

1987  
HAGSHU-  
KISHTWAR  
EXPEDITION



# THE BRITISH HAGSHU-KISHTWAR EXPEDITION 1987

## REPORT

Front cover: Hagshu Peak, 6330 metres,  
Kishtwar Himalaya, Jammu & Kashmir, Northern India.

Photo: Roger Brookes

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This Report is dedicated to the Late Trevor Pilling for his invaluable advice and experience.

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The Late Trevor Pilling

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Royal Geographical Society - Expeditionary Advice Centre.

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donations of money or supplies and equipment.

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encouragement and patience. Thanks also to Ruth our typist.

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Alan Peel, (Travel), age 24, 20 Woodseats House Road, Sheffield.

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Liaison Officer - Lt. Col. Yogi Kaul (Delhi).

## INTRODUCTION

### Objectives

The organisation and execution of an expedition to attempt the first ascent of a previously unclimbed mountain, known as Hagshu (6,330 metres) in the Kishtwar Himalaya, Jammu and Kashmir, Northern India.

### Planning and Preparation

Initial planning began in November, 1986. Hagshu was chosen after examining the information prepared by Pete Finclaire whose expedition attempted to reach the mountain in 1983 but failed to do so because the bridge allowing access across the River Chenab had been washed away in heavy storms. Two years later a second expedition attempted the mountain, led by Mike Rosser, and this also failed primarily due to poor weather.

The information and photographs we obtained from these sources indicated that Hagshu would be a suitable objective for a team undertaking its first Himalayan expedition. The attempt was to be via the easiest and safest route on the south side of the mountain. Application was made to the Indian Mountaineering Federation early in 1987 for permission to climb the peak. A provisional booking was obtained subject to payment of the peak fee (\$600). Preparations then began in earnest.

Each member had his own role to play and we began to research what we would need to take, particularly in respect of food, equipment and medical supplies. We obtained numerous reports of other expeditions to various parts of the Himalayas to try and give us an insight into the type and quantity of provisions and equipment we would require. This inevitably created a lot of discussion particularly as this was the first expedition for any of us.

## CHAPTER 1

### TRAVEL - ALAN PEEL

My Role as a travel organiser for the expedition was to arrange transportation for all of the team members, with their own gear, plus all the common expedition gear to base camp and back as cheaply and trouble-free as possible.

#### Objectives

- 1 Return air travel from London to Dehli for six expedition members who, because of varying work commitments required the following booking arrangements:  
  
Outward - four passengers on 8th August, 1987  
          two passengers on 15th August, 1987  
  
Inward - two passengers on 26th September, 1987  
          two passengers on 3rd October, 1987  
          two passengers on 10th October, 1987
- 2 Freight of approximately 350kg of gear from London to Dehli. This excludes the personal gear we each carried as our baggage allowance, plus as much as we could get away with, on our passenger flights.
- 3 Transport from Dehli to base camp and back for all members and all of the equipment.

#### Solutions

- 1 All international air lines operating flights to Dehli were approached with two questions in mind.
  - i Possibility of free or discounted air travel for expedition members.
  - ii The best possible offer.

None of the airlines were prepared to offer us free or significantly discounted flights and quotations varied from £365 (bucket shop with dodgy airline including the possibility of a stop-over somewhere) to £530 (British Airways).

We had a contact in the Commercial Department of Hogg Robinson Travel who agreed to match the lowest quote we could obtain with any given airline and we ultimately chose to travel on Thai Airlines who provided a direct flight at a cost of £435. We had read good reports of this airline and our experiences confirmed this. We would thoroughly recommend Thai for anyone wishing to fly to Dehli.

All flights were booked by March, 1987 to guarantee our flights for the times we required.

- 2 There are two options available for the freighting of gear:
  - i Air Freight - expensive.



Srinagar

Hagshu Peak

KISHTWAR

Jammu



DELHI

I N D I A



- ii Sea/Land Freight - time consuming.

We opted for air freight and investigated all avenues and established the following costs:

- a Standard freight cargo cost - £4.50 per kg. but if the goods being transported were personal effects the cost dropped by half to £2.25 per kg. Cargo sent by this route travelled on normal planes and could be booked through the airline freighting departments at any time.
- b Container cargo - this is where a freighting company books a given amount of space with an airline presumably paying a reduced rate whether they manage to fill it or not and any amount of weight can then be booked with this freighting company. The cost was £2.10 per kg.

We chose Option 'b' and freighted our extra gear of 357 kg through Air Forwarding International based at Newcastle upon Tyne International Airport.

### Warnings

- 1 It is important that if cargo is sent by container you should consign it to yourself in India and not the freighting agency in Dehli or the Indian Mountaineering Federation as this leads to horrendous red-tape. We lost two days by making this mistake.
- 2 All cargo must be in locked containers (we used Army Kit Bags), they should all be numbered and you should have a list of the contents of each bag. The list should include the Expedition Name, itemised details of all contents and the corresponding value of any equipment. Because of possible customs duty in India it is advisable to have a complete list of all of your equipment but show the cost of each item to be approximately a quarter of its true value. It is also useful to have another copy for insurance purposes but obviously you should have this at the full value of the equipment.

A proper expedition stamp (which cost us £8.00) and a red stamp pad is extremely useful. This mark of officialdom will help to break through the red tape of Indian bureaucracy.

- 3 On our return we intended to bring all remaining gear back as personal baggage as the cost of freighting gear from Dehli to London can be exceedingly expensive.
- 4 Taxis can be hired from the Indira Gandhi Airport at Dehli at a fixed rate to take you wherever you wish. Alternatively you can choose to travel by meter.

The Indian Mountaineering Federation Building is in Shanti Niketon and the correct address is Benito Juarez Road, Anand Niketan, New Dehli. Make sure your taxi driver knows exactly where this is because it took ours 2½ hours to find it.

### Dehli to Base Camp

Dehli to Jammu - having arrived in Dehli then taking up to a week to release our gear from customs, the next obstacle had to be overcome and this was to transport all members plus our liaison officer and all the gear to the town of

Jammu at the northern edge of the Indian Plains.

The two principal ways of arranging this were:

- i Train - very crowded and difficult to book seats.
- ii Bus - an experience.

Our initial plan was to travel by train at the anticipated cost of 270 rupees per person (£13.50) for a single second class air conditioned ticket. Although we could have travelled first class the cost would have been almost double and we understand that it really isn't worth it.

Unfortunately due to our problems with customs and the Indian necessity to book rail tickets at least three days in advance, we were forced to travel by bus. This cost us about 260 rupees (£13.00) but included all our gear.

We considered the options of employing a trekking agent in Dehli to sort everything out including transport all the way to base camp and back but the prices quoted for this were too high.

#### Jammu to Base Camp

Through a friend who had been to this area the previous year we had the name and address of a trekking agent who we knew could arrange transportation to base camp. This Company was called Wings Tours and Travel, Residency Road, Jammu and Kashmir.

We discussed our requirements with the proprietor, Samuel Francis, and negotiated a price for transport by bus to Kishtwar and then on to Galhar, which is the road head. He was then to arrange mules to carry our gear the majority of the way to base camp and then to employ porters to carry the equipment the final days trek up to base camp. Return transportation was also included.

This trekking company also provided a cook boy, all cooking equipment, food for the trek in and out and base camp food.

The whole contract was negotiated at a cost of 30,000 rupees (£1,500) which turned out to be quite reasonable as the walk in to base camp took eight days and Sammy was required to employ a total of 19 mules. Obviously the costs were less on the way out. It is unlikely that we could have arranged similar transportation directly with porters, mule men etc., at any less cost.

#### WARNINGS

- 1 Care should be taken to ensure that any price you agree is fixed and cannot vary, for example due to increase in costs of hiring mules or porters. This is the agents risk in taking on the contract and really is one of the reasons for using an agent in the first place.

Approximate costs in 1987 were:

Mules - 70-90 rupees per mule per day.

Porters - 60-100 rupees per day depending upon the weight to be carried and over what type of terrain.

- 2 The mules were unable to walk up the Hagshu Nullah (to Base Camp) and porters were hired at the nearby village of Suncham (very pleasant people). An English speaking villager there called Dollatarm is very helpful.

## NOTES

- 1 A Government official based at Galhar seems to provide local mules with a lot of business transporting Government grain. This representative speaks good English and is quite helpful.
- 2 Our trekking agent arranged overnight stops at various tea houses, Dak bungalows etc., en-route to base camp. We were only required to camp on two nights although some of the places were not very good and it is probably best to consider camping all the time. One place to avoid is Atholi which despite being a very attractive town from a distance is, to say the least, squalid and is a Malaria area.
- 3 At present extensive work is being undertaken in extending the existing road from Galhar through the Chenab Gorge to provide a road link to Atholi. The work on this road can only be seen to be believed. One of the contractors we spoke with said that the road was to be extended all the way over the Umasi La into Zaskar to the north. This is just a little unlikely!
- 4 On our return the first two people to fly back to England were loaded up with as much baggage as they could carry (120kg) and distributed as much as possible amongst other passengers. This worked okay and we were able to bring back all of our equipment on our individual passenger flights.
- 5 Unless the weight of equipment is prohibitive long distance travel in India is best done by air. It is cheap and efficient!! Srinagar to Delhi cost £35 one way and took 1½ hours.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hogg Robinson Commercial, Cloth Market, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Air Forwarding Newcastle International Airport, Ponteland  
International Limited, Road, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Wings Tours and Travel, 6 Residency Road, Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir,  
India.

## CHAPTER 2

### EQUIPMENT REPORT - ROGER BROOKES

Whilst it remains true that 'an expedition climbs on its stomach', today's mountaineer relies more than ever on the quality of his equipment. In this 'high-tech' age there exists an often bewildering array of both designs and materials from which to choose. This has made the equipment organiser's task of providing the right tools for the job both easier and harder than ever before. Inevitably, difficult choices and educated guesses had sometimes to be made, but overall we were well pleased with the gear we chose and used, sometimes elatedly so, but on a few occasions we were disgusted with failures that occurred.

#### TENTS

The basic requirement of a tent is that it should provide shelter from the elements. There are however often other equally important factors determining choice, such as the type of weather and terrain encountered; the functional use of the tent; and, even the type of climbing strategy involved. We were fortunate in having a lot of information, from previous expeditions, on both our base camp and advance base camp sites. Above this we intended to climb 'Alpine Style', if possible, using goretex bivi bags.

#### Base Camp (12,500ft)

Here we had six tents pitched on grass, next to a stream and at the head of a glacial lake. The tents comprised:-

|   |                              |   |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Large Nylon A-Frame Tent     | Supplied by our trekking agent as a kitchen tent in which our cook-boy worked and slept (we ate there). |
| 1 | Large canvas "Jousting" Tent | Used for sleeping and equipment storage.  |
| 2 | Vango Force 10 mk 3's        | Personal sleeping accommodation.  |
| 1 | Blacks Mountain Tent         | Personal sleeping accommodation.  |
| 1 | Phoenix Phreedome            | Used by our trekking agent's representative - Aswini Kumar.   |

#### Advance Base Camp (14,500ft)

Comprised three mountain tents pitched on morainic debris just below the summer snow-line. (3mm closed cell foam was used underneath the ground sheets).

|   |                                |  |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Wild Country 'Mountain Quasar' | A two-man dual nylon skin, geodesic dome with snow valance (weight 3.5kg). |
| 1 | Phoenix 'Phusion Extreme'      | Basically similar to the 'Quasar' (weight 4.4kg).                          |
| 1 | Salewa 'Snow Dome'             | A two-man dual nylon skin, dome bought second hand (weight 2.5kg).         |

## Performance

All the tents performed well, from the oldest Force 10 to the newest mountain tents. Re-proofing with 'Texnik' proved to be successful, particularly for the big frame tent which also provided us with a good 'dossing spot' during bad weather and in the evenings. The nylon kitchen tent had no ground sheet and leaked a little but served its purpose, while the other base camp tents provided admirable sleeping accommodation.

Up at advance base both the Wild Country and Phoenix tents proved windproof, waterproof, and snowproof as well as being reasonably comfortable. Condensation did occur in both but by careful ventilation control this could be virtually eliminated. The Salewa dome, however, suffered from pretty bad condensation problems and leaked during rain. In cold, snowy conditions it was better and, due to its lightness, could have been used on the mountain to good effect.

## CLOTHING

Clothing for the walk-in was left to personal preference but usually consisted of shorts and cotton shirt/T-shirt with tracksuit bottoms and fleece jacket for the evenings.

For the mountain we adopted a 'systems approach' based on the maxim that many thin layers are better than one thick layer. This also gave us greater flexibility as the individual items could be worn in many different combinations:-

### The Inner Layer

Helly Hansen 'Lifa-super' longjohns and polo-necked, long sleeve vests were usually worn next to the skin. Alternatively, or in addition to, we also wore the heavier weight 'Lifa Duplo' LJ's and shirt.

### The Mid Layer

This consisted of Helly Hansen 'Polar' pile salopettes and a fleece jacket of various make (Mountain Equipment, North Face, Helly Hansen etc.).

### The Outer Layer

A combined wind and waterproof layer utilising 'Goretex' material. We all used the North Face 'Mountain Jacket' and matching salopettes.

### Headgear

A light cotton 'beany hat' proved essential for keeping the intense sun off both on the approach and on the mountain. Ours were kindly donated by one of our sponsors 'Stirling Lloyd'. For colder conditions we wore Mountain Equipment 'Thermofleece' balaclavas which fitted well under our Phoenix 'Alpine or Winter' helmets.

### Footwear

On the walk-in, light trekking boots or training shoes were worn. For the mountain most of us used Koflach Ultra/Ultra Extrem plastic double boots, but Andy bought the relatively new Asolo AFS 100's. We also took Koflach 'High Altitude' inner boots, but I was the only person to actually use them.

## Gloves

Two basic systems were used:-

- a Dynastar Goretex/Thinsulate ski gloves with optional Snowdon Mouldings Goretex shell overmitts.
- b Wild Country pile lined, Goretex 'Mountain Mitts' with fingered thermal inner gloves (from Wild Country and Wintergear).

## Performance

Both the 'Lifa-super' and 'Duplo' undergarments worked very well, being warm and comfortable. In the drier atmosphere of the Himalaya they seemed to suffer much less from the problems of perspiration than in Britain.

The Polar salopettes used were also much praised for their warmth, comfort and lightness. Most were also treated with Nikwax's TX10 waterproofing solution and mine had an extra zip added to facilitate defecation without dropping one's pants!

The North Face Mountain jacket and salopettes performed very well keeping both wind and snow out without causing condensation. The advantage of the short jacket was that it could be put on or taken off without undoing one's harness while the full side zips in the salopettes permitted them to be put on even with crampons on. Both the jacket and salopettes seemed hardwearing with reinforcing patches in the right places. Our only criticisms were that the zips sometimes proved very difficult to fasten and that the front zip on the salopettes should have been two-way to make it easier to have a 'pee' whilst tied into a harness. Also, perhaps the inner pocket on the jacket should have been a vertical one at chest height and the salopettes would benefit from some small bits and pieces pockets on the front bib. Otherwise our verdict was excellent.

Yet more praise was heaped on the Rab 'Kinder' down jackets. A pull-over type, lightweight jacket with a specially made detachable hood. They were warm when worn over our other layers and fitted perfectly under our North Face jackets. Full marks also to Mountain Equipment for their Thermofleece balaclavas which were the warmest and most comfortable any of us had worn.

The performance of Koflach plastic boots is well known but chilly toes were experienced nevertheless when climbing at night in temperatures down to about -15C. One major problem seemed to be sweating/condensation which made both our socks and inner boots very damp leading eventually to cold foot. Even with 'High Altitude' inners on I very nearly suffered frostbite on Chiring. However, Andy's AFS 100's kept his feet perfectly warm on the same night, even though he normally suffers from poor circulation. His verdict was excellent, my verdict on the so called 'high altitude' inners from Koflach remains unprintable!

The Wild Country Mountain Mitts proved satisfactory for straightforward snow plodding and ice climbing. They were however criticised for being clumsy, and the wrist tightening strap often became tangled in our ice axe loops. They were not as warm as we expected. In contrast the Goretex/Thinsulate ski gloves proved excellent for climbing and handling krabs etc., and were very warm. We did not use the shell overmitts much, but the thermal undergloves proved invaluable.



## SLEEPING BAGS ETC.

A cotton sheet sleeping bag is essential for the walk-in where some rather dubious blankets and mattresses may be encountered. A light bag can also be useful and I took along a Mountain Equipment 'Snowline' pile liner. On the mountain we used a selection of different down sleeping bags:-

- 1 Mountain Equipment - Redline
- 1 Mountain Equipment - Snowline
- 1 Mountain Equipment - Salewa 'Makulu'
- 2 Rab 'Premier's and a Rab converted Polish bag.

Everybody, except Stuart, seemed happy with their choice and kept warm in temperatures down to -20C. Stuart, however, complained of severe condensation in his bag due to its new shell of supposedly breathable/waterproof material. (He ended up pricking holes in it with a pin!).

Underneath us we used the ubiquitous 'Expedition Karrimat' and on the walk-in and at base, a self-inflating mattress as well. Both performed their insulating function well but the inflatable pad was undoubtedly more comfortable and may yet challenge the Karrimat for High Altitude use.

Five of our Bivouac bags were made by Snowdon Mouldings (out of Goretex of course). They were the 'Standard' design and performed extremely well keeping us warm and dry in snow hole/trench bivies up to 18,500 feet. (Though occasionally it was so cold that frost formed on the inside of the Goretex as well as on the outside, thus inhibiting breathability).

## CLIMBING EQUIPMENT

Each climber was responsible for his own personal gear (ice axe & hammer, crampons, gaiters, belay plate etc.) though the expedition did purchase some individual items as well as equipment needed by the whole team. Most of the climbing hardware (nuts, krabs, pegs etc.) was supplied by individuals, with the Expedition providing specialised equipment and meeting any shortfalls. The aim being to equip three ropes of two so that they could each operate independently if required.

### Gear Per Person

Ice Axe and Ice Hammer  
Crampons  
Troll Expedition Whillans Harness  
Belay Plate and Fig 8 Descender  
Petzl Shunt  
Phoenix Alpine/Winter Helmet  
Petzl Zoom Headtorch  
Set of Ski Poles

### Gear Per Two Man Team

2 50m 9mm Cousin 'Superlight' Ropes  
Assorted Rocks, Hex's, Friends, Krabs  
6 Rock Pegs.  
6 Ice Screws/Tubes  
3 Snow Stakes (Mountain Technology)  
1 Deadman (DMM)  
1 Witco Snow Shovel  
1 Coleman Multifuel Stove + Pans.

### Expedition Gear

6 Spare 9mm Ropes, 100m Troll Superblue Tape, Avalanche Probe Set.

## Comments

Much of the gear we used is well known and needs little introduction, however, some of the items used do warrant further comment:

The Expedition Whillans harnesses were made specially for us by Troll and included two extra plastic gear 'loops' at the front as well as their clip on holsters. We found the extra buckle on the crutch strap very useful for dropping our pants whilst still tied in, and the new style metal buckle more easily adjustable when putting on or taking off layers. Our one main criticism, however, was that the sizes were a little large especially when we had lost weight on the walk-in!

All the climbing hardware worked to specification. Snow stakes were preferred to deadmen and the snow shovels were light and effective.

Perhaps the biggest failures of the whole trip though, were the Coleman multifuel stoves which we used to burn Paraffin (Kerosene). They proved very difficult to light, even using proper priming paste, and were subject to dangerous flare-ups. When eventually going, they were difficult to control, and did not burn with a very strong flame. (In comparison to my MSR stove burning the same fuel, they took twice as long to melt a pan of snow for a brew). Definitely not recommended.

## RUCKSACS AND GAITERS

Four members of the team used Berghaus AB65 sacs, I used an old Karrimor Joe Brown mk7, and Simon a similar sac by Wild Country. Although the AB65's proved comfortable when carrying heavy loads they were criticised for being too complex, having no fixed axe loops in one case, and for plastic buckles which broke rather too easily. Another problem arising with large loads was that the lid of these sacs is incapable of extension (unlike the Joe Brown sac) and the top pocket then interferes with head movement.

All members of the team had Berghaus Yeti style gaiters, most being Thinsulate lined. These did keep the snow out and our feet warmer, however, the rubber rands are notoriously difficult to fit and regularly rode up around the toe area. The rand was susceptible to being holed and at least one pair split completely. In our view the rubber used is too thin and too tightly stretched around the boot. It's about time Berghaus sorted this problem out properly, the original rands were much harder wearing.

## SUNGLASSES AND SNOW GOGGLES

It is very important to protect the eyes at high altitudes from the harmful effects of UV radiation as well as from the intense brightness caused by the sun reflecting off snow and ice. We were advised that Bolle sunglasses had the best lenses and were pleased to find they were very comfortable as well. The mid-range model we used was not quite dark enough and caused me to suffer sore eyes until I hit upon the idea of wearing two pairs.

We also took Cebe snow goggles with us in case of bad weather. Fortunately we had precious little of this and so did not use them. They are capable of being worn over sunglasses and have a double anti-fogging lens system.

## LIAISON OFFICER

According to INDIAN MOUNTAINEERING FOUNDATION rules "Every foreign Expedition has to be accompanied by an Indian Liaison Officer, who is a mountaineer. He is to be treated as a member of the Expedition Team and provided with the following equipment/clothing of the same standard as provided to the other members".

In practice, for a small expedition, already stretching its budget to the limit this requirement cannot always be met fully especially when, as in our case, we were given the sizes of a different L.O. to the one we were eventually allocated! We were however able to equip Yogi reasonably well with inexpensive or second hand equipment donated by individual members or loaned by the expedition. His gear was as follows:-

|                 |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Ice Axe         | - | Wooden shafted Chouinard one.                             |
| Windproof Suit  | - | Proofed nylon Cagoule and Overtrousers.                   |
| Down Jacket     | - | Mountain Equipment Dolomite.                              |
| Air Mattress    | - | Expedition Karrimat.                                      |
| Racksac         | - | Cheap prototype karrimor Alpiniste.                       |
| Boots & Gaiters | - | Plastic double boots (provided by IMF) and nylon gaiters. |
| Crampons        | - | An old pair of Salewa Standards.                          |

He was given a polar jacket and loaned a pair of salopettes, a harness, and some sun glasses. Most of this equipment was returned at the end of the expedition, though we were able to let him keep some of the clothing.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finally, we are grateful to Nikwax for supplying their excellent waterproofing products free of charge; and to the Alpine Centre, Blackpool for donating ski sticks and a Witco snow shovel. Thanks also to the following firms which gave us generous discounts on their goods:-

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Allcord                         | Dept 12, Ilford Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 3NX       |
| Berghaus Ltd                    | 34 Dean Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1PG.            |
| D.M.M. International Ltd.       | Coed Y Parc, Bethesda, Gwynedd, North Wales, LL57 4YY    |
| Helly Hansen UK Ltd.            | College Street, Kempston, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK2 8NA |
| Karrimor International          | Dept CG, Avenue Parade, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 6PR  |
| Lyon Equipment                  | Rise Hill Mill, Dent Sedburgh, Cumbria, LA10 5QL         |
| Morrisons Outdoor Shop          | London Road, Sheffield.                                  |
| Mountain Equipment Ltd          | Leech Street, Stalybridge, SK15 1SD.                     |
| Mountain Technology Glencoe Ltd | Old Ferry Road, Onich, Invernessshire, PH33 6SA.         |

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Phoenix Mountaineering | Coquetdale Trading Estate, Amble,<br>Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 0PE                          |
| The North Face Ltd.    | P.O. Box 16, Industrial Estate, Port<br>Glasgow, PA14 5XL                                      |
| Tony Brooder           | Great Asby, Appleby in Westmorland,<br>Cumbria.  |
| Troll Safety Equipment | Uppermill, Oldham, OL3 6AA   |
| Snowdon Mouldings      | Goodman Street, Llanberis, Gwynedd,<br>North Wales, LL55 4HN                                   |
| Wild Country           | Townhead, Eyam, Derbyshire, S30 1RD  |
| Wintergear             | Dept HM, The Old Boathouse, Llanfair<br>Hall, Nr. Caenarfon, Gwynedd, North<br>Wales, LL55 1TT |

## CHAPTER 3

### PHOTOGRAPHY - SIMON FENNA

We took lots of cameras. Everyone had one, some had two.

To accompany this plethora of photographic equipment we also took piles of film.

Mixing these together we took a vast selection of photographs. Most average, Some chronic. A few very good.

In a touch more detail then, lets see what we took:

|     |                                      |
|-----|--------------------------------------|
| SLR | 3 Pentax (2 X ME super, and 1 X P30) |
|     | 1 Cannon SLR (AE-1)                  |
|     | 1 Olympus SLR (OM2)                  |

Plus a selection of wide angle and telephoto zoom lenses ranging from 28mm to 300mm.

|         |                |
|---------|----------------|
| Compact | 2 Olympus Trip |
|         | 2 Olympus XA-2 |
|         | 1 Nikon        |

The accompanying film was Kodakchrome 64 slide film. Bought at a very generous discount from Kodak, this gave excellent colour.

Buy Kodak film.

Our two carrier bags (120 films between 6 of us) full of little yellow boxes attracted unwanted interest from security and customs at Heathrow and Delhi respectively, however, after a search and some persuasion we avoided problems.

How was all this stuff used?

The SLR's with accompanying zooms, wide angles etc., were excellent for touring around Delhi, Agra and the walk-in. Dust was the primary problem everywhere, but mostly noticed on the two day (dust storm) bus trip to the road head. Those with wide angle - telephoto zooms were thus in a better situation. Buy an air-brush and take it everywhere

Another problem was lugging the bulky SLR's around all day in heat that made just moving unpleasant. Hence we were glad to have our 'pocket' cameras except Stuart's Nikon, which broke (no fault of Nikons for sure). These pocket cameras were great for snap shots as you go, and excellent for use when climbing.

With a great big rucksack full of gear, who wants to be carting a clumsy big SLR etc., up to advance base, and beyond. In fact as most actual climbing was at night, the Olympus XA2's (with flashes) were to provide our only record of this phase. The few photo's they produced were excellent quality.

Delhi also provided the venue for me to raise extra cash, and unload my ageing OM2 and 300m lens. Not as lucrative as in years gone by, we still had minimal trouble in getting good prices. We toured the underground market, the Ganja Marg and the market by the Red Fort, searching for the best deal.

### Filters

We took the essential U.V. filters, some starbusts and polarising filters - I found the effect of a polarising filter excellent in many situations.

### Anything Else

I found that we ended up with few pictures on the climb. Do go out of your way to take photo's in these difficult conditions, and avoid the duplication of 400 views from base or advance base camp (despite all the time you spend there). If you are keen to have a comprehensive coverage then maybe individuals could adopt a particular topic to follow throughout.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to Kodak for supplying our 35mm slide films at a discounted price - The Sponsorship Manager, Kodak Ltd., P.O. Box 66, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 1JU.



## CHAPTER 4

### FOOD - ANDY DUNHILL

During our initial planning stages we met as frequently as possible usually at weekends to discuss our plans and go climbing. It was not uncommon at these meetings for at least one of us to fall asleep, such was the level of interest. As I have a great liking for both cooking and eating curries it was decided I should take on the task of organising food.

I quickly obtained copies of the food sections of other expedition reports to try and work out how I was going to begin this monumental task. It quickly became apparent that this is probably the most unpopular task of any expedition and the chances of keeping even anyone, let alone everyone, satisfied seemed impossible. Most people would agree that I am something of a selfish egoist and I therefore came to the conclusion that Mike Thompson's advice in his report on the 1978 Everest Expedition was the best I was likely to find - **"I decided that I could at least satisfy one person so I chose the food that I liked"**.

Many of the reports went into the realms of the nutritional value of the various food stuffs they were taking by comparing the kilo calories per ounce of individual items. This only seemed to be depressing because none of the foods seemed to match the potential energy usage at high altitude. I therefore based my planning on variety and weight.

I split the provision of food into two distinct sections:-

Walk In/Out and Base Camp

Mountain Packs

I intended that the provisions in Item 1 should wherever possible include fresh food as bulk and weight were not primary considerations although obviously you must still transport it. For the food to be eaten on the mountain the weight becomes a much more significant factor and it is essentially a question of balancing weight and energy to try and reach an optimum level.

Having decided what you want to take you must then decide where you are going to buy it and again there are two options:- (1) England (2) India

All food that is bought in England must be transported to India and the cost of this is not cheap. This does however give much more control over the quality and variety of food bought. It is also normally possible to obtain a fair amount of produce at discounted prices or in some instances free. All food stuffs that are bought in India must be packed there which would be time consuming and although most items can be bought their quality is questionable.

We adopted the approach that all non-perishable food stuffs would be bought in England and only perishable items in India. This decision meant that we bought all of the mountain food in England leaving the majority of the food for the Walk In and Base Camp to be bought in India. A number of basic commodities, for example, spices, sauces etc., were taken with us.

Our experiences proved to us that it is simply not good enough to just have some food. It is of paramount importance that the food should be interesting and digestible. On the walk in we had several meals that were bought in local villages and which were totally unpalatable to us. Although on most occasions

we were extremely hungry the staple diet of rice and daal was totally inadequate as we were unable to eat it but yet were still hungry.

### Walk In/Out and Base Camp Food

Arriving in Jammu the last major City before our walk into the mountain we employed a trekking company to provide transport to and from base camp and this company also provided all of the food on the walk in and at base camp. We were therefore not specifically involved in the purchase of expedition food stuffs in India.

The employment of this company made travel to the mountain much easier but as far as food is concerned caused a few problems. Their concept of a days food was not ours!

All food on the walk in was purchased, cooked from local villages and in the main consisted of rice and daal. This was found to be wholly inadequate as it consisted of 80% rice and 20% daal which if served in an Indian Restaurant in England would be sent back without any question whatsoever! Although this did save us carrying and cooking our our food we would in future carry all our food with us and not rely on these villages.

On arrival at Base Camp it became apparent that the trekking company had not brought a particularly wide variety of foods, in fact they really only had rice, potatoes, lentils and a few vegetables. Fortunately they were able to arrange a delivery of more vegetables and fresh meat and when supplemented by our surplus mountain pack rations fed us quite sufficiently.

Water purification is very important and we were fortunate to have been donated two excellent Johnson-Millbank water bags which were used permanently at Advance Base Camp to filter out particles of glacial grit.

All of us like eating Indian food and we all expected to be in our element, but the one conclusion we have drawn from our experiences is that the Indians who operate restaurants in England did not learn to cook in India!

### HIGH ALTITUDE PACKS

Having decided to purchase all our mountain food in England I had to work out how much we would require and within that a suitable variety. I calculated the amount on the basis of the number of man-days potentially to be spent on the mountain. We had planned to have base camp established for approximately three weeks and there were six expedition members which gave a total number of man days of 126.

As it certainly is vital to have sufficient food I purchased and packed 120 man days of food into sixty packs i.e. each pack being sufficient for two people for one day. On the assumption that we would spend approximately half of our time in Base Camp eating standard food this gave us enough mountain food for the duration Base Camp was to be established. I hoped that this surplus provision would meet any delays that might occur and would give us the option of supplementing base camp or walk in/out foods. Little did I realise how important this was to be.

All of the high altitude food was packed into heat resistant foil bags which were heat sealed in England and opened as necessary in India. The bags were kindly provided and sealed, free of charge, by Vallenbeck Packaging, Scotswood Road, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Having decided on the amount I chose three separate types of menu which could

essentially be used at different stages on the mountain. The contents of each is listed at the end of this chapter. The lightest being reserved for the final summit attempt.

There is no definitive answer as to what is the best food to take for the evening meal. Some expeditions have commented that dehydrated foods are not worth the effort as they use a lot of fuel and contain relatively little energy. Other expeditions have used pre-cooked vacuum sealed foods which only need to be heated in water although can be eaten cold if necessary. Another alternative is to simply carry cans of stew etc. We decided that the latter suggestion was simply too heavy and chose a mixture of the first two options.

### General Comments

As with anything we made a few mistakes but fortunately none of these were of any great significance. We have however learnt a few things for the future.

- a The food packs contained more drinks than were necessary and in future we would probably just take the Drinkmaster sachets, leaving all the tea bags for Base Camp.
- b We always found that we could not eat enough food whilst actually climbing and without significantly increasing the weight I do not think this problem can be overcome. Our daily supplies were sufficient to keep us going and we did not suffer unduly.
- c The Nut Bars were found to be totally inadequate and we would in future replace these with chocolate bars which have much more energy.
- d We omitted to take any salt, or pepper which would have been useful.
- e Although the contents of each food pack probably did represent our needs we found that for weight and other logistical reasons we often opened them and took out the more essential items and the food stuffs appropriate to what we planned to do over the next two or three days. It was a general consensus that in future we would not pre-pack the food but would take it out in bulk and take supplies as and when necessary.
- f In some instances the dried fruit mixed with the Alpen was mixed peel and this was generally disliked. Whereas the use of currants, and sultanas etc., were liked.
- g The jam and marmalade sachets were useful but broke easily.
- h The fruit cake became very dry and was not very palatable. This may well have been because we did not buy very good quality cake.
- i The boiled sweets, Hacks and Fishermans Friends were extremely useful to suck throughout the day and we had very little problem with sore and dry throats.
- j The Springlow dried meals were well liked with the exception of the Chicken Mexico. Although dried food has limited energy it certainly served our purposes. The Beanfeast meals were also well liked.
- k The Bernard Matthews meals were also generally liked with one exception the fish risotto because it consisted primarily of rice, which we had by that stage become totally sick of. These do of course have weight limitations for use at high altitude.

- l We would in future take at least 6 oz packets of dried potatoes rather than 4 oz.
- m The puddings were very popular and we all found we had a very sweet tooth, particularly whilst climbing.
- n The drinks sachets provided by Drinkmaster were excellent. We also had a good supply of tea bags given to us by Twinings and although ironically originally bought in India were better than the local tea.
- o We had very little problem with food being stolen by animals although in one noticable incident an unknown creature stole during the night at least six chocolate bars which we never saw again, not even the wrappers. This was at a time when food was becoming very low and I hesitate to think what we would have done to the creature if we had got hold of it.
- p We were not responsible for providing the porters or mule men with food and I strongly recommend that this be negotiated at the beginning of any walk in to a mountain.
- q If ever a smaller group decides to stay behind after the main expedition has left, they must make sure they keep enough food. This seems a simple enough proposition but it is one that Roger and I failed in with potentially alarming consequences. We effectively ran out of food and money whilst being at least four days walk from the nearest place where we could change any travellers cheques. It became necessary to sell and exchange gear for food. We spent four days walking out over the Umasi La into Zanskar to the north dreaming continually of sausages, bacon, eggs, chips etc. etc.....
- r The next thing to learn is that when you have been extremely hungry for a considerable amount of time, do not try to eat too much too quickly or you will make yourself ill as we did. The only cure for too much food is to throw it all up again - just another of lifes experiences.

## HIGH ALTITUDE PACKS

The following contents of each pack were designed to feed two people for one day

### Breakfast

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Alpen, Readybrek or Cereal     | 3 oz      |
| Dried Fruit                    | 1 oz      |
| Dried Milk                     | 1 oz      |
| Oat Cakes                      | 2 packets |
| Jam, Marmalade or Honey Sachet | 2 sachets |

### Day Time

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Fruit Cake  | 2 pieces        |
| Biscuits  | 2 small packets |
| Chocolate Bars e.g. Mars Bar, Marathon, Topic, Twix, Yorki etc. | 4               |
| Nut Bars  | 4               |
| Kendal Mint Cake  | 2               |
| Boiled Sweets   | 2 packets       |

### Evening Meal

Alternative 1 (Light Weight Packs)  
Springlow Dried Foods, Chicken Mexico or  
Minced Beef and Gravy or Vegetable Stew & Beef 1 packet

Alternative 2 (Medium Weight Packs)  
Beanfeast Meal, Curry or Beef Stew or Beef  
Stroganoff 1 packet

Alternative 3 (Heaviest Weight Packs)  
Bernard Matthews Pre-Cooked & Vacuum Packed  
Meals. Chicken Chausser or Beef Stew or  
Haddock 1 packet

With each of these we had either:  
Dried Potatoes 1 4oz packet  
or Dried Pasta 1 4oz packet  
or Pre-Cooked Rice 1 4oz packet

### Pudding

Bernard Matthews Pre Cooked Vacuum Sealed Apple Pie  
& Custard 1 packet  
or Springlow Dried Rice Pudding and Sultanas 1 packet  
or Instant Custard with Apple Flakes 1 packet

### Drinks Packs

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| Tea              | 4 sachets |
| Coffee           | 4 sachets |
| Soup             | 4 sachets |
| Orange or Lemon  | 6 sachets |
| Tea Bags         | 6         |
| Tube Nestle Milk | 1         |
| Sugar Sachets    | 8         |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS TO:

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Drinkmaster Limited,            | Plymouth Road, Liskeard, Cornwall                             |
| James Robertson & Sons Limited, | P.O.Box 4, Golden Shred Works, Droylsden, Manchester, M35 6DR |
| The Beecham Group plc,          | Beecham House, Brentwood, Middlesex, TW8 9BD                  |
| R. Twinning & Co. Ltd.,         | South Way, Andover, Hampshire,                                |
| Springlow Sales Limited,        | Marsland Industrial Estate, Werneth, Oldham                   |
| Colemans,                       | Carrow, Norwich   |
| Burtons Gold Medal Biscuits,    | Cherrytree Road, Blackpool                                    |
| Johnsons Progress Limited       | Carpenters Road, Strafford, London, EC15 2DS                  |
| Fishermans Friends,             | Lofthouse of Fleetwood Ltd., Fleetwood, Lancashire, FU7 7LP   |
| Vallenbeck Packaging            | Scotswood Road, Newcastle upon Tyne                           |
| Simmers The Bakers,             | Mitchelhill Biscuit Factory, 90 Peffermill Road, Edinburgh    |
| George Romney Limited,          | Mints Feet Road North, Kendal, Cumbria.                       |



## CHAPTER 5

### MEDICAL - MARK JACKSON

Why I was chosen to be medical officer remains to be seen. Of the six members of the expedition none were doctors or had had any medical training before - Civil Engineering seemed about as appropriate as computer software designer so I was chosen.

Some basic assumptions had to be made in the planning phase. Everyone knew the importance of not doing anything stupid - self inflicted injuries would not be looked upon too kindly by the rest of the team. Any serious injuries would be difficult to deal with so an element of luck was hoped for; this held out, so our meagre medical knowledge was barely required.

#### Planning

Deciding what to take was reasonably easy. Having bought three large plastic biscuit boxes anything which didn't fit in didn't go. There was one medical box for each climbing team. Most contained essentially the same items, with some slight variations for personal problems (e.g. piles!). Our choice of first aid kit was greatly helped by several useful books and reports:

- 1      Medicine For Mountaineering (3rd Edition), published by The Mountaineer, 306 Second Avenue West, Seattle, Washington, 9819. A Second Aid book. Excellent volume - very worthwhile to take on expedition as a reference book.
- 2      Hypothermia Frostbite and Other Cold Injuries published by The Mountaineers.
- 3      Mountaineering First Aid, a guide to accident response and first aid care published by The Mountaineers.
- 4      Expedition Medicine, published by Expedition Advisory Centre of Royal Geographical Society.

In addition to these items in the team's box, each individual had to have their own personal supply of anti-malarial pills (daily and weekly). The exact type varied according to each individual's doctor's idea! It is essential that an up to date knowledge of the strain of malaria in a given location is known before the appropriate medication is given. There seemed to be some doubt in our minds that a G.P. would have this knowledge.

In addition to malaria pills, prior to leaving UK we all had several injections for Cholera, Typhoid, Tetanus and Hepatitis 'A'. Andy had a course of injections for Rabies (not available on NHS). All the other inoculations were on prescription for a few pounds and given by the G.P. Yellow Fever inoculations were not necessary for India. The course of injections starts approximately 2-3 months before leaving UK, it is important to plan for these well in advance.

#### In India

"Dehli Belly; Very Smelly" was by far the worst problem encountered during the expedition although Andy, who normally suffers from constipation, pronounced that it was the only time he could remember being "normal"!

Each person was afflicted to a lesser or greater degree at some time during (or in fact in Alan's case, after) the trip. The cause was very rarely identified although the poor diet (rice and lentils) during the walk-in did not help. Most people were caught short in some embarrassing places to the amusement of the others. Normally it wasn't long before the joke was turned around! Freshly washed undies were as common as a Buddhist Prayer Flag fluttering in the breeze.

Stuart suffered a serious, although short-lived bout of fever, diarrhoea and vomiting which on Day 2 of the walk-in was quite worrying for us all. To some extent this could also have been from slight sunstroke/exhaustion. Treating the water with an iodine solution tasted foul but killed off most of the water borne bugs during the walk-in and out. Roger, Simon and myself all suffered several attacks of stomach related problems, though none were disabling for more than a few days.

Altitude sickness in a severe form fortunately did not occur to anyone in the party. Everyone suffered headaches, feeling listless and apathetic on arrival at advance base 14,500 ft. After several days there the headaches and general malaise disappeared.

The rapid gain in altitude (14,500 ft to 21,000 ft) on the first attempt on Hagshu in such a short period - two nights and two days, was in retrospect a mistake. If we had allowed one or two days acclimatisation at say 18,000 (on the plateau) bad weather would have made the descent more dangerous. Diamox, which I took and nobody else did, seemed to make no difference to the rate of acclimatisation or to assist in reducing any of its effects. The major problem was maintaining an adequate intake of liquid and food. All our efforts at drinking enough proved woefully inadequate especially at the snow cave (18,000 ft). Dehydration became a serious problem which we didn't adequately overcome.

The intensity of the sunlight at altitude caused predictable problems. Andy's chronically blistered legs and ankles, as a result of two hours exposed at 14,500 ft, curtailed all his activities for several days. Stuart's burned backside prevented him from making an initial reconnaissance of the ridge. Alan's preoccupation with his tan became obsessive and debilitating! Yogi suffered from sunburn and I'm still seeing yellow spots in my vision in one eye, a year afterwards. Reactolite lenses give a false sense of security to the intensity of the light and resulted in slight sunburn of the retina (snow blindness). Motto - wear dark shades at all times on snow; high quality lenses are essential.

One interesting observation on all our physical reaction to altitude was readily available by checking our pulse rates. From these, and noting general levels of tiredness it was obvious that recovery times from strenuous, constant exercise were considerable.

|                              |   |                |
|------------------------------|---|----------------|
| At Hagshu Nullah 10,000 ft - | resting   | 65 per minute  |
|                              | after 20 press ups  | 84 per minute  |
|                              | after 1 minute rest   | 67 per minute  |
| At Base Camp 12,000 ft -     | resting   | 76 per minute  |
|                              | after 20 press ups  | 90 per minute  |
|                              | after 1 minute rest   | 85 per minute  |
| At Advance Base 14,500 ft -  | resting   | 84 per minute  |
|                              | after 20 press ups  | 102 per minute |
|                              | after 1 minute rest   | 97 per minute  |
| At Snow Cave 18,000 ft -     | resting   | 102 per minute |
|                              | Could not do 20 press ups! Constantly at between 98-105 for entire time |                |

### Post Expedition

Return of the Dehli-Belly. In Alan's case after a virtually problem free trip, constant draining diahorrea for four weeks. This resulted in samples being sent for analysis at the Hallamshire Hospital in Sheffield. The problem finally being diagnosed as Gardia. Seven months on he still has recurring bouts of illness which can last several days.

Apart from considerable loss of weight in most people (expecially in Simon's bum!) serious problems fortunately have not (touch wood) reappeared.

### Addenda

Andy and Roger both contracted food poisoning from a bad meal in Padum on the trek out. Both suffered serious vomiting and diahorrea and bad guts for the remainder of their time in India.

On return to England it turned out, after 'stool' samples had been tested that Roger had Campilobacter and Salmonella sp. bacteria in his stomach. Andy, though seemed to have partially recovered in India and was back to normal after a week or two in Britain.

Roger also suffered with sore eyes due to the bright sun and had to wear two pairs of sunglasses on occasions. The Chloramphenical eye ointment proved excellent for treating this complaint.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Searle Pharmaceuticals, Morpeth, Northumberland for kindly donating most of our specialist medical supplies.

## MEDICAL KITS

Each kit contained the following items with some minor variations:

- Thermometer
- Triangular Bandages
- Melolin (non-stick pads) Bandages
- 3M Oxide Tape
- Elasticated Bandage
- Variety of Wound Dressings
- Elastoplasts
- Spenco 'second skin'
- Steristrips (skin closures)
- Micropore Tape
- Variety of Safety Pins, Blanket Pins
- Swiss Army Knife
- Insect Repellants
- Germoline (tube)
- Factor 15 Sunscreen Cream
- Savlon Cream
- Lip Protection Tubes (numerous)
- Anusol/Suppositories
- Antiseptic Wipes (several)
- Liquid Savlon Sachets
- Sachets of Re-Hydrat (Very useful)
- Eye Ointment
- \*Di-Hydrocodiene (DF118) Painkillers
- Paracetamol
- Asprin
- \*Diamox
- Antihistamine - Piriton
- Paracodol
- \*Lomatil
- Arret
- \*Limodium
- \*Codene Phosphate
- \*Amoxcillin
- \*Chloramphenical Eye Ointment

\* On Prescription Only.

We also had two inflatable splints for broken arms/legs which were fortunately not needed.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE MAIN EXPEDITION - ATTEMPT ON HAGSHU

#### DIARY - STUART GASCOYNE

##### 15th August

Arrived in Delhi where we were met by the others. The weather was very hot and humid, but not as hot or as humid as it had been according to Al.

The only noticeable smell was of dope smoke which is again, according to Al, freely available. We took two taxis to the IMF which we shared with two girls that Mike and I met on the plane (Sara and Alice). They stayed with us at the IMF.

##### 16th August

We took a taxi into Delhi and visited the main shopping street. The street was thronged with people moving in all directions on bicycles, motorised rickshaws and feet.

It was pretty surprising that no-one was run over. I stepped on to the street several times without looking, to take photographs, and as a consequence I was immediately greeted by a shout and the squeal of brakes as a rickshaw driver screeched to a halt. Having stopped, he neatly swerved around me and went on his way unconcerned. Everyone seems so good humoured and haggling for the price of things is regarded as part of the game. I haggled for two T-shirts and a pair of trousers and managed to get them reduced by 5 Rupees.

##### August 17th

The bus journey from Delhi to Jammu began well but towards the end became extremely unpleasant. We left Delhi at 5.30 p.m. and arrived in Jammu at 11.00 a.m. the next day. The bus arriving four hours late. The total journey time was therefore 17½ hours. We now face another journey to Kishwar of 14 hours which is supposed to be even worse than the one that we have just completed. The roads being rougher and more tortuous but the driver's driving with the same recklessness as they drove over the last 17 hours. They drive with a commitment and aggression that would assure them of instant arrest in England. Swerving around lorries going in the same direction. Hooting all the time at pedestrians, bicycles and cars, waiting until the last second before turning to avoid oncoming vehicles or obstacles in the road. I was quite comfortable to begin with, there being a large space ahead of the front seat that I was sitting on. I spent the time alternatively dozing almost horizontally and sitting upright looking out of the window.

After arriving in Jammu we obtained some handcarts and moved our luggage into the Hotel Samratz which is reasonably clean and costs 120 rupees per room per night. We were having a meal in the hotel restaurant when at 1.45 p.m. Yogi our L.O. announced that the Banks would close at 2.00 p.m. This resulted in a mad dash around the Town first visiting one Bank which would not change travellers cheques until we got into the Indian State Bank at exactly 2.00 p.m. and changed our money. Roger and I went to see a guy called Sammy who had arranged mules and porters for previous expeditions. He is going to come to the hotel at 6.30 with an itemised package which will take us to base camp and back.

18th August

The following slogans were safety promotion signs painted on the walls at the side of the road.

Life is wonderful, so ponder and think, don't cut it short with speed and drink.

I am guarding you, do not damage me.

My curves are gorgeous so go over them smoothly.

Peep Peep. Don't go to sleep.

Honk Honk. If you're feeling horny.

Saving time than life is not bargain.

Keep your nerves on sharp curves.

Always alert Accident Avert.

Don't be rash, avoid a crash.

Your hurry may be a cause of worry.

If your married, divorce or speed.

Take the time not the risk.

Speed thrills, but kills.

Care makes accident rare.

Take your time, not your life.

Haste makes waste.

Today was spent journeying from Jammu to Kishtwar. This has proved to be very simple. We let Sammy, the package seller, do everything. He hired the bus, paid for and arranged our meals and rest stops. The journey has been slow but interesting, 12 hours to travel 220km! The views from the road Batote to Kishtwar have been as spectacular as the road has been poor. The road winds its way up the side of gorge. The wheels of the bus being inches from a 1000 foot drop several times. When this coincided with a lurch caused by a bump in the road the adrenalin began to flow.

Al, Simon and Roger seem to have recovered from their bowel problem. Andy has been ill with what seems to be the flu and Mark seems to have a tummy upset. I thankfully (touch wood) have suffered from nothing as yet. When we arrived at Kishtwar some guys were unloading a lorry of stones for mending the road. It was 11.00 p.m. at night. As I write this I am sitting in the middle of a bed on one side of which is Mark and on the other Al. We have just heard our first Mosquito.

When we arrived in Kishtwar the hotel was full but after a few minutes it turned out that there were spare beds. The hotel proprietor had kicked his kids out of bed. They were not happy.



## 19th August - Kishtwar - Galhar

Today is bright and fresh, a pleasant change after the humid heat of the previous three days, looking out of the window we could have been in a French or even Swiss mountain village. Once in the street though, reality broke through in the form of open sewers and dust from the unmetalled road. Flies are everywhere. Over to my left people appear to be sweeping the road and others are making aggregate stone by hand with small stone hammers.

The scenery though is as spectacular as ever. Tree covered hills which have a similar appearance to those in the South of France, but much higher. We were woken this morning by Sammy who looked spectacularly clean in a clean shirt while we have only our dust impregnated clothes of yesterday.

Steep cliffs, plunging gorges and terraced fields. We have just rounded a corner to a spectacular view of the valley. All the way along the road the hillside drops away to the boiling river below, trees and shrubs poke out of the rocky hillside. We have just stopped because the roadside is to be blasted. A bulldozer has fallen off the road and they are blasting a path for it to get back on. The drivers jumped off before the bulldozer fell and are safe. The dust which is silver with mica which creeps in everywhere.

I have been very impressed with the two man shovelling technique employed by the road menders. A piece of string is attached to the shovel just above the blade. One man uses the shovel in the usual way while the other obviously pulls the string. Whether this is more efficient than two people operating two shovels is debatable but it is certainly faster than one man using the shovel alone. I suppose that in a place where the cost of a shovel is important it makes economic sense to get the maximum output from it.

Our average speed from Kishtwar to Galhar has been less than 10mph. Galhar is approximately 25yds long, seems to have a permanent population of 15 and a transient population of several hundred. Galhar is a terrace of 4 sheds. One is a Post Office. One is a hotel and there are two other shacks of indeterminate purpose.

## Thursday 20th August - The Walk In

Yesterday we went for a wash in a stream which is about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from Galhar. On the side of the road between the washing place and Galhar growing wild were Cannabis plants with a street value of several million pounds. Today we set off on the trek to base camp. We are splitting into two groups. Roger, Al, Yogi and myself are walking to Atholi while Andy, Mark and Simon will walk with the mules to Hagshu. We expect to arrive at base camp approximately two days ahead of the mules.

Started off at 8.00 a.m. It is now 9.30 a.m. and very hot. What will it be like in three hours time?





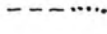
6.00 p.m.

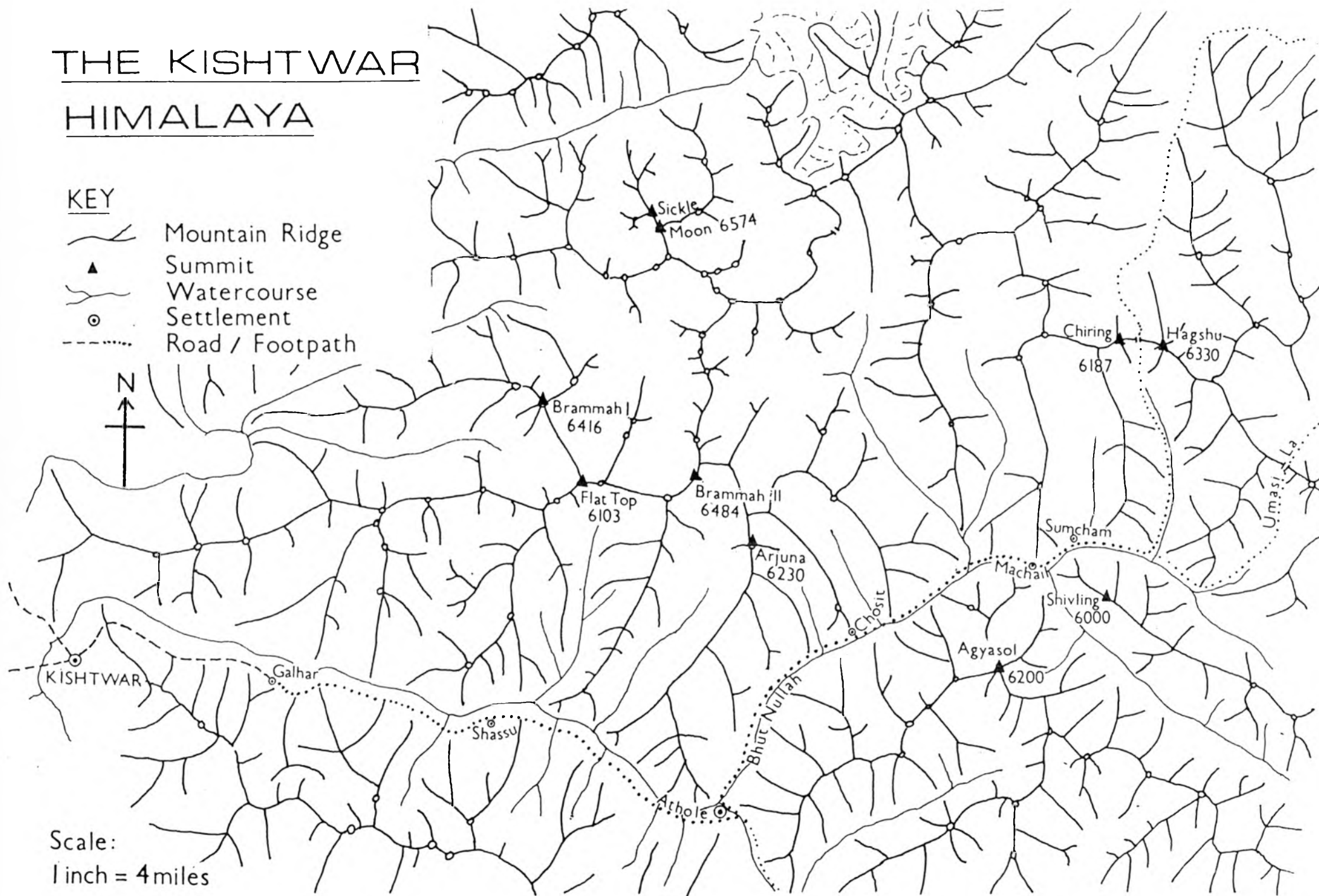
Tri-Nullah

The heat in fact did not directly effect us. It was hot but we were in the shade most of the day. We were shaded by the high valley and the trees. This did not stop me, in particular, getting pretty knackered. For most of the time between drink and rest stops my mouth felt about as dry as Ghandi's flip flop and I felt as if I was walking on a bed of hyperdermic needles. Al, Rog and myself, though, have small blisters or none at all. Poor Yogi, though, has a

# THE KISHTWAR HIMALAYA

## KEY

-  Mountain Ridge
-  Summit
-  Watercourse
-  Settlement
-  Road / Footpath



Scale:  
1 inch = 4 miles

couple of large ones but what was surprising was that when we arrived here Yogi wanted to go on to Atholi while Roger, Al and myself had resolved not to go a step further. I was so tired and my feet hurt so much that for the first hour I was almost unable to rest. I feel a bit better now we have just had a couple of brews, one made by the guy here and one made by myself without sugar. When Al announced that he had brought a bottle of Johnny Walkers' with him I asked Yogi to arrange for us to have some half cups of milk. Al put in a spot of whisky and it absolutely transformed me. I still have not worked out how to use the milk powder without making it lumpy.

### 21st August

Setting off from Tri Nullah at 7.30 a.m. There is a lot of cloud. My feet are sore. I may stop in Atholi.

13.40 p.m.

We have reached Atholi. This has been a short day. My feet are on fire. I am only going to attempt to walk to Machail if I can get a porter to carry my gear. One guy actually offered to carry my sac for 50 Rupees after a bit of haggling. Atholi is situated at the head of a flattening in the valley. All of the flat bottom and part of the gentler slopes are planted with trees. This valley is a beautiful lush green but the village is a rambling mess of huts. The streets of the village are just mud. The people have been becoming steadily more Tibetan in their features, and yesterday we saw some of the roadmen who were almost Negroid. It is the intention of the Indian Government to push the road through to here and eventually into Pradesh. They claim that it will take ten years in total.

It is difficult to believe that the road that we have walked along today which is for the most part a path and in other parts almost disappears is the main link between a community of 3,000 people (which is how many I guess live in and around Atholi) and the outside world.

### 23rd August

I was too ill yesterday to make an entry. I cannot remember the last time that I was so ill. I had diorrhea and vomiting, a headache, and felt so weak that it was an effort just to stand up. I visited the local doctor which was an interesting experience. He was sitting cross-legged on a bed. He asked me a few questions and then dispensed some pills wrapped in newspaper. The rest of the expedition has left. They were going to spend last night in Shassu and tonight they should reach Machail.

My goal for today was to reach Shassu. Well I did not make it but then, as it turns out, neither did the other lads last night. They spent the night in a dak bungalow in some place beginning with 'K' and that is where I am going to spend tonight.

This place is in another beautiful spot down by the river which is less than half the size it was in Galhar but still an incredible torrent. I can hear it thundering away outside.

### 24th August

I have given some thought to tackling the mountain obviously this is all very sketchy at the moment and we will need to look at it more closely before we can reach a decision. The two most obvious routes up the mountain are the central ridge and the gully to the right of it. Mike Rosser's expedition rejected the ridge for some reason and chose the gully. The two disadvantages of this are to

do with the risk of it avalanching. If you get above the gully and there is a snow storm your retreat is cut off and if you retreat in a storm when you are half way up it you would not be able to use that route again for a good long time. This is exactly the situation that Mike Rosser found himself and they ended up losing a lot of gear including a BBC camera. There are another couple of possible lines on the mountain; one over to the left and another on the far right. I think that if the lads from last year's expedition attempted the south face then they may have tried Mike Rosser's gully and been avalanched out of it. Not something I am keen to repeat.

#### 7.45

Today has seen dramatic changes in the landscape. From the scrubby forest land which is what we have spent most of our time just before Machail. To say it was like a Garden of Eden to verdant green is perhaps a bit too much of a cliché but wherever the irrigation ditches went they were lined with pink flowers and there was a wide variety of plants surrounding the cultivated fields. From there the scenery changed again into landscape similar to the Lake District but on a much larger scale. It made me feel a bit nostalgic and after just over a week! Since then a quick burst through another forest and then as we began climbing into the upper reaches of the valley I could feel the atmosphere of the big mountains closing in.

The people have now become almost totally Tibetan in their features and have started begging quite aggressively. One girl threw a bunch of flowers at me because I would not buy them. Strange really, I thought Buddhists were peaceful people!

#### 25th August, 6.20

I was woken this morning by an old man who had been sleeping on the floor next to my bed. He started chanting what presumably must be Buddhist Mantras. Some men have just arrived to buy wool and the mother of the house is weighing it with a lever balance. I think the bed that I slept on must be the only one in the house. Everyone else seemed to have slept on the floor. I hope that the mother and father did not give up their matrimonial bed for me, but it does seem as if I am being treated as the honoured guest. I did ask to sleep outside last night but I did not expect to be given this bed on the verandah. This morning is fresh and there is cloud on the mountain tops. We are now so high that it is necessary to use the down sleeping bag at night. I had a reasonably comfortable night, though the bed springs have broken and the bed is about 6in too short and I am sure my sleeping bag had some bugs in it. For a while I could have been at home in bed. We must set off soon for Hagshu Nullah if we are to catch the rest of the expedition up.

#### 19.20

I walked the short distance to the bottom of the Hagshu Nullah. Tomorrow I am going to walk up to base camp. I have spent the day washing my clothes lazing around and chatting with Yogi. I found Yogi, Simon, Papu and Shambu with the kitbags.

#### 26th August

9.45 and the sun is already burning down. I have just put some sun tan cream on but I can still feel the heat biting into my skin. I am sitting by a spring in the Hagshu Nullah. I have dreamed of a spring all the way up the Chenab gorge.

Arrived at base camp. I have spent a good deal of time looking at the mountain and the central ridge is definitely the way to go. Tomorrow we are going to set

up advance base camp just below the ridge. I want to go back up to advance base the following day and try the ridge with the possibility of tackling the mountain the day after. Roger would like to spend more time acclimatising and has suggested a walk up to and overnight stay at the Hagshu La, which is the pass which leads through to Zanskar. At the moment I do not want to consider any distractions from the primary objective but we have agreed to defer the decision until tomorrow night.

#### 27th August

We have set up advance base camp. 32 days of food, 2 stoves and a tent. Tomorrow we are going up to stay overnight and then reconsider the ridge. Originally just Al and I were going to reconnoitre the ridge but now Roger and Mark have decided they want to join us. I think this is a mistake because it means we will not be able to take sufficient ropes up to provide fixed ropes if that becomes necessary. Our sacks will be very heavy.

#### 28th August

Back up to Advance Base. Al and I are doing a recci on our own.

#### Evening

The weather has changed. Clouds are covering all the mountain tops. There have been a few cracks of thunder. We are not going out tonight. From my point of view this is not a bad thing because I have begun to feel unwell, just the shivers. This is probably due to a combination of altitude cold and nervousness. The nervousness is added to by the constant sound of falling rock and ice. Most of this appears to be falling well over to the right near a snow slope favoured by Simon as route up to the ridge but there was one spectacular rock fall from a gully on our right down on to the lower part of the Mike Rosser gully, a part which we will have to pass to get to the ridge.

#### 29th August

I am going to base camp this morning to get a microphone and a spanner for the stoves.

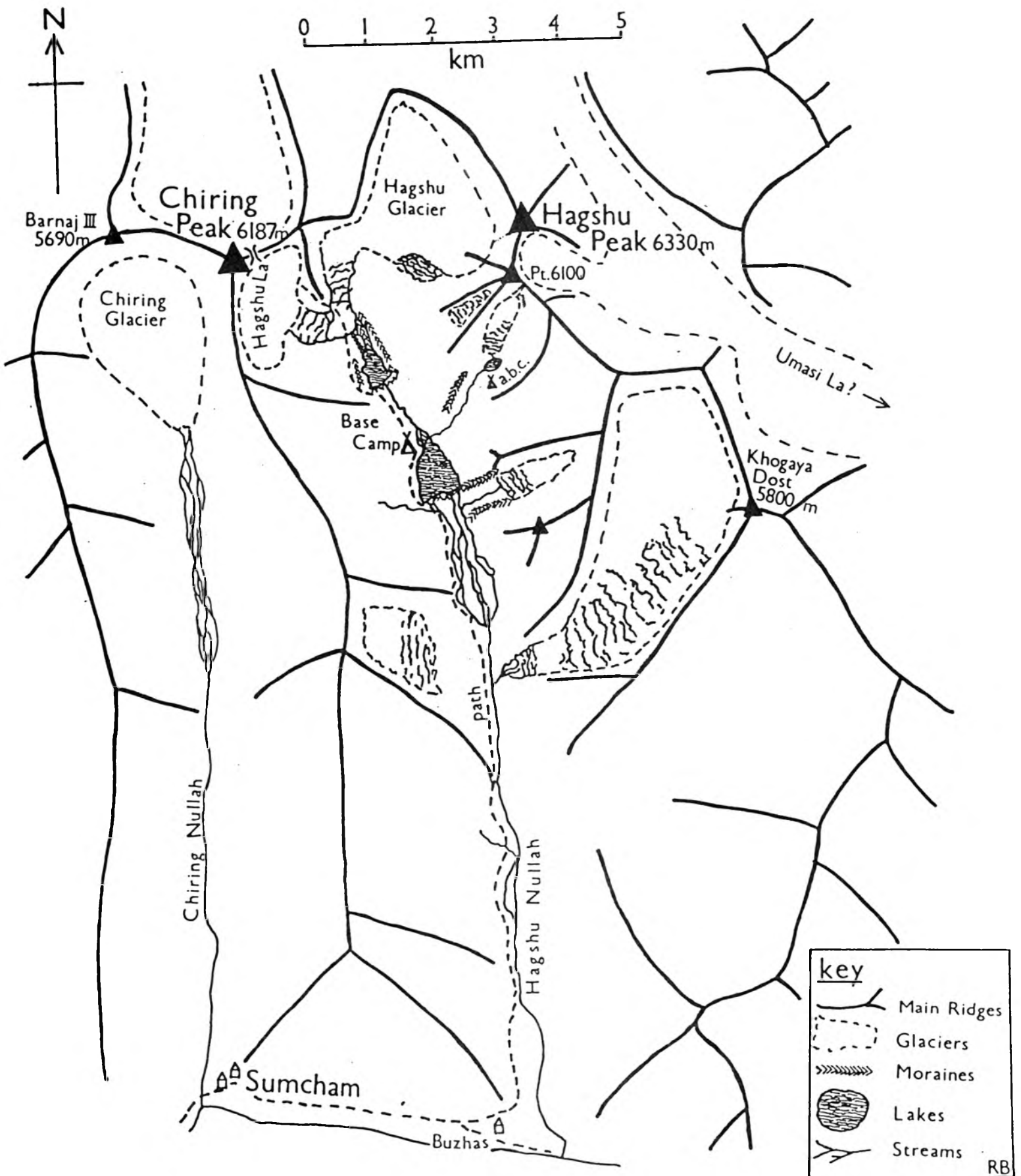
#### 30th August

The weather has cleared and all six of us are going on to the mountain tonight. Al and I are going to sort out the upper ridge. While Rog, Mark, Andy and Simon are going to sort out the lower part of the ridge and the left hand gully.

#### 31st August

The weather has completely clagged in. Cloud is covering all the mountain tops and visibility outside of the tent is down to about 100yds. We must go down tomorrow if the weather does not improve to obtain more fuel and food. Last night Al and I tried to climb the gully to the second snow band so that we could get on to the ridge. We failed abysmally. First of all we had a lot of problems locating the gully in the dark. Then when we found the gully we found that climbing it was such hard work that we were not able to climb much more than 500ft in an hour. We were relieved from this grind when a snow shower arrived and this gave us the excuse to go back down. I hope that this was a transient problem because there is no way that I could climb to the summit if my lungs and legs ached the way they did last night. Today, Roger, Mark, Andy and Simon managed to get on to the ridge, although only the lower slope, where they were able to see into the left hand gully and were able to examine that part of the ridge. The gully on the left was described as steep and difficult to get to

# THE HAGSHU VALLEY



and offering no better route than the gully on the right. They did well to get to this point especially as it started to rain soon after they left and it has continued to rain almost without interruption since then.

I wonder how things are at base camp. Pretty unpleasant I expect. I hope they are not using the paraffin. I left instructions for them not to use the paraffin stove but to use the wood which was delivered the other day. It may be, though, that they think this weather justifies its use. I hope that the fuel that Sammy promised to send arrives soon.

We must make a different plan for climbing the ridge because it does not now seem possible to climb it in a single day.

### 1st September

We have 14 days left to climb the mountain. The weather has improved again. Tonight we are going to attempt to climb the mountain again, but how? We are considering the safety of the ridge against the relative speed of the gully.

### 2nd September

Al, Mark, Roger, Andy and Simon went up to the gully last night. They reached the second snow ramp where they dug a bivouac ledge. They discovered a lot of gear left from Mike Rossers expedition including a Canon SLR, a movie camera, a Goretex suit, food (unedible) and some climbing gear. Andy and Simon stayed up there with the intention of digging a higher snow hole at the top of the ridge tonight. Mark and I may go down to base camp today to get some more food and fuel and also my long johns, some coffee and a battery for the found camera. The weather is extremely hot.

### 3rd September

Mark and I returned to advance base camp to find that Andy and Simon had returned. They had climbed about 200ft above the bivouac when Simon decided that the situation was too intimidating. Andy has suffered blisters due to excessive sun bathing the other day. He will be out of action for the next four or five days. We were able to see the pre-arranged signals that Simon and Andy made from their bivouac from base camp. The mountains looked really strange bathed in moonlight. Because of the snow on them they seem to be floating above the valley which was in total darkness. Tonight the four of us are going to make an attempt on the summit. We are going to get to the bivouac at about 5. We will then rest for a few hours and go for the top of the ridge. We will then rest and sleep there and then go for the summit. This should take one or two days.

### 8th September - The Summit Attempt

How wrong can you be. We have just returned to base camp. Four days and five nights later. Last night we got back to advance base camp and had the first really good night's sleep for the whole time we were away. On the first night of our summit attempt we reached the Bivouac ledge or Camp 1 as we later called it. I was so exhausted when I arrived there that I lay on the ledge with my rucksack on for about five minutes before I could summon up to the strength to take it off. We had started out by climbing 25 steps and then taking a rest but by the time we approached the ledge I was taking five steps and then having a rest. The following day we spent on the ledge just sitting around drinking and eating. That night we set off for the top of the ridge. I initially felt that I would not be able to survive another night of the same amount of effort so Al set off in the lead. After about 150ft we stopped for a rest on a ledge where we spotted some of Mike Rosser's gear (a friend and a leeper tied together by an

orange sling).

This ledge was about the same height as Andy and Simon's high point. After this the climbing became much steeper and we had to use two axes. Soon we crossed over into one of the stone fall channels and the climbing up this was really pleasant grade 3 ice climbing. This climbing of about 200ft led us to Mike Rosser's high point where we discovered a video camera, two stone and two snow shovels. This was lucky because Al had lost a shovel head when we had been enlarging the ledge at camp 1. I set off leading from this point though it did not really matter who led because we were not pitching the climb or using runners so the risk was equal for leader and second. After a stop to change batteries Al took over. From then on we took it in turns to lead. Mark and Roger who were following us were pitching the route with Mark doing most of the leading. I arrived at the top at about 1.20 a.m. with Al following a few minutes later. As I was leading the final 150ft I was feeling really strong and this was the only occasion during the whole climb that I had to slow down for Al. When we arrived on the ridge and could see the peak of Hagshu we were elated and whooped with joy. After a few minutes of congratulating ourselves (no one else had ever been that high) we started to dig a snow hole. This was very tiring and slow work. After about two hours we had made one large enough for two people but Mark and Roger had not yet appeared. I suggested that perhaps they had decided to bivouac and that we should just crash out and wait for them to appear next morning. Suddenly there was a faint whoop and I went back to the gully to see Mark staggering to the top.

The next day after we all arrived on top of the ridge we decided to attack the summit and we set off at about 1.00 p.m. We thought that it was not going to be very difficult so the 1.00 p.m. start did not seem such a bad idea. We expected to be back at the snow hole for about 8.00 p.m. Very soon the climbing became quite steep and the going was slow because of the altitude.

We had just got to the first rock step when Roger announced that he had only one ice axe and that he and Mark had left their rope at the bottom of the ridge. We pressed on with the climbing up to the bottom of the second rock step. By now the climbing had become very serious and steep with 2000ft drops down to the east side of the mountain. When we arrived at the bottom of the summit rock step we decided to rest and have a brew. After this we decided to try to climb the rock step. I took about six steps out to the ridge and I realised that I was just too tired to go up. I told the others this, there was a short conference and they decided that they were too tired as well. We decided that for the descent we would all be tied together. I was initially going to go down first but Mark offered to change places and I quickly accepted. I did not feel very confident. As we descended it soon became clear why, I was too ill. I had to keep stopping to retch. Each time I retched I had to rest for five minutes to recover. Worse my right crampon became loose and I had to front-point most of the way down. Eventually I managed to tap my crampon back into place with my hammer and I was able to side step down. We all got to the bottom of the ridge. Walking across the flat glacier bowl was exhausting and we had to lie down every few yards to rest. At each rest point we were falling asleep. We eventually got back to the snow hole at 4.30 a.m. Next day we were knackered. We decided to have a rest day and decide the day after whether we would make another attempt on the hill.

We rested the next day which was quite difficult because the sun was very burning at that altitude.

After the next day it was obvious to me that I was in no condition to make a second attempt. Mark was quite ill. Al seemed OK and Roger who had thrown up the night before and did not seem particularly well. I had a chat with Al and Mark in which I pointed out that the best we could hope for was to reach our



previous high point, meanwhile Roger enlarged the snow cave.

After a long discussion we decided to descend. The descent was very tiring and Mark became quite ill. We were thankful that the weather remained good.

#### 9th September - Base Camp

Today it rained most of the day and in spite of my best intentions I did not go up to advance base, I had intended to get my gear from advance base and then tomorrow go to the Hagshu La.

#### 10th September

It snowed last night and I regret not going up to advance base yesterday. Today we will have to get advance base completely cleared. Aswini is going to arrange the porters to arrive as soon as possible. Hopefully the porters will come through. It is possible that they will refuse because of the snow.

#### 11th September

Another awful night in my sleeping bag. The breathable waterproof material that it is covered with does not breathe. The consequence of this is that I woke up several times shivering and covered in sweat.

#### 13th September - Hagshu La

Yesterday we packed up base camp and I set off for the Hagshu La. I am now sitting on a rock in the Hagshu La I think. Its very cold but my sleeping bag worked extremely well (surprising). If this is not the Hagshu La then I am going to return to the others. Al, Mark and Simon are going back with gear. Roger and Andy are staying on to do some more climbing.

#### 14th September - Hagshu Glacier

I was wrong, it was not the Hagshu La. It eventually led to ~~the~~ the head of the glacier. By the time I reached the starting point again I was too tired to carry on. I walked down to base camp. No one was there. I left a note and carried on down. It got dark. Negotiating a part where it is necessary to walk down the bed of the river and then climb up the cliff was pretty hairy. Eventually I decided that it would be better to wait until morning.

#### 15th September - Buzwas

The mule men have arrived. We lazed around for most of the day.

#### 20th September - The Walk Out

No entries for a few days. We walked back to Kishtwar and on the 19th Simon and I set off for Srinagar.

We had a nice few days in Srinagar and then we travelled to Jammu on a video coach. We got to Jammu to find that Al and Mark were still there.

#### 24th September - Delhi Again

Arrived in Delhi. Felt awful. I got progressively worse until I eventually all but threw up in the American Express Office.

#### 25th September

Moved to the YMCA today. This place is cleaner and cooler than the IMF. It was 150R per day for two people including breakfast. Tried to sell the Video and various other cameras. We were offered \$60 for the SLR. Had a bit of a bust up with the others about the gear and then about the SLR. Had a really hard time at the airport while I was waiting for the others to see if they were going to get their baggage through. I was not allowed into the airport because I did not have a ticket. Al and Mark had both gone in and I needed to contact them. I eventually managed to get a message to them and they told me that everything was OK.

#### 27th September

Went to Agra. Saw the Taj. I found the palace at the Red Fort more interesting.

#### 28th September

Went shopping and Simon. Sold his camera. I think today is the last day of my new set of clothes each day policy. Simon flew out today.

#### 29th September

Met an American girl called Alison at breakfast. We are going out for dinner tonight. I have packed my bags.

#### 30th September

I flew home. I was too tired to drink or even eat. I caught a train up to Derby on which I left a painting that I had carefully carried from India.

END OF HOLIDAY

## CHAPTER 7

### DIARY - CHIRING - ANDY DUNHILL

Roger and I were able to spend more time in India and had arranged to have an additional two weeks to the others. After the attempt on Hagshu time ran out for Al, Mark, Stuart and Simon and they together with the Liaison Officer, cook boy and all non essential equipment left. Roger and I kept a limited amount of equipment and food to allow another attempt on this or a different mountain and thereafter to walk out to the north. We decided to change our objective and attempted Chiring, 6,187 metres.

#### 14th-15th September

Rest at base camp and allow the snow from the recent storm to melt and conditions on the mountain to permit climbing again. The weather improved but was significantly colder than before the storm.

#### 16th-22nd September

We packed our sacks with food and fuel for six days. The one tent we had retained was left at the site of our original base camp. We set off for the mountain and made our first error in trying to avoid the Chiring Glacier by walking gradually up the hillside on the east of the valley. Unfortunately what we did not appreciate was that a large hanging glacier came from this side of the valley barring our route. We were therefore forced to descend over 500ft to the glacier. This probably cost us a day as we were forced to bivvi in the moraine of the glacier that night. The following day we continued our walk to the mountain and in the early afternoon reached a convenient point below it where we dug a snow cave (Camp 1) and slept for a few hours during the evening.

We woke at about 10.00 p.m. and set off shortly thereafter. We walked up to and traversed underneath the face of the mountain to the couloir on its left hand side. Entry to this was barred by a large crevasse which we were able to cross relatively easily at its right hand end. The couloir was followed to its top which was a col between Chiring and an unnamed rock pinnacle immediately to the south. The col was reached by daybreak and we rested here for two or three hours watching the sun rise.

Above us a large rock gendarme barred the way and we were forced to traverse some 200ft to the right into a gully system which led up behind this difficulty. Several more pitches over mixed ground led up to below a 300ft rock wall. Unfortunately the weather was beginning to deteriorate and over to the west were obviously major storms on some of the other mountains. Discussions followed as to whether we should continue or descend and we reluctantly decided that the prospect of being caught out in a full blown storm was not an attractive one and we began to descend. Fortunately after having only gone down a few hundred feet the weather did show signs of brightening up slightly and after further discussions we decided to take a risk and sit it out for the night. We therefore returned to the snow slope below the rock wall and dug out a ledge (Camp 2). We went to sleep hoping the weather would turn good by the morning.

Our risk paid off and we awoke to brilliant sunshine. After a leisurely breakfast waiting for the sun to come round sufficiently to warm up the rock we set off climbing at about 11.00 a.m. It took three rope lengths to reach the top of the rock band and the grade was about Severe. There had been a previous expedition in 1980 - The British Padar Expedition which had attempted this mountain. Unfortunately they failed and one of the climbers was killed. We

found evidence of abseil points which were probably left by the member of that expedition who survived. The knowledge of this fatal incident was always with us.

We established a final Camp 3 below the summit ice field early in the afternoon and slept during the evening. We left to make the final summit attempt at about midnight and took only one rope and sufficient food and climbing equipment for the attempt. We climbed throughout the night on reasonable ice which was probably about 50°. The temperature was extremely low and despite having our full layered system on we were still cold.

We reached the summit by daybreak and had the timeless vision of watching the sunrise over nearby Hagshu which the other four had so narrowly failed to climb just a few days earlier.

To say we reached the summit is slightly misleading. We reached what we thought was the summit but on arriving there discovered two further summits just beyond this probably only 50ft higher. Unfortunately it would have been very difficult to have traversed to the main summit because of cornices. We were also very concerned to make our descent down the summit ice field to our last camp before the sun had chance to melt too much of it which would have been dangerous. Had we taken too long we would probably have to have waited until nightfall. We did not have enough food to allow this but more importantly Roger's feet were frozen solid and we were very concerned about the possibility of his becoming frost bitten. As far as we are concerned we reached the point we intended to climb to and this turned out to be the south summit of the mountain.

We returned to our last camp and equipment and had a welcome meal. That evening at about 6.00 p.m. we set off on the descent down the mountain and returned to our snow cave at the base by about 3.00-4.00 a.m. in the morning. The descent was made without incident. We slept for the rest of the night and the next day returned to our base camp.

#### 23rd September

We rested.

#### 24th-25th September

We wanted to make another attempt on Hagshu but were running seriously short of food. We knew that there was enough food for the two of us for four days still in the snow cave at the top of the gully on Hagshu which would allow us to make a summit bid and then return to base camp. Unfortunately our base camp supplies only allowed us one days rest. We therefore decided to make our attempt and returned to the site of advance base camp.

We set off at about 4.00 a.m. in the morning and reached the base of the gully at about 5.30 a.m. Circumstances and conditions were just not right - we were too tired, the weather was inclement, and there had been a massive ice fall down the gully from the serac barrier. All of this added up to make our decision to abandon the attempt on the mountain. This was the end of the climbing.

We returned to the nearest village of Sumcham.

#### 25th September

By this stage we had almost run out of food and did not have much money. We were able to sell our climbing ropes to the villagers in Sumcham which enabled us to buy some food and hire a porter to carry some of our equipment as we had the previous day carried loads of 35kg each, which were too much for us.

### 26th-29th September

With our porter we walked out to the north over the Umasi La which is a 17000ft pass leading to the Zaskar Valley in the Ladakh region to the north.

This is a popular route with both trekkers and local inhabitants wishing to trade. It is a magnificent pass and we were again fortunate to have superb weather throughout the trek.

We reached the Zaskar Valley on 29th September and paid off our porter. We were left with no food and only 35 rupees (about £1.75). We walked down the Zaskar Valley to Tungri where we managed to hitch a lift to the only town of Padam.

### 30th September

We rested in Padam and were fortunately able to sell some of our equipment to buy food and pay for our transport out. Perhaps it would have been better if we had not bought any food because one of the meals we ate made us violently ill and resulted in Roger having Salmonella food poisoning!!

### 1st October

The journey from Padam back to civilisation at Srinagar was notably painful. We spent over 30 hours sat in the back of open trucks being thrown around on dirt tracks, however the views were tremendous. Roger was not too keen as he was suffering from the shits so much so that the driver of the truck described him as being "a very disentry person".

### 2nd-10th October

We rested for a few days in Srinagar and not being able to face another 30 or 40 hour bus journey to Delhi decided to fly. This must be the best way to travel around India and the cost was only £35.00 for a distance of about 550 miles. We spent the last few days in Delhi doing a few more of the tourist things notably visiting the Taj Mahal. We flew back to England on 10th October and as usual it was torrential rain at Heathrow.



A. Dunhill



Chiring Peak 6187m.

R. Brookes



## The Team

Roger Brookes, Mark Jackson, Alan Peel,  
Simon Fenna, Andy Dunhill, Stuart Gascoyne.



## CONCLUSION

Although we failed in our main objective to climb Hagshu four members of the team did make a significant attempt climbing to within 400ft of the summit. As for Roger and I we made a successful ascent of the nearby Chiring and we are happy to have climbed a mountain. Which one is immaterial.

We were extremely fortunate throughout the expedition in having excellent weather. In fact in the nine weeks Roger and I were there we had only four days rain or snow. There were of course a few other overcast days and as indicated above we had a couple of storms but apart from that we had blue skies and hot sun. One noticeable and perhaps unique thing about this year was that there was no monsoon.

This was the first expedition for all of us and we consider it a success in that we managed to reach the mountain with sufficient supplies, equipment and health amongst the members to make a sustained attempt on the mountain.

Our further research in India indicated that Hagshu may very well have been climbed by a Japanese Expedition some years ago. Certainly the officers at the IMF were most adamant that it had although they failed to produce any written evidence. This view is supported by the 1985 Expedition's Report of Japanese provisions being found at the site of Base Camp.

Chiring is also listed as an unclimbed peak at the IMF but there is no doubt that somebody else had been to the south summit because there was a blue supertape sling on the top - well that's life I suppose.

\*\*\*\*\*

## ADDENDA I

### EXPEDITION ACCOUNT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR DONATIONS

#### INCOME

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| Mount Everest Foundation               | £700                  |
| British Mountaineering Council         | £600                  |
| Other Donations (See Acknowledgements) | £1,660                |
| Balance of Sale of T-Shirts            | £160                  |
| Personal Contributions:-               |                       |
| Andy Dunhill                           | £2,000                |
| Stuart Gascoyne                        | £1,350                |
| Al Peel                                | £1,650                |
| Mark Jackson                           | £1,700                |
| Roger Brookes                          | £2,000                |
| Simon Fenna                            | £1,700                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b><u>£13,520</u></b> |

#### EXPENDITURE

|                                   |                       |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Travel (including air freight)    | £3,220                |
| Insurance (RGS Expedition Scheme) | £740                  |
| Peak Fee - Hagshu                 | £380                  |
| Supplementary Peak Fee - Chiring  | £190                  |
| Trekking Agent                    | £1,580                |
| Food in England                   | £560                  |
| Equipment                         | £4,850                |
| Expedition Report                 | £200                  |
| Photography                       | £630                  |
| Medical Supplies                  | £75                   |
| Miscellaneous - England           | £485                  |
| India                             | £520                  |
| Balance in Bank                   | <u>NIL</u>            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b><u>£13,520</u></b> |

N.B. The personal contributions vary according to the items of equipment bought for each person. These figures do not include personal money spent by each member whilst in India.



## ADDENDA II

### DONATIONS WERE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING:-

Glenn Brookes

Steve Halton

ICI Advanced Materials - Blackpool

Glendale Refurbishments Ltd., - Birmingham

John Lockley - Landlord, The Golden Rule, Ambleside.

Simon Fennas Scout Troop

Fylde Mountaineering Club

Blackpool Borough Council

Blackpool Evening Gazette

British Mountaineering Council

Mount Everest Foundation

Stirling Lloyd

S. D. Sicon

## ADDENDA III

### SOURCES OF REFERENCE

#### Other Expeditions to attempt Hagshu

- 1 Hagshu Kishtwar Himalayan Expedition 83 - Leader Pete Finclaire.
- 2 British Hagshu Kishtwar Expedition 85 - Leader Mike Rosser.

#### Other Useful Expeditions to the Kishtwar Area

- 3 British Kishtwar Expedition 86 - Leader Bob Reid
- 4 British Padar Himalayan Expedition 1980 - Leader David Hillebrandt
- 5 Agyasol 84 - Leader Tim Richardson

NB Copies of all reports are available at the Royal Geographical Society Expeditionary Advisory Centre, 5 Kensington Gore, London.

#### BOOKS

- 1 India Survival Kit
- 2 Kashmir Ladakh and Zaskar - A Travel Survival Kit.
- 3 Treking in the Indian Himalayas.

NB All three books are published by Lonely Planets and are available at leading booksellers.

- 4 Lightweight Expeditions to the Great Ranges, edited by Charles Clark and Audry Salkeld, published by the Alpine Club, 74 South Audley Street, London, W1
- 5 RGS publication regarding The Organisation of Expeditions, Food, Medical etc.