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SHINGKHANG EXPEDITION 1991

REPORT BY : ANDREA C. STIMSON

DATE : OCTOBER 1991

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i **MEMBERS**

Andrea Clare Stimson - Leader
Montserrat Salas

ii **OBJECTIVES**

Please see enclosed MEF grant application forms and Expedition information sheet.

iii **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Berghaus	-	Full product sponsorship
Troll	-	Helmet, Harness, slings and Tat, T-shirts
Wild Country	-	Prototype outer mitts, loan of tent. Discount gear
Rab	-	Discount down gear
Berkshire Hosiery	-	Socks, Inner gloves
John West	-	Tinned food products
Premier Biscuits	-	Smash Potato
Climb for World	-	Affiliation and T-shirts

Also to all our friends and family for their help, advice and support; To Nick, I wish you could have been there. And to Mr. Chengazi and Nazir Sabir our agents in Pakistan, and to BMC, MEF, EAS for grant finds and information, And Stefan Lepkowski and Alan Hinkes at Berghaus.

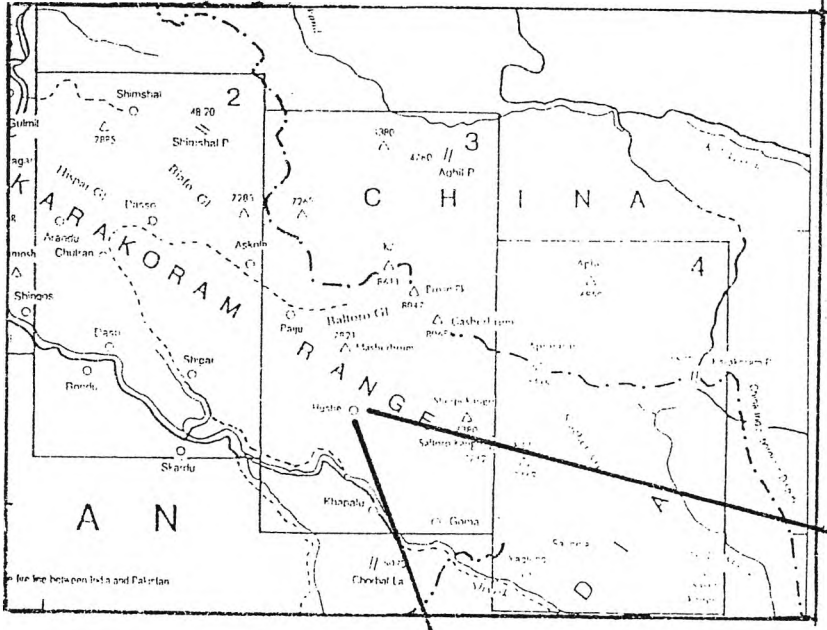
CHING KANG EXPEDITION 91



Leader Andrea Stimson

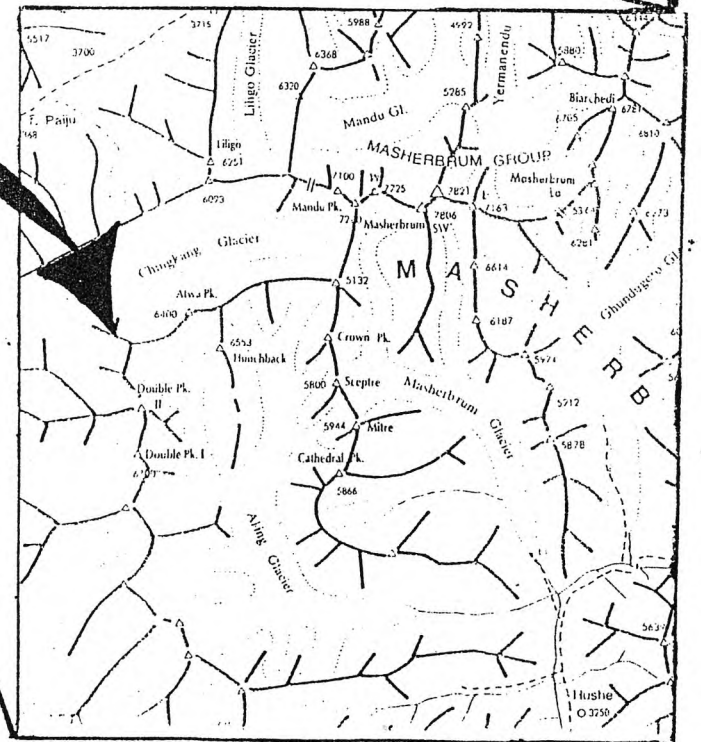
17 Ashwell rd,
Oakham,
Rutland,
LE15 6QZ.
Tel (0572) 722056.

KARAKORAM



EXPEDITION
LOCATION

CHINGKANG 5900m



THE KARAKORAM

This range of mountains, part of the great Himalayan chain, contains some of the highest and most spectacular peaks in the world. Famous names such as K2, Gasherbrum, Nanga Parbat, Trango Towers are situated along its magnificent glaciated valleys. 70% of all expeditions confine thereexploits to these loftier mountains, resulting in large unexplored areas with opportunities to climb smaller but no less stunning, or indeed technically demanding peaks.

CHING KANG EXPEDITION 1991

The criteria for identifying a suitable project included finding a peak that was under 6000m. in height; therefore requiring no permit or peak fee. Choosing one with an aesthetically pleasing shape and interesting route, the mountain offers either a superb ridge or a mixed rock/ice line up the face. Also the location should be suitably remote to offer opportunities for exploration.

Ching Kang (5900m) satisfies these criteria. It sits impressively at the head of the Aling Glacier, leading down into the Hushe Valley, and we believe it to be the ideal project for our first Himalayan expedition.

LOGISTICS

The team will fly out to Islamabad on the 5th August where bureaucratic formalities will be completed. We will arrange local transport and buy necessary supplies. We aim to leave on the 7th August, travelling along the Karakoram Highway by truck for two days. At Skardu we transfer to jeeps and continue onto Hushe for a further day where we will leave the road and trek up the Aling Glacier taking five days with the help of porters. Base camp will be established on or about the 14th August. We will allow four weeks with which to achieve our primary objective, the light weight alpine style ascent of Ching Kang. Another exciting aspect of our expedition is our plan to cross a high col, descend and explore the virtually unknown glacial system beyond Ching Kang. We will map our findings for future reference.

THE TEAM

We are the only British All Womens expedition to the Greater Ranges this summer. Our climbing team comprises:

Andrea Stimson - leader: Age 27, Landscape designer
Scottish grade V ice, British rock E35C,
3 Alpine seasons
All British female ascent of The Nose, El Cap
Expeds: Greenland, Crete and Morrocco.

Montserrat Salas.

We will be supported by a female trekking party who intend to explore the region independently of the expedition.

The expedition has been awarded MEF and BMC grant approval.

Press Information



Berghaus Limited, 34 Dean Street,
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1PG.
Telephone: (091) 232 3561
Fax: (091) 261 0922

BRITISH WOMEN'S TEAM TO CLIMB HIMALAYAN PEAK!

Local North East company Berghaus has sponsored the only 'all women' climbing team to leave Britain this summer in their quest to scale the unclimbed summit of Ching Kang in the Karakoram.

Expedition leader Andrea Stimson and Montserrat "Rat" Salas (named after Montserrat a famous climbing area in Spain) are amongst Britains top female mountaineers.

Last year they became the first British Womens team to scale the vertical, and at times overhanging, 3000 foot rock face of "El Capitan" in America's Yosemite Park. First climbed in 1957, the effort of setting up ropes and climbing equipment took over 18 months, the final push to the top...12 days of solid climbing, not coming down once. Andrea and "Rat" climbed it in under 5 days, sleeping through the seasonal electric storms which on occasion ravaged the valley as they clung to tiny ledges on the rock face.

A calm and mentally very controlled climber, Andrea feels strongly about encouraging women to push themselves to their limits. She feels somewhat alone, a pioneer for women in mountaineering and says she is pleased to be associated with performance outdoor clothing manufacturers Berghaus, a company which has championed female participation in the outdoors.

The team will be using clothing based on Berghaus' Rainbow Layering System of highly whickable and warmth, giving Polartek fabrics, in conjunction with Gore-Tex, a widely acclaimed breathable yet waterproof fabric.

For further information please contact:

Stefan Lepkowski
Berghaus Ltd.,
34, Dean Street,
Newcastle upon Tyne,
NE1 1PG.



GIRLS CLIMB THREE 6,000M PEAKS

News has reached the U.K. from Northern Pakistan that Andrea Stimson and Monserat "Rat" Salas have climbed three 6,000M (20,000') peaks.

Andrea said in a letter to Berghaus of Newcastle Upon Tyne, their main specialist equipment sponsor, that the original unclimbed peak they hoped to ascend of Ching Kang was too dangerous in this years dry conditions.

The two girls made three attempts on the virgin peak, beaten back by dangerous and lethal rock fall. Andrea commented, "we needed more than helmets, we needed armour plated shields, only a climber with a death wish would have continued".

On one of the assaults they were caught out in a storm and had to cut a tiny ledge in an ice field to bivouac for the night.

"The ice was like re-inforced glass" said Andrea, "we chipped at it for over half an hour to nick out a small ledge big enough for Rat and I to squeeze our bums onto and shiver the night away".

According to the girls, who descended safely next day the mountain was in a very unstable state with exceptional stonefall danger, and "only a Kamikaze climber would have gone on", they stated.

From their Base Camp established in August they went on to safely climb three other 6,000M peaks. They are now relaxing with a two week trek to K2 base camp (5100M) and should be back in U.K. in early October.

Tyneside based mountaineer Alan Hinkes who works with Berghaus as a technical consultant said this is a fine achievement for the two climbers. They obviously have plenty of drive as well as sound mountaineering judgement. To leave their hoped for original target and climb other peaks in better condition shows sound common sense. Suitable climbing conditions on mountains vary from month to month and only a madman (or girl) would climb without heeding the prevailing conditions.

For further information please contact:

Stefan Lepkowski/Alan Hinkes,
P.R. Department,
Berghaus Limited,
34 Dean Street,
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE.

(091) 232 3561

ACCOUNTS

INCOME

Alison Chadwick Award	800
BMC Grant	800
T-shirt Sales	95

TOTAL 1695

Individual Contributions (1482 - 85 x 2)	<u>2965.69</u>
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OUTGOING

1. Expenditure UK	
Stationery, Post, Phone	
T-shirts, Travel, Film	414.42

2. Travel	
Flights UK → Karachi	700.00
Flights Karachi → Pindi	166.00
Jeep Pindi → Skardu	
Jeep Skardu → Hushe	37.50
Jeep Hushe → Halde	
Jeep Halde → Hushe	12.00
Jeep Hushe → Skardu	12.50
Bus Skardu → Gilgit	3.50
Jeep Gilgit → Naltar	
Jeep Naltar → Gilgit	10.00
Bus Gilgit → Pindi	7.85
Freight Skardu → Pindi	8.75

TOTAL 1824.35

3. Food Supplies	
BC Food	36.50
Hill Food & Freight	75.00
Kitchen	20.00
Cook 6 weeks	360.00
Fuel & Freight	75.00

TOTAL 566.50

4. EQUIPMENT	
Berghaus Sponsor	500.00
Rope x 2	140.00
Mountain Tent	250.00
Hardware	50.00

TOTAL 940.00

ACCOUNTS cont.

5. PORTERS	
In Shingkhang	250.00
Out Shingkhang	120.00
In Ghondogoro	
Out Ghondogoro	25.00
	<u>TOTAL</u>
	395.00

6. INSURANCE	
US	156.00
Porters	50.00
	<u>TOTAL</u>
	206.00

7. EXPENDITURE PAKISTAN	
Safe Hotels/Meals, Mail, Telegrams, Taxis	314.42

GRAND TOTAL 4660.69

GRAND TOTAL 4660.69

BALANCE

AUGUST

- 1st - Depart Gulf Air to Islamabad
- 2nd - Arrive Islamabad
- 3rd - Contact 3 agents, Nazir Sabir, Mohammed Chengazi, Mohammed Iqbal.
Organise departure to Skardu.
- 4th - Organising in Rawalpindi
- 5th - Obtain trekking permit for Baltoro, visit Minister of Tourism. Leave by jeep for Skardu.
- 6th - Travel up KKT towards Skardu.
- 7th - Arrive Skardu buy food locate freighted gas and hill food.
- 8th - Depart Skardu for Hushe by jeep arrive Hushe.
- 9th - Organise Cook and Porters.
- 10/11/
- 12th - Walk in to Aling glacier
- 13th - Arrive Base Camp, Spangpohjo (Hunchback) build toilet. 7 porter stages. 4300m (approx).
- 14th - Build kitchen. 3 hour exploration of Eastern Arm of Glacier.
- 15th - Depart to Recce Western Arm of glacier, Shingkhang Peak Col with possible view to cross. Pack up 7 days supplies. Negotiate difficult serac band camp on glacier. 4600m (approx).
- 16th - Ascend further up glacier crossing second serac band, arrive at base of col 5000m (approx). Shingkhang Peak found to be exceeding 6000m technically demanding and at risk from collapsing seracs. Col judged to be feasible but not able to risk climbing with Ghulam, our 'guide' for Baltoro, he is too badly equipped and inexperienced.
- 17th - Descend to Basecamp.
- 18th - Bc - Rest day
- 19th - Pack up for 3 day Exploration for new objective up Eastern arm of glacier. Camp on glacier. 4500m (approx). Consider Mitre Peak 5944m.
- 20th - Ascend further up glacier decide on an attempt of Crown Peak. Attractive snow ice couloir leading to col and rock arete to summit. Return to BC.
- 21st - BC - rest day - weather deteriorates.
- 22nd - Bad weather, explore glacier.
- 23rd - Bad weather reece alternative peak objective not feasible rock fall danger.
- 24th - BC - bad weather.
- 25th - Weather improves, pack up for 4 days. 1st attempt of Crown Peak. Camp on glacier 4500m (approx).
- 26th - Ascend to Base of Peak (4600m approx)
- 27th - Midnight start 60/70° degrees snow ice climbing 12 hours. Bivy ice ledge 3/4 up ice field (5600m approx).
- 28th - Retreat due to exhaustion and sickness. Return to BC.
- 29th - BC - Rest day. Weather deteriorates. Visit by one of our Porters.
- 30th - BC - Bad weather.
- 31st - BC - Bad weather.

SEPTEMBER

- 1st - Improving weather explore glacier. -
- 2nd - Good weather pack up for 2nd attempt. Crown Peak camp on glacier 4600m approx.
- 3rd - Ascend to base of Peak continue up scree slope to snow field route under heavy stone fall assault. Traverse and ascend to safe bivvy rock ledge. Appraise situation.
- 4th - Instability due to increase in temperature higher than 0°C even at midnight abandon peak retreat from danger return to BC.
- 5th - BC - Rest day
- 6th - BC - Rest day
- 7th - Bad weather - dismantle BC walk out.
- 8th - Walk out arrive Hushe Jeep Halde
- 9th - Halde. Visit Khaplu telegram put back flight.
- 10th - Halde - Rest day
- 11th - Depart - Halde arrive Hushe organise Ghondogoro trek.
- 12th - Depart Hushe trek in Ghondogoro.
- 13th - Trek in Ghondogoro
- 14th - Arrive Ghondogoro BC.
- 15th - Ascend Ali La. 5600m. ACS Solo 1 peak 5700. Camp on Col.
- 16th - ACS Solo 2 further peaks. 5800m, 5900m reascend peak 1 with MS. Descend col to BC.
- 17th - Dismantle BC walk out
- 18th - Walk out arrive Hushe
- 19th - Hushe - Rest day
- 20th - Hushe to Skardu Jeep
- 21st - Skardu organising freight out
- 22nd - Skardu to Gilgit Bus
- 23rd - Gilgit - arrange trek Naltar valley
- 24th - Gilgit to Naltar with 4 other trekkers
- 25th - Naltar Valley explore lowest section
- 26th - Naltar bad weather. Rest day.
- 27th - Naltar to Gilgit
- 28th - Trapped Gilgit. Religious tension.
- 29th - Gilgit Pindi Bus
- 30th - Arrive Pindi - Organise land freight

OCTOBER

- 1st - Rest day - Islamabad
- 2nd - Tour Lahore
- 3rd - Lahore return Islamabad
- 4/5th - Islamabad
- 6th - Fly to Karachi
- 7th - Karachi LHR - Home Sweet Home

iv **MAPS, PHOTOS, DIAGRAMS, SKETCHES**

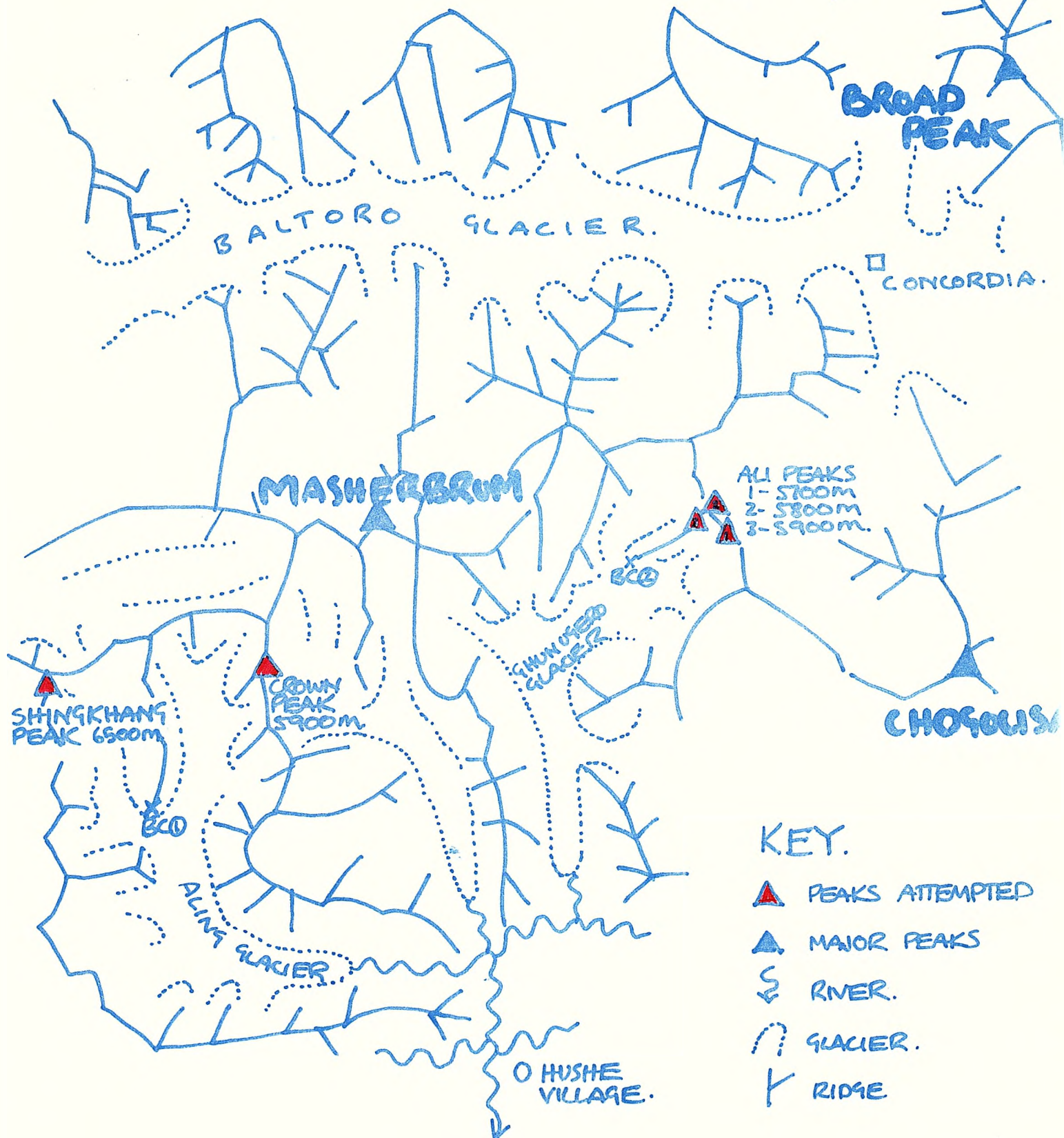
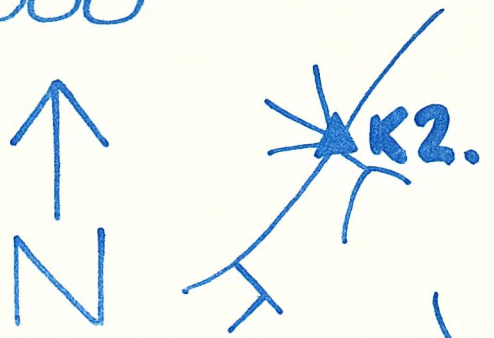
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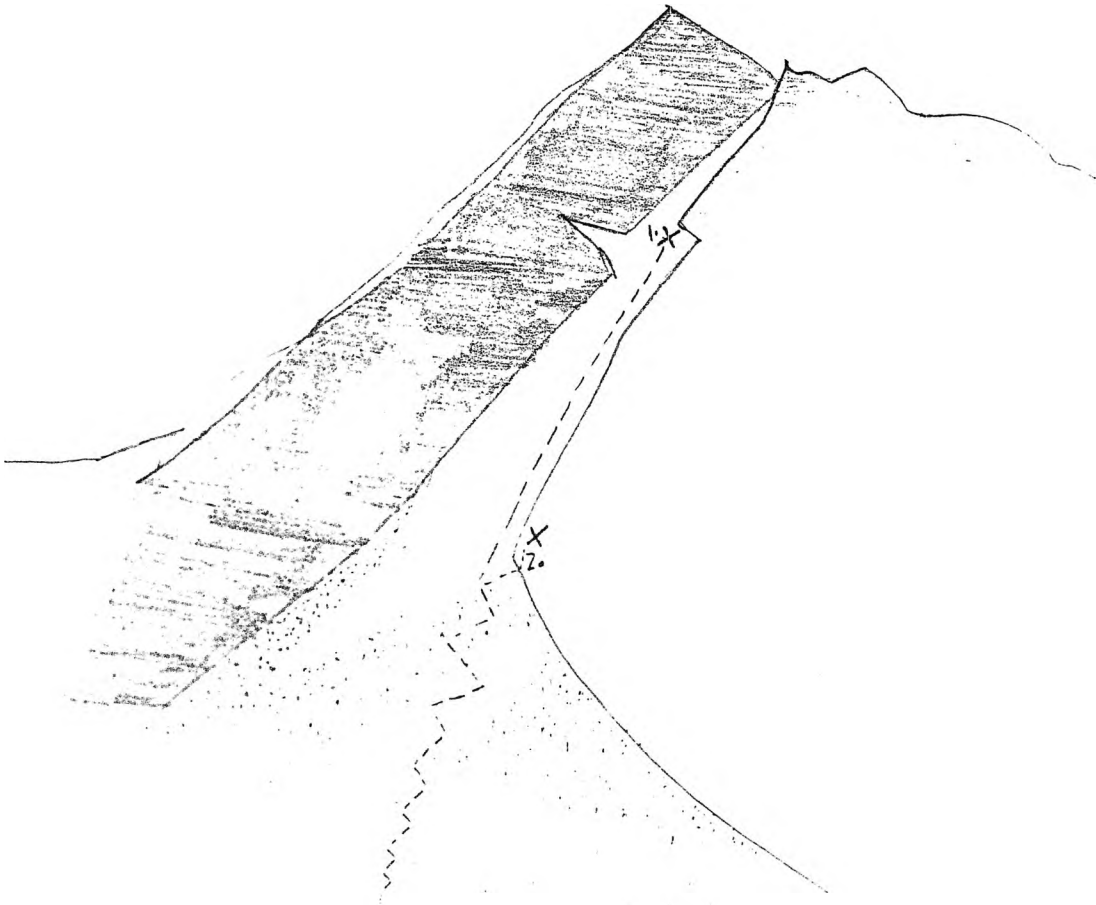
SHINGKHANG EXPEDITION 1991

LOCATION PLAN 1:200,000



DRAWN BY ACS.





CROWN PEAK

view looking North from Aling Glacier
showing high point and 2nd Biwvy



ALI PEAKS 2 AND 3.
view from Ali Col
showing route line.

v. **EQUIPMENT - COMMENTS**

Many thanks again to Berghaus, our main equipment sponsors, providing us with their technical clothing, rucsacs and footwear system. Thanks also to Troll, Wild Country, Rab and Berkshire Hosiery for their contributions.

1. **BERGHAUS**

Asgard Jacket

Roomy - sufficient to allow full range of climbing movements. Hood would cover helmet (only just as Troll model sits very high). Pockets rather fiddly to get to and largest one not big enough to take a standard map. Otherwise excellent.

Asgard Salopettes

Not a 'womans cut', i.e. dimensions do not allow for big bums and thunder thighs! Flexible movement allowed when combined with ACL but would be too restrictive with Polarplus. Full length zips great - but we still had epics going for a pee. Possible suggestion a zip between lower back and leggings.

Polarplus/Polarlight

Great for expeditions of lower altitudes not necessary for climbing but great for Base Camp wear. Too bulky to be compatible with Asgard outers.

ACL

Great - worn almost everyday. Easy to wash, lightweight leggings dry rapidly. Medium weight tops less quickly. Womens flyless bottoms - hindered efforts to pee with a funnel (don't ask!). Not too smelly. Durable but backside seams seemed (pun) to be point of weakness perhaps because they stand proud of material and become abraded when sat on rocks. Once torn, hole enlarges rapidly. (Rat became excellent darner).

Scarpa Vega Plastic Double Boots

Excellent, comfortable, warm, hard wearing.

Yeti Gaiters

We took them off to walk over glacier because rocky terrain was quickly destroying rubber rand and stitching. Otherwise excellent on snow.

Cyclops II Alp 65L Rucsac

Ideal capacity. Snap-Bergbuckle for lid awkward and more fragile than conventional snap buckle. One failed and we didn't have a spare. Side compression straps need to be longer to fit thick karimats. Otherwise excellent.

Lady Pulsar 55L Rucsac

Not sufficient expedition capacity. (Ideal alpine sac?) Had to strap lots to the outside to compensate. Also back length seemed too short. Belt didn't reach to hips (perhaps I have a longer than average back?) Not uncomfortable though durable light in weight I liked two compartments.

vi. **MEDICAL**

We went to Pakistan with a comprehensive First Aid Kit and returned with most of it intact. We had no major injuries.

Minor ailments included Mild diarrhoea, skin allergy reactions, headaches at altitude, Giardia infection. Flea infestation, cough/colds, bumps and grazes.

The most useful items in the FA kit were:

- Diorlyte - can be obtained on prescription, UK.
- Flagyl - as above, for treatment of Giardia
- Antihistamine Cream/pills - Skin inflammations. Insect bites.
- Antiseptic wipes, sticky plaster strapping dressings and bandages.
- Boiled sweets - coughs.

We unfortunately had no flea powder, it is difficult to obtain in Pakistan and I would recommend taking a quantity unless you have natural nit-picking tendencies.

Bolstered by liquid carbohydrate loading training sessions prior to our departure, and a healthy appetite for ghee with everything at BC ensured that by and large we have returned as 'fat' as we left. No problems of severe weight loss for us!

Most hill food was purchased in England and supplemented by donations of tinned fish and dried potato and cake baking sessions at Base Camp.

Our Staple Hill diet consisted of:

Breakfast - Porridge, babyfood

Lunch - Fruit cake, energy bars, savory biscuits

Main Meal - Soup, noodles, tinned fish, hot chocolate

At altitude, appetite is repressed, i.e. you feel sick so we decided the best hill food was the packet with the most writing on, at least you could pass the time reading it.

Base camp menu relied on the infamous combination of rice dhal chapattis, parathas black and green tea. With perhaps an onion thrown in a token 'fresh food'. All items liberally served in Ghee. We didn't have many treats. We saved our one Birds Trifle to celebrate our ascent of Crown Peak, in the end we ate as consolation for failing. When it got bad, we sent our cook down to Hushe shopping for luxuries (cheese) and while he was away, invented some alternative recipes - His own repertoire was dismal - but he wouldn't let us cook!

Recommendations - Take lots of goodies, saves you from food fantasies. Take spices and herbs from England. The diet is surprisingly bland. Take vitamin pills, saves you from spots.

In conclusion, food in Pakistan needn't be bad. We met a friendly American Diplomat and were treated to beer, wine and cocktails - bacon, sausage, lobster and french bread at his house in Islamabad (Thanks, Rick).

CONCLUSIONS

This was to be a 'first timers' trip to the Karakoram, our objectives were chosen with an emphasis on 'learning the ropes'. We both feel we have returned with valuable insight and knowledge about previously unknown situations and conditions.

After initial discovery that our chosen objectives were unsuitable, we quickly reconnoitred the area for a new challenge. CROWN PEAK was both challenging and exasperating sadly weather conditions caused the mountain to become highly susceptible to an unacceptable level of stonefall, and bearing in mind the motto 'A successful expedition is one you return from' we were forced to abandon our desired Peak.

By way of justice and compensation for our disappointment, we later enjoyed successful ascents of three sub 6000m peaks in the Ghondogoro area reached from a high col (5600m). The summits were soloed by Andrea and one latter climbed by both Andrea and Montserrat (suffering from sickness).

In conclusion, we feel we have learnt a great deal and by being flexible in our approach, achieved summit success in our desired height range. We both found Pakistan's '3rd World Culture' fascinating and as educational as the climbing experiences we have returned with.

A comment on the 'unknown element' of how 2 women faced alone in a Moslem country - we were amazed and relieved at the level of protectiveness shown towards us - at times we felt rather like celebrities. The pleasant, intrigued but tolerant attitude shown to us during most of the trip far outweighed the few isolated 'uncomfortable' but never threatening, situations that we had to put up with on occasions.

The Balti people proved to be friendly, open, welcoming and hospitable, which greatly contributed to the enjoyment of the trip.

I would not hesitate to recommend similar trips to other all female parties, it is common sense to keep covered up but an out going, direct and friendly approach to the Pakistani people we met, I am sure contributed to our safe and enjoyable stay in the country. Use of a recognised agency should ensure that reputable 'discreet' porters and cooks are employed which gives valuable peace of mind when personal safety must be given due consideration in a Moslem country such as Pakistan.