

BRITISH SIULA CHICO EXPEDITION 1988

REPORT

1st June to 20th July 1988

Members: Gary. Kinsey
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OBJECT: To attempt the first ascent of the West face of Siula Chico and other routes in the Southern Cordillera Huayhuash, Peru.

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Introduction:

First thoughts for the expedition were born from the desire to escape the overcrowded European Alps, without taking on the bureaucratic intricacies of a Himalayan trip. Also the desire of each member of the team to increase their high altitude experiance.

The Southern Cordillera Huayhuash was chosen for its beautiful peaks and its greater remoteness to the Cordillera Blanca and even the northern Cordillera Huayhuash. There was also a small number of existing routes on the large West face of the Siula's. All of which offered greater oppurtunities to leave the beaten track.

After team changes during the organization of the expedition, the team eventually numbered three people. For Gary Kinsey and Brian Barker it was a first climbing trip outside the European Alps. Jonathan Preston however had experience of both India and Kenya.

Although Gary and Jon were to climb the main objective, the West face of Siula Chico, Brian's role was originaly one of support and Base Camp helper. This was to change during the course of the expedition to adapt to the circumstances encountered.

Timetable of Events

May 31 Depart Heathrow

June 1 Arrive Lima
2 Shopping in Lima
3 Shopping in Lima
4 Depart Lima & arrive Cajatambo
5 Secure supplies
6 Secure supplies
7 Employ Arriero
8 Depart Cajatambo
9 Walk-in
10 Arrive Laguna Sarapococha
11 Rest day
12 Rest day
13 All climb Rosario Norte
14 Reconisance of Sarapo glacier by GK and JP
15 BB does reconisance of Jurau glacier
16 GK & JP walk up to Jurau glacier and bivouac at southern edge
17 GK & JP attempt Trapecio returning to glacier bivouac
18 GK descends to BC, BB ascends to bivouac site
19 BB & JP climb W.face of Jurau 'D', bivouac on summit
20 BB & JP return to glacier bivouac
21 BB & JP return to BC
22 Rest day
23 GK carries food and equipment to junction of glaciers
24 Rest day
25 GK & JP walk to foot of W.face of Siula Chico
26 Observation of route
27 GK & JP descend to BC
28 Rest day
29 GK to Huayllapa to secure Arriero for walk-out
30 BB & JP walk up to W.face of Sarapo

July 1 BB & JP attempt W.face of Sarapo and return to BC
2 Depart BC and arrive Huayllapa
3 Arrive Passo Tapush
4 Arrive Laguna Jahuacocha
5 Arrive Llamac
6 Arrive Chiquian
7 Arrive Huaraz
12 GK to Lima
13 GK depart Lima
14 In transit
15 GK arrive Heathrow
20 JP depart Lima
21 JP arrive Heathrow

Sept 12 BB depart Lima
13 BB arrive Heathrow

London to Base Camp:

The team travelled by Aero Avianca to Lima, although baggage was restricted to 20kgs per person, we managed to bring through 30kgs each. Upon arrival in Lima two days were spent purchasing the bulk of BC food except vegetables. We also secured; pots, pans, a large paraffin stove, a paraffin lamp, fuel containers and fuel. This was done in Lima as the village of Cajatambo at the roadhead had very limited supplies. The bus journey to Cajatambo, which was booked in advance, took twelve hours. The extra baggage of food and fuel was cumbersome, but we were not charged any extra for this.

Upon arrival in Cajatambo we stayed in the Hostal Cajatambo, just off the main square. The next day we found out that the town was in the middle of a week long festival. This meant that although some shops were open, no donkeys or arrieros could be hired as most of the people in the town were drunk. There was also a shortage of donkeys, as Cajatambo is just not geared towards supplying the needs of climbers and trekkers. Most people start their walk-in or circuit of the Huayhuash from the northern town of Chiquian. After several days an arriero and donkeys were found and we departed on the 8th of June. Base Camp was reached on the 10th of June. This took one day longer than usual due to the slowness and inefficiency of our arriero. The site of BC was just below Laguna Sarapococha, as the lakeside itself was rather desolate.

Rosario Norte (5596m):

After two days establishing BC and acclimatizing it was decided to attempt Rosario Norte. This offered a technically easy one day route, allowing the team to go high but sleep low. After ascending the initial scree slopes the summit was finally gained by the West ridge. The ascent took four and a half hours, the descent two and a half hours.

The following day Gary and Jon walked up the Sarapo glacier above Laguna Sarapococha to get a closer look at the W. face of Siula Chico. Upon reaching the snout of the glacier Gary returned to BC suffering from fatigue. Possibly not having recovered from the previous days exertions.

Jon proceeded up the moraine on the left bank of the glacier, until he could see two thirds of the W. face of Siula Chico. The lower part of the face being obscured by Sarapo Oeste. He reported that our proposed line up the W. face looked feasible, but traversing from Siula Chico to Siula Grande may take more time than expected.

The next day Brian made a solo reconnaissance of the nearby Jurau glacier. He reported that there were several possibilities on Jurau 'D' and Trapecio.

Trapeccio (5653m):

On the 16th of June Gary and Jon walked up to the Jurau glacier, bivouacing on the edge of the glacier at its southern end. The walk-in had taken three and a half hours, it placed them a short distance from Trapecio, their objective for the next day.

Rising before dawn they left the bivouac and walked over the sparsely crevassed glacier to the bergschrund at the foot of the route. The West face of Trapecio offers two large rock buttresses, which are both capped with large seracs. Separating these buttresses are two snowfields linked in the middle by a series of narrow ice gullies. These offer a way through a rock band which separates the two snowfields.

A rising traverse line up the first snowfield, which was interspersed with rock outcrops. The best of the possible ice gullies turned out to be much thinner and harder than expected, about grade 5 (Scottish). Though this was only for one pitch. The snowfield above was easier being only sixty degrees, but the snow was soft and airated.

The top of the snowfield was narrowed by encroaching seracs. Three pitches from the top of the rock band placed Jon in this gully from where he could see that it was at least two more pitches to the ridge, connecting the two buttresses of Trapecio. It was now 3.30 pm and it was decided to retreat, the team not having any bivouac equipment. The previous night's bivouac spot was reached by 6.00 pm. The decision to retreat was later verified by Jon who saw the summit ridge on Trapecio from the summit of Jurau 'D'. He described it as being about 500m of knife edge ridge climbing to the true summit of Trapecio.

The following day Gary descended to BC to relieve Brian, who walked up to join Jon at the bivouac spot. This was necessary as security was a problem at BC.

Jurau 'D' (5674m):

On the 19th of June Brian and Jon decided to attempt the West face of Jurau 'D', by a virtually direct line descending from the summit.

They descended to the foot of the route from their bivouac spot, at the southern end of the Jurau glacier. Three easy pitches led to a vertical 50m ice runnel. After this there were twelve pitches of mostly grade 4(scottish) interspersed with some grade 3. They emerged almost on the summit, after surmounting a crumbling cornice. The ascent had taken twelve hours.

A bivouac was made in a snow cave on the East face of Jurau 'D' a few meters below the summit. The next day they descended their line of ascent in a combination of abseils and down climbing. They returned to the glacier bivouac that afternoon, where they spent the night. Returning to BC the next day the 21st of June.

Siula Chico (6080m):

On the 23rd of June Gary made a carry of food and equipment to the base of a buttress, which descends from Yerupaja Sur and splits the glaciers leading to Siula Grande and Seria Norte. This point is roughly two thirds of the distance between BC and the foot of the route.

On the 25th Gary and Jon left BC for the W. face of Siula Chico. They reached the equipment dump after four and a half hours, and proceeded to cross the initially complex glacier descending from the South face of Yerupaja. The weather became more cloudy and there was some very light snowfall. The foot of the face (5400m) was reached about 5 pm. It could be seen that due to the previous hot and sunny weather, there was a lot less ice on the face than when first seen two weeks previously. There had also been a lot of stonefall activity. It was decided to spend the following day studying the face, to gauge the safety of the proposed route and to see if the weather would improve. The team had sufficient food and fuel to do this and still continue with the route.

The following day the weather improved towards noon but by 4.30 pm it had started to snow quite heavily. During the day there had been frequent stonefall in the central part of the face, between Siula Chico and Siula Grande. However the proposed route was mainly free from objective danger. Gary had begun to feel weak and became tired easily after short periods of exercise.

During the night of the 26th about 6mm of new snow fell. In the morning Garys' condition had not improved. A reconisance of the bergschrund confirmed his inability to proceed with the route. This combined with the inclement weather, decided the team to descend. BC was reached in the late afternoon.

Sarapo (6143m):

On the 30th of June Brian and Jon walked up to the W. face of Sarapo, to attempt the Ferrari route. They spent the afternoon and evening brewing and resting before starting the route after dark. The full moon however gave them plenty of light.

After climbing pitches of mainly grade 3 with some of grade 4 (scottish), they reached the halfway point of the route at 5600m. At this point a storm came in which produced heavy hailstones and snow. Although no large avalanches occurred, a continuous stream of snow and hailstones was pouring down the face. This persuaded Brian and Jon to descend before the situation became more serious.

The descent was achieved mainly by abseil and the glacier bivouac was safely reached. They then continued the descent to BC, reaching it on the morning of the 1st of August.

Base Camp to Huaraz:

Base Camp was left on the 2nd of August. Donkeys and an Arriero having been previously arranged for this date. It was decided to walk-out via the northern town of Chiquian, rather than return to Cajatambo. This not only offered a chance to see the rest of the Huayhuash range, but also there was a direct bus link between Chiquian and Huaraz. Travelling to Huaraz via Cajatambo involved a change of buses. This greatly increased the chances of losing some of the equipment. Opportunist theft being rife at bus stops.

Five days walking were enjoyed with overnight stops at; Huayllapa, Passo Tapush, Jahuacocha and Llamac before reaching Chiquian on the 6th of August. The following day a bus was taken to Huaraz. Here the team stayed for several days resting. Gary decided to return home early, as his chest problem, which had started on Siula Chico, had continued during the walk-out. This prevented him from doing any further climbing, so he flew back to England from Lima on the 13th of July. Jonathan returned on the 20th of July after some touring in the Cordillera Blanca. Brian returned on the 12th of September after climbing with other people not connected with the expedition.

Appendices:

(a) Food :

Virtually all the food was bought in Peru. Only the de-hydrated meals and Cup-a-soups for hill use were brought out from England.

Due to the anticipated lack of foods in Cajatambo all BC food was bought in Lima and transported to Cajatambo. This is unnecessary for trips to the Cordillera Blance, as all BC foods can be bought in Huaraz. Foods available in Cajatambo were :-

- Apples
- Onions
- Oranges
- Potatoes (also available from farms near BC)
- Paraffin
- Alcohol (for priming stoves)

- Pasta
- Pots, pans and kettles
- Salt and Pepper
- Rice
- Flour
- Porridge Oats
- Bread
- Cooking oil
- Tinned fish
- Toilet Paper
- Sugar

There is very little available in the higher villages, such as Huayllapa or Llamac. Supplies to these villages are sporadic. Although some items such as sugar and porridge are generally available, their supply cannot be relied upon. There is also virtually no bread in the higher villages only dry crackers and "ships" biscuits.

(b) Equipment :-

Due to the friability of the rock in the Siula group, it was decided to take mainly ice screws and snow stakes. Although some reasonable rock was found on Trapecio.

Hardware:

- 3 * 9mm/50m climbing ropes
- 30 * carabiners
- 10 * assorted slings
- 6 * quickdraws
- 4 * 45cm snowstakes

- 6 * ice screws
- 10 * assorted pitons
- 1 * set of wires
- assorted hexes and friends

Other:

For daytime walking and climbing all members had a thermal shirt, pile salopettes and a pile jacket. Out of the sun extra items used were; balaclava, duvet and thermal long-johns. All members had gore-tex/pile mitts as well as liner gloves. Also all members had gore-tex jackets and salopettes. Boots were a mixture of Koflach Ultra Extremes' and one pair of Asolo AFS 101s'. All of which performed well. Gore-tex bivi-bags were used in combination with a range of sleeping bags. The concensus being that a 1000 gramme down bag would be sufficient. It cannot be overstressed that some sort of protective sun hat must be worn. As the combination of tropical sun, (the Huayhuash is only 12 degrees from the equator), and high altitude can rapidly lead to painful lips and skin. Strong sun and lip cream should be taken.

Paraffin stoves are available in Lima and Huaraz, spares are available in Cajatambo. Fuel containers are available in the markets in Lima, but should be checked for leaks before buying.

Two paraffin and one MSR stove were used. The MSR being used whilst climbing only. White petrol for this is available in Lima or Huaraz.

(c Medical :-

Although none of the team had had any medical training, Jons previous expedition experience enabled him to put together a general medicine kit. All members suffered from several bouts of diarrreah, lasting from one to three days.

The only serious problem was Garys' chest infection. Which he belived was picked up in England and made worse by the altitude and extra effort of climbing. Although the medical kit did contain some Anti-biotics, none were used as a proper diagnosis could not be made. The infection, which produced flem in the nose and throat, was successfully treated with Amoxil, upon return to the U.K.

(d Budget :-

Expenses

In U.K.:	Flights	£ 1455
	Insurance	£ 135
	Bank Charges	£ 37
	Food	£ 40
	Medical kit	£ 30
	Hardware	£ 38
	Administration	£ 30

	Sub-total	£ 1758

In Peru :

All costs are expressed in U.S. Dollars, as this is less effected by the very high inflation rate in Peru.

Exchange rate- £1.00 = \$1.82

Transport (buses)	\$ 15	
Food (BC)	\$ 100	
Expenses, Lima	\$ 45	
Expenses, Cajatambo	\$ 25	
Expenses, Chiquian	\$ 13	
Expenses, Huaraz	\$ 69	
Donkeys to BC	\$ 23	
Donkeys to BC	\$ 93	
Airport tax	\$ 30	

Sub-total	\$ 413	= £227
	<u>Total</u>	<u>£ 1985</u>

Income :-

M.E.F. Grant	£ 300	
B.M.C. Grant	£ 200	
Saville & Holdsworth Ltd.	£ 100	
Gary	£ 362	
Jonathan	£ 362	
Brian	£ 662	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>£ 1986</u>

It is best to take Dollars Travellers Cheques. These can only be converted into Dollars cash in Lima. The exchange to local currency is done on the street with money changers. They give a much better rate for cash than for travellers Cheques. The airport tax is obliatory, currently \$10, and must be paid in U.S. Dollars.

(e) Security :-

Security at BC was a problem, due to the proximity of local farmsteads. The nearest being only half an hours walk away.

Most theft is done by the local children, who will take any item unattended. Small padlocks on the tent zips are enough to deter them, but as we had an open cooking area, this was not possible. It was therefore necessary for one person to always be in BC, which did restrict climbing possibilities and made for an unpleasant atmosphere at BC. Having said this not all the locals were antagonistic or ungenerous.

The political situation in Peru is very changeable and anyone considering a trip there should the situation before departure. Whilst walking down to Huayllapa to arrange for some donkeys to move the team out of BC, Gary met some local guerillas. They were in no way violent or threatening. They seemed more interested in spreading the message of communism than military action. It seemed they were on a patrol of the southern Huayhuash area. There were Police Posts in Cajatambo and Chiquian, though there were no visible signs of any government presence further into the hills. Each side seemed content to stick to its own area.

No bandits were encountered and although the communists asked for a contribution to their funds, they made no attempt to forceably take money. They were badly equiped and did take a map of the Huayhuash, of which they were very short.

The guerillas said they were linked with the Sendosa Luminosa group, which operates in the Ayacucho region of central Peru. This group has a more violent reputation and should be avoided. The information given here is only relevant to the situation in 1988 and cannot be used as a general guide. The different guerilla groups in Peru seem to become more or less active/violent as time goes by.

References:

1. Report (verbal) British Siula Grande Expedition - Simon Yates
2. Mountain No.90 Article by Alan Rouse
3. Peru: A Travel Survival Kit, Lonely Planet 1986

Acknowledgements :

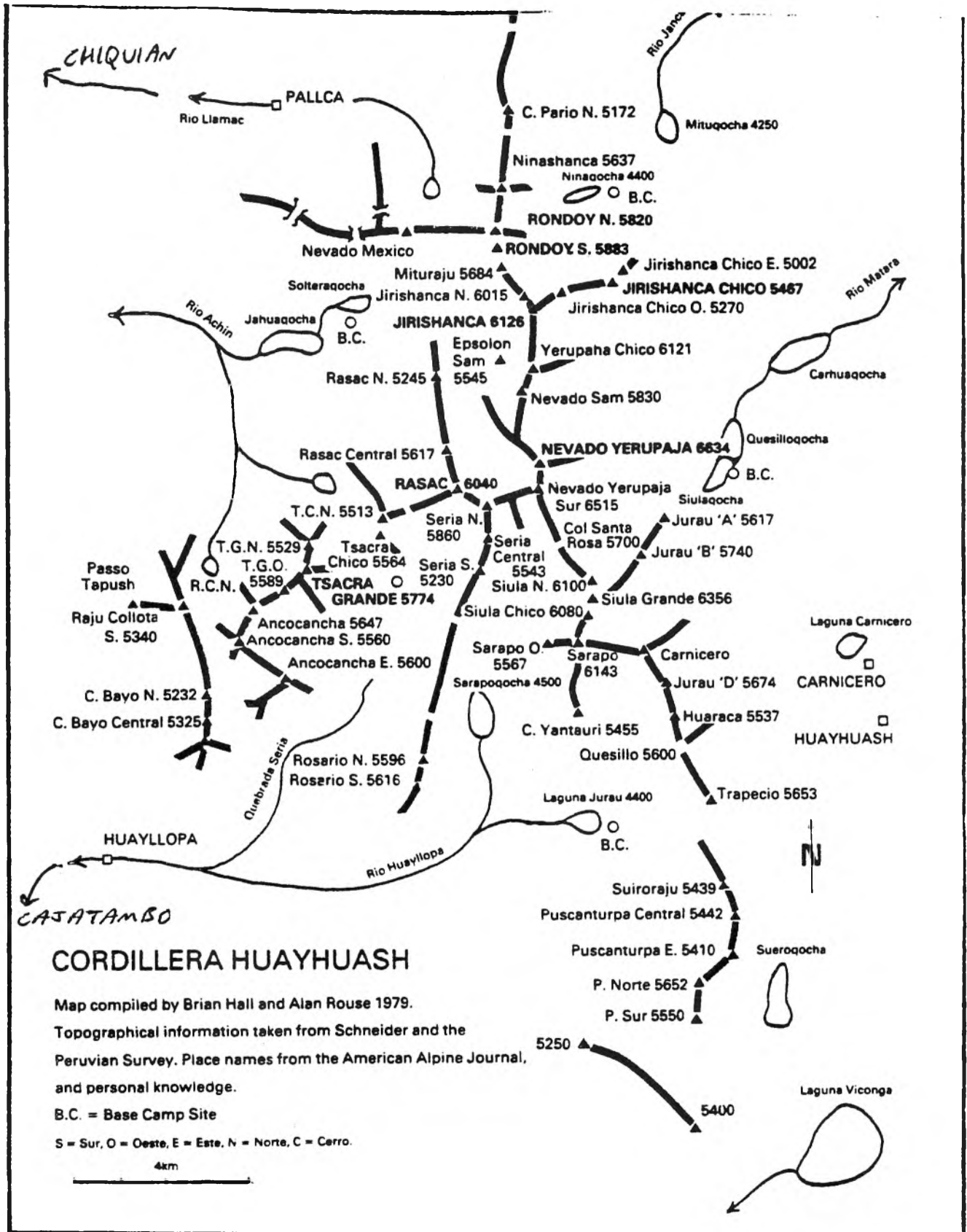
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Mount Everest Foundation
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Saville and Holdsworth Ltd.
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Batchelors Foods Ltd.

Anyone requiring further information about or photos of the mountains in the Cordillera Huayhuash, should write to the address below. They will be most welcome.

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August 1988



CHIQUIAN

CASATAMBO

CORDILLERA HUAYHUASH

Map compiled by Brian Hall and Alan Rouse 1979.
 Topographical information taken from Schneider and the Peruvian Survey. Place names from the American Alpine Journal, and personal knowledge.

B.C. = Base Camp Site
 S = Sur, O = Oeste, E = Este, N = Norte, C = Cerro.

