ACC 24045

87/19

BIBU-MO-TIN HOPEFULS 1987 EXPEDITION REPORT

BEGINNINGS

THE EXPEDITION BEGAN DURING THE SUMMER OF '86 WITH THE ARRIVAL OF A FRIEND IN CHAMONIX, HOT FROM PAKISTAN. AMIDST THE MANY OFT HEARD STORIES, OF EPIC EASTERN ENCOUNTERS, A GRANITE SPIRE AROSE SLOWLY THROUGH THE PARTING CLOUDS OF CURRIED MISTS. IT SOUNDED LIKE THE BIG WALL I HAD LOOKED FOR EACH TIME I STEPPED OFF THE 'PHRIQE' THAT SUMMER. MAYBE TIME TO GO TO PLACES NEW.
AND SO WE DID.

PREPARATION

IT BEGAN AFTER A CONVERSATION WITH ANDY IN A STEAMY PETE'S ON THE WRONG SIDE OF A WET WEEKEND. HE SOLVED THE PROBLEMS OF OUR MAJOR EXPENSE, AIR FARES, BY SUGGESTING THE M.E.F. AND B.M.C. AS SPONSORS. I HADN'T REALLY REALISED SUCH HELP EXISTED.
ALL THE EQUIPMENT WE EXPECTED TO NEED, WE HAD OR COULD BORROW, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A HAUL SAC WHICH TROLL GENEROUSLY SUPPLIED. THE LOCAL SUPERMARKET PROVIDED US WITH EXTRA DEHYDRATE, TO TOP UP THOSE FROM THE MOUNTAIN HOUSES. WE HAD FIRST HAND INFO. ON THE APPROACH TO THE MOUNTAIN, LINES ALREADY CLIMBED, AND BASE CAMP SITES. AND ALL IN ALL WE GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT PEOPLE WERE WONDERING WHY WE WERE GOING JUST FOR 'THAT SPIRE' – IT REALLY DIDN'T APPEAR TO BE MUCH OF A PROBLEM. WE WERE BEGINNING TO BELIEVE THEM.
THE TEAM OF TWO THEN BECAME SWELLED TO THREE WITH THE ADDITION OF PETE EVANS, WHO WAS TO ACCOMPANY US TO BASE CAMP. NOT ONLY DID THIS APPEAR GOOD FROM A SOCIAL VIEWPOINT, BUT WOULD ALSO HELP TO REDUCE OUR 'HAND' LUGGAGE ON THE FLIGHT, SINCE PETE WAS NOT BRINGING CLIMBING KIT.
WE LEFT THE WEST, HEADING EAST, NOT KNOWING QUITE HOW ACCURATE OUR CHOICE OF EXPEDITION NAMES HAD BEEN.

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623

OBJECTIVE : BIBU-MO-TIN, HUNZA, PAKISTAN

TEAM : J SILVESTER [4 NORTH RD. DEINIOLEN, N. WALES]
. M CHARLTON

M.E.F. REFERENCE 87/19.

10.8X

THE EXPEDITION

KARACHI
[5 JULY]

I HAD HEARD SO MANY STORIES, READ OF COUNTLESS EPICS, AND STILL IT CAME AS A SHOCK. TAKING A BUS FROM THE AIRPORT TO A RECOMMENDED HOTEL, WE REFUSED TO BELIEVE OUR STOP COULD POSSIBLY BE OUR DESTINATION, EVEN MORE THE PLACE WE WOULD SPEND THE NIGHT. BUT IT INEVITABLY WAS; A GOOD LESSON IN ADJUSTING ONE'S STANDARDS OF REFERENCE, AND ASSUMING TOO QUICKLY THAT EVERYONE IS OUT TO RIP YOU OFF. PLEASED TO LEARN IT SO SOON.
THE TRAINS TO RAWALPINDI WERE FULL - EVEN AFTER 4 HOURS OF QUEUES, THE ONLY 'AVAILABLE' TICKETS WERE EXPENSIVE. SINCE FLYING OFFERED A QUICKER ALTERNATIVE AT A COMPARABLE COST, WE FLEW

RAWALPINDI
- 6 JULY]

MEET MARK FROM HIS FLIGHT [6 JULY], AND TAKE A BUS TO GILGIT ON THE 8TH.

GILGIT
9 JULY]

MEET SIMON AND SEAN ON THIER WAY TO SKARDU - GREAT TO SEE FAMILIAR FACES. ALSO ANDY CAVES, WHO JUST HAVING CLIMBED A NEW ONE 'THATS ON THE MAP', IS WELL HAPPY.
BUY FOOD.

KARIMABAD
11 JULY]

TOTALLY GOBSMACKED.
PETE HAS A LOOK AT OUR APPROACH TO BASE CAMP, WHILST MARK AND I BUY FOOD, PANS, WATER CONTAINERS AND FUEL [PARAFIN].
FIND 2 PORTERS.

ALTAR BASE CAMP

13 JULY]

FIRST VIEW OF BIBU-MU-TIN. NOT SO BIG AS EXPECTED, BUT SO BLANK. THE MOUNTAINS AROUND ARE SO HUGE. SO MANY EXPLETIVES. YET TO DISCOVER THE SCALE. SET UP CAMP AND SOON LOOSE INTEREST IN THE SOUNDS OF FALLING SERACS E.T.C. UNSETTLED WEATHER.

14 JULY]

INVESTIGATE THE APPROACHES TO THE FACE, AND DECIDE TO TRY WHAT WE THINK IS A NEW APPROACH. SAY GOODBYE TO PETE.

5 JULY]

DISCOVERED LATE LAST NIGHT THAT PETE HAS THE SECOND PAIR OF JUMARS IN HIS SAC! MARK LEAVES FOR THE VALLEY AT FIRST LIGHT, BUT PETE LEAVES KARIMABAD AT 5:30 AM.
MARK ARRIVES BACK AT BASE CAMP AFTER DARK, WITH BOTTLES OF 'FANTA', AND BAD WEATHER.

6 JULY] ALTHOUGH POOR WEATHER, GO FOR A CARRY, BUT SOON RAINING, AND COLD. DON'T WANT WET PILE AND GORE-TEX BECAUSE IT'S ALL BEING LEFT HIGH, SO DUMP LOAD AND 'SCARPA IN ULFA.

7 JULY] I'M VOMITING IN THE NIGHT. WAKE FEELING ILL. LAZE ALL DAY IN UNSETTLED WEATHER. BETWEEN CLOUDS, SEE LOTS OF SNOW ON THE HILL, AND IMPRESSIVE ICE/SNOW FALLS ON HUNZA PEAK, WHICH HAVE FORMED OVERNIGHT.

8 JULY] STILL ILL, BECOMING DEHYDRATED AND TOTALLY LETHARGIC

9 JULY] FEELING WORSE

20 JULY] GO DOWN TO THE VALLEY, AND FIND A HOSPITAL [REMEMBER JOHN TINKER SAYING THEY [HOSPITAL] SORTED HIM OUT QUICKLY]. FORTUNATELY THE WEATHER CONTINUING BAD.

21 – 26] STAY IN KARIMABAD, EATING LOTS, POPPING PILLS, FEELING BETTER.

27 JULY] BACK TO BASE CAMP WITH MORE FOOD

28 JULY] CARRY GEAR INTO UPPER MEADOWS, TRYING TO AVOID SUN BUT STARTING LATE WHEN IT INVARIABLY HAS CLOUDED OVER.

29 JULY] CROSSED A GORGE WHICH LOOKED PARTICULARLY DEEP AND NASTY UNTIL WE DISCOVERED THE BOLT + PEGS LEFT BY A FRENCH TEAM. SET UP A TYROLEAN, ENABLING US TO SET UP OUR ADVANCED BASE [BIVOUAC] AN HOUR HIGHER. FROM HERE ON, WE WILL HAVE TO DROP INTO THE COULOIR. PROBABLY AT ABOUT 14 000 FT ALTITUDE.

30 JULY] WEATHER UNINSPIRING, FACE IN SNOW, SO HEAD FOR B.C.. RAMET, A SHEPHERD BOY WHO LOOKS AFTER OUR GEAR WHILST WE ARE 'UPSIDE' [HIS GOATS EAT ALL] GIVES US APRICOTS WHICH MARK DEVOURS.

31 JULY] [A.M.] MARK VOMITING.
RAINING. STAY IN TENT MOST OF THE DAY. MARK UNDECIDED, HALF IN, HALF OUT.

1 AUGUST] BACK DOWN TO KARIMABAD, SINCE WE AREN'T GOING UP, AND WE CAN'T CREATE WONDERS ON THE M.S.R.. WE HAVEN'T ENOUGH HILL FOOD TO WASTE ON BASE CAMP. MARK FINDS IT HARD GOING.

2 AUGUST] DISCOVER A SOURCE OF ALCOHOL WHICH ACTS MOST MEDICINALLY ON MARKS DIGESTIVE AND EXCRETORY SYSTEM. HARDLY SURPRISING. ALSO AN EXCELLENT ANAESTHETIC, AND A POTENTIAL FUEL FOR THE M.S.R.!

:-5 August] Lounge on verandahs, watching what could be mistaken for the Monsoon. Find some weather charts which suggest that June is the driest, August the wettest months. The locals corroborate this.

[6 August] Up to Base Camp.

7 August] Up to Advanced Bivouac.

8 August] Reach the base of the face at 10 a.m, having left the Bivvy at 2.30 AM. Much longer/further than anticipated. Both feel as if we were moving O.K. until the sun came out, then ZAP. Paid for our miscalculation — could have been alot dearer. By the time we sorted our kit, brewed E.T.C. it was past 12.00 p'noon, so the decision to doss was easy.
And then, lying beneath the face, our monstrous miscalculation was all too prominent. Had this been Chamonix, I still would have thought 'no go'. But here! Waves of misery capped with foolish arrogance wash through the brain — so stupid to come so far, just to turn round here. And then the tide changes, with a cooling breeze, and with a suppressed excitement — realizing that this is what I have wanted to find. Just didn't expect it here, and now.
The stove doesn't care for altitude, it works slowly. We treat it with sympathy.
Fortunate that the face is continuously the wrong side of vertical, otherwise inundation by icicle would be imminent.
Spend the afternoon watching Avalances. Informative.

9 August] Start up the wall, although we both know we shall not be going far. Climb two pitches of steep rock [5c ish between rests on gear]. 100m up we find a tiny snow patch beneath roofs, where 'the wall' begins. Overhangs continuously from here to the first ledge at just over half height. Gothic features. The next blank section makes me consider Bolt kits with fondness — Mark suggests they must be the hardest purchase in Pakistan. We know it's time for down.
But — should we fix ropes? stash kit?
Would Mick have a Bolt kit? Could we find him?
Will Andy be back with more ropes?
How many times are we prepared to climb <u>that</u> couloir?

[10 August] We retreat to Advance Base, happy to be safely down the couloir. Avalance debris practically over the whole slope, for 800ft. Yet it felt safe. New situations for old rules — the two just are not compatible. We now know why few with foiled aspirations have returned — and are pleased that we have shortened the couloir by 50%.
Look for higher camp site [next year], but the meadows are just too steep. Create terraces with chacals at Advanced Bivouac. Hard work but reminiscent of childhood dens.

1 August] Back down to base, realizing the size of our sacs.

2 August] Break camp, return to Karimabad

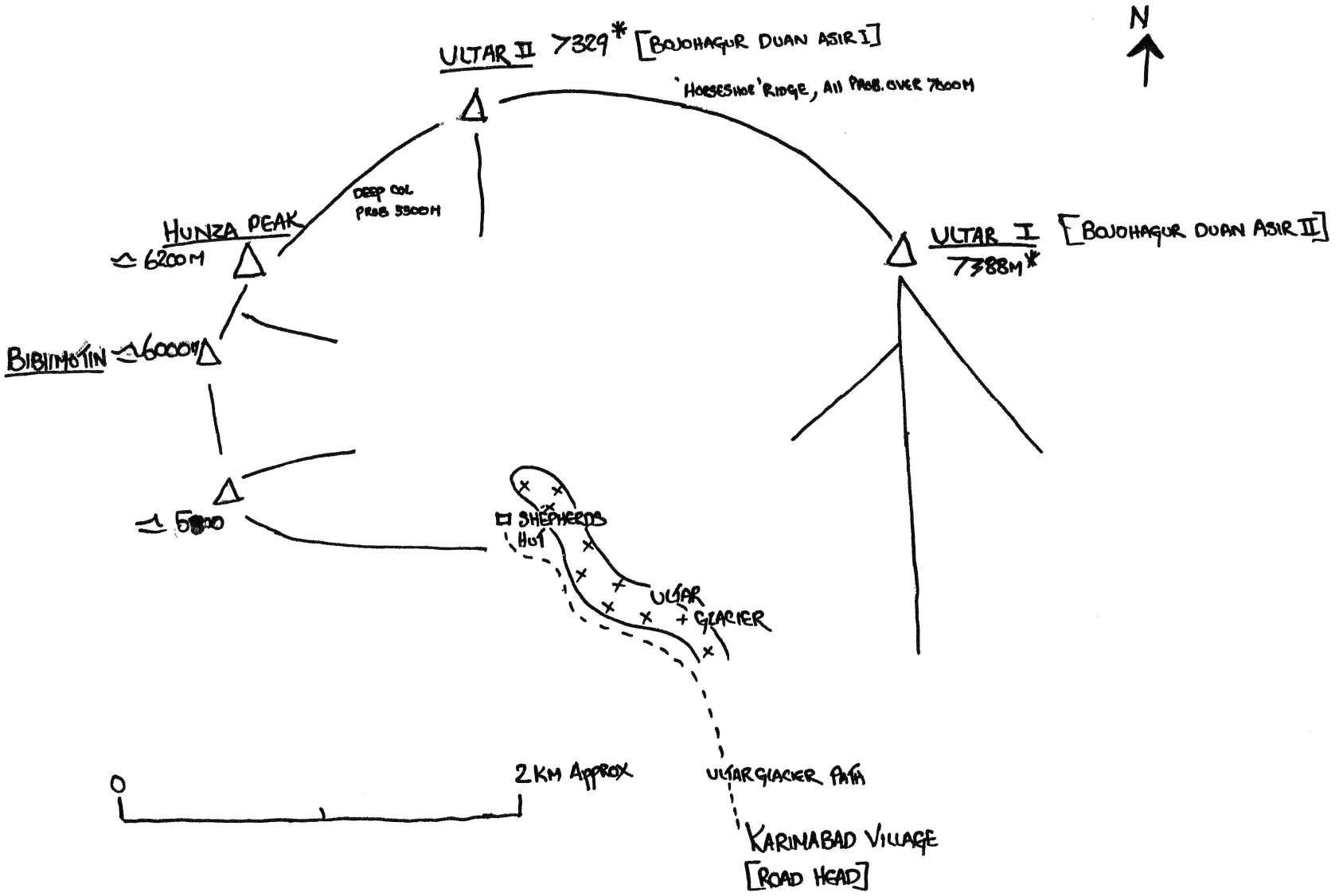
13–25 Aug.] Travel up Minapin Glacier, visiting Rakaposhi and Diran Base Camps.

26 August] Arrive Gilgit

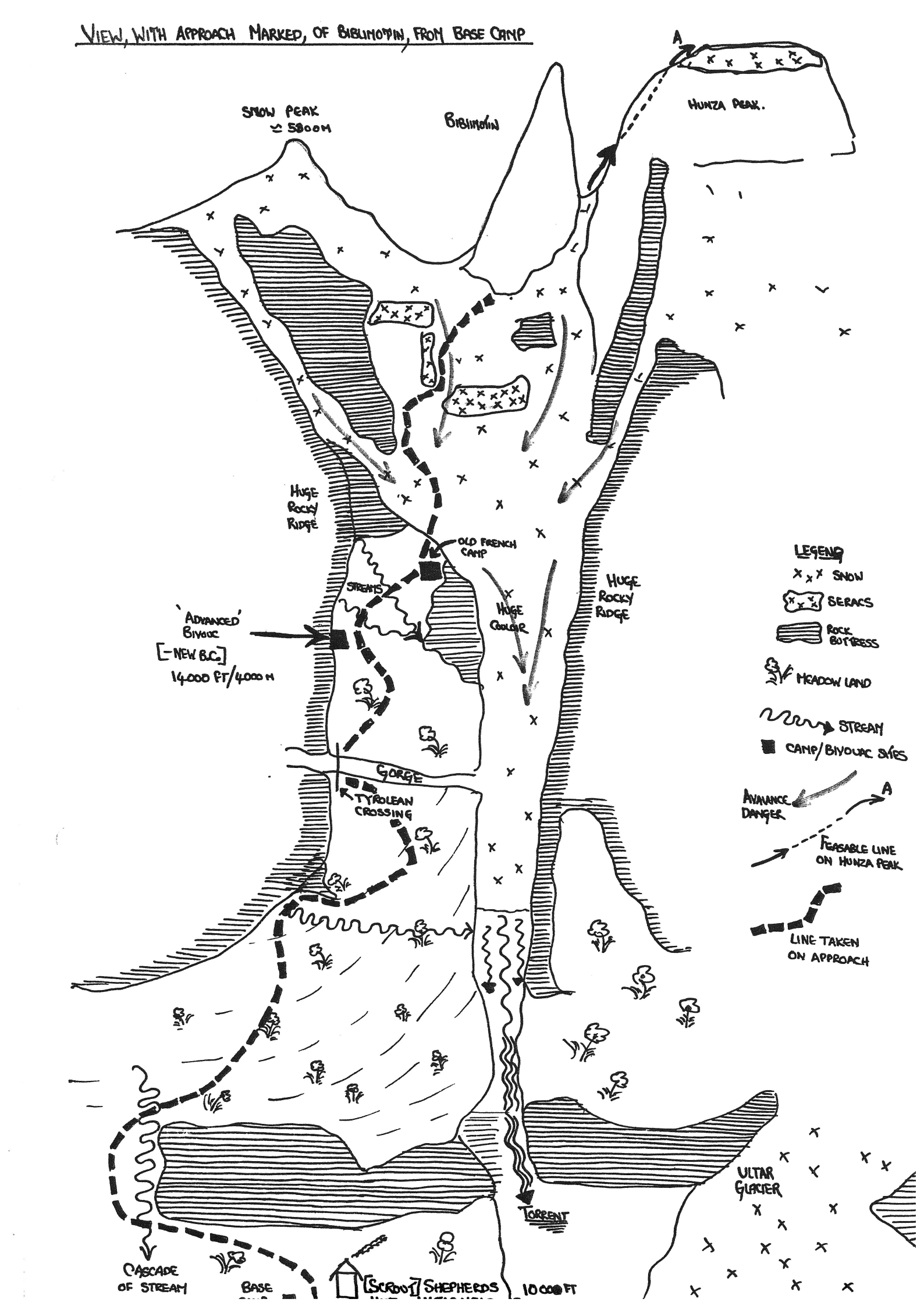
27 August] Arrive Rawalpindi

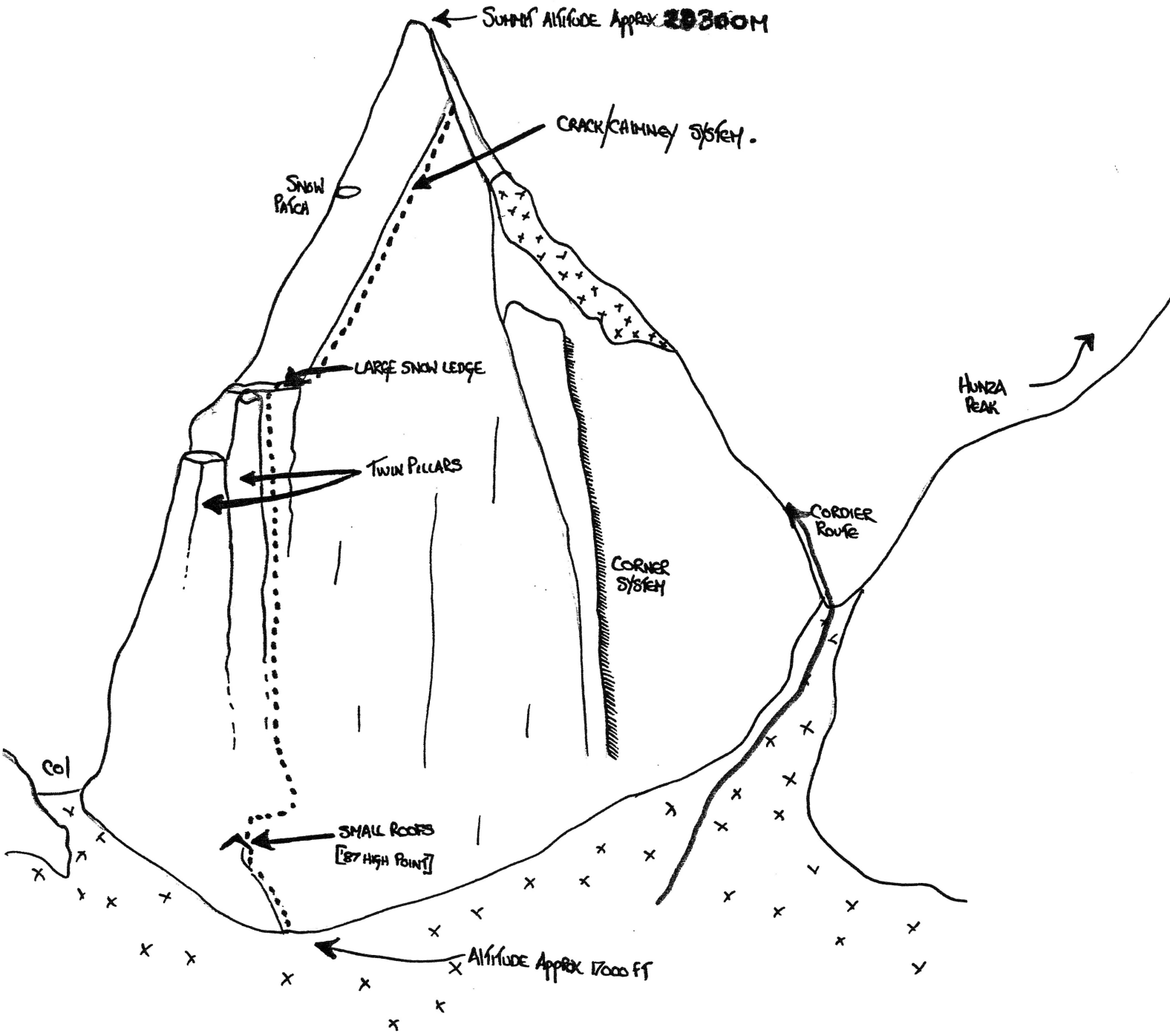
29 August] Fly west

PLAN SKETCH OF THE ULTAR GROUP, HUNZA.



* HEIGHTS FROM ROUSE ARTICLE 'THE HIMALAYA', MOUNTAIN 104


VIEW, WITH APPROACH MARKED, OF BIBLIMODIN, FROM BASE CAMP
A
HUNZA PEAK.
SNOW PEAK
≃ 5800M
BIBLIMODIN
HUGE ROCKY RIDGE
OLD FRENCH CAMP
STREAMS
HUGE COULOIR
HUGE ROCKY RIDGE
'ADVANCED' BIVOUAC
[-NEW B.C.]
14000 FT/4000 M
GORGE
TYROLEAN CROSSING
LEGEND
SNOW
SERACS
ROCK BUTTRESS
MEADOW LAND
STREAM
CAMP/BIVOUAC SITES
AVALANCE DANGER
A
FEASABLE LINE ON HUNZA PEAK
LINE TAKEN ON APPROACH
ULTAR GLACIER
TORRENT
CASCADE OF STREAM
BASE
[SCROO] SHEPHERDS
10 000 FT



AN ILLUSTRATION OF BIBLIM-O-TIN SPIRE [S.E. FACE] WITH ITS FEW MAIN FEATURES HIGHLIGHTED.

Proposed Line

REMARKS THE WALL ABOVE THE HALF HEIGHT SNOW LEDGE IS 'PLUM' VERTICAL, BELOW MILDLY OVERHANGING FOR ITS ENTIRE HEIGHT

Discussion of the Expedition

The Spire

The reasons for our failure to climb the spire result directly from an under-estimation of the walls difficulty, possibly a result of our naivety towards Himalayan climbing. The wall also appears deceptively small and benign from a distance, being surrounded by 7000 m peaks, which possibly affected the assessment of other parties.

A Discription

The south-east face forms a large unbroken wall of about 1000 m in height. There is a small intrusion from the south shoulder of a large snow ledge / otherwise the face appears ledgeless. Below this ledge the wall is continuously overhanging: above, just vertical. There are no obvious 'lines' to climb, the few features which are climbable do not interlink. Only in early morning light [sunrise] does the face possess contrasts, when the features of pillars and contours are highlighted in side light [photo rock + ice]. The face merges on its right hand extreme with a couloir [snow] which leads to the col adjoining Bibliotin with Hunza peak.

Reasons for failure

Very early on in our first attempt on the spire it became apparent that we were not going to succeed. This was due to the difficulty presented by the face, which we had underestimated by a massive degree. We were faced with an assent which we could predict would take at least five days. Since we only possessed 150 m of rope, this would mean most of our bivouacs would be ledgeless, since we would be unable to fix long sections. The possibility of moving fast on such ground, at approx 6000 m, seemed remote [excessively?]. Unless we could secure portaledges 1000 ft of rope, a star drill e.t.c., the route above us appeared unfeasible. We couldn't, So it was.

Ingredients for success

1. Higher base camp. — now prepared at approx 14000 ft.
2. Porta-ledges
3. Star drill [+ bolts?]
4. Fixed rope potential [500-1000 ft] to enable camps to be moved to high point
5. Possibly a team of four
6. More Western food.
7. Arrive late May, climbing during June

THE ULTAR RANGE : CLIMBING POTENTIAL

THE ULTAR GROUP OF MOUNTAINS, AS VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH [KARIMABAD], HAVE FOUR MAIN SUMMITS. TWO OF THE SUMMITS, INCLUDING THE HIGHEST, ARE YET TO BE CLIMBED FROM ANY DIRECTION; ULTAR II HAVING BEING CLIMBED FROM THE N.W. BY A JAPANESE TEAM; BIBLIHOTIN FROM THE SOUTH BY A FRENCH TEAM.

HUNZA PEAK

PROBABLY ABOUT 6400 M IN HEIGHT. CERTAINLY OVER 6000 M. ITS SOUTH FACE CONSISTS OF STEEP SLABS ABOVE A HIGH SNOWFIELD [DIFFICULT TO GAIN ACCESS TO THIS SNOWFIELD], WHICH ARE THEMSELFES CAPPED BY THE HUGE SUMMIT DOME OF SERACS. VERY IMPRESSIVE. THE MOST REASONABLE LINES OF ASCENT WOULD BE FROM EITHER OF ITS TWO COLS.

i BIBLIHOTIN COL — A ROUTE OF MIXED CLIMBING WHICH MAY PROVE TO BE TECNICALLY DIFFICULT, ALTHOUGH DIRECT.

ii ULTAR II COL — A LONGER ROUTE ON SNOW.

ULTAR I

THOUROUGHLY IMPRESSIVE. THE WHOLE OF ITS SOUTH FACE RECIEVES HUGE, AND FAIRLY REGULAR, AVALANCES. HOWEVER, A RIDGE, WHICH BEGINS JUST ABOVE KARIMABAD, RUNS FROM THE SOUTH, STRAIGHT UP TO THE SUMMIT. IT WOULD BE LONG [AT LEAST 7000 FT] TECNICAL FOR ITS WHOLE LENGTH, BUT PROBABLY FREE FROM OBJECTIVE DANGER. THE OTHER OBVIOUS APPROACH WOULD BE FROM ULTAR II, VIA THE LONG RIDGE WHICH JOINS THE TWO SUMMITS. THE RIDGE WOULD BE CONSISTENCY ABOVE 7000 M.

ULTAR II

REFERED TO AS BOJOHAGUR DUAN ASIR I

ULTAR I

REFERED TO AS BOJOHAGUR DUAN ASIR II, [ROUSE MOUNTAIN 10K]

ILLNESS

THE ONLY ILLNESS OF ANY NOTE WAS AN INTESTINAL INFECTION, SUFFERED BY MYSELF. IT BECAME MOST DEBILITATING, BUT WAS SOON SOLVED QUICKLY BY THE USE OF THE DRUGS DISPENSED BY A LOCAL HOSPITAL:

— FASIGYN [TINIDAZOLE]

— PHTHALYL SULPHATHIAZOLE

THESE DRUGS WERE THE ONLY ONES REQUIRED DURING THE TRIP, AND ARE RECOMMENDED.

EXPEDITION COSTS

		£ STERLING	PAK RPS.
RAVEL	LONDON ↓ GULF AIR	308	350 [AIRPORT TAX]
	KARACHI ↓ P.I.A. 'NIGHTBUS'		1860
	ISLAMABAD ↓ N.A.T.C.O. BUS		240
	GILGIT ↓ PRIVATE BUS		40
	KARIMABAD		
	SUB TOTAL	308×2 = 616	2490×2 = 4980
PORTERS	2 PORTER, 1 DAY HIRE		200
CCOMODATION + MEALS	15 NIGHTS, ×2 PERSONS		2000
LIMBING GEAR + FOOD		310	
ISCELLANEOUS		100	
SUB-TOTAL		1026	6180
TOTAL		£1270	

SPONSORS

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