



**Karakoram 8000 Project.** Bringing hydro-electricity to a remote community during expeditions to Broad Peak and K2.

## **1992 REPORT**

# **BRITISH BROAD PEAK TRAVERSE EXPEDITION**

## TEAM MEMBERS

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Lastly we would like to acknowledge **Intermediate Technology Development Group** for providing valuable information and thank the group of specialists from **Eastern Electricity** and **Nigel Smith** from **Nottingham Polytechnic** whose combined experience helped the expedition achieve a meaningful contribution to sustainable development in a remote mountain region.

## EXPEDITION TIME CHART

05	June	Arrive Islamabad
06-07		Ministry briefing, purchase of food, etc
08		Flight Islamabad - Skardu
09-10		Hire porters, pack loads, order jeeps, visit AKRSP
11		Skardu to Askole by jeep (with stop at Hoto)
12		Walk-in: Askole to Nr Bardumal
13		Nr Bardumal to Paiju
14		Paiju - rest day
15		Paiju - Lilligo
16		Lilligo - Urdukas
17		Urdukus - Goro
18		Goro - Concordia - Base Camp
19		Establish BC, reconnaissance
20		Climb rock summit 5400m
21		Depart for Khal-Khal Glacier
22		Acclimatization peak 6200m, return to BC
23		Rest day
24		Walk up to Broad Peak ABC 5000m
25		Ascend to first camp 5400m
26		Continue climb to 6200m - camp
27		RP, JC, AF, MH climb to 6700m and return to 6200m
28		Descend to BC
29-01	July	Rest days
02		Back to ABC
03		Heavy snowfall - return to BC
04-05		Base Camp
06		Up to ABC
07		Ascend to 6200m - establish camp
08		Continue climb to 7000m - establish camp
09		Bad weather - descend to BC
10-12		Base Camp
13		IP, LP, AF to ABC
14		IP, LP, AF to 6200m. RP, JC, MH to ABC
15		RP, JC, MH to 6200m
16		Bad weather - rest at 6300m
17		Bad weather continues - descend to BC
18		Base Camp
19		Back to ABC
20		Up to 6200m
21		Bad weather - rest day 6200m
22		Continue to 7000m
23		IP, LP, AF up to 7300m
24		RP, JC to 7300m
25		RP, JC, IP, AF climb to c7700m - bad weather and conditions - return to 7300m. IP, AF to 6300m
26		RP, JC climb to c7700m - continuing bad weather and conditions - abandon climb - all back to BC
27		Walk-out: BC to Urdukas
28		Urdukas - Paiju
29		Paiju - Korophon
30		Korophon - Askole - Hoto. RP, JC jeep to Skardu
31		Rest of team to Skardu
01	August	Skardu - visit with AKRSP
02		Fly to Islamabad
03		Debriefing
04		Return to Britain

## SUMMARY

The objectives of the Karakoram 8000 project were two-fold. To attempt a new route on the S Face of Broad Peak and in so doing make the first traverse of the main summit; and to oversee a micro-hydro energy scheme being installed by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) who play a major developmental role in the Northern Areas of Pakistan. The site for the installation was the village of Hoto, on the approach to the mountain.

The energy project arose from ideas that we had after an expedition to the same area in 1987, and from discussions with our sponsors Eastern Electricity. Eastern provided funds for the purchase of hardware, the training of two AKRSP engineers and the time of a British expert to assist and advise on all stages of the project. The project was facilitated by the AKRSP who helped the villagers set up a 'village organisation' to be responsible for the scheme in the long term.

The mountaineering objectives were unfortunately thwarted by very poor weather in the Karakoram. After a promising start acclimatizing on peaks near Base Camp and on the lower reaches of Broad Peak, progress soon deteriorated. The intrusion of the monsoon brought rain to Base Camp and heavy falls of snow at altitude. The S Face route was deemed to be too dangerous in the conditions and so all attempts to reach the summit were then concentrated on the W Flank. A number of attempts were made, but each time the team was forced to turn back because of stormy weather and dangerous conditions. A high point of c7700m was reached on two occasions.

The development objectives of the project progressed well despite early problems. On the approach to the mountain in June the hydro scheme seemed in some difficulty due to concerns by villagers about the diversion of the water supply. However, this problem was resolved by moving the site of the generator and by the time of the walk-out in early August most the power cable had been laid, the settling tank built and pump-house and pipeline almost complete. The AKRSP engineers noted that local labour had been more difficult to employ than expected, due to the number of men away from the village portering for expeditions. Despite this, operation of the system was expected by the end of August. In addition to the hydro scheme, a large solar lighting unit had been left with AKRSP in Skardu to trail, and three lightweight solar panels were tested by the expedition at base camp. The unit at Skardu was installed in the poultry house of a model experimental mixed farm, and worked extremely well. A lot of interest was expressed by local farmers. AKRSP were extremely pleased with the project and were keen to discuss possibilities for future co-operation. The solar panels at base camp also worked extremely well, allowing the charging of sufficient batteries to supply all electrical equipment as well as headtorches.

## REPORT

Arrangements for our approach to the mountains went very smoothly. Our Liaison Officer met us in Islamabad and we received assistance from him and our friend Nazir Sabir with our administrative tasks. The briefing with the Ministry of Tourism, lodging of helicopter and environmental bonds, paying of porter insurance and other jobs were achieved in a couple of days.

The flight to Skardu was arranged in advance and made for a much more relaxing journey than the traditional bus journey along the Karakoram Highway. A few days were spent in Skardu to hire porters and a cook, buy provisions and to arrange jeeps for the journey to Askole. We also had an opportunity to visit the AKRSP regional office to meet some of the people involved with the energy project and to present them with a solar lighting unit. They talked to us about their work and showed us around a demonstration project.

From Skardu we travelled to Askole by jeep - a hair-raising 8 hour ride. Our journey was broken to pay a visit to the village of Hoto where the micro-hydro scheme was being installed. The installation was expected to provide low wattage lighting and possibly water heating for the village. Many similar schemes operate in Nepal and elsewhere in the Himalaya, and are very suitable for the small-scale energy needs of remote villages. When we arrived at Hoto the arrangements for the installation were still being discussed. A problem had arisen between Hoto and a village lower down the river over concerns that the flow of water would be reduced and thus compromise the supply. Negotiations were taking place and plans to relocate the generator were being considered. There being little we could do at that point we promised to visit again at the end of the trip and continued with the approach to Broad Peak.

The walk to base camp went without problems. Our 60 porters were extremely hard-working and cheerful and with our delightful cook and LO it was an entertaining journey. The weather was kind, with only one small fall of snow on the glacier which did not hinder our progress. We reached base camp eight days after leaving Skardu.

Because of our plans to attempt a route on the S Face our base camp was sited well away from the normal Broad Peak base camp area. Our base was situated near the entrance to the Broad Glacier, about 1 hour from Concordia. It was an excellent spot, sheltered from the wind, with two pools to draw water from and receiving lots of sun. We started our reconnaissance of the S Face immediately, walking up and down the glacier with binoculars to inspect the proposed route. A rock ridge obscured the lower part of the S Face and so plans were made to ascend one of the rock pinnacles from which to get a better view. The climb was straightforward and took us to c5400m which gave an ideal vantage point. While the upper part of the S Face looked quite straightforward, the lower section presented considerable

difficulty. Steep slopes of hard ice running into an even steeper rock band, barred access to the upper face. The approach to the face was via a confined glacier and both the lower part of the route and the approach would clearly be threatened by avalanches after snow fall. It was obvious that the lower part of the route would need to be climbed very quickly and in the right conditions. Wanting time to consider the best tactics and needing to gain some acclimatization we next set off for some unnamed peaks above the Khal-Khal Glacier at a height of around 6000m. These provided good day routes.

Returning to base camp we looked at the S Face again, and decided that to make an attempt we would need to be very well acclimatized to a high altitude in order to travel as quickly as possible. The nature of the route makes it a very committing one: making a retreat due to illness or bad weather would not be easy to achieve. Having arranged with the Ministry of Tourism for a permit which also covered the W Flank, we moved our efforts there. The plan was to climb to at least 7000m and put in a camp as high as possible for our descent should we climb the S Face.

The position of our base camp meant that it was a 2 hour walk to reach the foot of the W Flank route and so we set off in the early evening to reach ABC (5000m) by dark. Here we ate dinner and rested for a couple of hours until it got cold enough for the snow to be in good condition. At lower elevations the best time to climb was in the dark hours, for once the sun hit the slopes the heat was overwhelming and the snow like porridge. We planned to start at about 2am, but woke to find it snowing steadily. However, by 6am the sun was out and so we decided to do a short day and climbed to 5400m. Over the next two days we moved up to 6200m where we left the tents and climbed through to c6700m for a reconnaissance of the route above. We were hoping to find a site for a snow-hole rather than leave tents at that height, but despite the deep snow underfoot, there were no suitable sites sufficiently drifted in. Our acclimatization at that stage would not allow us to go any higher, so having made a cursory examination of conditions we descended to base camp.

It was at this point at the end of June that the weather started to turn for the worse. Apart from one window of 4 days when the wind turned to the North, we were then plagued with days of SW winds, rain and snow until the end of the expedition.

Our next foray back on the W Flank was to get higher and to stock camps with food. We climbed this time straight from ABC to 6200m where we had left tents from the previous trip. The heavy loads and the big gain in altitude left us feeling tired, but the next day in initially good weather we pressed on to 7000m. Here we dug out platforms for the tents and settled in for an uncomfortable night. A deterioration bringing strong winds and extreme cold made any further progress out of the question. The next day leaving the tents stocked with a several days food, we turned around and descended back to base camp.

Although having established our camp as planned, it was clear that the S Face routes were still not in condition and so it was decided to make an all out effort to get to the summit by the W Flank route. Then as time and circumstances allowed whoever was fit enough would attempt the S Face at the end of the trip.

Rain at base camp and indifferent weather kept us down on the glacier for four days. An abortive attempt on the mountain followed, with us only reaching 6200m before sitting out more bad weather and having to descend. Time was now running short and after a days rest we were back at ABC. The weather suddenly turned to clear blue skies, making us hope that this might be the break we needed, but as soon as we got on the mountain again it deteriorated for the worse. We climbed again to 6200m then sat out a day of bad weather. We pushed on to 7000m and then again had to sit out another day. Given that this looked like our last attempt we kept moving up despite conditions and put a last camp in at 7300m. The following day we made our first summit attempt. Climbing was in white-out conditions with strong winds, falling snow and avalanches triggering too close for comfort. Progress was desperately slow at about 50m an hour and at 7700m we gave up in despair. It was a despondent team who returned to the tents. In the night we listened for an easing in the weather. We were literally approaching the last day of the expedition when a group of porters were due to arrive at base camp for the walk-out, but after all our efforts we were eager for one final attempt. It cleared at 1am, and this being all the encouragement we needed, we started to get ready. At 3am we emerged from the tent, but after only a short while climbing we were back to normal conditions. Committed anyway we pushed on into the dark, stopping every so often until we could see the way again. Progress was interminably slow and despite seeming so close to the summit we again had to admit defeat at our high-point of 7700m.

The rush to get back to base camp and pack for the walk-out left little time for despondency. We arrived at base camp at 11pm that same day and started the walk-out at 6am next morning. The porters were very eager to get home as quickly as possible, so the next few days passed in an exhausted blur. What had taken 8 days on the walk-in now took us only 4. Ironically the day we left base camp was perfect weather, although it did not last. We stopped on the walk-out at the village of Hoto again, to inspect progress on the installation of the micro-hydro scheme. We were amazed and delighted at the progress which had been made. The dispute over water rights had been settled by relocating the generator and work had been progressing steadily while we were climbing on the mountain. The cable to carry power to the village had been installed, and most of the work on the generator, pump-house, pipeline and settling tanks was completed. The scheme was expected to be up and running by the middle of August and we regretted not being able to stay longer to see the results of the work. After spending time with the villagers and AKRSP engineers we left to continue our journey to Askole.

Unfortunately the bad weather had washed out the jeep road between Hoto and Dusso. We and our equipment were ceremoniously dumped on one side of the land-slide and we were left to find our own solution to getting it all across to the other side where we hoped to pick up another jeep. Twenty-two loads of 25 kg later saw a dirty, dishevelled team sitting on the road waiting to be rescued. As the hours crawled by it became clear we would have to camp for another night and so we set about putting up the tents while our cook produced a last meal. Our LO offered to walk out to the next army post to try and locate a jeep and he set off as the evening wore on. We had just settled in for the night when suddenly the noise of a vehicle could be heard approaching. Our LO had been successful in obtaining one vehicle and so in the darkness we loaded up most of our equipment and some of the team and headed for Skardu. By the next morning the remainder of the team were also back in Skardu and the benefits of being back in civilization were making up to quite some degree for our disappointment in leaving the mountains.

A couple of days were spent in Skardu, for debriefing and sorting out equipment for our return in 1993. It also offered an opportunity to meet with Mr Darjat of AKRSP again and to discuss in more detail their work in farming, agriculture and afforestation, and possible plans for the future. Time spent with the Women's Project coordinator also highlighted the efforts of the AKRSP in improving the lives of women in the Northern areas; by introducing simple technology to reduce their workload, enabling them to acquire new skills and earn a small living. Our contact with the AKRSP gave us a memorable insight into the way of life and particular needs and problems of people living in the Northern Areas. It was an experience to be recommended to other expeditions.

Two days were spent in Islamabad for a debriefing with the Ministry of Tourism. Eight weeks after our departure we were back in England on the 4th August.



# Broad Peak Traverse Expedition 1992

## ACCOUNTS

<u>EXPENDITURE UK</u>		<u>INCOME</u>	
Flights	4,795		
Insurance and Visas	1,603		
Equipment	11,359		
Food	864		
Frieght	1,513		
Radios	835		
Medical	147		
Administration	398		
Film and Processing	435		
Peak Fee	1,613		
Liaison Officer Exp.	294		
Agents Fee	579		
 <u>EXPENDITURE PK</u>			
Food and Accomodation	1,456		
Insurance	182		
Labour Costs	4,404		
Liason Officer Exp.	371		
Frieght	424		
Transport	436		
Provisions	284		
Equipment	92		
		BMC Grant	1,100
		MEF Grant	900
		Sponsorship	26,000
		Team Contributions	4,084
 <b>TOTALS</b>	 <b>32,084</b>		 <b>32,084</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>00,00</b>		<b>00,000</b>

