

## BRITISH GASHERBRUM IV EXPEDITION

### SUMMARY

This report tells of an attempt on the South ridge of Gasherbrum IV (7925m). 12 June to 13 August 1993.

The team consisted of Andy Cave, Chris Flewitt, Andy MacNae, Brendan Murphy, Andy Perkins and Kate Phillips.

The ridge was attempted via the south Gasherbrum glacier from a base camp shared with teams trying G1 and G2. Initial progress was good but constant poor weather soon hampered progress. Despite initial intentions to the contrary rope was fixed on the south face. It was felt this was justified in view of the absence of anchors for an abseil descent of the route. The climbing on the face was found to be serious but not especially technical.

Toward the end of the exped. Brendan and Kate braved marginal weather to reach a high point of 7300m on the south ridge. Progress along the ridge proved impossible due to high winds. This altitude is the highest yet reached on the route. The ground up to 7600m looked reasonable and another day or two of good weather would have allowed us to reach this point. The final 300m to the summit looks very difficult indeed and will no doubt give the crux of the route.

Despite the lack of a summit the trip was nevertheless a good one. Logistically it went very smoothly and as a team we had both a thoroughly good time and learnt valuable lessons on the way. Attempting Himalayan new routes of this standard is always going to be a hit or miss affair but at least we all came back and can be satisfied in the knowledge that we gave it our best shot.

This expedition would not have been possible without the generous assistance of the following-

The Mount Everest Foundation  
 The B.M.C  
 The Nick Estcourt Award  
 Malden Mills  
 The Foundation for Sports and the Arts  
 Everyone who bought the T shirts

Our thanks to them and to the many individuals who gave us their time and assistance.

#### GASHERBRUM IV DIARY

- November '92 : Expedition conceived in the Plas-y-Brenin bar (how unusual!) at the ACG Symposium.
- 29th May '93 : Kit packed at AP's terrace in Mossley while bemused neighbours look on.
- 9th June : AC flies out to Pindi to clear freight and buy supplies.
- 12th June : Rest of team fly out, departing Heathrow, no problems with baggage.
- 13th June : Arrive in Pindi, straight into briefing, during which CF falls asleep. Meet Capt. Razaq, later dubbed Captain Camembert.
- 14th June : No Skardu flights running, so drive Pindi to Chilas in aircon minibus.
- 15th June : Drive Chilas to Skardu. Team finally reunited with the freight, which had been mislaid.
- 16th June : Buy food, fuel, kitchen gear etc. in Skardu.
- 17th June : Jeep from Skardu to Askocle, taking on porters in Shigar: Minor alteration with jeep man over payment.
- 18th June : Walk Askole to Jolla, with entertainment provided by Tarzan from the K2 West ridge team at the bridge.
- 19th June : Walk Jolla to Paiju, finding it in a very sad state and obviously under pressure from the number of expeditions and treks passing through.
- 20th June : Rest day in Paiju. K2 team slaughter a cow. G4 porters get a goat! Day finished off with Balti dancing with Kate under severe pressure.
- 21st June : Walk Paiju to Urdukas. Trango looking very exciting.
- 22nd June : Walk Urdukas to Gore. Fabulous views of G4 West Fac, all very impressed with Kurtyka-Schauer-route.
- 23rd June : Walk Gore to Shagring. Weather, which has been perfect, starts to crack up.

- 24th June : Wake up to heavy snow. Porters unhappy, but carry on. Eventually they strike, convinced we are lost, and leave us with 7 star porters staying on the ferry gear to BC. Cloud lifts to reveal BC only 40 minutes walk away.
- 25th June : Ferry all loads to real Base Camp, already occupied by several teams, hygiene and environmental care of most other teams sadly lacking.
- 26th June : Rest BC.
- 27th June : Bad weather, snow and wind.
- 28th June : Bad weather. AP + BM ill with stomach problems probably due to contaminated water supply from other teams shitting above.
- 29th June : AC/MAC/KP and CF from BC to Camp 1 at 6000m below Gasherbrum 2.
- 30th June : Descend from Camp 1.
- 1st July : AP and BM do return trip to Camp 1. BM gets sunstroke.
- 2nd July : Rest of team except BM to C1.
- 3rd July : AC/AP/MAC and CF from, C1 to a dump tent site opposite the Italian icefall. MAC and CF descend to BC with KP.
- 4th July : AC & AP probe Italian icefall, finding it dangerously unstable. This confirmed by rumoured avalanche of Japanese soloist attempting the east face. AC and AP spot easy line into basin below South face.
- 5th July : AC and AP descend to Base. KP, MAC and BM up to C1. CF ill in BC with stomach problems.
- 6th July : BM gets ghardia and descends to Base. KP and MAC ferry to the dump.
- 7th July : AC ill with stomach problems!  
CF and AP up to Camp 1  
KP and MAC establish Camp 2 at 6500m in the bowl below the south face.

8th July : AP and CF ferry to the dump, but onset of bad weather forces them and other two to retreat to Base.

9th-12th July : Horrendous storms, clearing on

13th July :

14th July : MAC/AC/KP/BM to Camp 1

15th July : AP and CF to Camp.  
BM and KP ferry to Camp 2.  
AC and MAC ferry to 2 and return to Base.

16th July : Weather crapping out again.  
AP & CF ferry to the dump, then descend to BC  
KP & BM, the eternal optimists, hang out.

17th July : KP & BM descend to Base in heavy snow.

18-19th July : Heavy snow and high winds. Pass the playing cards!

20th July : AP/CF/MAC and AC to Camp 1.

21st July : AP/CF/MAC and AC to Camp 2.  
BM and KP to Camp 1.

22nd July : AP shuttles from 2 to 1 and back.  
MAC in support at 2.  
AC and CF run out 250m of line to 6750m on the south face. Moderate snow conditions with limited belays on deadman and deeply buried snow stakes to avoid melting out.

23rd July : AP & MAC push it out to 7000m, encountering appalling rock and old fixed line from the 1992 attempt by Steve Swenson, Alex Lowe and Charlie Fowler. We're heartened to see we picked the same line, entirely by coincidence, and feel that this is the easier way to the crest of the ridge.  
AP descends to Base with AC and CF. BM and KP up to Camp 2, KP gets heatstroke.

24th July : MAC and BM push it out to 7200m. KP returns to Base, closely followed by MAC and BM  
weather craps out.

25th July : Blizzard.

26th July : Weather clearing.

27th July : AC/CF/AP and MAC to Camp 1

28th July : AC/CF/MAC to Camp 2. BM and KP to Camp 1 with AP who feels wrecked.

29th July : BM and KP to Camp 2.  
AP down to Base Camp.

30th July : Team at Camp 2, in bad weather.

31st July : BM and KP climb to the ridge at 7250m. Further progress would be exposed to the full force of storms from the South West sweeping up the Baltoro. They descend to 2.

1st August : Bad weather. Team waits at 2 except for AP, socialising with the British K2 expedition.

2nd August : The team clear 2 down to 1.

3rd August : The team clear 1 down to Base with 35kg loads.

4-5 August : Rest and packing the barrels.

6th August : Start walk out to Concordia

7th August : Walk Concordia-Urdukas

8th August : Walk Urdukas Paiju. Full bore argument with the L.O. which has been building up for some time. Porter strike averted by Mac suggesting a round of cards as a waiting strategy!

9th August : Walk Urdukas to Korophan

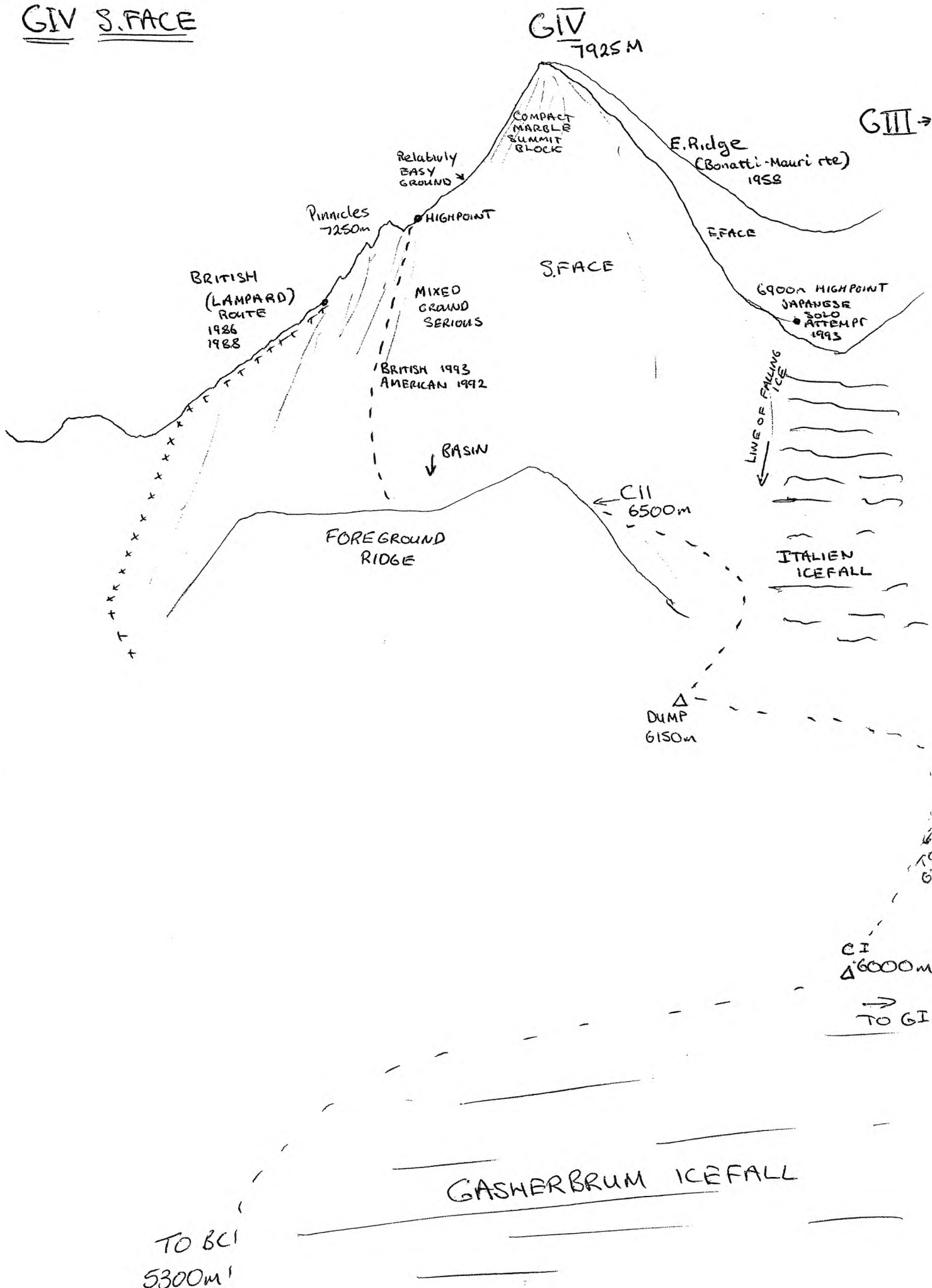
10th August : Walk Korophan to Askole, then jeep to Skardu.

11th August : Mellowing out in Skardu.

12th August : No flights running (again), so jeep to Gilgit and bus from there to Pindi arriving on...

13th August : to discover (at the airport) that we're not reconfirmed on our homeward flight that night. A Mr. Doug Scott pulls strings at PIA for us and we fly home 1st class!

GIV S.FACE



## Gasherbrum IV Medical Report.

### Pre-Expedition IV Medical Report

Travel to Pakistan requires immunisation from Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid and Cholera, Malaria tablets are not normally recommended since the risk in the Islamabad area is relatively low. There are no mosquitoes in the mountains. Immunisation from Hepatitis B is also recommended by some doctors to reduce the risk of infection from a blood transfusion or surgery after a serious accident.

### Health During Expedition

The health of the team during the expedition was generally good. Any trip to Asia usually involves at least one dose of the runs per person, and our expedition was no exception. There were several incidents of giardia within the team at base camp. Other ailments included high-altitude indigestion, high-altitude dry coughs, sun-stroke and a suspected peptic ulcer with our Liaison Officer.

The water is probably the biggest cause of gut infections. In the towns, it is possible to drink bottled mineral water which is usually safe (although unscrupulous shop keepers have been known to recycle old bottles using tap water!). The chilled water at the Pearl Continental also appears to be safe. It is advisable to steer clear of uncooked vegetables and some fruits, even when these claim to have been washed in purified water. On the walk-in, we treated our water with iodine (which is effective against amoebic cysts, unlike some agents); 5 drops of tincture of iodine per litre of water usually suffices, although this may be doubled for badly polluted water. We did not use a water purifier, although this would have been useful in Askole, Paiju and several other locations.

The water supply at all the normal stop-off points on the trek up to Concordia is badly polluted by human faeces, particularly at Paiju (where porters usually spend a rest day). The water supply at base camp is also very bad due to the fact that it is shared by all the expeditions to the normal routes on the Gasherbrums. WE treated our base camp water with iodine, even when cooking. Despite these precautions, Brendan Murphy contracted giardia twice and Kate Philips once. It was effectively treated using Tinidazole (Fasigyn) rather than Flagyl. We marked our kitchen utensils in an effort to limit the spread of such infections, although the efficiency of this is probably limited.

(2)

Another major problem was the fierce sun at these altitudes. High factor sun cream together with top rate sun-glasses are absolutely essential. We treated a number of porters from other expeditions for snow-blindness caused by missing or inadequate sun-glasses. It is also very useful to have long scarves to protect the face and scalp. Despite these precautions, sunburn and especially lipburn were common ailments, the latter being exacerbated by the cold. Brendan Murphy had a case of suspected sun-stroke early on in the trip through being out on the glacier in the morning sun and suffering from dehydration.

Most team members suffered to an extent from altitude headaches early on in the trip. There were no incidents of oedema. Another problem partly attributable to the altitude was indigestion suffered by some members; a large supply of anti-acid tablets is recommend.

A common effect of the cold was to induce a very irritating dry tickly cough which got progressively worse with altitude and proved quite dishabilitating. Throat lozenges and sweets gave some relief. However, it is highly advisable to cover the mouth with a scarf as much as possible to help warm the air entering the lungs; this is more preventative than a cure. There were no incidents of frostbite.

Brendan Murphy suffered from knee pain in one leg when walking down hill, and injury sustained some months previously. A neoprene support bandage proved invaluable.

Most of the porters regard it as fashionable to try as many western drugs as possible. The use of placibos, such as brightly coloured vitamin tablets, may be necessary to preserve the expeditions support of more useful drugs. Many of the porters also suffer from altitude, probably due to dehydration more than anything else. However, an expedition must be prepared to instruct a porter suspected of having oedema to descend immediately; this can be very difficult since all porters will be reluctant to forfeit part of their wages.

Probably the most serious illness of the trip was our Liaison Officer developing a suspected peptic ulcer. This manifested itself as a sharp pain below the rib cage which was alleviated by the intake of food. The condition was treated using anti-acid tablets, fluids, bland food, and pain killers. He resisted all attempts to persuade him to be evacuated by helicopter. It is probable that he had an incipient ulcer before embarking on the expedition.



## Notes for Future Expeditions.

Take plenty of sun-block, throat lozenges, anti-acid tablets and mild pain killers. Pay particular attention to water purification; investing in a water filler would be very wise. Try not to add to the pollution problem: always urinate/defecate well away from drinking water and down-stream of any inhabitants. Always burn or bury toilet roll. At base camp, we used a plastic barrel as a toilet; this allowed us to dispose of our excrement at the end of the expedition well away from the base camp. This was not a savory experience but it is highly recommended for the benefit of future visitors.

## Drugs

The following drugs were, in the most part, supplied free of charge by Dr. Ian Tattersal extremely grateful for his help and advice. Drugs marked with a \* were found. The list does not include sunblock, lip block, soap and other items of person.

### Gut Infections:

\*Imodium: Acute diarrhoe, 2 immediately, 1 after each loose motion.  
Maxolen 10mg: nausea and vomiting. 1 tablet 3 times per day  
\* Topal tabs: indigestion, 2 as necessary.  
Anusol HC oint: piles, use twice a day.

### Skin:

Tri-Cicatratin oint: 2 or 3 times a day for any skin rash or itch.  
Otosporin drops: itchy ears, 3 times a day  
Canestan cream: womens problems.

### Eyes:

\*Betnesol N: UV conjunctivitis (snow blindness), 2 drops three times daily.  
Fucithalamic oint: infective conjunctivitis, 2 times a day.

### Antibiotics:

\*Ciproxin 250mg: broad spectrum, good for severe diarrhoea, 1 or 2 times daily.  
\*Augmentin: for chest infections, 1 2 or 3 times a day.  
\*Tinidazole 500mg: giardia, initially 4, then 2 daily for 4 days.  
Vermox 100mg: worms, 1 tab, repeat 1 week later.

Analgesics:

\*Paracetamol: mild pain, 2 as necessary.  
\*Distelgesic: moderate pain, 2 as necessary.  
\*Acupan: severe pain, 2 as necessary.  
Brufen 600mg: soft tissue injuries, 1 three times a day  
with food.

Altitude:

Dexamethasone 0.5mg: emergency for HACE, 6 tabs daily until  
down.  
Difedipine 10mg: emergency for HAPE, 2 tabs twice daily  
until down.  
Diamox 500mg: prevention, 1 tab daily.

Miscellaneous:

\*Zimovane 7.5mg: sleepers, 1 or 2 as desired.  
Triludan: anti-histamine, 1 tab twice daily.  
\*Dioralyte: fluid replacement  
\*Dequacaine: throat lozenges  
\*Merocets: throat lozenges  
Cavit: replace dental fillings  
\*Vitamin Tablets:  
\*Iodine for water purification  
Silver Nitrate tabs: for water purification  
Disinfectant: for the kitchen utensils.

Dressings

Gloves

Triangular Bandage

\*Dressing 0packs

Melolin non-stick dressings

Gauze swabs

Salvodil antiseptic

Elastocrepe bandages

Crepe bandages

\*Slinky bandages

Steristrips

Razor

\*Micropore tape

Stethoscope

Thermometer

### Gasherbrum IV Gear Report

This was without doubt the most comprehensively supplied expedition any of the team had ever been on. Because of the attitude of the hard climbing and the style in which it was to be attempted, every effort was made to reduce the weight of rucksacks to a minimum. While the American G2 climbers plodded up the glacier with sacks a foot above the head height, we sped past with what looked like day sacks. This reduction in bulk and weight was thanks to several star pieces of kit which deserve special mention.

Karrimor Alpine Lite RucSacks: A nominal 45 litre sack which extends hugely, has a detachable lid for your summit days, and is that much lighter than any other comparable model.

Rab Windsuits in Pertex: Once again, significantly tighter than any Goretex jacket salopettes. We had some great technical jackets and salopettes from Karrimor, but rarely used them above Base Camp. Rab's design is superb, thought out by someone who obviously knows the game.

Polartec Hooded Jackets in Windproof Fleece: Though heavy, the effectiveness of these jackets meant that a windshell was unnecessary. The material itself is first class, being totally windproof, very warm and snow brushes off. The smock design with the integral hood, deep zip and long back is reputed to have come from a lowe pattern, but it is now known that North Cape produce a very similar model in this windproof fleece.

MacPac Summit Tents: A hydrophilic nylon single skin tent with twin interior poles, and a porch in ripstop added at the request of the team. Their secret lies in the cavernous pockets which line the walls on both sides, above the sleeping level, thus retaining the maximum floor space available for sleeping. Those of you dissatisfied with Mountain Geminis, look no further. This is the tent!

### Grivel Airtech Ice Axes and Compact 3 Harnesses

These wonder tools were scoffed at, labelled as 'toffee hammers,' but once in use proved firm favourites. Like all the above, they won't last as long as standard models, but the saving in weight more than compensates for this, and their drop forged tapered profile gives penetration even on hard glacier ice.

In addition to these star pieces of gear, we were comprehensively supplied by the trade. The clothing system was fleece based, supplemented by the incredible Rab Kinder jackets, AFS. Expeditions from Asolo were de rigueur, supplemented by Javlin neoprene overboots. Hand protection remains problematical. Black Diamond overgloves are extremely good, but not really warm enough below -20 deg C, and Goretex/pile mitts are often cumbersome. Progress between camps would have been impossible without snowshoes from Kohla, where our summit' teats were augmented with MacPac Expedition Olympus tents. Though these were good, it was felt in retrospect that Mountain Quasars from Wild Country would have been a better choice.

Down at Base Camp, Lichfield provided Skomer dome tents on a loan basis, and a Verona frame tent for a base camp kitchen. Verona, incidentally, is an anagram of Rave On, and so say all of us!

For costing above BC, we used MSR's running on a mixture of petrol and kerosene. This proved extremely troublesome at 6000m, and there is no doubt that, given the choice EPI gas propane/butane mix running on either HP alpinex or Markill stormy stoves is infinitely preferable.

No gear report would be complete without a mention for all the little accessories, especially the graduated Nalgene water bottles, and tent underlay from Functional Foam.

Finally, the team would like to thank all the suppliers who are:-

Karrimor - shell gear and sacks  
Badgers (Manchester) - Expedition T-shirts  
Fotolynx - CCS Camera Cases  
Dalesman - Sag & Nalgene bottles, Isostar  
                  Staminade, Mardale Shell gear and can openers!  
Eclipse - Marlow climbing rope  
First Ascent - V B socks  
Functional Foam - tent underlay and sleeping mats  
Snow Goose - insulated jackets for BC staff  
Javlin - overboots  
Lichfield - tents  
Lyon Equipment - Pretel attributer and Petzl ascenders  
Macpac - tents  
Malden Mills - windproof fleece and underwear  
Perseverance Mill Co. - Pertex  
Rab - windsuits, kinder jackets, down boots & sleeping bags  
Trailwise - Kohla snowshoes and Marhill stovys and Caravan bags for BC staff.  
Steiner - sunglasses and the brilliant Duo concept in sunscreen cream.

## FOOD

I don't intend to be overly specific about the food since everyone's tastes will differ in this area. Instead I'll try and stick to generalities.

We took a lot of food from the U.K -about 300kg . The general idea was to have 20 days BC and walk in goodies, 20 days ABC type food (heavy and calorific) and 20 days hill food (light<1kg/day). The ABC food was selected with the knowledge that it might have to be used as additional BC food.. In retrospect we had far too much hill food and too few BC luxuries but then we never expected the weather to give us so little time on the hill.

Food bought in Skardu was the usual fare- rice, dahl, atta,veg and ghee being the major weights.Again because of the time spent at BC the initial batch proved insufficient and a resupply run (3 porters) had to be made.A rough guide to the amount of BC food required is given by Man Days walk in/out and BC x 2kg (useful when budgeting for porters).

A few hints and observations. Chris, who organised the food, supplied us all with BC goodie packs. These were kept in our tents and attacked when the nibbles struck. A good idea that prevented clandestine raids on the hill food. Other top BC ideas included veggie burger mix, cheese cake mix, deans cheese and primula cheese's.

On the hill the favoured drink was hot chocolate of various flavours, mainly because it was so easy to make.Main meals were also chosen with ease of preparation in mind. Mash potato, cous cous and noodles were all enjoyed and were supplemented with tinned fish at ABC.

The food on this trip was some of the best I've had (not everyone's opinion) but relative to most of the other expeds our fare was rather spartan , particularly in the meat department. Some of the teams had brought the bulk of their food from home. If you can't stomach rice, dahl and chapatis this is the way round it but it makes for a very expensive trip and tends to leave a mountain of tins to be dealt with at the end. Not in my view a good plan.

## RUBBISH

When selecting food in the UK we attempted to keep non combustible packaging to a minimum. At the end of the trip we burnt all combustibles and carried the remainder down (one porter load) and I'm glad to say that we left the BC cleaner than when we arrived.

More important than refuse (which has been overly focused on recently) is human waste. As mentioned in the medical report we used plastic barrels as toilets this both contained the waste and made disposal of it possible.Such measures are I believe essential to prevent serious water pollution at crowded BC sites. Other teams were less organised, particularly in bad weather, and hot weather brought a distinctly unpleasant odour to BC.

## ACCOUNTS

### IN UK

INCOME		OUTGOINGS		NOTES
NICK ESTCOURT	£1000	PEAK FEE	£1138	
AWARD		ADMIN	£125	
MEF	£1000	AIR FARES	£2970	£495 EACH (PIA)
BMC	£1000	EQT. L.O	£206	
MALDEN MILLS	£1269	EQT. COOK	£80	
PERSONAL CONT.	£7985(£1330ea)	EQT. TEAM	£1602	
T.SHIRTS	£2844	T.SHIRTS	£1485	
POSTCARDS	£40	EQT.PERSON.	£967	
LECTURES	£230	FOOD	£450	
FOUND. SPORTS	£1000	FREIGHT(545KG)	£560	
& ARTS		BONDS	£105	BANK CHARGES ETC
		GAS	£150	INC. FREIGHT
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£16368</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£9836</b>	

### IN PAKISTAN

OUTGOINGS		NOTES
AGENTS FEE	\$275	HIMALAYA TREKS AND TOURS PAID IN \$ (=Rs7700)
FREIGHT CLEARANCE	Rs2500	
MONEYS TO L.O	£250	Rs300/day ex PINDI, \$20/day IN PINDI (=Rs10750)
PINDI TAXIS ETC	Rs200	
PINDI HOTEL IN	Rs1900	
PINDI HPTL OUT	Rs2500	
MEALS PINDI IN (TEAM)	Rs1200	
AC 1 WEEK IN PINDI	Rs3000	IN ADVANCE OF TEAM
MEALS PINDI OUT(Team)	Rs1500	
AM 1 WEEK IN PINDI	Rs2500	STAYING FOR DEBRIEF ETC
BUS TO SKARDU	Rs8000	
HOTEL CHILAS	Rs520	
FOOD KKH	Rs250	
HOTEL SKARDU IN	Rs1595	AT K2 TEAM CAMPING ROOM FOR L.O
HOTEL SKARDU OUT	Rs2036	"
FOOD SKARDU IN	Rs400	
FOOD SKARDU OUT	Rs910	
WALK IN & BC FOOD	RS5000	
BC FUEL	Rs5000	
KITCHEN	Rs5500	
PORTER EQT.	Rs1200	SHADES AND TARPS
STAMPS	Rs3120	
JEEPS TO ASKOLE (3)	Rs4500	CHEAP RATE
GOATS	Rs3500	
ASKOLE CAMP FEE	Rs100	
ASKOLE BRIDGE FEE	RS560	
JOLA BRIDGE FEE	Rs550	
3 PORTERS TO PAIJU	Rs2400	RATE BASED ON Rs 100 UP, Rs50 RETURN, Rs40
2 TO URDUKAS	Rs2700	FOOD ALLOWANCE =Rs190/day PLUS Rs100 EQT
1 TO GORE	Rs1620	ALLOWANCE. FOOD ALLOWANCE ONLY PAID
4 TO SHAKING	Rs7600	WHEN PORTERS SUPPLYING OWN FOOD.

1 PAJU TO SHAKING	Rs910
44 TO BC	Rs88440
COOKS ASST BONUS	Rs200
SIRDAR	Rs2700
FERRY PORTERS	Rs3100
RESUPPLY PORTERS	Rs7350
RESUPPLY FOOD	RS2020
19 PORTERS DOWN	Rs45600
JOLA BRIDGE	Rs250
ASKOLE BRIDGE	Rs400
JEEPS DOWN (2)	Rs4000
COOKS WAGES	Rs14000
BUS TO PINDI	Rs6000
FOOD GILGIT	Rs495
FREIGHT TO UK (100KG)	Rs13000
MISC	Rs4400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Rs280865</b>

TOTAL 12 STAGES INC REST DAY AT PAJU

FOR LAST MILE TO BC

12 1/2 STAGES TO 1 HOUR BELOW ASKOLE

FOR 57 DAYS

SENDING FREIGHT BACK TO UK EXPENSIVE

=£6532 (Rs43=£1)

#### SUMMARY

OUTGOINGS UK	£9836
OUTGOINGS PAK	£6532
INCOME	£16368