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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
EXPEDITION TO THE EAST KARAKORAM 1989

INTERIM REPORT

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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

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TEAM MEMBERS

Wilb Oldfield BSc MSc	Expedition Leader Research Co-ordinator
Martin Kitson BSc	Deputy Leader Equipment Organiser
Andrew Bradley BSc MSc FRGS	
Simon Bradley	
Anna Drew BPharm MPS	
Faisal Jaffri BSc	
Amanda Johnson Ll.B	Food Organiser
John O'Grady	Food Organiser
Chris Rothwell BSc	
Keith Scholey	
Scott Woods BSc	Freight Organiser

INTRODUCTION

The expedition was conceived eighteen months ago as a result of the continued growth and expansion of the University of London Mountaineering Club. Over the resulting period of planning and fund-raising the composition of the team changed dramatically with people who were initially keen deciding not to come because of the usual bugbears of work commitments, financial problems, or simply that an expedition is a much more serious undertaking than a trip to Wales.

A fair amount of research had to be done prior to departure - where to go, when to go, how do we get there, can we afford it? To this end the brains of Doug Scott and Dave Hamilton were picked and many hours spent in the libraries of the Royal Geographical Society and Alpine Club. The area finally chosen, the Charakusa valley, Pakistan, was felt to be ideal with basecamp only a 3-4 day walk from the road head thus cutting down on porter costs etc. Previous expedition reports and slides gave us some idea of what to expect in the way of climbing etc. although the general plan was to get out there and see - a good idea it turned out for a first expedition. In addition to the climbing two small studies on respiratory physiology were conceived and planned with the help of St. George's Hospital Medical School.

Once a destination was selected the necessary funds had to be raised. Hefty personal contributions were collected and in-house support from the University and outside help

from various Trusts obtained. In addition, money was raised from a sponsored run and a guest lecture.

The last few weeks before departure were a blur of frantic activity with chaos just beneath the surface whilst the final selection of equipment, purchase of food, and packing of freight including eight oxygen cylinders for the research took place. Finally, after eighteen months of planning for the future, the present arrived and the expedition began with the departure of the advance party for Pakistan.

CLIMBING REPORT

Owing to the poor weather conditions in the Karakoram this year very little snow and ice climbing took place, with rock climbs being done in the spells of fine weather. In addition to the large amount of trekking done by the group up the Gondokoro, Charakusa, and Chogolisa glaciers, three summits were reached.

Naysner Peak (~5500m) (25th July)

Naysner Peak is a prominent pyramidal rock spire off the Charakusa glacier near K7 basecamp. It was first climbed in 1988 via the north ridge by Dave Hamilton and Andy Bunnage (Climber and Hillwalker, August 1989, pp 30-33). The route followed the ridge in its entirety and involved a short aid section after about eight pitches.

On the 24th July Martin, John, Keith, and Chris climbed to the col at the foot of the north ridge. Martin and John climbed the first two pitches (S/Vs) of the route before fixing the ropes and abseiling back down to the col. Early the following morning Martin and John set off up the fixed ropes followed by Keith and Chris. Conditions were good enough not to require gloves or warm clothing. After about eight pitches of up to HVS the aid section of the first ascent was reached. Owing to a complete lack of aid climbing experience Martin traversed onto some smooth slabs on the side of the ridge and climbed a short poorly protected pitch at E1 5a to regain the ridge. A further three easy pitches led to the summit after five hours climbing.

Senate Peak (~5500m) (8th August)

After bivvying at the porters halt of Techemic Martin and John set off up some easy slabs on the left of the Charakusa valley on the 8th August. After three hours of unroped climbing up easy slabs a rock amphitheatre was reached. At the head of the amphitheatre was the main ridge rising to a summit to the north. The south ridge was joined at its lowest point and eight pitches of mainly S/Vs climbing with a pitch of HVS 5a near the start led to the summit. An abseil descent of the north ridge was then made to regain the amphitheatre. The route took a total of 12 hours for the round trip from the bivvy site. As far as we know this was a first ascent and the peak was named for the University of London, one of our major sponsors.

Gondoro Peak (~5800m)

This popular trekking peak at the head of the Gondokoro valley was climbed by Andrew and Simon Bradley on the 8th August.

RESEARCH REPORT

At present the data collected on the expedition is still being analysed. Preliminary results have been presented to the Breathing Club at Charing Cross Hospital and are scheduled to be presented to the Physiological Society shortly. All the experiments designed for the expedition took place, the only mishap being an unexplained total battery failure on the two Oxylog devices taken. This resulted in the loss of a large amount of data that would have been very useful in the subsequent analysis. Full results, conclusions, etc. will be presented in the main expedition report.

MEDICAL REPORT

Generally, the expedition was healthy with no cases of mountain sickness, the only problems being the expected diarrhoea and vomiting. This was treated, when considered necessary, with metronidazole/co-trimoxazole and prochlorperazine. The main consensus amongst the expedition was to let any upset run its course with occasional use of anti-motility agents e.g. loperamide when things got really miserable. It is worth noting that to use this policy large amounts of oral rehydration sachets need to be carried by an expedition. The only really severe case of dehydration occurred on the bus ride from Islamabad to Skardu and was treated with i.v. saline/dextrose which resulted in a unremarkable recovery.

Other problems encountered were a middle ear infection treated with co-trimoxazole, and numerous sore throats treated with Strepsils.

The main problem of the expedition was a severely twisted knee requiring a stretcher back to basecamp under i.m. Omnopom pain relief. Temgesic tablets proved totally ineffective, the side effects of nausea outweighing any pain relief. Later examination revealed two partially torn ligaments in the knee.

No real problems were encountered taking drugs, etc. through airport security, customs, etc. though it is probably worth one person carrying the complete kit rather than dividing it up amongst the group.

EQUIPMENT

A wide variety of equipment was used on the expedition ranging from shorts and T-shirts to Scottish Winter clothing. A full account will be given in the main expedition report.

NOTES ON FOOD

A surprising amount of planning was necessary to ensure sufficient quantity and variety of food for eleven people. We estimated that we would spend a maximum of 18 days actually climbing and trekking (an overestimate), 10 days at basecamp, with a further 5 days trekking to and from basecamp at the start and finish of the expedition. The rest of the time we intended to buy food en-route.

Essentially, the food for the non-climbing days was bought and used in bulk, most of it being purchased in Pakistan with a few exceptions, such as Marmite, Coffee, and tinned cakes. The food for use whilst climbing was mainly purchased in the U.K. and before freighting was split up into 2 man-day packs. Packs consisted of a breakfast of Ready Brek or Alpen, a main meal of McDougall or Raven dried food, and an assortment of snacks and drinks.

Of the food bought in Pakistan most was purchased in Rawalpindi, along with the stoves and utensils. This it transpired was a mistake. The stoves did not work properly, the lanterns were little better, and we mistakenly purchased a large quantity of paraffin oil to run them on. Luckily, before departure for the mountains, we discovered that the stoves ran on kerosene - paraffin oil being used for enemas and little else!!

On reaching Skardu we found all the necessary goods readily available and with the help of our head porter replaced the stoves etc. with more effective models.

In retrospect we would only bring out hill food from the U.K. purchasing the rest in Skardu thus saving money and time on freighting and transport within Pakistan.

PRELIMINARY ACCOUNTS

INCOME

Grants and Awards from Trusts	4980.00
Team Contributions	5850.00
Lecture	200.00
Other	432.65

	11462.65

EXPENDITURE

Flights	3840.00
Travel in Pakistan	705.00
Expenses in Pakistan	265.00
Freight	1475.58
Porters	1940.00
Insurance	1055.00
Food and Fuel	1140.00
Equipment	41.95
Medical Kit	163.82
Research Costs	211.18
Administration	85.25
Miscellaneous	46.35

	10969.13

BALANCE £493.52

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For Financial Aid

University of London Board of Convocation	1000.00
University of London Union	1000.00
University College, London	800.00
Mount Everest Foundation	600.00
Imperial College Exploration Board	500.00
Sir Samuel Scott of Yews Trust	500.00
The Wellcome Trust	500.00
The Sandal Carities, Wakefield	50.00
Wakefield Probus Club	30.00

For Equipment at Reduced Prices

Ardblair Sports Importers Ltd
Asolo (UK) Ltd
BOC Ltd
Field and Trek Ltd
Mountain Technology Ltd
The North Face Ltd

For Food Free or at Reduced Prices

BCB International Ltd
Colman's of Norwich Ltd
Forth Valley Foods Ltd
Framptons Ltd
Hutton's of Hull Ltd
KP Foods Ltd
Lyons Tetley Ltd
Moore Fine Foods Ltd
Jesse Oldfield Ltd
Porters Specialist Food Merchants
RHM Foods Ltd
Sleaford Trading Co Ltd
Spring Snackfood Supplies Ltd
R. Twining and Co Ltd
Walker's Nonsuch Ltd
JE Wilson and Sons Ltd (Kendal)
Winter and MG Imports Ltd

For Help and Advice in the Planning of the Expedition

Doug Scott
Dave Hamilton
Prof. K.B. Saunders
Dr. P.W. Jones
Rachel Wilson
Dr. S. Fernando
Colin Dawson
Simon Harper
Carl Trowell
The members of ULMC
Ruth Benzimra
Andrew Hobley

SKETCH MAP OF EXPEDITION AREA

