



**BRITISH
Hushe Valley Himalayan
Expedition 89**

89/27

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THE
REPORT



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PERSONNEL

Bill Dark Leader. Age 30. Over 3 years Antarctic experience working as Polar Guide and Base Commander. Several first ascents in Antarctic Peninsula area, one of a small group to reach South Pole. Also Alpine, Kenyan and previous Himalayan (Nepal) expeditions.

Address 33 Bates Street
Sheffield S10

Alan McPherson Doctor. Age 29. Climbing experience in Alaska (Mt Saint Elias), Norway, Spitzbergen, the Alps and Antarctica (for two years).

Address c/o 24 St Albans Close
Ashington, Northumberland

Andy Smith Age 27. Scientist with British Antarctic Survey. Extensive experience of British hills, also Alpine and Kenyan experience.

Address 24 Cyprus Road
Cambridge

Chris Griffiths Age 33. First ascents in Antarctica and Pakistan (Thui II), also climbing trips to Morocco, Alps and India.

Address 60 Bower Road
Sheffield S10 1ER

Muzarhir Hussain Cook, Sirdar, Guardian, Manager.

Address Hushe Village, Tagus,
Post Office, Skardu
Baltistan, Pakistan





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INTRODUCTION

The idea was Bill's. He persuaded us that we really needed to spend this summer in the Himalayas. Pakistan was chosen because of the timing of the monsoon and its policy for allowing "trekking peak" ascents with the minimum of bureaucracy. None of us wanted to spend much time organising an "expedition" - where peak permission has to be applied for and paid for and much time devoted to the procurement of sponsorship.

The Hushe area was chosen simply because we had heard about it first, from Joe Simpson who had just returned from the area and Pat Littlejohn who had just written about the area (Mountain 120). Photographs seemed to show a large variety of peaks under 6000m, just what we wanted. With this decision made the other organisation needed was a visit to the Mount Everest Foundation to beg for cash, the procurement of a map and the purchase of tickets and a few odd pieces of equipment we were short of.

We did not bother to research the previous ascents in the area, this may mean that not all of our ascents were the first. Not being mega-star climbers, this seemed un-important to us. We came to the area to have fun, rather than searching for fame. Calling ourselves an "expedition" seemed a little ludicrous, considering the number of people who visit the area and the general ease of access. We therefore decided to throw away all the usual hype the name expedition implies and call ourselves a holiday, which was of course exactly what we wanted. Unfortunately we had to keep the title "expedition" for our sponsors. If you are going to the area we suggest you throw away this report and just turn up, you will not be disappointed. We also decided to take no bolts, which have no place here we feel, there are unfortunately too many in the area. We climbed no impossible walls, but also murdered none.



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DIARY OF EVENTS 1989

- July 4 Depart UK. The holiday begins
July 5 Arrive Rawalpindi
July 6 Arranging transport
July 7 Bus to Skardu
July 8 Rest and shopping
July 9 Shopping and rest
July 10 Jeep to Belagoon Bridge in Hushe Valley
July 11 Walk to Hushe
July 12 Walk to Saitcho
July 13 Walk to just before Chogolisa Glacier
July 14 Arrive basecamp at Spansa (junction of Charakusa and Chogolisa glaciers)
July 15 Brief reconnaissance of Beusten Glacier, meeting with "Georges" expedition
July 16 Reconnaissance to K7 basecamp
July 17 Walk and climb to bivi below Rona Peak
July 18 Ascent of Rona Peak
July 19 Resting and reconnaissance of Phantom Glacier
July 20 Rain, low cloud
July 21 Rain, low cloud
July 22 Rain, trip to Hushe
July 23 Lots of rain, return with supplies from Hushe
July 24 Rest and reconnaissance of Number 4 Gully
July 25 Walk up to Bivi in Gully 4
July 26 Attempt on SE ridge of Ripple Ridge Failure and retreat
July 27 Walk to bivi at base of Karbu Gorge
July 28 Walk/climb up Karbu Gorge to bivi at base of Fiona Peak
July 29 Ascent of Fiona Peak
July 30 Return to base
July 31 The Great Flood
August 1 Rain
August 2 Rain
August 3 Walk to base of Gully 4, bivi
August 4 Attempt on west face of Ripple Ridge, failure
August 5 Return to base, rain
August 6 Walk to base of Gully 4, bivi
August 7 Ascent of Ibex Hill
August 8 Ascent of Patika Peak (by Alan and other expeditions)
August 9 Return to base
August 10 Depart Spansa, return to Hushe
August 11 Resting and flying at Hushe and Saitcho
August 12 Chris trek up Alling Valley, others flying
August 13 Bill and Andy do 12-pitch climb to west of Hushe
August 14 Flying, trekking and socialising in Hushe
August 15 Walk out to Belagoon Bridge
August 16 Jeep to Skardu





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August 17 Hassling for flights
August 18 Hassling for flights
August 19 Pick straws - Chris and Andy return to Rawalpindi
August 20 Bill and Alan take bus to Rawalpindi
August 21 Chris and Andy return to UK
August 22 Bill and Alan hassling for flights
August 23 Bill and Alan hassling for flights
August 24 Bill and Alan return. End of the holiday.





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GETTING THERE

Preparations

These were kept to a minimum, involving the purchase of tickets, the procurement of a map, some begging for cash, the purchase of a few odds and ends of gear and a final mad packing, repacking and re-repacking and ... giving up and going to the pub.

Getting to Skardu

This can be a hassle but luckily (except for Bill who was ill) proved to be a memorable 24 hour ride up the Karakoram Highway.

Skardu

We stayed at the K2 Motel which is horribly overpriced but does offer an extremely convivial environment. It was here that we employed Hussain our "cook". He did not figure in our original plans and was an expensive addition. Our main reason for employing him was a fear of theft from our base camp. On reflection this was a justifiable fear, though in future we would probably site our basecamp in an out-of-the-way area or use lockable tubs to store our equipment. Hussain did prove excellent company, a good cook and taught us much about the local way of life. We bought all our base camp food, fuel and odds and ends in the well stocked bazaar here.

Hushe

We travelled to just below Hushe by jeep through some breathtakingly beautiful scenery. The road to Hushe was blocked so we were forced to walk for one and a half stages (5 hours) to Hushe. Hushe itself is a magnificent place, full of character and characters who are very friendly to travellers.

The walk in

Spansa, our base camp is about six hours walk from Hushe. But it is three days walk for the porters! This really did seem excessive to us, but seems to be the standard rate and provided an extremely relaxing walk in. Apart from having to pinch ourselves every time the porters chose a stopping place for the night, the trip was very enjoyable, following a good path with a very gentle gradient. The people of Hushe love to sing and dance and to engage in competitive tests of agility and strength. These activities enlivened a pleasant three-day walk that left us at Spansa, one of the many grassy campsites that dot the edges of the glaciers of the region. We chose this spot as it seemed in the centre of an area with a large variety of hills. It is an extremely beautiful spot.





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THE ASCENT OF RONA PEAK

"After all we are only mortal....which idiot suggested coming here....how many pegs have we got....I am not going up THERE....." These were some of our first impressions. This is a very impressive area. Squeezed together in a small area are smooth rock walls, mega super couloirs, enormous mixed faces and as far as we were concerned, rather too much death potential for what was supposed to be a holiday.

After two days of reconnaissance we had calmed down and discovered a few secret paths that might allow some degree of upward movement without depleting our very limited supply of courage. The true right bank of the Charakusa Glacier features several steep-sided gullies that lead into small glaciers that, in turn sometimes lead to the bottom of easy snow peaks. Alan and Andy found our first objective, they suggested it as an ideal acclimatising peak, being safe and not too high (5800m). All four of us stomped up what we creatively called "Gully 1". I say stomped, but for Andy and Chris possibly crawled might be a better adjective. This was distinctly hard work, it was not fun, it was hot and heavy and oxygenless and the snow seemed horribly slippery. But we made it. Made it to our bivi, tucked safely out of the way to the left of the peak we had come to climb.

Dawn found us dreaming of Rio and Stanage and chips and still in our sleeping bags. Panic and a mad rush ensued. Unbreakfasted and unready and unequipping ourselves, the dash to beat the morning sun was on. We headed up, but Bill headed down as his head announced a need to acclimatise a little more gently. We were a team of three with a rope, an ice screw, a friend and lots of hope. We rushed for the top. But alas, Alan was also suffering from an altitude head. Being a doctor, he decided this might be an excellent time to experiment with pain tolerance at altitude. Amazingly, he made it to the col just below the summit before common sense returned and he rapidly retreated towards oxygen and tea. Andy and Chris (usually in that order) headed stealthily on as the weather deteriorated, thankfully keeping the snow in reasonable condition. We were rewarded with a delightfully pointed summit after some interesting mixed climbing, tackled to avoid a tottering slope of "reasonable" snow. Exhaustion and cloud prevented the hoped-for view. Andy's altimeter revealed what our lungs already knew - we were much too high up. We decided to go down. After some initial trickiness, Andy achieved this in minutes, leaving a deep glissade trench behind him. Chris followed in a slower, stumbling fashion. We paused at the bivi site to brew up and throw up and collect the huge pile of hardware we had taken there for the exercise and yomped back to base. Alan gave the mountain its name - Rona is a woman, she still remains a mystery to the rest of the team.

SUMMARY: Rona Peak, 5800m. First ascent by Andy Smith and Chris Griffiths 18.7.89 via SW face. Straightforward snow slopes (make sure you choose the





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correct gullies, a following expedition didn't) with an unstable snow or rock step finish. Descent via the same route. Alpine PD.

ATTEMPTS TO ASCEND RIPPLE RIDGE

I am sure someone has given this ridge/mountain a better name but this is the one we used, so here it is. It refers to the large buttress and summit that lies between gullies 4 and 5 and is the first summit one can see from the Charakusa Glacier. We first noticed the possibilities of this shapely piece of rock during our reconnaissance of this glacier on 16.7.89. Its SE ridge seemed to offer a twenty-plus pitch route at a reasonable standard with the bonus of a start direct from the main glacier, needing no plodding.

ATTEMPT ONE

The 26.7.89 saw the battle commence, unfortunately without Andy who was suffering from stomach problems. The weather was superb, if a little threatening. The climbing was continually interesting and high quality. But mid-afternoon saw us only seven pitches up, with a l o n g way to go. We decided to retreat and abseiled off with very mixed feelings. Looking back now it is easy to see our mistakes. These included a late start mainly due to ill health and the choice of the wrong selection of equipment. Being a long route we took a small quantity of bivi gear but, deciding to go light we took insufficient to sit out a storm. We also underestimated the difficulty of the climbing and were slowed down by being a threesome, although the last man jumared. If trying the route again we would either plan for a bivi and take sufficient gear to sit out some bad weather or leave all this behind and move light and fast. Our halfway house left us moving too slowly and also worried about the possibility of a bivi. Excuses, excuses!

SUMMARY

Ripple Ridge, SE spur. Attempt on 26.7.89 by Chris Griffiths, Bill Dark and Alan McPherson. 7 pitches on excellent rock, HVS 5b with a couple of aid moves, failure.

ATTEMPT TWO

The 4.8.89 saw round two and again provided some excellent climbing but alas, again failure resulted. Again one of the team wimped out, this time Chris, and again due to a stomach complaint. This time we approached the mountain from the opposite side, the NW. We climbed Gully 4 past the mountain then climbed up the side wall of the gully to a col between the summit and Ibex Hill. The climbing was described by Andy as being excellent. What looked like a rather loose groove system turned out to be good rock with a crucial overhang on the final, fifth pitch which looked rather "out there" from below. The col gained, unfortunately the weather deteriorated to snow and storm so, after some deliberation we retreated.





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Though a "failure", we consider the ascent to the col to be worthwhile in its own right. The ascent of Ibex Hill from here looks (from below and above) to offer some very good climbing.

SUMMARY

Ripple Ridge, North Peak. Failed attempt on north ridge via northwest face by Andy Smith, Alan McPherson and Bill Dark. 5 pitches up to the col, the final one being E1 5b.

THE ASCENT OF FIONA PEAK

After the first, humiliating failure on Ripple Ridge we decided that the obvious, snowy dome we could see from our base should be our next objective. This looked as though it might be easy or it might be awkward, it looked avalanche-prone or it might be safe. It was, according to Hussain (nominally our cook but in reality our guru and leader) "Small Mountain No Name". This noble lump needed a more elegant name so Andy gave it his sister's, who's birthday coincided with our day on the summit.

The same day we arrived on base with our tails between our teeth after the failure on Ripple Ridge we set off for the Karbu Gorge. We bivied at its base after an averagely unpleasant crossing of the Charakusa Glacier. This fit of extreme keenness on our parts was initiated by Alan who was keen to wash the hated taste of retreat from his mouth and by the knowledge of the need to cross the Karbu River in the early morning.

Dawn saw us boulder-hopping up the side of the still-sizeable river that fearlessly hurled itself down the narrow gorge. We had to cross the river three times in all, either by closing our eyes and ears and leaping or via a final, impressive ice bridge. By now the sun was up, allowing some serious suffering as we wandered up steep scree, even steeper grass and soft snow. The discovery of a perched boulder allowing an escape from the sun in the ice cave beneath, called a halt to progress and a start to a much more pleasant existence of snoozing and brewing and watching the avalanches. Avalanches! Oh yes, the whole basin seemed to be falling towards us. We nervously searched our mountain for ridges and other safe routes. A vague line decided on, we slept and waited for the morrow.

We left at midnight and started the upward rush. We decided that we must be off the face before 8am when the sun would start to tickle the precarious white stuff. Climbing up the initial gully by the lights of our torches was weird. We were in a strange land full of avalanche debris. It was not freezing but the snow seemed in good condition. We crossed a couple of rock outcrops, moving first diagonally right then left, keeping up a furious pace by swapping leads regularly. Dawn saw us exhausted below a rocky triangle we had to climb to avoid the cornices that fringed it. This was dealt with without recourse to the rope and the summit soon followed. Here Alan, in his usual hyperactive form had arrived ahead of us and waited till we all, in the true spirit of our holiday moved together on to the summit.





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Here we watched a storm brewing above the tops of K2 and Chogolisa, two very impressive mountains. Indeed, the whole panorama was most impressive, and made more so by the dark clouds overhead. Handshakes and photos over, we hurriedly retreated, as the sun was up and we could feel the temperature rising. A 50m abseil down the rock triangle over, we were able to stow the rope and down-climb the first gully as fast as caution allowed. With impeccable timing, the last man just stepped out of the wide gully onto the rocky ridge as an avalanche of wet snow galloped past. This narrow escape ensured that the following slopes were descended at breakneck speed, glissading then keeping to the sides of the lower, large gully, running down with one eye on the slopes above. By eight we were all back at the boulder, much relieved and pleased with ourselves. Return to base required another bivi in the gorge as none of us was prepared to be the first to jump the torrent (except, perhaps Bill, but that doesn't count). A rainy dawn and a gentler flow of water encouraged a rapid descent of the Karbu Gorge followed by a damp crossing of the Charakusa Glacier to base.

SUMMARY

Fiona Peak, 5900m. First ascent by Alan McPherson, Bill Dark, Chris Griffiths and Andy Smith. NE face, up snow slopes and rocky outcrops. Descent by same route. Alpine PD.

ASCENT OF IBEX HILL

Alan was off up the Beusten Glacier. Possibly he doubted Chris's description of this lovely rock spire and his guarantee of easy-ish climbing leading to a perfect top. He had, after all said something rather similar before our attempt on Ripple Ridge. Our two failures on rock routes rankled so when the rain stopped we walked up to our favourite bivi spot below Gully 4. This was a lovely spot with soft grass, a gurgling little stream and some fantastic views. The next day's pre-dawn slog up the snow slopes to the glacier basin was less pleasant but due to by now, some considerable practice in this form of self-torture and to the fact that we carried minimal gear, this was rapidly despatched. In front of us now was a snow and ice gully leading up to a col between the second and third pinnacles on this magnificent ridge. It was here that we were amazed to find ibex footprints.

We waited for the sun to warm the rock and watched a team across the valley preparing to repeat this year's most popular route, the North ridge of Naser. Our route did not look quite so impressive and was shorter but we could only guess at its difficulty. The first pitch was a delight, sneaking a way between layers of overhangs on the right side of the ridge. This set the scene for the day, each of the following pitches provided entertaining climbing, never exceeding VS in standard, but always exceedingly good sport. The summit was enjoyed and celebrated by the consumption of our last chocolate bar.





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Descent was via the ascent route and comprised some tricky abseils and some down-climbing. We soon reached the bivi site after the usual mad slide down the soft snow slopes. Next day we felt too tired for another proposed attempt on Ripple Ridge deciding to explore up the Charakusa Glacier instead. We all felt this highly enjoyable ascent was a fitting climax to our holiday.

SUMMARY

Ibex Hill, 5200m, the second major summit on the ridge between gullies 4 and 5. Ascent via Gully 4 to west face, up to and along north ridge. Alpine grade D IV. First ascent on 7.8.89 by Andy Smith, Bill Dark and Chris Griffiths.

ASCENT OF PATIKA PEAK

As the majority of the members of the party that climbed this peak were from other expeditions, please see other reports for full details. Alan McPherson from our expedition was part of this team which also included George Armstrong and David Hamilton. The mountain was climbed on the 8.8.89 from the south side of the Beusten Glacier and consisted of a somewhat complex snow face. Another smaller mountain on the same ridge was also ascended.

SUMMARY

Patika Peak (Baldness) 5990m. First ascent by Alan McPherson and party via Beusten Glacier and North face. Alpine Grade AD.

GOING HOME

With four mountains climbed and what looked like more unsettled weather on the way we decided to retreat homewards. We were fed up with the walks up the Charakusa and Chogolisa glaciers and with the views from base. We decided to spend a couple of days in Hushe while Hussain arranged transport and then head for home. Chris went trekking and exploring the Alling Valley which is much less popular than the area we had been busy in but seems to offer much potential for future expeditions, though without as much spectacular rock as the other valleys nearby.

Bill and Andy climbed a 12 pitch rock route (VS) on the buttress immediately to the west of Hushe Village and Bill, Alan and Andy did some parapente flying. This last activity was a very popular spectator sport with the locals, Bill in particular became a hero in the eyes of the youngsters of the village.

The road was still blocked so we had to walk to Belagoon Bridge where we were greeted by huge quantities of apricots. The next day Hussain and a jeep met us and transported us to the fleshpots of Skardu.

On August 19th Andy and Chris flew to Rawalpindi and did not see Bill and Alan again until the 24th. Bill and Alan's attempts to obtain seats on





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already-full aircraft sound truly epic and resulted in a long bus trip to Rawalpindi and flights to Karachi and London before reaching Sheffield and the much dreamed of pub. The holiday was over, we all considered it successful, not because of our successes but because we had fulfilled our main objective of having fun.

MEDICAL

We had no major medical problems, though all members suffered from mild stomach (or rather bowel) problems at some stage. These originated in Rawalpindi or Hushe, emphasising the need to be careful in these dangerous places. Luckily our base camp cook was very hygiene-conscious which curtailed the outbreaks of these annoying little problems.

WEATHER

This was apparently worse than usual this year. About 30% of the days we were in the area were not suitable for climbing. Luckily we were able to time our ascents to coincide with the best days. Our major problem was an unusually large amount of snow on the hills combined with very high temperatures - on many days in July it was not even freezing at 6000m at night. This made avalanche danger a serious problem. August was a little better but even the locals complained about the unusual quantity of rain.

EQUIPMENT

We took too much. Really needed a minimum of Alpine gear. Duvets, long-johns, warm sleeping bags etc all stayed at base getting damp. Waterproofs, bivi-bags and umbrellas were most useful. We used Raven food on the hill which was OK. MSR stoves burning paraffin proved ideal. The rock here seems to love Friends, being often rounded and flared. Abseil anchors can be problematic - we used a lot of tape. We had assistance from a number of companies who supplied equipment at reduced or zero cost which was all excellent and for which we are most grateful; Casio supplied four digital watches, Phoenix Diamond jackets were used by three of us, an Ultimate Phazor Dome tent was used (mostly at basecamp) and Bill was very pleased with his Buffalo pile/pertex clothing.



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FINANCE

INCOME	£	
Mount Everest Foundation	500	
British Mountaineering Council	400	
Personal contributions (4x930)	3720	
TOTAL		<u>£4620</u>

EXPENDITURE

Travel		
Return flights to Rawalpindi (4x480)	1920	
Flights from Skardu	20	
Bus to Skardu	100	
Jeep to Belagoon and return	78	
Porterage on approach	394	
Porterage on return	125	£2637
Food and Accommodation		
Food bought in UK	270	
Food bought in Pakistan	100	
Hotels and meals in Rawalpindi	300	
Hotels and meals in Skardu	120	
Cook's wages	190	£980
Insurance		
From BMC (4x90)	360	£360
Equipment		
Climbing equipment bought in UK	380	
Cooking equipment bought in Pakistan	30	
Camping equipment for cook	20	£430
Miscellaneous		
Airport tax	3	
Postage and stationary	80	
Expedition report	10	
Visas (4x30)	120	£213
TOTAL		<u>£4620</u>





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PRACTICAL DETAILS FOR FUTURE EXPEDITIONS

Exchange rate: Rs33 to £1

Visa: Visa required. Cost £30 for 3 months. Obtained from Pakistan embassy in London.

Transport to Pakistan

We flew PIA to Rawalpindi at a cost of £480 return. We were also given a free excess baggage allowance of 20kg each. This needed a little persuasion to extend to the return leg. Mr Massod Mir from the Bradford office was extremely helpful. Apparently the Cardiff office is also popular with expeditions. The cheapest way to get there seems to be an Egypt Air ticket to Karachi (£290) followed by an internal flight or train. The advantages of using one of the more prestigious airlines include a faster travel time, likelihood of free excess baggage (be persistent), the possibility of changing flight dates and the possibility of swapping airlines (we returned with BA).

Accommodation in Rawalpindi

We used the Pine Hotel behind the Pearl Continental (the latter being an excellent place for a swim, an ice-cream, its air-conditioned foyer and for watching rich people). The Pine Hotel has air-conditioning, a store room and friendly staff for about Rs100 each per day. A good place for a short stay, if a little lacking in atmosphere. Don't stay at Flashmans, it's worse but more expensive.

Transport to Skardu

The easiest way to do this is to fly. The flight is best booked in UK as there may be a long waiting list, though this can be jumped by getting a tourist priority from the tourist office in Flashmans Hotel. The most interesting method is to take one of the local buses. These go via Gilgit, taking about 50 hours. We hired a Transit van (with drivers) from the very helpful Mr Muhammed Ali Chengazi who's office is behind the American Express office on Muree Road. This costs Rs6000 and carried 8 of us with a lot of luggage in comfort. Cheaper buses can be hired but do not always make it along the spectacular Karakoram Highway. To minimise hassle and see some of the country the option of overlanding in and flying out is recommended. The return flight to Rawalpindi must be reserved in advance. If this has not been done one might be able to use the priority seats available from the K2 Motel in Skardu or some backsheesh (bribe) might be useful. A determined approach in the PIA office is essential.

Skardu

We stayed at the overpriced K2 Motel. This is a very convivial spot and by far the best place to stay in Skardu. The option of camping in the grounds and renting a lock-up garage for the gear is recommended. This allows you to use all the facilities for the cost of about Rs20 each per day. Actually





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staying in the hotel costs over Rs100 per person. Skardu is a friendly place with a more relaxed atmosphere than Gilgit but the people are serious Muslims and respect politeness and people who follow their dress restrictions.

Transport to Hushe

This is via jeep. We paid Rs1300 for the 9 hour journey. This was arranged through Mr Abbass who helps many expeditions and is extremely friendly and efficient. We found it very hard to reimburse him for the considerable time he spent on our behalf.

Hushe

Hushe is growing fast. Several trekking companies now use it as a base and one imagines that more and more expeditions will pass through as more realise the area's potential. The village is a very interesting place and its people are the most friendly we met in Pakistan. There are now 5 shops in the village all eager to sell to expeditions. This makes it easy to top up on shortages during the expedition and to buy eggs and other such goodies but most produce is more expensive than in Skardu simply because one has to pay for the transport to this remote valley. The village has a "hotel" (beware of the little beasties) and a more pleasant camping site. It is also surrounded by some excellent crags and scenery.

The Cook

We hired Mr Hussain in Skardu as our cook. He charged Rs150 per day. He organised our food purchases and porters and generally mollycoddled us. The main reason we employed him was to stop theft of our equipment while we were away from base. Although the Pakistan people are generally honest, theft can be a problem when expeditions flaunt their apparent wealth. Other solutions are to site your base camp well off the regular paths or lock your belongings in plastic tubs. Hussain was excellent company, a good cook and ensured we suffered no real losses or damage to our equipment.

Porterage

Most expeditions underestimated their porterage expenses this year - we were no exception. What we had been told was a one-day walk and took us only six hours with heavy packs took our porters three days! We thought this extortionate but, like all the other groups we were forced to pay these rates. This said, our porters were excellent company, enlivening the walk-in with song, dance and various sporting challenges. Porter rates were:

Rate per stage (not per day)	Rs90
For food per day (or stage!)	Rs30
Rate for return trip per stage	Rs45
One-off payment for sunglasses and shoes	Rs100
Rest-day payment (if working for 6 days)	Rs50

The porters seemed to expect a little bit of bargaining over the rates and one can win some concessions, though the porters then seem to expect some





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backsheesh. Porters are quite happy to walk several days' stages in one, but of course still expect the full pay for each stage.

Environmental concerns

We were distressed to see other expeditions and trekking organisations indiscriminately leaving litter and excrement in this beautiful place. We beg future visitors not to do this and to avoid polluting the streams with detergent. Expeditions also need to take responsibility for the behaviour of their porters - discouraging deforestation etc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would very much like to thank the following for their considerable help:

Mount Everest Foundation

British Mountaineering Council

Pakistan International Airlines

Casio

Phoenix Mountaineering

Ultimate Equipment

Buffalo

Outside, Hathersage



