

SCOTTISH GARHWAL EXPEDITION 1989

Patron: Cameron McNeish, Editor 'Climber & Hillwalker' Magazine

SUMMARY REPORT



Bhrigupanth
6772m / 22,218 feet
India

SUMMARY REPORT

for the Mount Everest Foundation

1.0 Title: Scottish Garhwal Expedition 1989

Patron: Cameron McNeish, Editor 'Climber & Hillwalker'
Magazine

2.0 Members:

2.1 Climbing members:

2.1.1 Richard A. Napier, Expedition Leader
Age 27

Architect in private practice, Glasgow.
2 alpine mountaineering seasons; 10 years
general mountaineering in the British
Isles.

2.1.2 William G. H. Johnstone, Treasurer
Age 42

Design Engineer in Glasgow.
5 alpine climbing seasons; 5 alpine
ski-mountaineering seasons; attempted
ascent of Mount Kenya; 25 years
general mountaineering in the British Isles.

2.1.3 Chris G. Roper, Equipment Organiser
Age 29

Hospital Theatre Technician in Glasgow.
2 alpine climbing seasons; Expedition
to Nepal, ascents of trekking peaks
Kangchung and Island Peak. 15 years
general mountaineering in the British Isles.

2.1.4 Elvyn Haigh, Travel Organiser
Age 41

Engineer in Glasgow.
5 alpine climbing seasons; Expedition
to Iceland's highest peak; 20 years
general mountaineering in the British Isles.

2.2 Support members:

2.2.1 Dr Rona E. Patey MBChB FFARCS,
Expedition Doctor
Age 30

Aenaesthetist in Aberdeen.
General hillwalking and medical research
experience.

2.2.2 Anil Joshi, Indian Liaison Officer (civilian).
Restaurant proprietor, Pune, India.
Several previous mountaineering expeditions
to the Indian Himalaya.

3.0 Organisation contact address:

Scottish Garhwal Expedition 1989,
per Richard A. Napier, Expedition Leader,
44 Gardner Street,
GLASGOW,
G11 5DA.
Telephone: 041-357 0699

4.0 Objective

The purpose of the expedition was a small mountaineering expedition to climb the peak Bhrigupanth (6772m/22,218ft) in the Garhwal region of the Indian Himalaya. Bhrigupanth is situated at the head of the Kedar Bamak valley, due south of Gangotri village which forms the roadhead in the Ganga (Ganges or Bhagirathi) river valley. The expedition attempted the first British ascent of Bhrigupanth by the original route on the S.E.Face first climbed by Arlene Blum's New Zealand/American/Indian womens' expedition of 1980.

The attempt was unsuccessful; a high point was reached at c.5900m/19,400ft in the couloir below the peak's South Col.

5.0 Expedition dates

6 September - 10 October 1989

- 6 Sep Departed Glasgow Airport to Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport.
- 6/7 Sep Paris to Delhi Airport.
- 11 Sep Departed Delhi by bus to Uttarkashi. Hired porters and cook.
- 13 Sep Uttarkashi to Gangotri by bus.
- 14-15 Sep Acclimatisation trek from Gangotri (3100m) to Gaumukh(4000m), source of the Ganges, and return to Gangotri.
- 16-18 Sep Approach trek from Gangotri to Base Camp with porters, up Kedar Ganga valley. Intermediate camps at Bhoj Karga (3840m) and at Kedar Kharga (4340m). Established Base Camp at Kedar Tal lake at c.4750m on 18th. Porters returned to Uttarkashi.
- 20 Sep Established Advanced Base Camp on Kedar Bamak Glacier at c.4900m.
- 21-22 Sep Reconnaissance of route up Ice Fall to Snow Dome camp below western couloir. Reached Snow Dome campsite, 5600m.
- 23-24 Sep Load-carrying to establish Camp 1 below Ice Fall at 5100m and Camp 2 on Snow Dome. This is the Snow Dome camp established by the 1980 womens' expedition.
- 25-26 Sep Rest period during heavy snowfall, return to Base Camp.
- 27-29 Sep Load-carrying and climbing on peak. Snow hole camp at Snow Dome, 5600m. Haigh and Napier reached high point in couloir at c.5900m.
- 30 Sep Retreated to Base Camp, ending attempt.
- 1-2 Oct Recovered remaining gear from camps.
- 5 Oct Departed Base Camp for Gangotri with porters.
- 6/7 Oct Return bus journey to Delhi.
- 9/10 Oct Return flight to Edinburgh Airport.

6.0 Weather conditions

Between 11th and 24th September there was a period of settled, predictable weather pattern, which was characterised by cold clear nights, hot sunny mornings, becoming cloudy in late afternoon; odd snow showers occurred in the afternoons.

Two days and nights of constant snowfall dumped approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet of snow, preventing further progress from Camp 1 (25-26th Sept), forcing a retreat to Base Camp.

Four days of settled weather followed, allowing the ascent to be continued to the high point until the attempt was abandoned on 30th September.

Therefore lack of time remaining forced the retreat which was fortunately completed in good conditions. While at Base Camp waiting for the porters to return to collect loads for the return to Gangotri, there were 3 days of constant heavy snowfall down to 4000m, which would have prevented further climbing above Camp 2 had the attempt not been abandoned, as well as being potentially serious.

7.0 Medical/accidents

One member suffered snow blindness in one eye, and was treated by the Doctor at Base Camp, recovering in 2 or 3 days. Another member suffered chest pains after load-carrying off the mountain. Minor headaches and toothache were experienced above Camp 1 (above 5000m). There were no serious cases of pulmonary or cerebral oedema. The porters suffered no apparent medical problems.

8.0 Route description

The approach to Base Camp (an established site for ascents of surrounding peaks) from Gangotri to Kedar Tal lake is a very straightforward and recognised trekking route following a good path. It ascends 1650m (5412ft) in 12km, with 2 established campsites en route (3 days' trekking).

The Kedar Bamak glacier is easy to cross, and affords numerous possible campsites on its lateral moraines. The Ice Fall below the North Face of Thalay Sagar, which provides access to the couloir and South Col of Bhrigupanth, although dangerously crevassed, can be circumvented easily on its south side (600m of Scottish Grade I/II). The couloir is approx. 500m of Grade I/II, with poor if any belays. The remainder of the original route up the S.E. Face above the col is said to be probably steep snow and ice of Grade III, with loose rock forming the summit pyramid (600m from col). This would have involved a camp at the col and a bivouac on the face at c.6300m. Minor crevasses were encountered on the Ice Fall, and a bergschrund guards the couloir, otherwise the ascent was varied angled snow and ice.

9.0 Estimated costs

Prior to the final expedition accounts being prepared, the costs were estimated as follows:

<u>Expenditure:</u>	Air fares	£2070
	Transport in India	520
	Accommodation and meals in India	290
	High altitude food bought in Britain	68
	Equipment	4320
	Peak fee	533
	Porters and cook	290
	Insurances	505
	Miscellaneous expenses	287
		<hr/>
		£8883

<u>Income:</u>	Personal contributions (5 members) including general spending in India	£6305
	Fund raising:	
	Disco	£490
	Raffles	84
	T-shirts	625
	Ceilidh	402
		<hr/>
		1600
	Grants/donations:	
	MEF grant	300
	MCofS/Scottish Sports Council Grant	300
	Scottish Mountain Trust grant	250
	Private donation	100
		<hr/>
		950
	Miscellaneous	28
		<hr/>
		£8883