
Bakewell Unemployment Office

Equipment and Other Goods were Donated by:

Ever Ready	C.P.C. (dextrasol tablets)
J.W.Thornton	Cheshire Wholefoods
Chromagene	Troll Safety Equipment
Helathlife	Lofthouse of Fleetwood
Beecham Bovril Brands	Shepherdboy Ltd.

Discount Assistance or Help was Obtained from:

Alpine Centre Blackpool	Rover Treks and Expeditions PVT
Troll Safety Equipment	(Mike Cheney)
Raven Foods	The North Face
Linfood Cash and Carry	Davie Mason and Co. Ltd.
Wild Country	Centresport (Leeds)
North Cape	Leeds Camera Centre
EPIGAS	Don Morrison (Sheffield)
Europa Sport	Pakistan International Airlines

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For Help and Advice:

Ang Lhakpa Sherpa  
David Hopkins  
Martin Boysen  
Andy Fanshawe  
Peter Gentil  
Mike Cheney  
Kami Nuru Sherpa

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### The Walk In.

After final arrangements and packing in Kathmandu we caught a bus to Jiri on 4th. September. This journey, which usually takes ten hours, had to be split into three separate bus journeys because of landslides. Petrol was ferried over the landslides to the vehicles stranded at the far side.

The owners/drivers found themselves in an enviable position whereby they were at liberty to charge exorbitant rates for relatively short "shuttle" journeys. This was a take it or leave it situation where bus space was sold to the highest bidder. However, these difficulties were overcome and we reached Jiri in about 14 hours. The key to our smooth passage was sending a man ahead to sort out transport.

From Jiri we walked to Namche Bazaar in nine days sleeping overnight in the villages of Shivalaya, Bandar, Sete, Junbesi, Nuntala, Karikhola, Surkhe and Mondzo.

At Namche the porters were paid off and yaks hired. Three days were spent here, acclimatising and buying fresh vegetables for cooking at Base Camp. In fact anything from Cadbury's Milk Chocolate to Chouinard crampons can be bought here, although much more expensive than in Kathmandu.

From Namche a fine walk took us to the village of Tengboche with its famous monastery. After a night here we made our way to Pangboche and up the Mingbo valley where we spent a night in a makeshift shelter under a huge boulder. From here a further 2 hours walk brought us to Base Camp at a height of 17,500 ft.

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### The Climb.

Base Camp was set up on 17th. September which coincided with the first major improvement in the weather. This lasted two days, after which the weather closed in until September 25th. During this period, several members of the team were able to get up to the site of Camp 1 on the South Ridge where there was much refuse from previous expeditions. Life was made awkward by persistent snow and rain.

By September 27th. four members of the team had left Base Camp because of various illnesses including a viral infection of the spleen (Martin Mandel), acute food poisoning (Dave Green), cerebral oedema (Ian Barton) and an acute chest infection (Mac Battersby). The remaining climbers Andy Cave, Andy Perkins, Henry Todd and Burt Simmonds ascended to the cache of food and gear at Camp 1 (18,800 ft). Pete Swift had stayed behind to look after Base Camp and Jane Richmond had accompanied Dave Green to Kunde Hospital.

The next day Andy Cave and Andy Perkins climbed to Camp 2. This involved approximately ten pitches of rock climbing on Chamonix style granite weaving around and over pinnacles. There were several pitches of VS and HVS climbing and pegs from previous expeditions were found. This lead to Camp 2 which had 2 - 3 Gemini sized platforms at 19,500 ft. Henry Todd and Burt Simmonds bivvied 200 ft below Camp 2.

On September 29th. Henry Todd and Burt Simmonds did a short day to Camp 2, while Andy Cave and Andy Perkins traversed to the base of the ramp line cutting diagonally up to the base of the Yellow Tower. This ramp involved three or four pitches of mixed climbing (Scottish II - III). There was obviously a lot more snow than usual and this was poorly consolidated.

Turning the Yellow Tower involved three pitches of snow

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climbing the last one of which one was appalling. Andy Cave then lead a very hard rock pitch, complete with tottering blocks and 'suspended mantlepieces'! On the pitch after this the snow mushrooms covering the easy ground were dangerously unstable, so they bivvied at 20,500 ft.

The next morning they climbed to the site of the old Camp 3 then took the right hand side of the snow slope leading to the main serac barrier. Just below this they encountered deep powder snow with a surface crust. The 50 degree lower slope was manageable but a steep couloir cutting through the right hand side of the serac barrier proved to be too dangerous. With bad weather also threatening over Baruntse to the East they elected to descend.

At the ramp they met Henry Todd and Burt Simmonds who also elected to descend.

On the 5th. of October there was a storm which deposited about 6 inches of snow at Base Camp, which had been moved down to a meadow below the West Face as the water supply at the original Base Camp had dried up. On October 9th. Base Camp was struck as most of the team had to return to Kathmandu to arrange Pakistani Transit Visas.

Andy Perkins and Henry Todd returned to Camp 1 for another attempt. That evening there was light snow so they rested at Camp 1 the next day and continued to Camp 2 on October 11th. However, the snow on the ramp had deteriorated since the last attempt and the difficulties had increased to Scottish IV with poor snow and dubious protection. Attempting the Yellow Tower proved too dangerous (poor snow, no belays) so they retreated and descended to Base Camp the next day.

For a route which had received many ascents it was felt that conditions were very bad, probably due to the bad monsoon



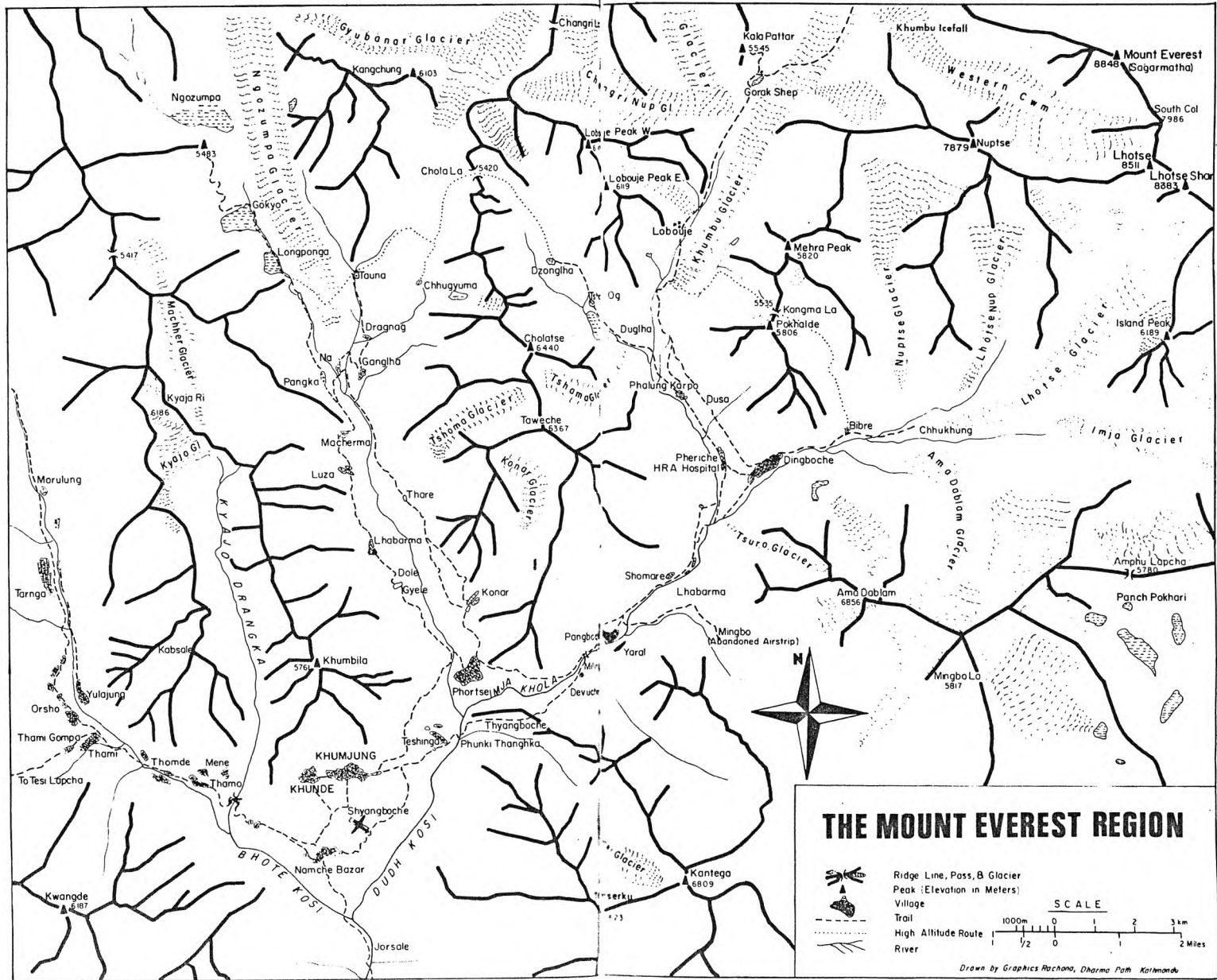
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weather. This was reported to be the worst for 35 years. There were few successful ascents of high peaks in the Khumbu during the post monsoon period so it was felt that a high point of 21000 ft. Alpine style was a very creditable effort under the circumstances.

### The Walk Out.

Various members of the team had left Base Camp because of illness before the end of the expedition. Henry Todd and Andy Perkins flew from Lukla to Kathmandu, whilst Andy Cave, Pete Swift and Burt Simmonds walked out. Jane Richmond stayed on in the Khumbu to go trekking.

The site of Base Camp was cleared of all the debris from the expedition and the cooking equipment was given to our Sirdar (Kami).



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Ama Dablam South Ridge 1987 Budget

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Exchange Rate £1= 35.47 Rs

	<u>No.</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Rs/day</u>	<u>Cost Rs</u>	<u>Cost £</u>
L.O.	1	52	70.00	3640.00	102.62
BC workers	2	52	110.00	11440.00	322.53
Porters for walk in	30	12	70.00	25200.00	710.46
Porters walk out	20	10	70.00	14000.00	394.70
Porters bonus	50	1	30.00	1500.00	42.29
Insurance for LO and 2 BC workers				3500.00	98.67
Cash in lieu of clothing				20000.00	563.86
				<u>79280.00</u>	<u>2235.13</u>
Peak fee				12000.00	338.31
Agents fee					300.00
Road transport				3500.00	98.67
				<u>15500.00</u>	<u>736.99</u>

	<u>No.</u>	<u>Weeks</u>	<u>Rs/week</u>	<u>Cost Rs</u>	<u>Cost £</u>
Trekking permits	10	12	60.00	7200.00	202.99
Visas	10	12	118.75	14250.00	401.75
Living expenses, food, accommodation	10	8	600.00	47600.00	1341.98
				<u>69050.00</u>	<u>1946.72</u>

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<u>Additional Team Equipment</u>			<u>Cost £</u>
Tape, deadmen, ice screws, krabs, etc.			801.08
BC tent, kerosene, cooking gear in Nepal			830.09
Medical expenses			125.00
Air freight			0.00
Expenses: postage, telephone, printing, etc.			185.00
			<u>1941.17</u>
			-----
	<u>No.</u>	<u>Amount £</u>	<u>Cost £</u>
Insurance	10	136.00	1360.00
Air fares	10	478.00	4780.00
Contingency fund			300.00
			<u>6440.00</u>
			-----
		Total Expenditure	13300.00
			-----
<u>Income</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>
Members contributions	10	1200.00	12000.00
Mount Everest Foundation			800.00
British Mountaineering Council			500.00
CHROMAGENE			1000.00
			<u>13300.00</u>
		Total Income £	13300.00
			-----
		Balance £	0.00
			-----

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Diary Of Events.

Arrive in Kathmandu	August 31st.
Start walk in to Base Camp	September 4th.
Establish Base Camp	September 17th.
Andy Cave, Andy Perkins, Henry Todd and Burt Simmonds climb to Camp 1.	September 27th.
Andy Cave and Andy Perkins climb to Camp 2. Henry Todd and Burt Simmonds bivvy below Camp 2.	September 28th.
Andy Cave and Andy Perkins climb to above Yellow Tower. Henry Todd and Burt Simmonds climb Camp 2.	September 29th.
Andy Cave and Andy Perkins climb to Camp 3.	September 30th.
Andy Perkins and Henry Todd climb up to Camp 1. Rest of the Team leave Base Camp.	October 9th.
Andy Perkins and Henry Todd climb to Camp 2.	October 11th.
Andy Perkins and Henry Todd return to Base Camp.	October 12th.
Return to England	October 26th.

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Gear Report.

The gear came from a variety of sources: old personal kit, new gear purchased specifically for the expedition, communal gear on loan from manufacturers and gear bought in Kathmandu.

Of the personal kit several items proved themselves very well. The Javlin Super S salopettes were superb and will undoubtedly be firm favorites for further expeditions or even Scottish Winters. Troll Expedition Harnesses were 'de rigueur', being light and easy to use. Koflach Ultras with Alveolite inners were almost universal and there were no cases of frostbitten feet. Down boots for sleeping were vital higher on the mountain and were purchased in Namche or Kathmandu at reasonable prices. Gloves were also bought in Nepal. A warm, durable inner glove is still difficult to obtain in the U.K. it would seem.

Rucksacks came from a variety of sources but Andy Cave's 'Alex MacIntyre' sac was obviously best for the job, although of limited life compared to the heavier sacks from Berghaus and Troll in Cordura.

We had several tents on loan from Wild Country. The Super Nova was especially useful for afternoon Bridge clubs during bad weather. The Mountain Geminis were as useful as ever on the hill, being light and easy to erect. Stoves at Base Camp were of the Kathmandu primus variety. However, our cook, Ang Lhakpa, seemed to keep both of them working throughout our stay at Base Camp.

On the hill we used EPIGAS Propane/Butane mix, with a variety of burners of which the best was probably the simple Epigas burner with an MSR stove shield.

Ropes wore well, apart from one Mammut which was severely abraded in three places. Racks were kept to a minimum and typically consisted of 10 crabs, a couple of Friends, some wires

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and 3 or 4 pegs. Slings in a variety of lengths were the most commonly used runners.

### Photography.

Camera equipment came from Olympus, Nikon and Minox, much of it from Chromagene. The results obtained were on the whole excellent, the Minox cameras proving particularly useful because of their small size. The film, Kodak Professional, was also supplied by Chromagene for which we are extremely grateful. Black and white film was supplied by the Sheffield Star, courtesy of Mike Korner.

### Food.

Only food for the hill was taken from the U.K. Food for Base Camp was purchased in Kathmandu and in Namche. Food for the walk in was obtained locally from tea houses. The expedition was self sufficient in Kerosine (purchased in Namche) in line with the National Park policy of conserving wood.

The main problem with the hill food was the choice of dehydrated food (Raven). Although good at sea level this proved to be highly unpalatable at altitude. In retrospect it would have been better to have taken a greater variety of snack type foods.

Thorntons fudge was a great success, vast quantities were eaten at all altitudes, although quantities diminished higher up the mountain.

### Medical Report.

It is with great regret that we have learned of the disappearance of Jane Richmond, the expedition Doctor, in the



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Annapurna Sanctuary after the end of the expedition.

A full range of medical equipment was taken. The chief medical problems were caused by infectious diseases and altitude. Almost the whole team suffered from Giardia at some stage of the expedition despite taking with the water supply. It is interesting to note that the causative organism (Giardia Lamblia) seems to be becoming resistant to the most commonly used treatment which is Flagyl (metronidazole). A better choice of drug would be Tinidazole. This has several advantages, single dosage schedule, less side effects and no reported resistance. It may also be wise to give local people working Base Camp, particularly the cook, a course of Tinidazole to prevent contamination of prepared food.

Two team members suffered from a viral infection very similar to classical glandular fever. Both had sore throats, enlarged regional lymph nodes and tender spleens. Examination of blood films at Kunde hospital revealed classical mononucleosis. However, on return to the U.K. one member who was tested for antibodies to Epstein Barr virus proved negative. Thus it would appear that this infection was caused by another virus. It is worth noting that many members of other expeditions suffered from this infection whilst we were in Nepal.

One member of the expedition suffered from cerebral oedema at Base Camp probably caused by ascending too rapidly. The symptoms resolved on descending. Acetazolamide (Diamox) was taken by two members of the expedition. Considering the mechanism of action of this drug it would seem it is most effective when taken to assist sleeping at altitude. Both members taking the drug suffered from tingling fingers.

Another member of the expedition suffered from a chest infection at Base Camp but this resolved on treatment with antibiotics.



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### Porters.

The porters were hired in Kathmandu by Mike Cheney and paid off in Namche. A total of thirty porters were used and we found them to be cheerful and helpful. No loads were lost or stolen.

### Notes.

#### 1. Peak Booking.

Arrangements for booking the peak were handled by Rover Treks who dealt with the Ministry on our behalf. Just before leaving for Kathmandu we heard that permission for the South West Ridge had also been granted to Bill O'Connor. In the event both teams were on the climb at different times and this did not cause a problem. However, it may be worth future expeditions making sure that no other group has permission to attempt their route before arriving in Nepal to avoid possible conflicts of interest.

#### 2. Visas.

Nepalese visas were obtained from the Embassy in London and extended as necessary in Nepal. It should be noted that Pakistani transit visas are required for flights between Karachi and Islamabad on PIA.

Trekking permits were arranged by the Ministry of Tourism in Kathmandu through Rover Treks.

#### 3. Insurance.

Insurance for the expedition was arranged through Devitt Midland.

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4. Flights.

Flights to Kathmandu were arranged on Pakistan International Airlines. It is worth noting that transit visas were required for the return flights via Islamabad and Karachi.

5. Freighting and Local Transport.

All the expedition equipment was taken on the flight with us and PIA kindly gave us an excess baggage allowance. Local transport was by bus and arranged through Rover Treks.

6. Fund Raising.

The following organizations kindly provided the expedition with financial support:

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The Mount Everest Foundation

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