

92/12

The Scottish Nanga Parbat Expedition 1992

Expedition Report

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EXPEDITION REPORT

In January 1991 I applied for and was granted permission to attempt the Diamir Face of Nanga Parbat early in 1992.

I assembled a team of five, including myself. The team was :- Peter Long(Leader) 42 yrs, Geoff Cohen 44, Ally Kellas 47, Barry Owen 44, Des Rubens 39. These were all people who I have known and climbed with for many years. All had previous Himalayan experience, four of the party had been over 7500m before and some more than once.

Our aim was to attempt the Kinshofer Route(1961) as this appeared to offer the safest line on the Diamir Face, (indeed, on the whole mountain). This route had had a number of ascents varying from solo ascents to sieges. We intended to attempt the route in purely alpine style ie. acclimatising on nearby peaks before setting off on Nanga Parbat with only what we could carry and having no fixed camps. It was felt that this was the only legitimate approach on what is a known route. Siege tactics, it was felt, were an outdated approach to a route of this kind.

In July 1991, the Kinshofer Route was climbed by two British climbers; Roger Mear and Dave Walsh. This was a disappointment(for us) in that their excellent alpine style ascent could hardly be bettered. However, we considered that we should go ahead but should consider one of the other routes or unclimbed lines on the face.

We received generous grant aid from the MEF, BMC and Scottish Mountain Trust. The rest of the money we found ourselves and sought no sponsorship as such, though we received some food free. We were also given generous discounts on a lot of equipment, air fares, and food. (See Appendix)

On 27 May, Barry Owen and I flew from Manchester to Islamabad with PIA. On arrival, we were met by a representative of our agents, Nazir Sabir Expeditions, who took us to the Hotel Holiday in Rawalpindi. This is a 'mid range' hotel; a double room costing Rps 412 per night. This was excellent value - the hotel being well run, secure, reasonably clean and the staff very friendly and helpful. Barry and I then set about completing formalities with the authorities as well as making final food and equipment purchases and packing it all into porter loads. We air freighted approximately 350 Kg of food and equipment from the UK. This had already been cleared through customs by our agents, thus sparing us many of the usual problems.

Ali Kellas, Geoff Cohen and Des Rubens arrived on 3 June and we completed the packing of the gear they had brought. We finally had 27 loads each of 25 Kg.

In Islamabad we met our Liaison Officer(LO) - Munir Kasmi - a civilian who worked in a bank. He was very pleased with the equipment we had brought for him with exception of the high altitude boots which were too small as a result of us being sent inaccurate information while in the UK. This problem was resolved by my giving him my size 11 double boots, requiring me to use the expedition's spare pair of somewhat worn size 10's. Munir was a very pleasant man - polite, co-operative and well educated. For the duration of the time he was with us, he worked hard to help us and we grew to like him despite his sometime child-like naivety and inability to look after himself.

Also in Islamabad we took on Swalfqir - our cook. Originally, we were allocated a Hunza cook, with good references, by our agents. However, he mysteriously failed to appear one day due, we think, to 'pressure' from the Diamir valley contingent who were in Islamabad trying to get work from expeditions to their valley. Swalfqir was introduced to us by the cook from the British Nanga Parbat Expedition of 1991. It seemed a good idea to have a local and as it turned out, Swalfqir was well connected in the Diamir valley. This helped us over a few rocky patches later. Unfortunately, Swalfqir's skills did not extend to cooking and though he made an effort with simple, local food and later 'European food', we generally ate poorly unless we helped with the cooking ourselves. References from previous expeditions are a good idea but a cook, however good, is no use if he ends up being chased out of the valley by angry locals!

On 6 June, we left Islamabad in two minibuses. We leapfrogged along the Karakoram Highway(KKH) with a Swiss expedition, also bound for the Diamir. Several expeditions had been delayed in Islamabad by unrest in Gilgit and the consequent closure of the KKH. Once re-opened(after 3 days) there was a headlong rush to get to the mountains. We reached Chilas at about 2am after the usual arduous drive, police road blocks etc.

Early next morning, the 7th, Munir and I went along to Bunar Bridge to organise the porters for the walk in. The Diamir porters pay scant regard to the set rates as laid down by the Pakistan government. Initially they wanted Rps 1400 per man for the four days to Base Camp. No food or equipment is asked for which simplifies things somewhat, but the financial demands more than made up for this. In addition to the 27 porters we required, they insisted we take 4 sirdars, non load carrying 'minders' whose job seemed to be to protect the interests of each of the 4 factions comprising our porter force. I asked them whether they wished to bring their mothers along as well! While eliciting some laughter, this didn't have the desired effect. We eventually settled on Rps 1280 per man and 4 sirdars. Later that afternoon we took all our gear along to Bunar and camped, ready to set off early the next morning. We were somewhat surprised to see a huge Korean team, of whom we knew nothing, also camping for the night. I found out that they needed 140 porters, and along with the Swiss(35 porters), a Polish expedition rumoured to be in the vicinity and ourselves, it looked as if porters might be in short supply...

Next morning, to their credit, the men I had engaged turned up at our camp and signed for their loads. Only two sirdars accompanied them! We felt we were doing well! We set off at 8.30, ahead of everyone else, and by 2.30pm we at the first halt - Dimroi. A very hot, dry walk - no water anywhere; Munir suffered because of his not carrying enough to drink. We had to give him most of ours! The Swiss and Koreans also arrived and the scene was reminiscent of a film set from a biblical epic. So much for the peace and tranquillity of these empty Himalayan valleys!

We were up at 4am and away after the usual problems with porters and loads, all demanding attention; I was quickly finding out that being 'leader' means that every problem or decision, no matter how small was referred to me. I was glad to start walking; a long day climbing up the Diamir gorge - a very spectacular path, in places cut into the rock walls. By mid afternoon we reached the next 'camp site' in some miserable scrub with little shade at about 2600m. Once the crowds had arrived it became pretty unpleasant. The porters then staged a strike - Rps 2000 were required from each expedition for a 'goat', to be sacrificed in celebration of the festival of Eid. The leaders conferred in the withering heat and it was decided that Rps 20 per man would be offered and this was eventually accepted.

Everyone was up early on the 10th. The porters were away with no trouble at all - I believe they argue and provoke confrontations just for something to do! A very pleasant day's walk through beautiful woods and out onto an 'alp' at 3870m - the last settlement and a good view of Nanga Parbat. As the Base Camp was only a couple of hours away, Ali carried on and reached it hoping to claim a good camp site.

Another arduous evening followed, arguing about the goat for the festival. Even Munir, keen on the idea of a goat feast himself, tried to get us to pay up but we steadfastly refused, knowing that it was just another money making ruse. His disillusionment was sad to see when the Koreans paid up and no goat appeared. At least it was cooler up here and with beautiful surroundings we felt a bit more relaxed.

We reached Base Camp(at 4000m) early on the 11th. It had rained hard during the night and Ali had got soaked! He had claimed a good spot but the Koreans had arrived and started to encamp very close by, so we moved to a place on the edge of the glacier. There was already another large Korean team in residence at Base Camp, having been there for two weeks of mostly poor weather. They must have been somewhat disconcerted as we, the Swiss(5), the Poles(6) and the second Korean team(15) arrived all at once!

We paid off the porters and set up camp amid melting snow and mud, glad to be left to our own

devices. The Base Camp area was not as squalid as we had feared, as someone had made a big effort to clean it up. It had apparently been very untidy in 1991. Was this a squad of shamefaced expeditioners or a big effort by the Pakistan government using the Environmental Tax that all expeditions are required to pay? - I suspect the former!

The weather was good and after a couple of days of relaxing and short walks we felt ready for our first training foray. During this period it became obvious why the Kinshofer route is so popular. It is indeed the only safe line on the Diamir Face. The Czech Route to the south summit and the Mummery Rib were dangerously threatened by seracs and though avalanches down them were rare, when they did occur, they were devastating. The Messner Route was subject to frequent ice avalanches and at all times of the day and night. The upper Diamir glacier leading up to the col dividing it from the Rakhiot side was also threatened throughout its length and it was not difficult to imagine what might have been Mummery's fate. The Mazeno Wall, to right(SW) of the Diamir Face is a huge complex feature 3200m high consisting of ribs, buttresses and couloirs, reminiscent of the North Face of the Jorasses. Small hanging glaciers, however, threaten all feasible looking lines. From Galano Peak in the north west, through Nanga Parbat, to the final peaks above the Mazeno Pass, the Kinshofer Route appears to be the only safe line.

The other teams at Base Camp all turned their attentions, in a very businesslike way, to the Kinshofer Route. A scramble for tent sites at Camps 1 and 2 quickly resulted in cases of altitude sickness as unacclimatised climbers rushed up with heavy loads. The Koreans, Poles, Swiss and Czechs(who arrived on the 13th) eventually shared tents and equipment. All adopted a classic siege approach which we found a little depressing as there were some very powerful climbers about - two of the Czechs having climbed seven 8000m peaks before. They were all there to bag Nanga Parbat and set about it with no qualms about style. We felt however that it was up to them what they did and we had no right to criticise. All were very well equipped, with new gear, and we must have seemed to them a typically eccentric British expedition with our 'light' approach and motley collection of well used equipment and old tents!

On 13 June we set off on our first training trip. Geoff and Des went down the valley to climb a couloir on the Galano side that they had spotted on the walk in. Ali, Barry and I went up the short rib above Base Camp on the Galano side to a point just above an obvious gendarme at about 4700m. On the 14th Ali and I climbed a spur to about 5000m and descended to the tents where we spent the rest of the day relaxing. Barry had a bad headache and stayed put. Des and Geoff climbed about 1000m up their couloir to a col at about the same height and descended again the same day. Barry, Ali and I again ascended to 5000m on the 15th then went down to Base Camp.

On the 16th, Munir, left along with all the other LOs. They generally felt superfluous and life at

Base Camp must have seemed a little Spartan for them. It was sad to see Munir go as he had been a good friend. Our cook, Swalfqir, tried to persuade us to take back the gear we had given to Munir and give it to him instead! We refused but it seems that Diamir cooks do expect to receive good gear from their expeditions. The equipment we had provided was a bit below par compared with that provided by other expeditions and this did not go down too well. To his credit, Swalfqir put up with his lot and continued to be polite and helpful.

On the 17th we all went up the hill together on the Galano side but further up the valley than before. We camped - five of us in three small tents - at about 4800m. Various stomach problems and headaches were evident - Barry the worst. We all went up to 5200m early the next morning and camped on a narrow site on a col. Reading and brewing up filled the rest of the day. On the 19th Barry went down feeling worse; Des accompanying him to easy ground. The rest of us, without gear, trudged up snow and rock to about 5900m. We all felt pretty well and with a beautiful clear day and great views, we felt optimistic about the future. Relaxation filled the rest of the day before descending to Base Camp the following morning.

On the 21st, Barry left Base Camp for home. He wasn't acclimatising and felt he might be a liability on Nanga Parbat. We tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade him to stay but his mind was made up.

June the 22nd saw the arrival of a Basque expedition (4 plus a doctor) with 40 porters. Overnight it snowed heavily and several tents around Base Camp, including our cooking shelter, collapsed. The snow soon burned off in the sun and things were back to normal in a couple of hours. Later that day, the four of us set off on another acclimatisation trip. Ali and I went up on the Galano side, camping at the 4700m site again while Geoff and Des crossed the glacier to attempt a summit of about 7400m on the Mazeno side, camping below a couloir at 3800m.

The following day, Ali and I ascended to about 5600m up couloirs and ridges in good conditions. The others climbed up their couloir to its top at 5100m, Des quickly but Geoff less so, still suffering the effects of both a gut problem and an ear and throat infection. Geoff had taken a course of antibiotics for these and maybe they were affecting his performance.

On the 25th, Ali and I moved the tent up again to a snow shoulder at almost 5900m, below the summit pyramid of the westernmost of the Galano Ridge peaks. We climbed mixed ground for two pitches then soloed up snow and eventually quite hard ice. I reached the summit at about 6100m but Ali declined the last, hard ice, considering it too dangerous. He was probably right as it was quite a nervous strain cramponning down with only one axe and no rope! After another night on the shoulder we descended to Base Camp on the 26th.

Geoff and Des were out of sight all day(25th) behind the Mazeno Ridge and did not return, as planned, on the 26th. Ali and I spent the next couple of days worrying about them. By the 28th I was very concerned as there had been a storm and no sight of them since the evening of the 26th when we had spotted their tent. They arrived back exhausted on the 28th. They had reached about 6400m after some fairly hard climbing.

We rested until 2 July when Ali, Des and I set off for Nanga Parbat carrying about 20 Kg each. Geoff was still feeling ill and too tired to start so he decided to stay behind. The weather deteriorated rapidly as we climbed up to Camp 1 - the first really bad day on the whole trip! We couldn't believe it and stopped to brew up in a large Czech dome tent to console ourselves. All our gear got wet, depressing us somewhat. The following day we descended leaving some food at Camp 1. The prospect of continuing in poor weather and new snow in wet gear was unappealing - we would wait for a more settled spell of weather.

The weather on the 4th was beautiful: clear and still - the best yet. Geoff was much improved and so the whole team could set off together. We made Camp 1(5200m) in good time and pitched our tiny tents.

Next day we started up the couloir, followed by the Swiss who were also embarking on their final push. Despite being fully loaded we kept ahead of them, except Geoff who was moving quite slowly. Ali, Des and I using the ropes fixed by other parties, arrived at Camp 2(6225m) in six or seven hours. It was a very strenuous day - hard ice, steep and nowhere to rest comfortably. The last 100m up rocks to the col is very steep and littered with old ropes and gear of all kinds - it might have been easier without them in place. Geoff didn't arrive until 7.30pm, having taken 15 hours from Camp 1. He was very tired and it was apparent to the rest of us that he would be unwise to continue, though we decided to leave the discussion until the morning.

I spent a sleepless night considering the options but feeling that Geoff should not descend alone despite the fixed ropes. My position as leader weighed heavily on me and I felt responsible for the safety of the team. By the morning, I had decided that I would descend with Geoff and render assistance if necessary - unfortunately, giving up my own chance of the summit. Ali and Des thought I was being over-cautious and Geoff distraught that he should be the cause of my turning back. However, the alternatives were unacceptable to me. Although the others both offered to go down, I saw it as my responsibility. If Geoff had had an accident descending alone, I would never have forgiven myself.

So, at about 9am on the 6th, Geoff and I set off down, reaching Base Camp in about 7 hours. Geoff performed efficiently on the fixed ropes but seemed very tired towards the bottom of the couloir and I was happy with my difficult decision. I thought, before the trip, that as 'leader', I was

just the person who fills in the forms and organises things. Once on the mountain, I expected it to be each person making his own decisions and taking his own risks - this wasn't the case. I felt personally responsible for the others as well as myself. The physical and mental stress of this type of climbing means that all your energies need to be channelled into the climb. If you are worrying about others and their well being, you are necessarily distracted from this. So, to ensure Geoff's safety, to give the others a worry free chance and to ease my mental burden, I descended too. At a time like this, you wonder whether you are using the situation to 'chicken out' of a dangerous and demanding enterprise that is perhaps too much for you - who knows? I know that climbing the couloir and the rocks to Camp 2, I was buzzing with that energy and excitement which serious climbing brings. I felt fit and strong and optimistic - certain that if things stayed OK, I make it to the top. Once Geoff's condition became obvious, the climb and the summit were suddenly unimportant.

Ali and Des, after the turmoil of these discussions, didn't move that day. It was too hot by then and they spent the day brewing up and acclimatising. The Swiss moved up to Camp 3 at 6800m on the 7th. The following day, Ali and Des also climbed to Camp 3 in good time and enjoying good weather and on the 8th got to Camp 4(7250m), again in perfect weather. The Swiss, a day ahead, summited on the 8th; one of them reaching the top, alone, after a 12 hour effort.

Approaching Camp 4, Ali became aware that Des was showing signs of stress. He seemed uncoordinated and suddenly very slow. On reaching Camp 4, Des was unable to eat or drink even water and was sick. Faced with these symptoms, Ali decided that they should descend. The next morning Des was no better and they descended, slowly, to Camp 2 in worsening weather.

On the 10th, they reached Base Camp; the weather now really bad, with heavy snow. Des had recovered now, though both were very tired. According to John English, an experienced expedition doctor, Des had had the beginnings of HACE and had been in some danger.

We left Base Camp on the 11th and reached Bunar on the 12th. We only required eight porters as most of our kitchen utensils and spare food were given to our cook, Swalfqir.

On the 14th we flew back to Britain from Islamabad.

SUMMARY

26 May	PL, BO fly to Islamabad	
2 June	AK, DR, GC fly to Islamabad	
6 June	Leave Islamabad for mountains	
8-11 June	Walk in to Nanga Parbat Base Camp	
13-15 June	1st acclimatisation trip -	
	2 nights at 4700m	PL, AK, BO
	2 excursions to 5000m	
	2 nights at 3800m	DR, GC
	1 excursion to 5000m	
17-20 June	2nd acclimatisation trip -	
	1 night at 4800m	All members
	2 nights at 5200m	
	1 excursion to 5900m	
23-26 June	3rd acclimatisation trip -	
	1 night at 4700m	PL, AK
	1 night at 5600m	
	1 night at 5900m	
	1 excursion to 6100m	
	1 night at 4700m	DR, GC
	1 night at 5100m	
	2 nights at 5800m	
	1 night at 5600m	
2 July	PL, AK, DR to Camp 1	
3 July	PL, AK, DR to Base Camp	
4 July	PL, AK, DR, GC to Camp 1	
5 July	PL, AK, DR, GC to Camp 2	
6 July	PL, GC to Base Camp	
7 July	AK, DR to Camp 3	
8 July	AK, DR to Camp 4	
9 July	AK, DR to Camp 2	
10 July	AK, DR to Base Camp	
11 July	Leave Base Camp	
14 July	Leave Islamabad	

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Previous high altitude experience is no guarantee of subsequent performance. Barry had been to 6600m before but seemed unable to acclimatise above Base Camp at all.

Des was probably the fittest and fastest of us all but was unable to eat above about 5800m. His sudden deterioration at 7200m was a surprise as he had previously been to over 7800m.

Geoff was ravaged by gut and ear/throat infections early in the trip and seemed below strength subsequently. Normally very fit, the veteran of twelve previous trips to the Himalayas up to 7900m, his performance must have disappointed him.

Ali Kellas, proved very strong and fit throughout and would have stood a good chance of reaching the summit. Previous visits to 7600m and 7900m emphasised his strength and reliability.

Personally, I acclimatised well and felt strong on Nanga Parbat but circumstances detailed elsewhere necessitated my early descent.

It would seem that Ali and I had a less stressful acclimatisation period, going high and sitting around a lot. Geoff and Des were more ambitious and perhaps wore themselves out a bit too much.

Most of the other teams were successful on the Kinshofer Route this year - which may say something about siege versus alpine tactics.

To be successful on an alpine style ascent, everything has got to go right - you need to be very fit, have perfect weather, be single minded and perhaps selfish.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

OUTGOINGS(£)

Peak fee		1460.00
Travel:- BR(UK)		44.00
Air fares		2495.00
Islamabad-Bunar		200.00
Bunar-Islamabad		105.00
BO Bunar-Islamabad		22.00
Air Freight - 347 Kg - out		487.47
160 Kg - back		267.50
Post/Fax/Telex		123.52
T-shirts(Islamabad)		15.00
Gas		115.50
Tents		815.75
Clothing/Equipment		1087.22
Liaison Officer	Pay	145.00
	Gear	557.91
Cook	Pay and gear	193.00
Porters and Sirdars	In - (27+2)*Rps 1280	825.00
	Out- (8+1)*Rps 1280	29.00
Insurance	Expedition Members	638.00
	LO and porters	54.95
Visas		150.00
Taxis(Pakistan)		83.00
Bank Charges		44.13
Kit bags		14.40
Medical Kit		294.00
Food	UK	200.00
	Pakistan	101.00
Accommodation and subsistence(Pakistan)		405.91
Agent's fee	\$130*5	325.00
Kitchen Tent Hire	\$105	52.50
Environmental/Rescue Bond	\$150	75.00
Kitchen Gear		210.00
Fuel		11.00
	TOTAL OUTGOINGS	£11648.76

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

INCOME (£)

Grants -	Scottish Mountain Trust	1000.00
	Mount Everest Foundation	1100.00
	British Mountaineering Council	1100.00
	Contributions by expedition members	7448.76
	TOTAL INCOME	£11648.76

APPENDIX : FOOD

In planning food for the expedition we used a combination of experience from our own and others' previous expeditions, plus some back of the envelope calculations regarding amounts. As the base camp was only four days from the road there did not seem any necessity to plan packs of so many man-days. We knew that everyone's tastes would differ and we hoped that there would be sufficient variety that all members would find something palatable.

In view of the economic recession we were not hopeful about getting support from British food and drink manufacturers, but in fact we were wrong. Several firms, especially Scottish ones, responded with extraordinary generosity, so we were very well supplied with oatcakes, fudge, shortbread, hot drinks and whisky! To these firms we extend grateful thanks.

On arrival in Pakistan we discovered that the government's 'scale of rations' that we were supposed to provide for the porters, was not required - it was sufficient to pay cash instead. We did still buy some local rations for ourselves, but we didn't really take enough fresh vegetables. Given the proximity of base camp, and our cook's limited abilities, we should certainly have taken more potatoes. As it was the base camp diet of rice and dal, or chapatties and dal soon palled. In the latter half of the expedition we varied it with a lot of eggs, after one of the other expeditions had ordered a porter load of 300 eggs up from the valley. To some extent we were constrained by the fact that four out of the five of us were nominally vegetarian (some more conscientiously than others). On the one occasion when our cook managed to persuade us to purchase a chicken, his cooking of it was so incompetent that even the principal carnivore was unable to stomach it!

It should perhaps be explained that every expedition is obliged to employ a cook. At the Diamir base camp all the cooks seemed to belong to one extended family, and they had frequent contact with their other family members, a short way lower down the valley. We were perhaps unfortunate in getting a rather young and inexperienced cook (only 18 years old) - he was keen to oblige but had a very limited repertoire, and was not even very good at chapatties.

As regards food on the mountain, we found several problems. Pete was unable to stomach quick noodles, which were one of the main carbohydrate staples planned for higher up. Oatcakes, tubes of cheese and tinned fish were generally quite popular, except with Des who lost all his appetite above about 5800m. Salami was very popular with Pete, Des and Ali (the last two being the lax vegetarians) - it is undoubtedly one of the best ways of carrying high energy and tasty food at altitude. The 'Options' hot chocolate drinks proved very popular, with the wide variety of flavours capable of appealing to all tastes. Needless to say food like shortbread and fudge was consumed in large quantities; however we had been so generously provided that we were

unable to get through it all and had to leave a fair amount with the family of our questionably deserving cook. We had also bought large quantities of nuts and raisins in Islamabad, on the theory that they provide fibre as well as very good value in terms of calories per gram. But this too proved more than we could eat. Generally we tended to take more food than we needed on the hill. The greatest concern at altitude is to reduce the weight of one's rucksack, and in any case appetite is generally much reduced.

Food Acknowledgements

The expedition would like to thank the following suppliers for their donations or discount:

Mr J.P.Robertson,
Robertsons (Orkney) Ltd,
Cairston Road,
Stromness,
Orkney

Orkney fudge

Ms Debra Peterson,
California Cake & Cookie Ltd
67 Elderpark Workspace

Millionaire shortbread, Butter shortbread,
Almond slice

Ms Elizabeth Raeburn,
Paterson-Bronte Biscuit Co.,
Nettlehill Road,
Livingston
EH54 5DN

Shortbread biscuits

Mr James N Walker,
Walkers Shortbread Ltd
Aberlour on Spey
AB3 9PB

Oatcakes

Ms Dora Curtis
Wander Ltd,
Kings Langley,
Hertfordshire,
WD4 8LJ

Options (Instant hot chocolate drinks)

Mrs W E Harvey
R.Twining and Co Ltd.,
South Way,
Andover,
Hants SP10 5AQ

Ceylon tea and assorted fruit teas

Mrs Sarah Underhill,
Consumer Services Supervisor,
The Schwartz Herb and Spice Centre,
Dormer Road,
Thame,
Oxon OX9 3SL

Spices

Ms Jackie A Watson,
Leisure Drinks Ltd.,
24 Willow Road,
Trent Lane,
Castle Donington,
Derby DE7 2NP

Vegetarian pate

Ms Sheila Smith,
Kavli Limited,
Kingsway,
Team Valley Trading Estate,
Tyne and Wear
NE11 OST

Primula cheese tubes(discount)

Ms Margaret Struthers,
Matthew Gloag and Son Ltd,
Bordeaux House,
Perth
PH1 5EU

Famous Grouse Whisky

Tunnocks

Real Foods

APPENDIX : EXPEDITION EQUIPMENT

Tents

3 two-man Wild Country Gemini tents were used on the mountain above base camp. These single skin, Goretex tents were easily the lightest available specifically designed for extreme conditions, weighing only 1.9 Kg. They were used without pegs, making them even lighter.

They are very cramped for 2 large adults and would be hard work in a prolonged period of bad weather. However, for a lightweight, Alpine-style ascent such as ours, where more comfort than would be provided by a bivouac is wanted, they worked well. They can be pitched in very small spaces and are quick and easy to erect. We did not experience any severe storms while we were on the mountain and consequently the tents were not tested in really rough conditions.

Ropes

50m of 8.5mm lightweight rope was taken for each climbing pair but because of the amount of fixed rope found in place, it was not used.

Stoves

A large, double burner, kerosene stove was used at Base Camp. On the mountain we used Camping Gaz 470 burners with propane mix cylinders. These worked very well indeed. On the acclimatisation trips a small Bluet stove was also used.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Clothing

Two types of layered systems were used depending on individual preferences. The tried and tested Lifa type underwear was used by everyone. Next, a fibre pile layer under down jackets/suits, with or without a Goretex shell garment or as an alternative, Buffalo clothing. Buffalo Big Face Shirts were found adequate to over 6500m. Above this one member also needed a Buffalo Belay jacket, to cope with the cold early morning starts. For the summit day, the intention was to use a thin one-piece down suit over the Buffalo gear but this was never tested. Certainly the Buffalo alone was more than warm enough up to the 7250m reached. Another advantage of Buffalo is that it dries quickly and is still quite warm even when wet.

Gloves

Dachsteins worked as well as ever. Three members used the new Wild Country Mountain Mitts and these seemed to wear well when used for fixed rope work and abseiling. Both types of mitts required inners for extra warmth.

Footwear

2 members used Koflach boots with Alveolite inners; the rest preferred Asolo Expeditions. We all had cold feet at times but no frostbite. The Asolo double lacing system on the outer was found difficult to tie if the boot was at all frozen.

Overboots used varied from thinsulate Yetis to neoprene. No problems were found with either type.

Everyone used vapour barrier socks, most commonly polythene bags. These generally worked well, keeping both socks and inner boots dry.

Sleeping Equipment

Everyone used good quality down sleeping bags. One Mountain Equipment Everest, one redline, one Rab bag and two Snowdon Mouldings bags. We all used Goretex bivvi bags and in one case a vapour barrier sleeping bag liner(this was only partially successful).

Expedition weight Karrimats were used by everyone and found to to be as good as ever.

Technical Gear

Various types of Alpine adjustable climbing harnesses.

Mainly Mountain Technology Ice Axes and Hammers.

Both Messner and Grivel clip-on crampons.

No significant problems were experienced with any of the above with exception of one harness which showed a marked tendency to fall down to the user's knees.

Equipment Acknowledgements

Buffalo Gear	Salopettes, shirts, and jackets(discount)
Wild Country	Gemini tents and gloves(discount)
DMM	Ropes(discount)
Mr Gordon Grossett, Tent Repair Service	Rucsacs(discount)