

3/17

LEEDS BAFFIN ISLAND EXPEDITION

1991

AUYUITTUQ NATIONAL PARK

JUNE 20 - JULY 29

N J Phillips
158 Whitehall Road
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS12 4AR

Patron: Mr D Scott

+
475

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1. EXPEDITION MEMBERS

Ian Marriot, 23, is an agricultural student at Lancaster Polytechnic. He has been climbing for 7 years and has made ascents in the French Alps, Alaska, Morocco, Iceland and the Himalaya. Ian's job will be to organise the equipment.

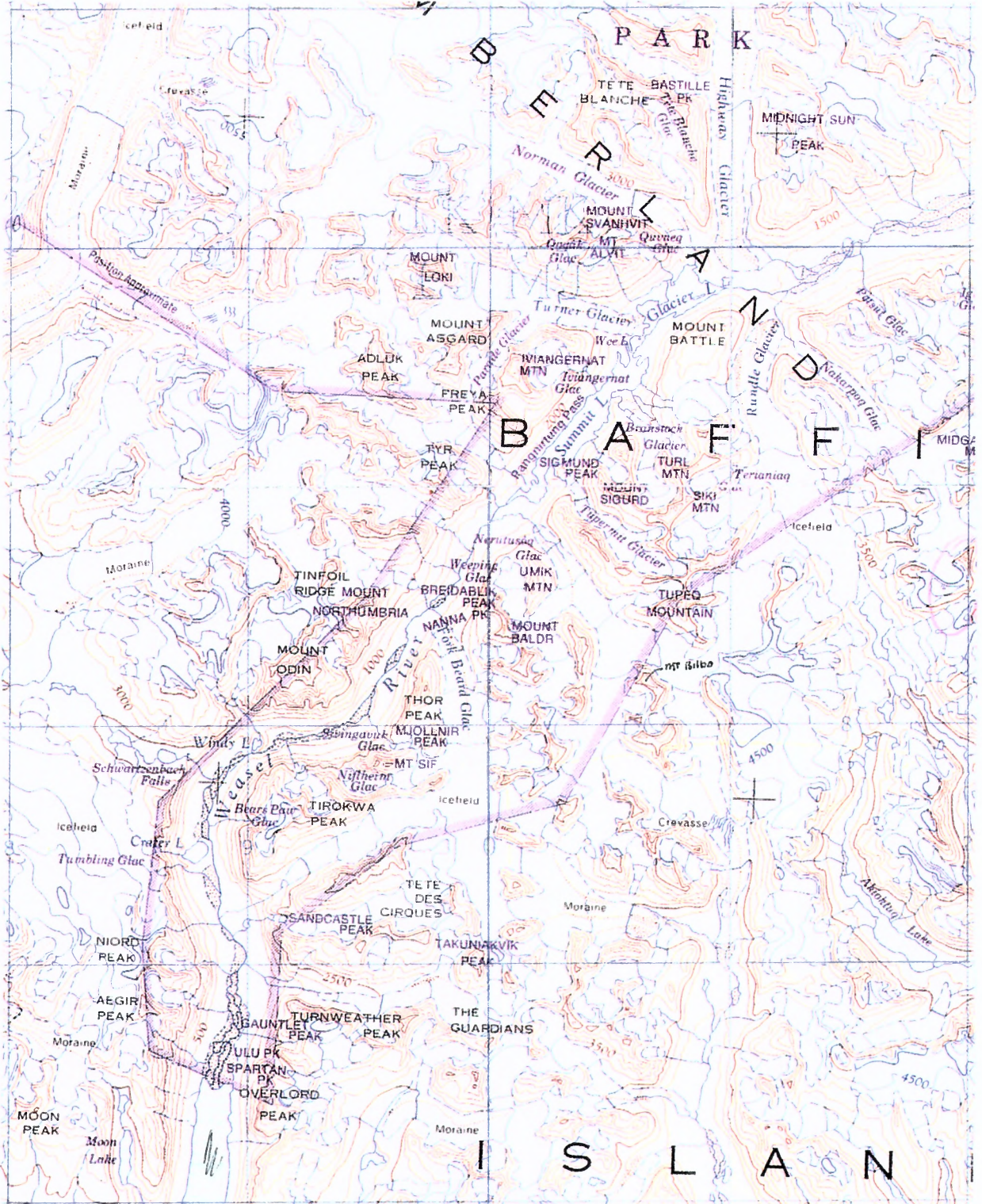
Jon Ison, aged 22, a graduate in Electronic Engineering (Leeds, 1990), has been climbing for five years in the British Isles and has made ascents of numerous routes in the U.S.A., Spain and the French Alps. He was president of the University Mountaineering Club 1989-1990 and before coming to Leeds was a member of the Southampton Lifeboat Crew. Jon's role on the expedition will be to organise the food and supplies.

Nick Phillips, aged 29, is at present a post-doctoral research fellow in the School of Chemistry. He has been climbing for seven years and has made ascents of routes in the Yosemite Valley and the French Alps. He has also had the honour of being president of the University Mountaineering Club 1988-89. Nick is responsible for fund raising and travel.

Sean Walsh, 22, having just obtained a degree in Biotechnology is now the sub-warden of the Glenmore Youth Hostel, Aviemore. He has been climbing for six years all over the British Isles as well as in Spain, Morocco and France. Sean will be responsible for the medical supplies and first aid.

Nick Wood, 26, is a post-doctoral research fellow in the Radiation Research Centre in the School of Chemistry. He has been climbing and mountaineering for five years, has done several routes in the European Alps and once spent five weeks trekking in the Indian Himalaya. Nick's role in the expedition is fund raising and liaising with the national grant giving organisations.

2. MAP - AUYUITTUQ NATIONAL PARK



3. SUMMARY OF EXPEDITION

The organisation of this expedition was initially a battle against naivety as for all of us this was our first organised trip away from the more popular ranges. The remote situation of Baffin Island brought about its own logistic problems, mainly associated with the transfer of food and equipment. The task of organising the flights to Pangnirtung, that would give us the weight allowance for our food and equipment, was not at all easy and took many an hour in the travel shops. It is possible to buy food on Baffin Island, and thus simplify the organisation, but the cost of food on the island is beyond belief and we would recommend that all food be purchased elsewhere.

As our organisation proceeded, we became more familiar with the 'do's and don'ts' of expedition fund raising. This eventually resulted in sponsorship from a number of organisations (see appendix A), without whose help the expedition would not have been feasible.

Overall, the expedition was a success, despite the fact that some members felt that more could have been achieved. We explored a beautiful mountain area in fine weather conditions and were able to achieve our objective - a new route on Mount Bilbo, together with other ascents. The general scenery offers dramatic contrasts with massive sheer glacial rock faces, wide, and desert like valley floors, and upland fell reminiscent of Scotland. The remoteness of this area, being about 40 miles from the nearest settlement, brings about a unique atmosphere and will offer pioneering climbing potential for years to come. Without question, there are many aspects of this expedition which, if we were to go again, would be done very differently. One of the major problems was that not enough food was taken (although of excellent quality) and that dietary needs were not worked out correctly before hand. This resulted in general fatigue amongst the members.

4. EXPEDITION DIARY AND MOUNTAINEERING REPORT

20-21 June

The Expedition members assembled at Manchester Airport, and weighed and checked all luggage. The weight allowance per person was 32 kilos. The first leg of the flight to Montreal was with KLM Airlines, and flew via Amsterdam. On landing at Montreal we had to take a half-hour bus journey to Montreal Duval for the connecting flight to Iqualuit, Baffin Island. Our late arrival meant an overnight stay on Duval Airport's departure lounge floor.

Next morning an Air Canada flight was boarded for the next leg to Iqualuit. This journey took about four and a half hours. All our equipment was checked through to Pangnirtung, the final destination. The flight to Pangnirtung was with Nord Air, and on arrival in Pangnirtung, we were greeted by the Inuit Tourism Officer who was helpful in directing us to a suitable camping ground and making us aware of the requirements to enter Auyuittuq National Park.

22 June

All members registered with the Park Warden, this is absolutely essential. The Warden made us aware of the radios in the shelters along the Weasel Valley and that no rescue facilities were available. The remainder of our food requirement was bought in the Hudson Bay Store, though if this can be avoided, do so - the food is very expensive. Colman fuel for the M.S.R. stoves was also bought, this thankfully was cheap. Later that day a local Inuit outfitter contacted us and we arranged skiddoo trips to transport ourselves and equipment to Mount Overlord at the head of the Fjord.

23 June

All equipment, food, fuel etc. was packed and moved on to the ice of Pangnirtung Fjord. Here two skiddoos, one for us, the other for the equipment, were loaded. Because of an early thaw, the pack ice in the fjord had begun to melt, leaving large cracks and rifts. These were crossed with a variety of hair-raising stunts. One's trust was with the Inuit, as we approached the third Peninsula along the Fjord, about 14 miles from Pangnirtung and 6 miles from Overlord. Extremely bad ice was encountered, so much so, that both skiddoo and sledges began sinking. If it had not been for the quick thinking of the expedition members, all the equipment and skiddoos would have sunk. Fortunately, ropes were easily accessible and were lassoed to the sinking vehicles and pulled free of the water. This resulted in damage to one of our ropes. The sledges were then uncoupled from the skiddoos and pushed over very suspect ice to the shore of the Peninsula where equipment and people were dumped. We were charged \$450.00 for this privilege, and as we found out later, this was overpriced. The remainder of the day was spent transferring all the equipment to the main shore, about 3 hours return journey.

24 June

We woke to torrential rain and spent a miserable day load carrying 6 miles along the shore to Overlord. This was made a little easier by walking on the remains of the ice along the fjord's edge. Ian Marriot suffered bad blistering, mainly due as he pointed out to the wearing of cheap socks and plastic boots. Radioed Pangnirtung to report all well.

25 June

Because of the soaking we received on the previous days, food and equipment had to be dried. N Wood and J Ison retired to the third peninsula for equipment that had been

left the previous day. S Walsh and N Phillips took the opportunity to carry the bulky but light equipment and food to Windy Lake, 8 miles further down the fjord. The terrain of this leg is desert like, very flat for the most part, with only minimal moraine and stream crossing. A cairn marks the crossing of the Arctic Circle about 1 mile before the Windy Lake emergency shelter.

26-27 June

All members load carried to Windy Lake in very good weather and continued with some loads to Cabin Thor, which is 6 miles further up the valley. Two Britons, Tony Sawyer and Phil Ward, were met on their way out. They reported continual bad weather with only two good climbing days out of two weeks.

28 June

N Wood, I Marriot, and J Ison pioneered a new route on Mount Tirokwa. This was an obvious corner gully about 3500 feet long. The bottom two thirds of the route was on good rock with pitches of 5.6 to 5.7. The climbing thereafter was on loose, broken *ground which eventually lead to a steep snow-filled gully which lead to the summit.* The ascent time was approximately 13 hours, with the descent down loose and steep terrain.

29 June

N Phillips and S Walsh attempted to repeat the route but bad weather prevented this attempt. J Ison's feet were very painful today, he complains of a sore Achilles' tendon. Load carried again to Cabin Thor.

30 June, 1-2 July

The load carrying continues until all equipment has been ferried to Summit Lake. Camp is established here. Everyone takes this opportunity to wash themselves and clothes. Stock is taken of the food and there is alarmingly little considering all the effort it took to get there.

3 July

N Phillips, N Wood, and J Ison set off in thick fog for Mount Bilbo. In order to cross the river, flowing from Summit Lake, it was necessary to cross by a wire bridge. Steep moraine then leads up onto the Nerutuseq glacier. The lower half of the glacier is dry with no overlying snow. Camp was made half way up the glacier. Set off at 9 am across the glacier. The further up we went, the worse the conditions underfoot became, with hidden crevasses and thigh deep wet snow. The route was the central buttress on the south face of Mount Bilbo. The buttress was climbed on the right hand side, and consisted of approximately 25 pitches. The top three pitches were very icy, with the last pitch up a snow slope topped by a cornice. The majority of the climbing was 5.6 - 5.7 and took about eight hours. The descent was by easy slopes to the south. (see appendix).

4-5 July

Return back to Summit Lake and rest. N Phillips' knee, which has been a cause for some concern, has given out and he decides that he should reluctantly return to Pangnirtung. The radios are still not working.

6 July

N Phillips is accompanied by S Walsh for the walk back to Overlord/Pangnirtung.

7 July

N Wood, I Marriot and J Ison set out to climb the swiss route on Mount Asgard. The first two thirds of the route was up easy rock slabs (5.4-5.5). This the lead to deep snow which was traversed. This snow is particularly avalanche-prone. Once over the snow, a series of chimneys and face climbing (5.7-5.8) lead to the summit. They descended via the same route.

8,9,10 July

Everybody rested and took stock of equipment and food. The mosquitos are out in force now and the first trekers have been seen in the valley.

11 July

Everyone set off for Mount Adluk, via the Caribou Glacier, to attempt the S E Ridge. The snow was very deep on the approach and heavily crevassed. The initial few pitches were of poor rock which worsened as height was gained. The lack of cracks for aiding and poor quality of the rock brought about the decision to retreat. The return journey to the tent was worsened by deep, wet snow. J Ison's knee is now beginning to trouble him and he descends to Summit Lake to take a rest.

12-14 July

N Wood and I Marriot set off at 11.00 am for Mount Breideblik to attempt a route on the North Face. They reached the foot of the face at approximately 4.00 pm. The initial 10 pitches were 5.7-5.8, with some aid. At 2 am a ledge system was gained where they had 2 hours rest. The next series of pitches were mainly aid climbing A1 with some free climbing. A lack of pegs and large wires made the aid sections long and tedious. The following climbing was all aid, up a narrowing crack system, taking

12 hours to climb just 3 pitches. At this point a decision was reached to retreat. This was based on lack of water, equipment, and the onset of bad weather. On their return to Summit Lake, they were met by J Ison and all returned at approximately 1.00 am.

15-16 July

It was decided to attempt a route on Mount Loki. The terrain along the edge of Summit Lake is primarily moraine and makes for an unpleasant walk . Once at the head of the lake, the party headed up the Turner glacier. Feelings and energy were running a little low at this point. N Wood returns to Summit Lake because of fatigue. J Ison's knee is again giving him some concern and after an attempt at the South Face, they retreat and make trail back to Glacier lake. J Ison is virtually unable to walk because of the pain.

17-18 July

Everybody takes time out to rest, and take stock of food, and discuss the logistics for the remainder of the trip. Everybody heads back down to summit Lake and picks up *food and fuel stashes*. *On the way back the going is slow. Meet up with four Mexicans* on the way down from climbing Mount Asgard. The weather is cloudy but good. On arriving back at Summit Lake everybody eats, and eats, to replace lost energy.

19-21 July

Two days of rest. Then everybody packs for the walk back down to Cabin Thor, and then onto Windy Lake, about 12 miles. The rivers were noticeably higher due to melt water from the glacier. This makes crossing them a little dangerous. The nights are also closing in, with a brief darkening sky

22 July

Set off for Overlord, the Park was beginning to fill up and numerous treckers are met on the walk back.

23 July

Pangnirtung was contacted by radio. The warden informed them that a boat would arrive either the next day or the day after. Everyone therefore, took the opportunity to sit and relax in the sun.

24 July

A boat arrived and a lift back is arranged to the first peninsula outside Pangnirtung for \$150. The walk from the peninsula to Pangnirtung took 2 hours and was over rock and mud flats. On arrival in Pangnirtung, everyone checked in with the Warden and filled in the necessary information sheets regarding the expedition. The remainder of the day was spent in, or around, JR's Snack Bar.

25-30 July

The days left in Pangnirtung were spent cleaning-up and washing after six weeks without a bath. Thereafter, opportunity was taken for sight-seeing and visiting many of the historical Inuit sights. On 27 July, a flight was boarded for Iqualuit. In Iqualuit a Canada North plane was boarded for Montreal Duval. This flight makes a scheduled stop at Kuujjuaq, a tiny settlement, surrounded by trees, on the Northern most point of Canada's mainland. The plane arrived at Montreal Duval Airport at 5.00 pm. Here, J Ison and I Marriot took the opportunity to visit Montreal for a day or two. N Wood decided to take the opportunity of a cheap flight back to the UK, arriving back on 28 July. J Ison and I Marriot arrived back on 29 July.

5. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

5.1 General

The expedition was partly assisted by sponsorship and concessions from food and clothing companies. Because of financial constraints and the baggage, food and equipment allowance, selection was based on the following criteria:-

1. Low overall weight, with as much dehydrated food as possible and sufficient equipment for two parties to climb.
2. The cost was kept low by using as much of each members own equipment as possible. No specialist equipment was bought.
3. Only two extra ropes were taken, together with one large roll of tape.

95% of the food was bought outside Pangnirtung, with only the food and heavier/bulkier food items ie jam oats, pilot biscuits, bought on the island

5.2 Baggage

An individual baggage allowance of 32 kilos was given for all three flights to Pangnirtung. Each member had a full 80 litre rucksack plus hand luggage. A large plastic barrel was also used for food transport. Our total allowance was under by just 2 Kilos. This was mainly due to all the heavy equipment being carried as hand luggage. For the walk in, everyone's load was very large and heavy, requiring two or three trips between each camp. It is difficult to say whether this weight could have ben reduced as we were carrying virtually the minimum necessary for 6 weeks climbing.

5.3 Clothing

The climate between June and August is similar to a mild Scottish winter and therefore no extreme condition clothing or equipment is necessary. We all took the same clothing as we would have used in Scotland. This generally consisted of thermal underwear, pile of fleece overgarments, and Goretex or similar windproof/rainproof. For the choice of footwear, we would recommend that a good flexible leather boot be used with over gaiters. Those who used plastic boots on this expedition suffered very bad blistering, a result of walking long distances with heavy loads.

5.4 Climbing

The choice of climbing equipment is entirely dependant on the type of expedition. We took three complete rock climbing racks plus two extra ropes to cover loss. Crampons and ice axes that were also taken. These proved useful when topping out on some of the routes and glacier travel.

It is recommended that snow shoes be taken. These would make walking on the wet slushy snow of the glaciers very much easier. *Contrary to popular belief, you cannot buy them on Baffin Island!*

5.5 Camping

Two tents were taken - a Wild Country Quasar and a Phoenix Phreedome. These were perfectly adequate for five people. Free standing tents are essential as the ground is hard and does not readily take pegs. A large poly-bag was taken to store the food and climbing equipment.

5.6 Food and Equipment

To save time and effort, it is possible to ship food and equipment into Pagnirtung prior to an expedition. In winter, one can also arrange to have it taken to Summit Lake by skiddoo. This can be arranged through the Pagnirtung Tourist Office or Park Wardens (see appendix B for address).

All members used good quality down sleeping bags - these are essential. M.S.R. stoves, fitted with windshields, were used for cooking. Colman fuel, for the stoves was bought on the island.

5.7 Skiddoo and Boat Hire

Beware of high costs! The average cost of skiddoo hire one way for two skiddoos and sledges is approximately \$350, although charges may be higher as we found out. The boat hire is slightly more expensive. However, with bartering and shopping around, lower fares can be found.

There is a set maximum charge laid down by the Canadian government. It is wise to find out what this is. This information is available at the Rangers Office.

5.8 Administration and Planning

Applications for financial assistance were made initially to the Mount Everest Foundation, Gino Watkins Memorial Fund, and the University of Leeds Expedition Society, all of which were successful. For all food and equipment needs, numerous applications were sent to a variety of companies, many of who offered their help. (see appendix A for names and sponsorship details). This method of fund raising proved, for us, very satisfactory, though somewhat time consuming. However, even with all the generous support, each member still had to contribute some £530.00 towards the

total budget.

5.9 Insurance

Insurance was taken out for each member through the British Mountaineering Council Scheme. This covered loss of baggage, medical and Rescue, and camera equipment. Separate insurance was taken out through the travel agents for the flights.

5.10 Travel

The flights were booked through the Holiday Shop, Leeds and were for return flights to Pagnirtung. This company proved exceptionally helpful and very patient for such an out of the ordinary request. The baggage allowance per person was 32 kilos, with all the equipment and 75% of the food flown out. No excess baggage had to be paid. The flights were:

KLM - Montreal

NORD AIR - Iqualuit

FIRST AIR - Pagnirtung

Warning - If dried meat or fresh meat (unlikely) is being taken out, do not declare it at the Canadian customs check as they will confiscate it. This could be the ruin of the expedition. We view this bending of the law as fair, because all the food will be consumed on the expedition.

5.11 Medical Arrangements

A comprehensive medical kit was taken and guidelines were taken by reference to Expedition Medicine, edited by Bert Jeul-Jenson and may be obtained from the Expedition Advisory Centre. Medical practitioners at the university of Leeds Health Centre were also consulted and gave valuable help.

5.12 Miscellaneous

Ski poles were very useful for walking and for probing, when crossing streams. A variety of books were taken to relive boredom when not walking or climbing.

5.13 General Comment and Suggestions

When to go - During the last two weeks of June the ice in the fjord begins the annual melt and begins to pull away from the shores. While the ice is melting, the Inuit will not travel - we only just managed to get skiddoo hire. It is recommended that for the skiddoo travel up the fjord, journeys are made before 15 June and for boat travel, after the first week of July. For precise information contact the Warden Office, Pangnirtung.

6. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Contributions and Awards

Mount Everest Foundation	£1,000
British Mountaineering Council	£ 500
Gino Watkins Memorial Fund	£ 600
University of Leeds Expedition Society	£ 150
Seabrook Crisps (Bradford)	£ 100
Personal Contributions	<u>£2,650</u>
	<u>TOTAL £5,000</u>

Expenses

Air fares	£3,490
Insurance	£ 350
Food and Fuel	£ 350
Film (Fuji)	£ 100
Equipment	£ 100
Skiddoo/Boat hire	£ 400
Medical	£ 60
Sundries	
Maps/Posters	£ 23
Brochure	£ 50
Postcards/phone calls	£ 45
Travel	<u>£ 30</u>
	<u>TOTAL £4,998</u>

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS (Appendix A)

All of the expedition members would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizations and people listed below for their generous support and assistance. It is certain that, without such help, the five of us would not have been given the opportunity to climb in Baffin Island. For this we are all sincerely grateful.

Mount Everest Foundation	£1,000
British Mountaineering Council	£ 500
Gino Watkins Memorial Fund	£ 600
University of Leeds Expedition Fund	£ 150
Seabrook Crisps (Bradford, England)	£ 100
McDougalls catering Foods Ltd	Cost price dehydrated food.
Colmans of Norwich	Powdered sauce mixes
Brook Bond Foods Ltd	Dehydrated rice meals
North Cape	Cost price thermal underwear
Holiday Shop (Leeds)	Great patience!
Cadburys	Free Chocolate bars
Premier Brands	Powdered chocolate drink
Phoenix	Reduced cost clothing
Troll UK	Reduced cost climbing equipment
Alpha Printing (Leeds)	Typing of brochure/report
Expedition Advisory Centre	Help and Advice
University of Leeds Proctor Department of Food Science	Vacuum packing of all dried foods
University of Leeds Health Centre	Advice and medical supplies
Doug Scott	Aerial photographs and patronage
Paul Nunn)	
Paul Braithwaite)	Consultation
Gregg Strange)	

USEFUL ADDRESSES (Appendix B)

Mount Everest Foundation	Scott Polar Research Institute
c/o W H Ruthven	University of Cambridge
Gowrie	Lensfield Road
Cardwell Close	Close Cambridge
Warton, Preston	CB2 1ER
PR4 1SH	

Expedition Advisory Centre	Arctic Expedition Group
1 Kensington Grove	Bingon House
London	Milton Grove
SW7 2AR	London
N16 8QT	

Superintendent	Travel Arctic
Auyuittuq National Park Reserve	Government of the NWT
Pangnirtung	Yellowknife
North West Territories	NWT
XOA ORO	Canada
	XIa 2L9