

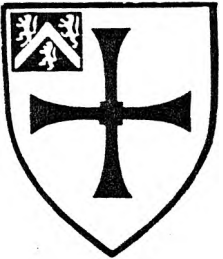
**DURHAM UNIVERSITY
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB**

FINAL REPORT

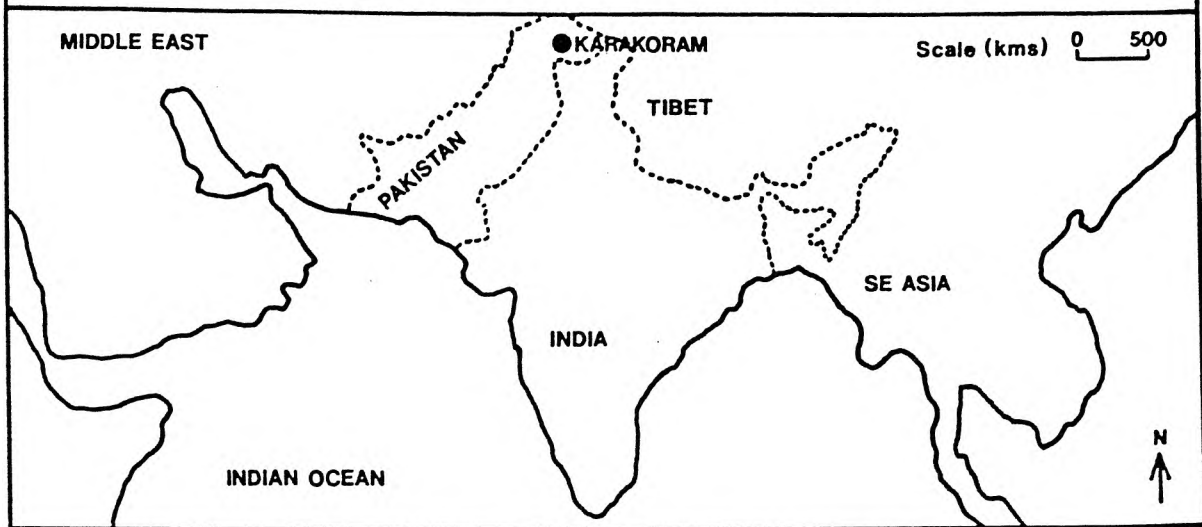
HISPAR WALL

EXPEDITION

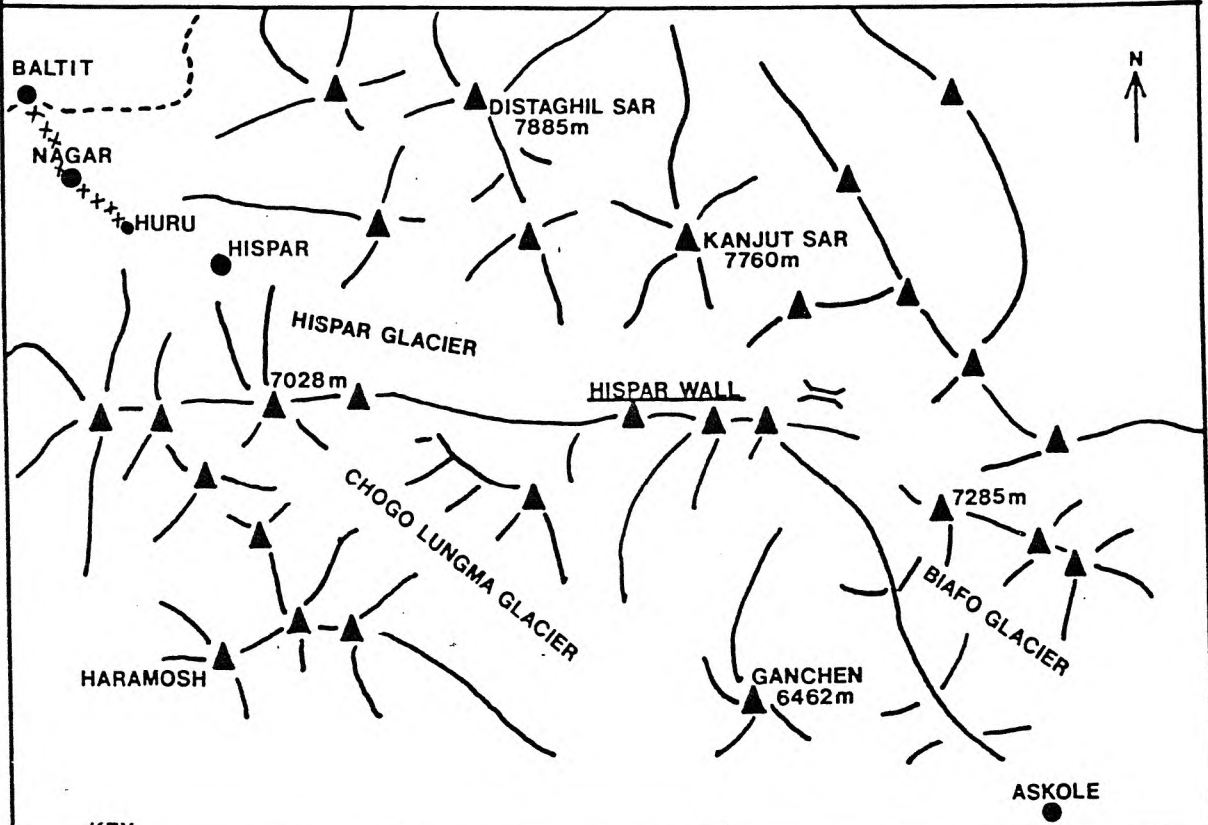
1988








SITUATION OF THE KARAKORAM



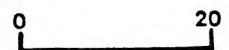
THE KARAKORAM



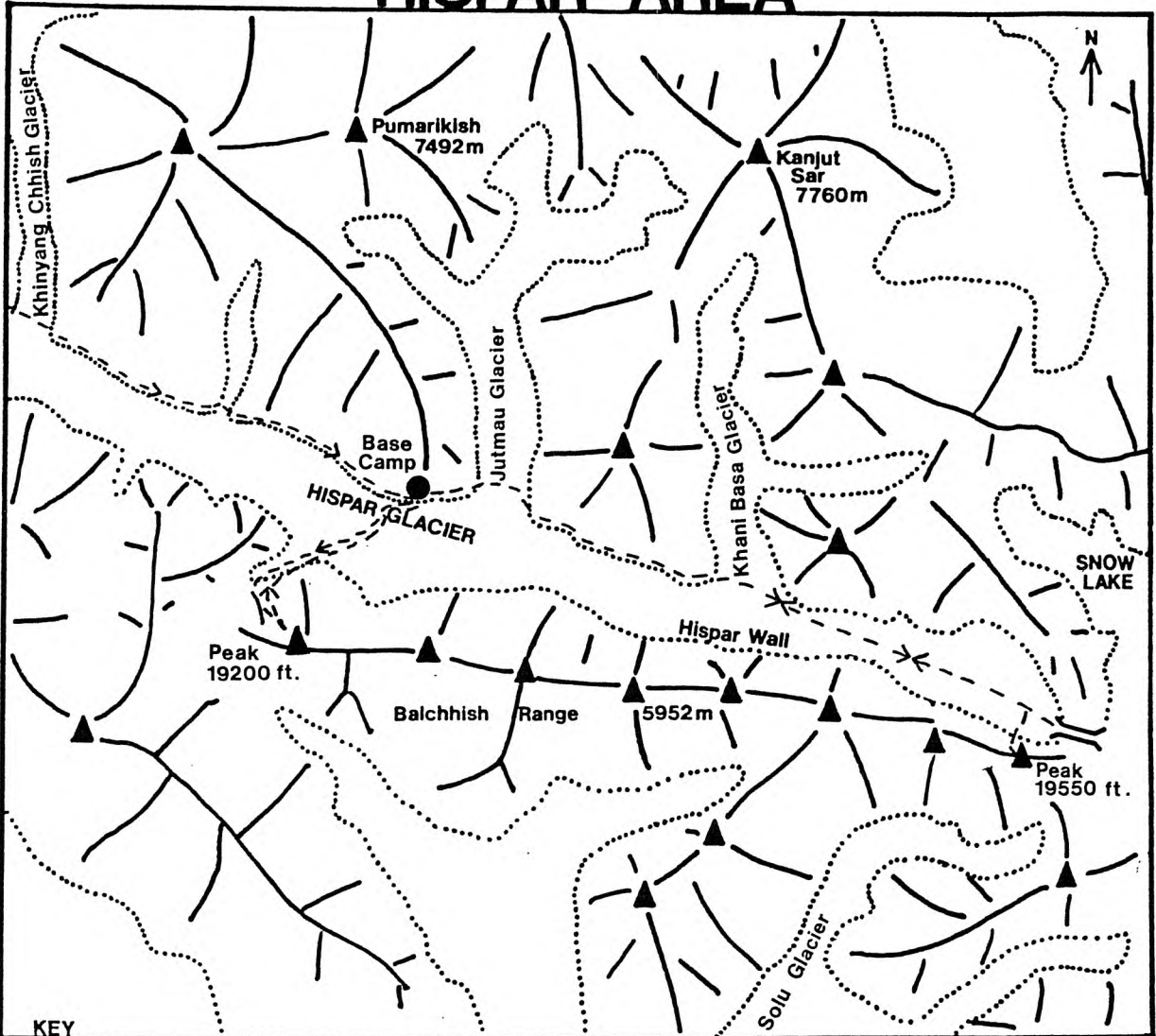
KEY

-  Peaks
-  JEEP TRACK
-  Hispar Pass
-  Settlements
-  Karakoram Highway

Scale (kms)



HISPAR AREA



KEY

 Hispar Pass

 Routes Followed

 Peaks

 Glacier

Scale (kms)



FINAL REPORT

DURHAM UNIVERSITY MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

HISPAR WALL EXPEDITION 1988

1. INTRODUCTION

The idea was to mount a lightweight expedition climbing peaks of below 6000m. 'Alpine' style climbing was obviously appropriate to this type of expedition. The 6000m limit was important, because below this height no peak fees are charged.

The peaks of the Balchhish range on the Hispar glacier were chosen as an appropriate objective, being unclimbed and mostly under 6000m.

In conjunction with climbing, scientific work was carried out on snow pack structures. The results of the scientific work are discussed in a separate report.

2. JOURNEY TO BASECAMP, 9/7/88 to 20/7/88

Despite the huge amount of equipment and food which had to be moved, the expedition members were able to use public buses up the Karakoram Highway from Rawalpindi to Gilgit and Hunza. It was possible to buy most provisions in Rawalpindi. However it was difficult to obtain high energy and sweet food. As a consequence the diet was rather bland. Rice gets a bit tedious 30 days in

succession! In retrospect it would have been better to bring high energy (good) food from Britain.

From Hunza (Baltit) no difficulties were experienced in hiring a jeep up towards Hispar. The jeep cost 800 Rs for the 3 hour journey to Huru. Huru is a shepherds hut at the end of the extended jeep track which is only suitable for 4-wheel drive vehicles. Taking the jeep to Huru saves one porter stage between Nagar and Hispar village.

Four Hispari porters were arranged at Huru. The porter rates were high, 180 Rs/porter/stage. Porter stages proved to be very short for a day's walking, so the expedition ended up paying for 7 stages to basecamp, but it only took 5½ days walking. The porters were friendly and cooperative. Taking Hispari porters guarantees a better reception in Hispar village than if Nagar porters are used.

The journey up the Hispar gorge was uneventful apart from the usual landslide areas. The further development of the jeep track is certain to make this journey easier.

In Hispar village the rest house appeared to be ruined, but camping was possible outside. The Hispari people seem keen to capitalize on visitors. They tried to charge 30 Rs for the use of the wire bridge below the village and 60 Rs for camping, but they proved open to 'negotiation'.

The walk up the Hispar glacier from the village was straightforward following grassy ablation valleys, on the north side of the glacier. There were well established camping areas with good water. The major problems on the 'walk in' were at side glaciers particularly the Pumarikish glacier. These gave hard going over scree and moraine. Basecamp was reached on 20/7/88. Although the target

climbs were on the south side of the glacier the lack of good sites below the Balchhish range meant the north side had to be chosen for a basecamp. The site was just west of the Jutmau glacier, with good water and even a supply of wild rhubarb!

3. HAIGUTUM 24/7/88 TO 28/7/88

The expedition aimed to climb a 19200 ft peak at the western end of the Balchhish range above the Haigutum glacier.

The five mile walk from base to Haigutum was very hard going over the moraine and ice cliffs of the main glacier. A bivouac was made on the upper part of the Haigutum glacier. The proposed route took the 2000 ft snow slopes up to the Nushik col from where the west ridge of the peak could be gained.

A 3 a.m. start was made so as to cross the lower avalanche slopes before dawn. The climbing was up steep avalanche 'runnels' with the bergshcrund being crossed where a cone of avalanche debris formed a snow bridge. Despite the early start the ascent was still on the upper slopes when the morning sun began to melt the snow. The rapidly melting cornice above began to look decidedly worrying. With some relief we were able to wallow up the final soft snow

slopes to gain the summit ridge.

The ridge had much better snow and provided easy going along a steep corniced ridge. Reasonable progress was made until a serac barrier blocked the ridge. There was a possible route around the north side above the main face, but an area of collapsed cornice made this route unjustifiable.

A further bivouac was taken followed by an early morning descent back down to the glacier.

4. HISPAR PASS 30/7/88 TO 14/8/88

After a few days resting at basecamp the expedition set off to attempt a peak near the Hispar pass. The problems of a light-weight expedition were demonstrated here. With no porters the expedition members had to carry all provisions and climbing equipment for 15 days. The arduous nature of the terrain particularly on the Jutmau glacier meant only short stages were walked. Bad weather with regular snowfalls slowed progress, but on the 5/8/88 a final camp was made near the Hispar pass.

A day was spent carrying out scientific work on snow structures and reconnoitering a route through an icefall towards peak 19550 ft.

The following afternoon the icefall was crossed with few problems. After the icefall came one mile of straightforward snowfields to reach the base of peak 19550 ft. A bivouac was made below the 2500 ft ice head wall.

The huge avalanche flutings on the head wall and the amounts of debris at the base indicated a high avalanche risk, so it was decided to climb at night, when freezing was more intense.

A 1.30 a.m. start was made. The slope proved very steep, up to 70°, with small ice cliffs in the lower section. Some of the flutings were huge. In the shadowy light of headtorch beams they had the atmosphere of a Scottish gully! Climbing solo, good progress was made up to the ridge but unconsolidated powder snow near the top of the slope made for hard going.

A rock tower made for a difficult start to the ridge. An exposed traverse around to the right led to a chimney which offered a way up onto the narrow rock crest. The rope was kept on as the expedition moved together along the main ridge. This gave delightful climbing on mixed snow, ice and rock. The unstable nature of the rock meant that pegs and 'spikes' provided the belays. A steep descent led to a difficult looking rock tower. The tower was turned on the north side. This proved a serious pitch on loose rock poised above the precipitous north face (TD, V).

From the 'tower' the ridge became more icy. A ramp system bypassed another tower. The ramp was covered with brittle ice, frozen earth and snow. This led up to a fragile ice step. By early afternoon the snow had turned to slush, making crampons 'ball up' and the climbing difficult. So a snow hole bivouac was made on a snow col.

The following day the final section of the ridge was tackled. This involved a couple of difficult granite pinnacles. The first pinnacle was turned on the left, its sphinx-like profile led us to call the peak 'Sphinx Peak'. The second rock tower involved VS/A1 rock climbing on the granite slabs of the south face. A final corniced ridge led up to the ice mushroom and rock tower which constituted the summit. The final rock tower was scaled by some exposed VS climbing.

The descent followed the same ridge involving a mixture of abseiling and down climbing on the more broken sections. There were a few rather worrying abseils off dubious spike belays.

In deteriorating weather a further snowcave was built. Fortunately the storm proved short lived and it was possible to descend the icy head wall the following night. The descent was awkward, front pointing most of the way. The tent was reached by mid morning on 9th August.

Further scientific work was carried out before returning to basecamp which was reached on 14/8/88.

5. JOURNEY OUT 16/8/88 TO 24/8/88

The walk out to Hunza was uneventful with porters being hired in Hispar and a jeep being taken down from Nagar. The people of Nagar were unfriendly, but they were in the middle of a religious festival. The festival involved them flailing themselves over the back, not a pleasant sight!

6. POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE CLIMBING IN THE AREA

The western and central areas of the Balchhish range, overlooking the Hispar glacier offer few obvious routes. Most of the feasible lines on this range seem to have a high objective danger. These peaks seemed to offer much easier climbing from the south, Arondu side, although access may be more difficult from this side.

There are numerous 'mixed' peaks around the Haigutum glacier, but the rock is very loose and unstable.

The area around the Hispar pass has potential for further climbing. Peak 20685 ft (Shiptons map) to the north west of the pass was a particularly impressive peak. The cirque just east of this peak seemed to have several 'walker spur' like features.

7. CONCLUSION

The expedition was able to achieve its twin objectives of climbing and undertaking scientific work. The fast, flexible approach to the climbing proved ideal in view of the unsettled weather. There were also drawbacks for instance the huge amounts of time and energy expended in moving huge amounts of gear to the climbing areas, but it is the good memories that will remain. For the expedition members this was a fine first climbing trip to the Karakoram, hopefully the first of many.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The expedition is very grateful to all the organisations that contributed financially to the expedition:-

British and Foreign School Society,
Durham University,
Mount Everest Foundation,
British Mountaineering Council/Sports Council,
Tioxide UK Limited,
Watt Memorial Trust,
St. Cuthberts Society.

We also thank the many other individuals and organisations who have contributed to the success of the expedition.

APPENDIX 1: Timetable

Dates

- 8/7/88 Flight to Karachi in Pakistan
- 9/7/88 to 10/7/88 - Train from Karachi to Rawalpindi.
- 11/7/88 to 12/7/88 - Provisioning in Rawalpindi.
- 13/7/88 - Bus to Gilgit and Hunza.
- 14/7/88 - Jeep from Hunza to Huru.
- 15/7/88 to 20/7/88 - 'Walk in' to basecamp.
- 21/7/88 to 23/7/88 - Rested and acclimatized.
- 24/7/88 to 28/7/88 - Attempted 'peak 19200 ft' at the western end
of the Balchhish range.
- 29/7/88 - Rested.
- 30/7/88 to 14/8/88 - Walked to the Hispar pass. Climbed 'Sphinx
Peak' (19550 ft). Walked back to basecamp.
- 15/8/88 - Rested.
- 16/8/88 to 24/8/88 - Walked out to Nagar and Hunza.

APPENDIX 2: Budget

A Expenditure

Spending in Britain:-

General

Airfares.	£ 650.00
Visas.	£ 50.00
Stationery and Brochures.	£ 86.92
Insurance.	£ 207.50
Contingency Fund.	£ 200.00
Travel.	£ 36.00
Total	£1230.42

Equipment

Sleeping Bags.	£ 381.00
Duvet Jackets.	£ 269.84
Mitts.	£ 49.34
Tent.	£ 219.36
Stove.	£ 68.99
First Aid Kit.	£ 20.00
Goggles.	£ 72.00
Shovel.	£ 27.95
Pan.	£ 4.50
Shell Clothing.	£ 240.00
Accessories	£ 130.00
Total	£1482.98

Appendix 2: contd.

Spending in Pakistan:-

Travel from Karachi to Hunza.	-	£ 18.30
Accommodation.	-	£ 29.30
Jeep hire.	-	£ 41.00
Porters.	-	£ 193.00
Food and Fuel.	-	£ 55.00
Total		<u>£ 336.60</u>

Sum Total Expenditure:-

£1230.42 + £1482.98 + £336.60 = £3050.00

B Income

Mount Everest Foundation	-	£ 300.00
British Mountaineering Council	-	£ 300.00
St. Cuthberts Society	-	£ 50.00
Tioxide UK Ltd.	-	£ 200.00
British and Foreign School Society	-	£ 627.20
Durham University	-	£ 127.20
Watt Memorial Trust	-	£ 250.00
Personal Contributions	-	<u>£1195.60</u>
Total		<u>£3050.00</u>

C Summary Budget

Total Expenditure	-	£3050.00
Total Income from Sponsorship.	-	£1854.40
Balance made up with Personal Contributions.	-	£1195.60

APPENDIX 3: Equipment

'Shell' Clothing:-

2 x Phoenix 'Diamond' salopettes.

2 x Phoenix 'Opal' jackets.

4 x Orion gaiters.

Other clothing:-

2 x Helly Hensen, thermals.

2 x Helly Hensen, pile salopettes.

2 x Mountain Equipment 'Annapurna' duvets.

4 x Wild Country thermal inner gloves.

4 x Mountain Equipment 'Annapurna Expedition' mitts.

Tent

1 x Phoenix 'Photon Extreme'.

Rucksacks

1 x Karrimor 'Alpiniste' 65.

1 x Karrimor 'Jaguar' 75.

1 x Berghaus 'Red Flame'.

Sleeping Bags

2 x Mountain Equipment 'Redlines'.

2 x Phoenix 'Phreeloder' goretex bivvy bags.

Stove

1 x MSR stove.

Boots

2 x Asolo AFS 101 Plastic boots.

Climbing Equipment

3 x 9 mm, 50m ropes Edelrid.

2 x Troll freestyle harnesses.

Appendix 3: contd.

2 x Phoenix 'Alpine' helmets.

4 x Grivel '2F' crampons.

1 x Grivel 'super Courmayeur' ice axe.

2 x Camp 'Golden Eagle' ice hammers.

1 x Camp 'Golden Eagle' ice axe.

Other Climbing Gear

Extenders, tape, slings, pitons, jumars, etriers, nuts, hexs, ice screws, deadman, friends, carabiners, screwgates, cosmic arresters and descenders. Made by Troll, Wild Country, Cassin, Clogwyn, Edelrid and Camp.

Accessories

4 x snow goggles, 1 x snow shovel, first aid kit, 2 x pans,

2 x head torchs, 2 x thermofleece balaclavas and 8 x wool socks.

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