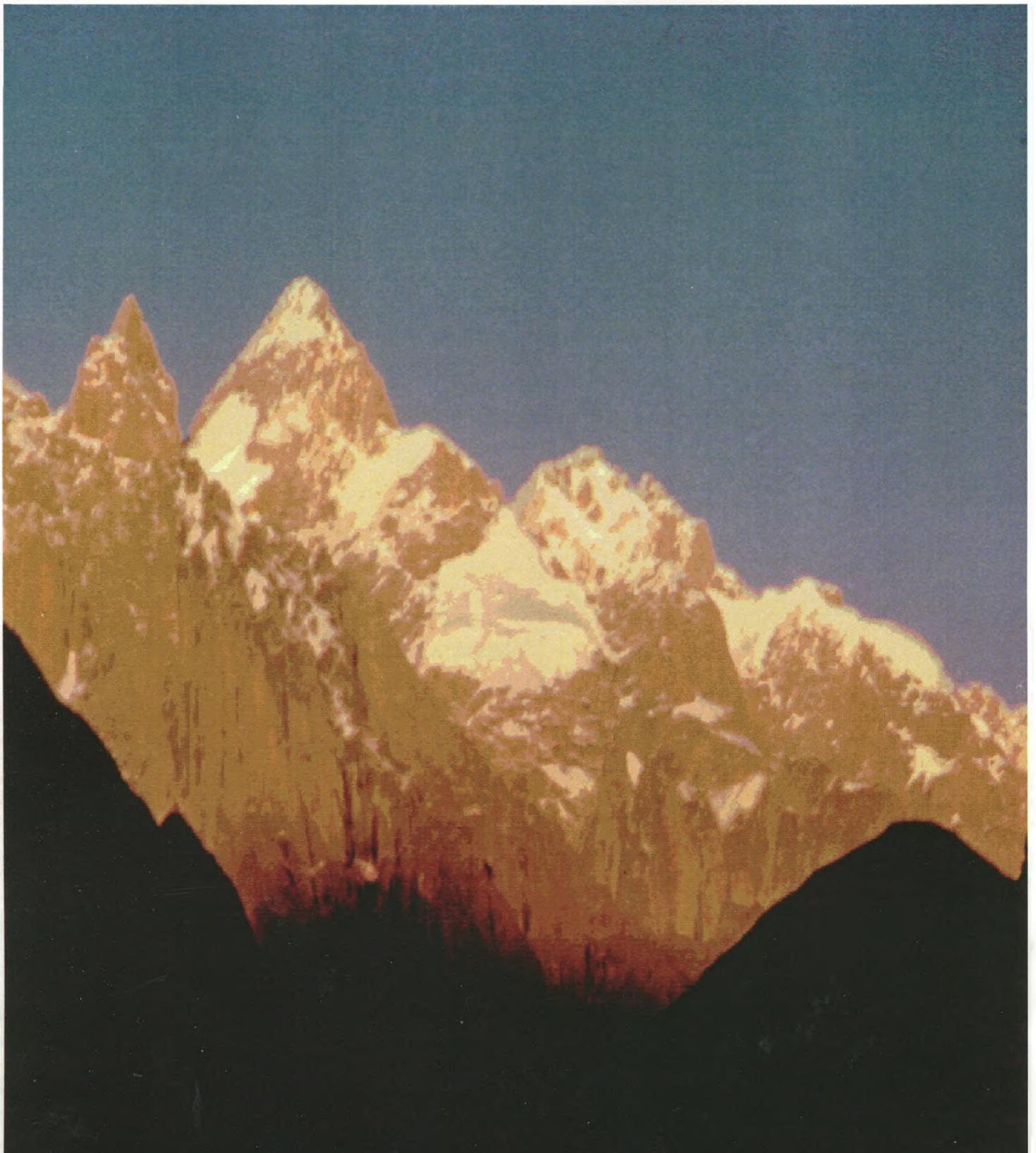


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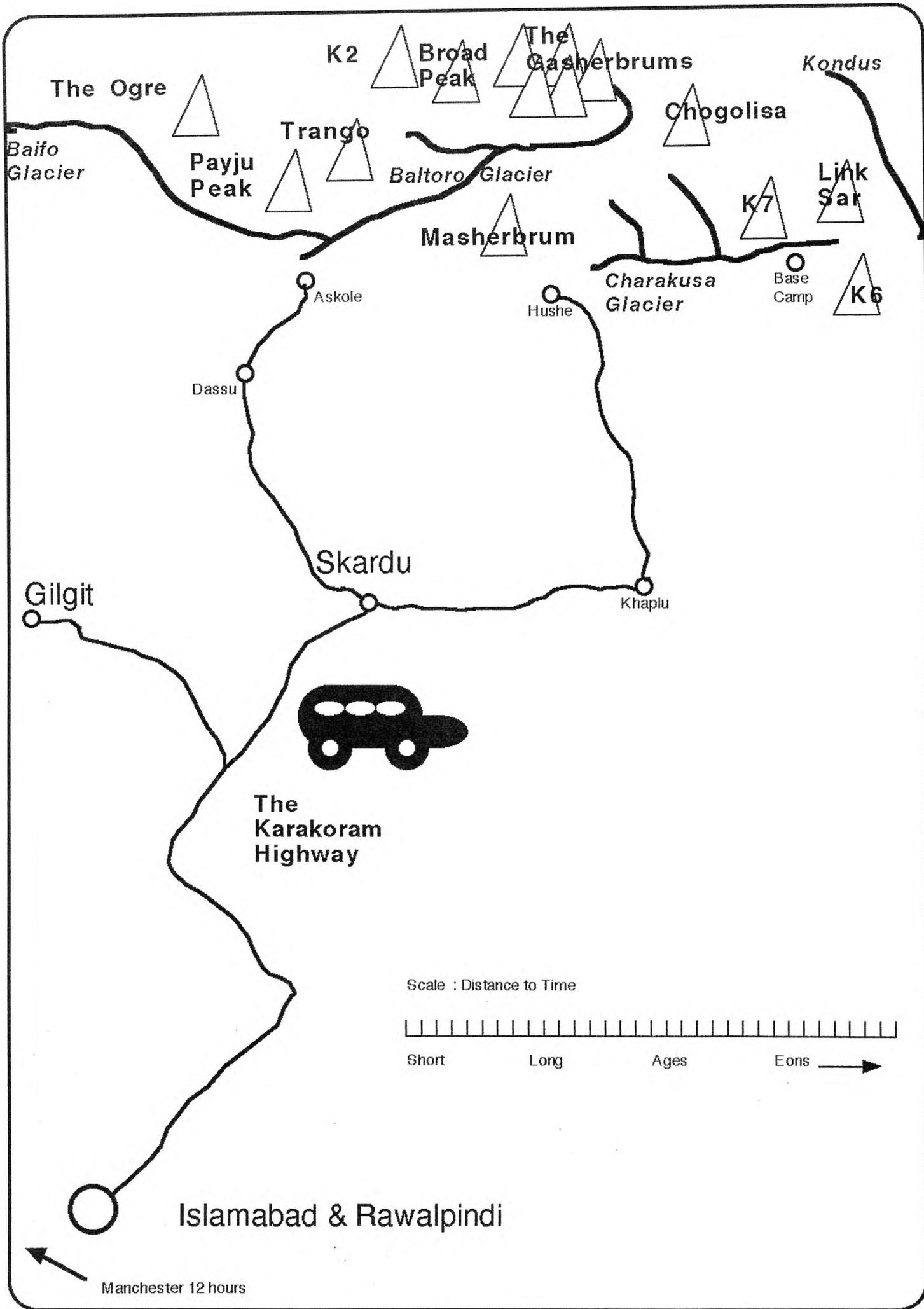
K7

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K7 THE EARLY YEARS

K7, 6935m, is one of the original triangulation points of the Great Himalayan Survey of the late Nineteenth century, conducted in the Karakoram by Sir Martin Younghusband. Like its better known namesake K2, K7 has not been found a local name despite being the most prominent peak in the Charakusa valley and in view only two hours walk from the village of Hushe.

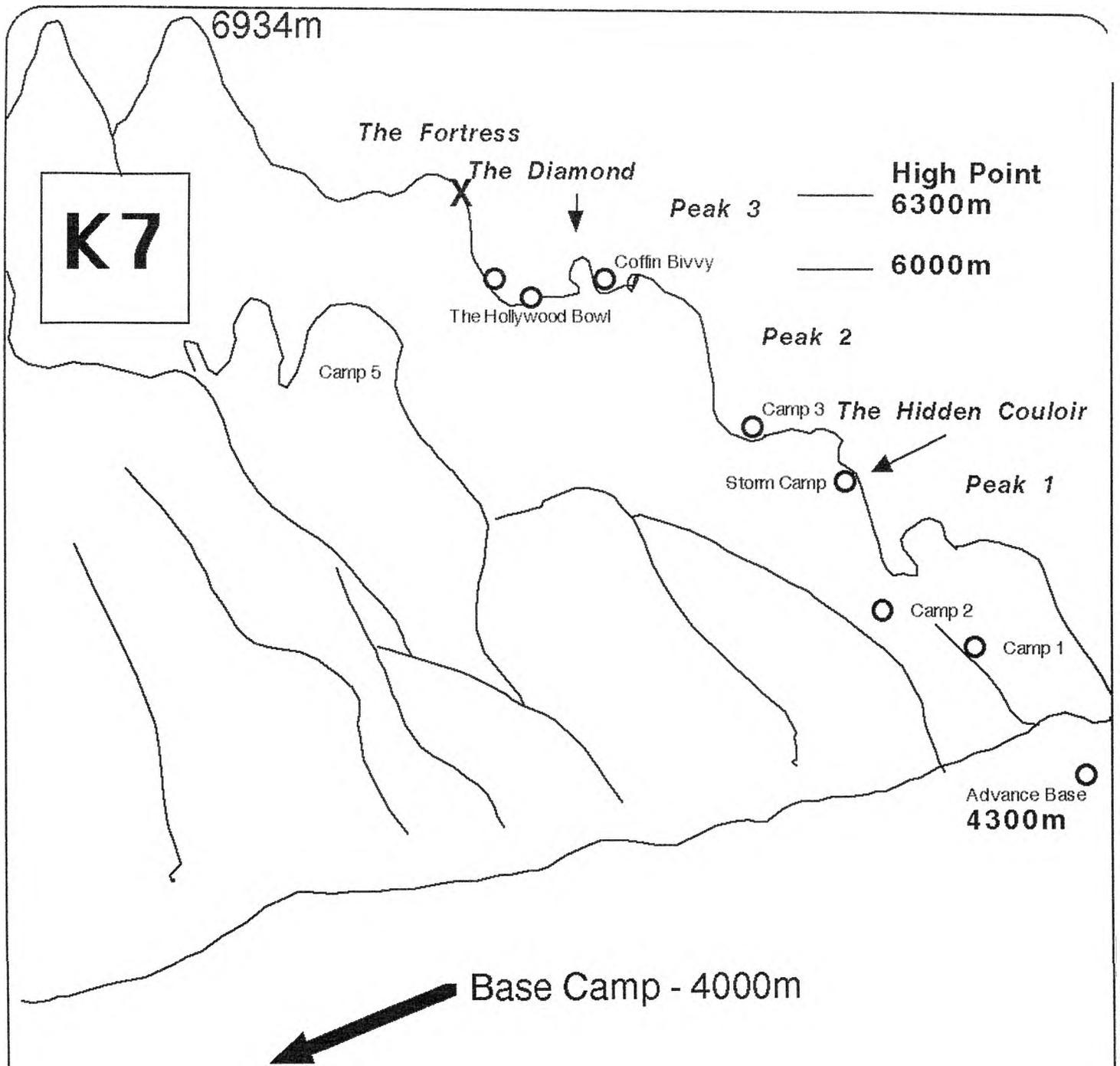
The peak does not appear to have been attempted until 1961 when a German team attained a height of c.5100m, this is around 500m above the base of the mountain. What is more significant about this attempt however is that the Germans were under the impression that they were on K6! This mountain lies a couple of kilometres to the south.

In 1976 a two man British team attempted the mountain, but in fact climbed a subsidiary peak of Link Sar, the peak to the east. It would appear that the mountain had an identity crisis! A Japanese team also tried the mountain in this year but did not get very far. The following year a further two teams tried their luck. A British team attempted a line to the left of the SW Ridge. They reached a height of c.5800m. For a first trip to the Himalaya this was an impressive attempt. The other team was Australian and ascended the couloir to the east of K7, gaining the col at its head, then climbing a few rope lengths before retreating. The Americans were next, and for some inexplicable reason they climbed the couloir to the west, gaining the col before retreating. This couloir is extremely dangerous, being raked constantly by avalanches.

Another Japanese team tried to climb K7 in 1982. This team, from the University of Tokyo, gained c.5800m by a couloir to the right of the SW Ridge. Despite failing on their initial attempt, they returned in 1984 determined to conquer the peak. They certainly came prepared, 13 members sieged the mountain for 50 days, fixing 6500m of rope, placing 600 pegs and 400 bolts and 300m of Electron Ladder before they finally succeeded and put all team members on the summit on two separate days.

In 1989 Bob Wightman visited the Hushe area to try some of the many "Trekking" peaks in the area. K7 formed the backdrop to their camp and Bob resolved to return in 1990 to K7. At the same time Dai Lampard had finally decided to act on advice from Rozi Ali, the head man in Hushe. Rozi had kept telling him that K7 offered an extremely difficult challenge, and seeing the "red rag" waving, Dai applied for permission. Three days after Bob returned from Pakistan, Dai asked him to join his trip, and with the addition of Luke Steer and Bob Brewer the team was complete. On July 12th 1990 the eighth team to attempt K7 arrived in Pakistan.

The team spent a continuous 18 days on the South West Ridge before supplies of both food and gas ran out. Bob Wightman lost his rucksack and spent five days high on the mountain without a sleeping bag. A combination of all these factors eventually necessitated retreat. The completion of some 88 pitches had given an indication of just how vast a mountain K7 was. Although the superb quality of the climbing had acted as some compensation for not attaining the summit, the route had not been completed. Undeterred by defeat, Bob Brewer and Dai Lampard resolved to return to the South West Ridge as soon as possible. Although work in Pakistan, during 1992, brought both within sight of K7, it was not until 1993 that an expedition was able to be mounted. Unfortunately, Bob Wightman had been hit by a car and had broken his leg in early 1993. Luke Steer was tied up with his new house in Ambleside. Finding a team with the experience necessary proved to be difficult, but on June 27th 1993, six members set off for a renewed assault on our old adversary. This is the tale of 32 days on the face of K7.



The South West Ridge of K7 from the Charakusa Glacier

Beginnings

"You're crazy" .. Bob's Cardiff accent cackled down the phonenumber.

"No, it will be different this time..... we know the problems" ... I lied. "You'll only miss out"

Two days later Bob's cheque for his share of the peak fee on K7 arrived - we were going back.

I hadn't made a conscious decision to return to the mountain until I was jolted into action by news that Andy Perkins was getting a team together. It was the catalyst I needed and by early autumn of '92, things were in full swing for an expedition in June the following year. Denis Gleeson and Ian Lonsdale, old friends from my "Bolton" days had mentioned being keen to go and I asked them to join us. Ian had been on Trango with me in '84 and I was looking forward to another trip with him. Unfortunately work commitments meant he couldn't have the time off and he was forced to drop out. Denis had mentioned that Greg Cotterill from Leeds might be interested. We hadn't met but I knew he was a good alpinist. I phoned him. He was very keen but eventually declined because of previous problems with severe headaches at altitude. We couldn't afford to gamble on such problems when we knew we would be on the mountain continuously for something like a month.

In March, we still hadn't come up with another member and I was getting concerned as to whether anyone would materialise. Our worries about competition on the mountain were over however, when it transpired that Andy Perkins wasn't going to K7 - their objective was now the South West Ridge of Gasherbrum IV. This was a route I had spent two years attempting and still had ambitions towards. The revelation at least explained why everyone had been so damned secretive during the year. They were going with a strong team and it looked as though they were in for good chance of completing the route. Still life's hard and I couldn't be everywhere- K7 was where we going and if GIV fell then so be it.

Finding our fourth member was proving to be impossible and I spoke to Bob and Denis about going as a three. Bob was not keen but agreed to at least look at the potential. We all got together for a meeting in Wales and thrashed out the problems and disadvantages. We talked for hours, finally deciding that we could do it. A few minutes after reaching this decision, Denis went into the kitchen to make a phone call home, whilst Bob and I dwelt on the horrendous amount of work we both knew would be needed on K7. Suddenly Denis rushed back into the room clutching a fax message that had been lying on the table.

"Do you know Roger?" he said, referring to Roger Whitehead from Colorado, the sender of the fax.

"Well, only by phone" I replied.

Roger had approached me out of the blue, about working on a strange project in Borneo, putting microphones in the tree canopy to attract Proboscis monkeys back into the area! Although I didn't know him at all, our conversations had been interesting to say the least and he had immediately given me the impression of being someone easy to get on with. It transpired that Denis knew Roger really well and had climbed a lot with him. Our fourth member had been sitting in front of me for months! But would he come? It was the middle of the night in the States and so we quickly drafted a fax saying " Roger, meet us in Islamabad 28th June for large project in mountains". Three hours later his reply came through, he was on his way and we had our team.

A further interesting sequence of events occurred, in that a friend of Bob's, Mark Berrisford had bumped into Greg Cotterill who was temporarily working down in Cardiff. Mark had been talking about coming out with us to visit Pakistan and Greg also fancied the trip but not

to go climbing high. I knew Mark, he had helped me with some work the previous year, and so I was happy to have him and Greg accompany us to Base. They wanted to help with some of the donkey work during the start of the expedition and that could prove to be a great benefit to us all.

On the 28th June, the six of us emerged from flight PK 709 into the bustle of Rawalpindi, to begin preparations for our journey to the Northern Areas of Pakistan. Our intentions to leave Islamabad within three days were soon destroyed when a three day holiday was unexpectedly announced. Our Liaison Officer, Captain Tariq, disappeared back home for the duration and so we had little choice but to sit it out in the stifling heat of Islamabad and await his return. Further plans to fly to Skardu were thwarted by bad weather and it was only on the 5th July that we finally departed, jammed like sardines, in a minibus for the horrendous journey along the Karakoram Highway.

We stopped some eight hours from Rawalpindi at Besham so that the lads could savour the delights of the Hotel Prince, a place we'd always stayed at because it was so awful. Unfortunately this time even the rhino sized bed bugs couldn't disguise the fact that the place had been subject to improvements and showers had been installed. Bob and I left disillusioned that our party piece on the KKH had succumbed to progress.

We arrived in Skardu during the early evening of the 6th July and booked into the K2 Motel, greeted by familiar faces and old friends. Rozi Ali, our guide and cook on so many expeditions in the past, couldn't come with us because he was going with an Italian expedition to the West Face of GIV. Although sad that he couldn't accompany us, I knew that he was getting paid a vast amount of money, which made better sense than hanging around for the meagre pittance we could afford. Rozi had sent his brother, Heder, to join us instead. After some shopping in Skardu we headed off in jeeps to Hushe and the start of the walk in to Base.

Thirty kilometres out of Skardu, we remembered that we had left our gas cylinders in Baltistan Tour's offices- so much for organisation. Roger, the captain and myself decided to carry on with the cargo jeep, whilst the others returned for the gas. Half an hour from Hushe, we turned a corner to find the road washed away and so began to pile rocks into the stream to try and build it up enough for the jeep to cross. It was dark by this time and difficult to see what we were doing, but eventually the driver thought he could get through and set off across the stream. Half way in the jeep suddenly lurched sideways and began to be swept down stream by the water. Everyone frantically tried to stop it moving further, the edge of the road was only feet away and if the jeep went over, the next stop would be Karachi. It was a nasty situation, the water was very powerful and no matter what rocks we threw in, they were just swept away. It seemed as if we were fighting a losing battle- I was worried that the driver was going to go over with the jeep and we all tried to get him to come out of the cab, but he seemed determined to hang on in there. Suddenly lights appeared along the road, it was the others back from Skardu. They arrived just in time to give the extra push needed to get the jeep out. It had been very close shave.

The following day saw us packing the loads for the walk-in, in the grounds of the Masherbrum Hotel, Hushe. This was Rozi's and Aslam's Hotel and as usual we were treated to great hospitality. Well used to our requirements, eggs and chips were provided in enormous quantities throughout the day, much to the disgust of other travellers in the Hotel who had to make do with rice and chapatis.

We set off with thirty four porters in torrential rain and arrived in Saitcho, our first camp, soaking and cold. The clouds were down and so the mountains were hidden. It was certainly a lot different to 1990 when we had been greeted by our first sight of K7 in glorious sunshine. The 9th of July brought worsening weather and we were forced to remain another day in Saitcho. It was snowing heavily and the men couldn't be expected to work in the conditions. Most sloped off to stay with friends in the small settlement whilst Mark and Bob taught the

rest to play "Hacky Sack". Roger amused us with tight rope walking- and after many hours and many bruises we all managed to stay on the rope for over a minute. We thought it was quite something until he told us he had tightroped across to the Lost Arrow Spire in Yosemite!

Greg was suffering, he had a really bad headache and was in a lot of pain. Even our strongest painkillers couldn't help him and by the end of the day it was looking as if he might have to return to Hushe. We hadn't really gained much height in the last section and there was a big rise to come. It looked as though he had an altitude problem after all. All we could do was hope he improved overnight.

On the 10th, it had brightened sufficiently to consider moving. The men wanted to go all the way to Base that day and I knew we were in for a hard time, it was a long way. Greg felt a little better and he decided to carry on. The day continued miserably, rain and snow interspersed with the odd glimpse of a mountain side but nothing of K7. In the late afternoon we reached Base in a howling gale, and erected the large mess tent for the men to shelter in. We paid off most and kept ten to carry our equipment to Advance Base, an hour and a half further up the glacier. Base Camp was occupied by another group, led by David Hamilton. They were planning to climb various smaller peaks around the area and had been there for ten days but done nothing because of appalling weather. Night brought further snow and we needed to lend the porters all our spare kit in order for them to make the journey up the glacier to Advance Base. I went with them and we dumped the equipment opposite the first tower of the South West Ridge. Greg's headache had gone and he was beginning to feel much better. During the afternoon, the clouds finally parted, revealing for the first time, the initial buttresses of K7. There was a lot more snow on the mountain than in 1990 but hopefully we had seen the last of the bad weather.

We all trooped off up the Charakusa glacier the next day to view the route and take photos. The Ridge is flanked on the right by the Japanese couloir and there was a huge amount of snow in it which we knew meant avalanche danger on the approach. In 1990 we had skirted the first Tower by a line on its left side. Now, we wanted to climb the Tower direct, in keeping with the true S.W Ridge. Later in the day, Roger started to show symptoms of the Hushe Horror bug with all sluices open, and had to move into permanent residence behind a large boulder.

On the 13th July Greg and Denis set off to start climbing Tower 1. Bob and I followed in the afternoon and spotted them about five pitches up the Tower. They looked miniscule against the rock, I had quite forgotten just how big the thing was. It's always the same, the scale is so vast it's impossible to grasp. As we stared up at the tiny figures it became obvious that our initial objective, of reaching a ledge some third of the way up the Tower, was not going to be met in a day. Bob and I discussed things and decided that perhaps we were biting off too much- it could take us at least a week just to do the first Tower. If that was the case, we would be severely limiting our chance of success on the mountain. We decided to go for our original line to the left. If we went that way, it would only mean Denis and Greg retreating one pitch before being able to get back on the line. They had left the radio behind and so we tried to shout up to them from the dump. After much swearing and cursing, the change of route was agreed and they moved leftwards away from the main Tower.

They returned around 5pm and headed off back to Base. Bob and I slept at Advance Base and started up the ropes very early the next morning, well before the Jap Couloir began its rumblings. We climbed steadily throughout the day and by mid-afternoon had reached our old Camp I some 500m above the glacier. We managed to push one further rope length up the mountain before daylight began to fade and we descended to the ledge at the end of the first days ropes. We stayed the night there watching the head torches of the others down below at Advance Base. We chatted on the radios and learnt that Roger was better and due up the next day. Bob and I planned to push onto the couloir leading to Camp 2 whilst the others moved kit up the ropes.

It was snowing on the 15th and by the time we had climbed the remaining pitches into the couloir it was too warm to consider trying to reach Camp 2, the snow was disgusting. We dumped our equipment at the end of the ropes and went down to bivvy. Mark had moved masses of kit to the ledge that day, he was going really well and everyone was ready for a push to Camp 1 on the 16th. I looked forward to us all getting together again.

That evening the skies clouded over and I had an ominous feeling that it was going to pour down. Stupidly, we had left our tent at the end of the ropes several hundred metres above. Cursing, I pulled on my boots at midnight and jumared the ropes above to collect it, whilst Bob tried to make a space on our small ledge. I returned an hour or so later, to some rather impressive excavations and we crawled into the shelter of the tent to escape from the torrential rain that kept up throughout the night. The lads below were not so fortunate and it was a sorry and rather soggy bunch that arrived on the ledges of Camp 1 sometime in the late morning.

On the 17th we all moved up the couloir to Camp 2, carrying gear and food. The snow was deep and wet. Mark and Bob broke trail, battling to see who would be first up. Camp 2 was covered, there was far more snow than we had experienced in 1990. It looked as though we would be in for a hard time on the rock above if the cracks were all iced up. Roger was finding the going difficult - it could not have been much fun having to come straight up the hill after being so ill. He looked rough and seemed to be swelling up. He was feeling down over the route and I was concerned as to whether he was fit enough to be committing himself to what would be a long stay on the mountain.

Greg and Mark returned to Base in the afternoon, they had done their bit and now had plans of their own to get on with. They had been a tremendous help to us and we were all sad to see them go. Although we had cracked the first part of the route, things were not right and I could see that problems were beginning to surface:

Extract from diary 17th July [Beanfeast day]

"... after a meal and many brews, things are looking up- I feel human again. I think everyone was tired today but Greg and Bob did a fine job with two load carries up the couloir. Mark has an upset stomach and is not feeling too good. He has worked bloody hard maybe he's just overdone it? It was a poor night's sleep for everyone yesterday- three to a tent. Roger and I are staying outside tonight, I hope it doesn't rain, it is still very warm, but the skies are opening up.

Morning started with one brew and a carry up the couloir. I felt it was all taking too long, but really it was just tiredness. Managed to get all four of us together at Camp 2 and discussed feelings about the climb. Roger was having doubts over the route, I had been expecting this since Bob and I paired off. The reason for keeping Roger and Denis together was to allow them to experience the route first hand- it has not worked. I think we should swap around and then the pressures can be shared, perhaps everyone will be happier. I think it might make the teams stronger. Denis is going well and is strongly motivated. Roger just needs to get into the lead, so tomorrow he should go with Bob. I suppose it is always difficult in a situation where Bob and I know so much about the route and work well as a pair. As long as Roger can get his belief in being able to climb this hill, then we do have a strong team. Once again it shows that the experience of long hard climbs in the Alps pays off in terms of knowing what you need to be able to put up with and do on this sort of project. I am not sure these boys can do it, they have had to go right in at the deep end. I just hope they can cope with it."

On July 18th we all moved up to Camp 2. Roger and Bob started on the rock climbing on Tower 2 round about mid-day, whilst Denis and I dug out the tent platforms. Generally, things were not looking too bad but Denis' hands were starting to give him problems, he had cuts all

over them that didn't seem to be healing. Bob and Roger moved fast up the first few pitches of the Tower and we watched them work their way upwards to a prominent ledge that we'd nicknamed the "Jutting Ledge" in 1990. That evening we celebrated reaching Camp 2 and the Jutting Ledge with a special menu Denis had packed for the occasion. Roger seemed a lot happier after doing some rock climbing, after all it was his forte, but he was worried about missing his flight home. We'd originally planned to be back for the 15th August but with the delay in Islamabad our schedule was tight. I knew that it was preying on his mind and I suspected it was seriously affecting his motivation for the climb.

On the 19th July, I climbed up to the Jutting ledge with Denis to begin work on the headwall above. Denis' hands were giving him a lot of pain and so I led. The snow and ice on the Jutting Ledge made it tricky to cross and we had to gouge out a deep trench to get started on the rock. We climbed two hard pitches before returning to camp. Everyone was quiet at dinner. It was almost as if we didn't speak about the mountain it would go away. I knew we were all tired but I was also beginning to have serious doubts about the team. We were poised to move to Camp 3 and at a point of no return in the sense that if we had to mount a retreat from above Camp 2, it would cost us so dearly in time that it would probably mean the end of the expedition. I resolved to give it one more day and make some sort of decision as to how to proceed.

The K7 story really begins on a small ledge, some thousand feet above Camp 2:

Stalemate

It just wasn't going to work. A week ago I had had my doubts and now I knew it. Hanging on my jumars, I turned and looked down to Camp 2 a few hundred metres below. For once the sun was shining and the previous night's snow was beginning to melt off the rocks. It was 12.30 pm on our seventh day of climbing- the radio call was due at 1-00pm - I had thirty minutes to think of something.

The complexity of the situation swirled around in my head, as I swung in space above the granite walls of Tower 2. The only certain thing was that the four climbers now on the face could not do what needed to be done. I looked above. Denis was jumaring to the Jutting Ledge, moving so, so slowly. His hands bandaged and taped like some Egyptian Mummy. Underneath the dressings, dozens of open weeping cuts. The final stage of the dermatological complaint he suffered from. With another three weeks to go - how could he continue? Even the jumaring was taking its toll- he had hardly been able to open his hands this morning.

Down below me, Roger had begun to ascend the ropes. He was finding it hard. Acclimatisation was not coming easily and now there was the pressure of him missing his flight home. No matter what happened in the next few weeks, we were not going to get back by the 15th August. Selfishly, I thought so what, but underneath the consequences ran deeper. The pressures from Roger's side were all too obvious. You couldn't quit this mountain- I knew it and now he knew it. The drive just wasn't there and it was clear that it never would be.

The radio cackled into action. Mark bubbled enthusiastically from Base about plans to climb Driffica, Nazir, and Sulu. I listened to the details knowing I was about to blow everything into pieces. There was no choice, I asked to speak to Greg.

"How are things going?" Greg's London accent came across the air.

"They're not. I need you on the mountain"

Unemotionally, Greg replied that he would like to come, and I breathed a silent sigh of relief. I had known he would, but that made it harder to swallow the fact that I had destroyed Mark's plans. We talked over feelings, the reaction of Roger and Denis and what we should do next. Bob suddenly came on air, he was still at the Jutting Ledge and waiting for Denis. Hell, they should have been climbing into the couloir by now.

"Bob, we need to have a word with you" I said

"Yes, I think I know what about" came the reply.

We talked between ourselves knowing that however we put it, the team was just not strong enough to continue. Above lay another twenty one days climbing- three and a half miles of it, 7,500 vertical feet. It was not going to get easier. The technicalities had not even begun and by spitting the teams, we had in reality weakened our position not strengthened it. We went over the problems of working as a three- we knew it was feasible but it would be hard. If Greg was willing then it appeared to be the only solution.

A sudden jolt on the rope pulled me sideways. Roger had arrived. The ropes lay diagonally below me and the next upward movement by Roger catapulted me over the edge of the ledge I had been standing on. I jangled about on the rope whilst Roger established himself on the ledge.

"Roger" I said "This is not going to work."

Telling someone that they had to return to base was not easy, but in reality the decision was

obvious to us both. We mulled things over for a while and gradually a plan offering a compromise of sorts began to emerge. We would all descend to base and then Greg , Bob and myself would set off for the summit. Denis could have time to rest his hands and then with Roger , attempt the direct line up the First Tower in alpine style. If this could be accomplished it would complete the true line of the SW Ridge of K7. All in all such a solution appeared acceptable, even though it meant a return to Base and thus marring a continual push on the mountain. That I could live with.

Shouldering my rucksack, I started up the ropes towards the Jutting Ledge. the long clean pitches on the tower looked like good climbing and I secretly wished I had led them. Still , I'd been able to climb the two superb pitches above which was ample compensation. The orange bivvy bag containing our food supplies signalled the end of the ropes and I off loaded the gas canisters I had been carrying. Somewhere above the clatter of pegs and hardware meant Bob and Denis were climbing again.

I sat on the edge of the Jutting Ledge and smoked a cigarette. No point in going up just yet since they would not have completed the last pitch to the Hidden Couloir. I felt relieved in one way that we had sorted out the team but the prospect of working as a three felt daunting. We were also going to lose several days of what looked to be good weather.

I felt a strange mixture of bewilderment and resentment over the basic commitment of Denis and Roger. Although there were bonafide reasons for both not continuing, I had felt for a long time that their hearts were just not into the project. The choosing of team members is always difficult . Combinations of time and money provide the usual constraints. Personalities, family commitment and experience add to the recipe. Lord knows we'd tried hard enough to get it right, but does anyone ever find that balance ?

The desire to succeed on a mountain like K7 has to be almost overwhelming especially when you know just how long and hard you are going to have to fight. Bob and I knew what it had taken in 1990 and we also knew just how far we had still to go. Sometimes I think it is easier when you do not know.

When Roger had agreed to come as our fourth member, it had come as a great sense of relief to us all. Finally meeting him outside Manchester Airport for the first time had reinforced my initial views as to him being exactly the sort of climber we needed to succeed. Now the dream had been shattered leaving a feeling of emptiness. It was not a new feeling, but one I, as an expedition leader , had come to accept. When members fail to carry on , not only do you have the problems of continuing the expedition, but there is always the guilt over whether you should have brought them in the first place. It is disappointing to see people not achieving their best or at least trying to do so.

Until now our team relationships had been excellent and it did not seem as if things would change that much. The usual battle to blame someone was not in progress and quite frankly any decisions were based on practicalities rather than personal conflicts. I just hoped Roger and Denis would be able to climb the first Tower - a route of some considerable difficulty and length in itself, and get something positive out of the expedition.

It was time to move. I stuffed the 200 meters of 9mm static into my sack and traversed the snow of the Jutting Ledge. This year it was piled high against the back wall of the ledge and made it an exciting journey as you had to tiptoe on the very edge. In 1990 there had hardly been any snow - but now as I slithered across ,the void below became very obvious. I changed jumars on the next stance and began the journey upwards to meet Bob and Denis. The single peg anchoring the rope looked distinctly dodgy and I made a mental note to back it up on my way down. We had enough problems without the single peg syndrome.

The pitch followed a layback system of flakes into a groove fifty metres above. Perfect orange granite with the world below. As I pulled over the roof at the top of the groove, Bob came into sight. he was suspended in slings from an exfoliating flake on the headwall. In 1990 we had reached this point totally gripped by the exposure and the seemingly tenuous nature of the the belay. Now we bounced about with total disregard despite the fact that every time we moved, little bits of the flake would disintegrate

The tents at Camp 2 were tiny dots and Base Camp looked a long, long way off. The overhanging summit block of Peak 1 was now well below us and the airy nature of the SW Ridge was beginning to become apparent.

Back to Base

I was quite surprised to see Denis in the lead, he had been having so much trouble with his hands earlier on in the day. The way forward lay in a crack system some twenty feet left of the belay. Denis had climbed to it's end where it ran into the headwall. I remembered the climbing above had been quite hard, with little in the way of protection. It was also a very long pitch and in 1990, we had had to tie two ropes together to make it to the belay. Now the wall was dripping wet with melt water from the snows above. Denis decided to try and move back right into the groove system above us. It was a lot steeper but drier. Reaching the groove he banged in a peg and tied off. Bob decided to go back to camp, he'd been hanging on the stance for several hours and needed to move. I took over and jumared up to Denis. I asked him how he had found the climbing. With a look that said everything, he lifted his hands up in front of me. Blood oozed out everywhere. There was no way he could continue - it was over and he knew it. I told him what we'd discussed and he agreed that it was probably the best solution, but his face showed an inner disappointment.

We still had some daylight left and Denis agreed to do one more pitch. I took over the lead and climbed delicately on tiny crystals up the groove to a ledge that signalled the end of the hard climbing on Tower 2. To my right lay the Hidden Couloir and the passage to Camp 3. I was pleased to see that it was banked out with snow. It looked much safer than the last time we had climbed it when water and stones had rained down upon us. Time was getting on, down in the couloir I could see Bob and Roger making their way towards camp. At least dinner would be ready when we got back. I shouted down to Denis that I was coming down and set off on the abseils to Camp 2.

Nobody spoke much at dinner. The decision to retreat had been made and the silence served to subdue emotions in us all. Next morning, we descended the couloir and abseiled down the initial rock of Tower 1 to the foot of the Japanese Couloir. Mark and Greg were waiting at advance base, as we made a dash across the slopes to safety and the glacier.

The camp seemed empty to when we had left a week ago. David Hamilton and his clients had left the day before. It was good to hear that they had managed to get something done in the mountains, three weeks stuck at base camp is a pretty depressing activity at the best of times. They had left us a few goodies to supplement our meagre base camp rations. Needless to say they were disposed of in no time at all with the inevitable consequences of us all feeling sick. It was only some hours after reaching base that we realised we had another problem. Practically all the climbing hardware was still on the mountain. Denis and Roger would obviously need some to attempt the first tower. Luckily Mark had brought a small amount of his own kit and we hunted around the camp for various bits and pieces, eventually coming up with something resembling a full rack. Denis was not too happy about substituting several large hexs for his "friends" but they were all we had!

Heder said that he needed to go back to Hushe to get some more milk powder and sugar. There had been no other visitors to camp and he would have the chance to hear some news of

the other expeditions especially the British GIV trip, in which I had a particularly strong interest, having spent two years attempting the line. The captain would stay with Roger and Denis. He had been ill during the previous day and looked it. We suspected Giardiasis and gave him some flagyl, it normally cleared quickly. Greg, Bob and myself decided to leave about 3pm the next morning in order to climb the couloir before it melted. We sat round playing scrabble for the rest of the day, Roger coming perilously close to attaining the elusive score of 300.

Caught Out

Heder was up before us all and I awoke to the sound of the paraffin stove roaring away. I woke Bob and Greg and we downed coffee and tea with cold parata before setting off up the moraine towards advance base. An hour and a half later we were jumaring the two ropes we had left fixed on the first part of Tower 1. Bob and I shared leads on the pitches above whilst Greg jumared behind carrying his kit. We had left a packet of biscuits at Camp 1 and had a short break before hitting the couloir. We were moving fast, it was remarkable how just a few days could make the difference in acclimatisation. Four and a half hours after leaving base Bob and I reached camp 2, Greg followed shortly after and we lay in the sun contemplating our next move on Tower 2. The weather was good, a few clouds about but no indication of any impending deterioration. It was a pity we had missed two days of climbing but at least we were back on the mountain. The 10'clock radio call revealed Heder had left for Hushe and the lads were busy pigging out on the food at base. The captain was feeling much better and had managed to eat something after two days.

Later that day we made a carry up to the base of the tower taking the remaining equipment ready for a push to camp 3 the following day. It looked as though we were in for a period of settled weather and we enthused to Greg about the climbing to come on the third tower. Little did we know that in less than twenty four hours we would be battling for our lives on the face above.

We arose to a very different sky. The clouds were very high and moving fast typically "mackerel" in appearance. It was going to be bad. We packed one of the tents and our personal kit and moved up slowly through the rocks and ice above Camp 2 to the start of the ropes. We planned to go all the way to Camp 3 and then return for the equipment and ropes the following day. We reached the ledge above the Hidden couloir at about 10 am just as it started snowing heavily. The temperature was rapidly going down. We needed to do something. It was going to be impossible to climb the couloir, large snow slides had already begun to slump off the ice field above and it would be extremely dangerous. I also needed to go down for my personal gear at the Jutting Ledge some four hundred feet below. I had left my sack there and brought up ropes instead. We were poised a thousand feet above camp 2 in the middle of a huge rock wall, in a rapidly worsening storm and we had to find shelter. The only possibility seemed to be a snow cone fifty feet above us against an overhang. Greg tied on to the rope and moved up to explore. It didn't take long to realise that the site was useless. He climbed back down, moved over to the left, and started to hack out the snow. After a few minutes it looked promising and Bob and I took over the digging whilst Greg volunteered to go and collect my sack from the Jutting ledge. Within minutes of Greg going, the storm began in earnest. I looked worriedly at Bob, the ropes would be icing heavily and I doubted as to whether Greg would be able to get back up. We decided to try and pitch the tent, at least we would have shelter. It probably took over an hour to achieve enough space to squeeze the tent onto. Greg still hadn't appeared, the whole face was white and snow was cascading down everywhere.

"We'll have to go down for him" I said to Bob.

Bob agreed and suggested we took our sleeping bags in case we couldn't make it back either.

Hurriedly , with the wind battering our precariously pitched tent, we threw all excess kit into the entrance zipped up the door and began to descend. Bob went first. He stopped half way down the first rope and shouted up that Greg was on the belay below, he'd got my sack but couldn't jummar with the ice on the ropes.

"Ok , I'll go back and get the stove going" I shouted back as Bob dropped down to help Greg.

It was with some relief that I crawled into the restricted space of the tent and started the stove. Only much later did I hear the jangle of karabiners as somebody neared the top of the ropes. I looked out into the storm to see Bob battling his way up the final twenty metres. He was having to clean the jumars for every move, breathing on them to melt the ice from the teeth. I should have gone out to meet him but instead remembering what Leo Dickenson had told us three years previously ,I wrapped a plastic bag over the video camera and filmed him sliding and slipping on the slabs leading the ledge. As I zoomed in closer I could see his face , plastered in ice , wince with the effort of each pull on the ropes. He was frozen, god knows what Greg would be like, he'd been in this for hours.. Bob stuck his head into the tent door and told me with his usual colourful language that Greg was OK but his jumars were really icing badly, a problem with Clog jumars at the best of times.

It was another hour before Greg appeared at the tent door, he was caked in ice and snow. It had taken some three hours for him to ascend the final fifty metres,even after Bob had relieved him of the sack he was carrying. At one point he'd slipped back some twenty feet when the jumars failed. Just before nightfall we all finally regrouped in the tent,to fight for what little space there was. It had been an awful day, none of us could have contemplated just how bad it had turned out to be.We were very glad to have found some sort of a camp, however precarious it actually was.Our spirits improved with several brews but the weather didn't as we struggled into sleeping bags for the night.

The 6pm radio call was muffled by interference in the storm. Roger's intermittent voice told us that there was over six inches of snow at Base, and it was still falling. How much had fallen up here was anyone's guess. The Skardu weather forecast did little to brighten spirits as no improvement was due. I secretly cursed the fact that we had missed three good days of climbing, we could have been in camp 3 now comfortably sitting out the storm ready for an attack on Tower 3.

Greg had a headache, though he said it wasn't as bad as his previous ones. Bob passed him a couple of cocodmol and he curled up in his sleeping bag trying to fight the pain. It was weird how he could suffer from such terrible headaches, he was by far the fittest of us all. The tent was very stuffy with three of us in it, and felt claustrophobic. Bob passed me a cigarette in an attempt to improve the atmosphere! I pulled out a lighter but couldn't get it to work. We tried another, with similar results and then another. They must all be wet , I thought, and gave up on the attempt since my thumb had become sore from trying to strike a light. Bob had a go but failed too. We abandoned the idea and snuggled into our pits. A little later Bob told me that he had a headache too. I was also beginning to feel one coming on. Suddenly,something dawned on me, I sat up , unzipped the tent door and thrust a lighter out into the porch. I struck it and it lit immediately, shit we were suffocating ! I hurriedly opened all the vents and a great gush of fresh air came in. Needless to say all three of us felt much better within a few minutes.

The storm continued throughout the night . Snow poured from above, collapsing the walls around us and threatening to push the tent over the edge. We got little sleep , drifting off only to wake to another furious attack by the wind. Outside in the distance we could make out the noise of huge avalanches coming off K6. Fantasy ridge suddenly lost it's appeal. Finally, in the early hours of July 22nd, we managed to fall asleep.

We woke to stillness, the wind had abated. One by one we manoeuvred into position to allow the stove to be lit. The ice-caked walls of the tent melted onto everything as the temperature

rose. I banged on the entrance flap to push the snow off and breathed on the frozen zip to free it from ice. Peering out into the dawn, I could see the snow had stopped but well over a foot had fallen. The whole face was plastered in white. What a place to have been caught out in. With the usual time consuming effort of gearing up in a restricted space, Bob and I forced our way outside to survey the situation. It was hard to believe that the bare granite walls of yesterday could have been so transformed. We were in a world of ice, the ropes were like hawsers. Boots and harnesses had to be bent into shape in order to put them on. Down below, inversion clouds floated above the glacier, occasionally parting to reveal the spires of the Charakusa. The wind was coming from the Kondus direction, which was unusual since we did not normally associate this sort of weather with an east wind. It looked good enough to think of moving, so Bob and I got ready to drop into the Hidden Couloir and move towards Camp 3.

We had left a rope in place from 1990* on the short drop to the couloir. It was discoloured and battered but with Bob belaying me I used it to abseil the twenty feet into the couloir. There was a lot of snow, and I was quite worried about avalanche from the slopes above. Bob joined me and we quickly crossed to the opposite side which offered some shelter from attack. We waded up the side of the couloir in thigh deep snow fixing a line, it was hard work, three steps up and two back, the usual stuff. In 1990, it had been stone fall that had threatened us here, now it was the snow which kept pouring down to our left. We knew there was a big snowfield above and if it went we would be right in the line of fire. Three pitches later we had moved out of the gully onto the side wall and could afford to relax. Looking back we saw Greg emerge from the tent attempting to film us climbing. Not being particularly familiar with the camera despite his instrument engineer's background, he was having trouble and kept shouting something about a "wheel going round" - we laughed between ourselves and left him to it!

A steep ice pitch brought us to the bottom of the snowfield leading to Camp 3. Unfortunately we had no more rope left and had to descend. It began to snow again and by the time we had abseiled the four rope lengths to the tent we were once again in the grip of another storm. Greg was already in his sleeping bag and Bob and I cursed him since the tent had not been dug out and we had to do it. Greg apologised and made a brew. It wasn't long before the avalanches started again and we were driven inside by the snow. At 1pm we made the radio call and spoke to base, they'd been worried about us during the night- so had we. Denis cheered us up no end by describing the breakfast they had eaten and the lunch they were about to have. We all looked at each other, turned to the radio and shouted some particularly vulgar comment into the mouthpiece, and turned it off. All we had were tea bags and a Beanfeast. The storm intensified during the next few hours. Some time late in the afternoon we thought we heard thunder- impossible since thunder just didn't happen in the Karakoram. Well, at least it was not supposed to happen. The noise grew louder. There was no doubt about it, it was thunder and it was coming towards us. The banging and crashing increased steadily and then the lightening came. Great forks of it, slamming into the mountain side and lighting up the whole of the Charakusa cirque. What a place to be in, on the lightening conductor of K7- the South West ridge. There was little we could do save move the metal equipment away from the tent in a vain attempt to distract several million volts. We waited in our tiny prison, each trying to pretend it wasn't quite as bad as it really was.

Back in the previous summer, Bob and I had been attempting a route on Dinas Mot in Llanberis Pass. It was a hot and humid day. Bob had just completed a large roof pitch when I looked up at the sky. It was jet black and coming from the South over Crib Goch. It meant only one thing- a massive storm. I yelled to Bob to fix a belay and get off, but he couldn't see the clouds and so didn't appreciate the seriousness of the situation. Seconds later there was an almighty boom and the heavens opened. Bob grasped the idea then and rattled down the ropes to join me sheltering under the enormous roof. We looked at each other knowing full well that the last place on earth you want to be in a storm, is under a bloody roof! Water had formed a curtain off the edge of the overhang and the whole valley reverberated to crashing and banging as lightening hit the crags. We had been in a few storms together, but this beat the lot. A bolt

hit the buttress to the left of us and slithered down the hillside. The crag was just a solid sheet of water. The only way down was to abseil the groove of Plexus, just where the lightning went. We were scared, so scared we even left a "friend" in the belay as we finally summoned up the courage to descend the rope. I went first, hurtling down the ropes praying the lightning would pick another spot. Bob quickly followed and we ran, hell for leather, down the hillside, leaving all our kit. We laughed later as we walked back up the hillside to collect the ropes and gear after the storm had passed, but it had been the closest I had come to meeting my maker in nearly twenty years of climbing. That was on my own back doorstep in Snowdonia, now at nearly twenty thousand feet in the Karakoram, we had nowhere to run and it was frightening.

Sometime late in the afternoon, the lightning finally disappeared, but the wind and snow kept up their ferocity. We would have to do something in the morning, we couldn't remain in the position we were. We had no food left since it all lay on the Jutting Ledge several hundred feet below and there was just so much snow about that movement anywhere was going to be dangerous. We slept fitfully as the storm raged throughout the night. Morning brought no better weather, we had to go down. Once again I cursed having missed the previous days good weather, we could have all been at Camp 3 sitting this out in relative comfort. But we weren't and so we had to deal with the situation as it stood. We would head for Camp 2 where one tent still remained. We could leave most of our kit in the tent on the ledge and just beat a retreat. Everyone packed, we shoved the perishable items into one of the large bivvy bags closed the tent door and headed off down the ropes. It was hell.

The ropes were frozen to the core, covered in a layer of ice over an inch thick. It was impossible to stand on the belays without slipping and we had to do a sort of sideways slip with our bodies against the face, to make progress. Trying to hold onto the rope tight enough to stop us gathering momentum with the ice was impossible. We would start to increase speed on every little overhang and there was nothing we could do except hope we could slow down enough by the time the next abseil point came. Avalanches crashed down the face above us continuously, the whole mountain was alive.

We reached the Jutting Ledge and shuffled along to the ropes leading down to the base of the tower. There was going to be an awkward abseil two ropes down since the rope followed an arete. It was alright when you had friction to balance with, but now it was a vertical skating rink. I knew that Bob and Greg must have had a hard time on this abseil because of the time they had spent on it, but little did I realise just how hard, until I was half way down myself. At that point any attempt to balance on the arete was just futile and with a combination of wind and ice against me, I was blown backwards off to the right. The rope formed a "V" shape with me at the bottom of the "V" in the middle of a slightly impending wall. The sack on my back pulled me over and I was pinned unable to move in any direction. No amount of shouting and cursing could dislodge me and everything was compounded by the enormous amount of spindrift pouring through my clothing. Somehow I managed to extract my rucksack from my back and find my second jumar which had become entangled with the straps. With some effort I finally pulled myself across the wall and up towards the belay, absolutely shattered.

I could see Bob and Greg just below and I made the last few abseils to join them at the tower base. Greg was having trouble with his crampons and so Bob and I set off across the head of the couloir. We were worried about the avalanches from above and hurriedly banged in a peg to make a short abseil onto the snow below. I shot down and waited in the shelter of a large overhanging boulder, Bob followed but seemed to fall and get his leg stuck half way down the abseil. He shouted something but I couldn't hear him in the wind. It took a few minutes before he was able to move again and join me at the boulder.

"I've twisted my bloody knee" he grimaced. "It's bad"

"Come on, let's go - we'll have to look at it at Camp 2" I replied, realising that our epic was

still not over.

Bob limped behind me as I ploughed a three foot deep trench towards where Camp 2 was supposed to be. We could see nothing. Everything was white. I looked back to see Greg following near the abseil. Suddenly an enormous crash came and the Hidden Couloir above exploded with a huge avalanche - Greg missed it by literally by feet. If he had managed to get his crampons on first time, he'd have been under it. Bob and I screamed for him to run as we could see another avalanche pour off the top of Tower 2 towards him. Greg moved into action and came panting towards us. We didn't need any words.

The tent at Camp 2 was totally buried. We dug it out to find a pole had broken under the weight. We fixed it temporarily and dived in. What a god awful day it had been - it was hard to think that in 1990 we had sunbathed for days on the route. Somebody was making it hard this time.

There was now so much snow on the mountain that we would be unable to move for at least a couple of days even if the storm stopped. It was pointless remaining at Camp 2 in such conditions. We were merely wasting food and fuel. All of us agreed to set off the following day for Base and await better weather. We spoke to the lads that night and told them we were on our way down, they would come and meet us if the storm blew out. It did and the three of us set off down the couloir early the following morning. It was not nice, the threat of avalanche was very real and we were very glad to reach the relative safety of Camp 1. Bob's knee was very swollen. He had damaged the lateral ligaments and it looked serious. I began to wonder about whether we would be able to return as he limped down the mountain. It took several hours to negotiate the descent from Camp 1 but eventually we arrived at advance base to be greeted by Mark, Denis and Roger and a very welcome brew. It had been a sobering lesson in reminding us that K7 was one big mother of a mountain, and that our little expedition was really pretty vulnerable to the mountain's moods. Mark shouldered Bob's sack and we ploughed our way back to base, thoroughly disillusioned. It was the 25th July and we had already spent two weeks on K7. We hadn't even begun to touch it.

"Bob and Greg's Story"
(insert)

A plea for help

Back at Base the extent of Bob's knee injury became obvious. The joint was swollen to the size of a football and he couldn't bear weight on the leg. We had some tablets I had been given for a similar injury but had never taken, so Bob did. Mark delved into his battery of medicinal aids and came up with a tube of foul smelling ointment that probably worked by taking everyone's mind off the injury and concentrating pain in the olfactory receptors instead.. All we could do was to wait and see how the knee responded. The situation did not bode well.

To make matters worse, Heder had not appeared back from Hushe. That meant we all had to cook, which was annoying since for the majority of the expedition we had all been away on the mountain, paying for a cook we didn't need. Now when we needed him, he was swanning it up in Hushe, or at least that was the consensus. The Captain was beginning to look like a climber, bearded and scruffy but he was still there. A lot of LO's would have disappeared long ago. We were getting short on food at base, Roger had scooped a whole kilo jar of pickle left by David Hamilton's mob, and we all had a few words over it. Our original intention had been to spend a maximum of seven days at Base and of course with Roger and Denis coming down and us returning, there just wasn't enough to go round. I was worried about having enough left for the Captain and for our return when we came back from the mountain, so we gathered four days rations and locked them in a barrel - barring anyone from breaking into it on pain of death!

We were now way over schedule on the mountain. Bob's knee was a cause for serious concern and he was also pressed for time since he had to reach Islamabad on the 15th August. He had postponed his honeymoon to come on the trip and SJ, his wife, was expecting him back. Even if the injury improved we needed help. There was only one place that was going to come from and that meant asking Mark, Denis and Roger to come back on K7. I resolved to confront everyone, it had to be sorted out one way or another.

We played a half hearted game of scrabble that afternoon, everyone was tired and the quest for a score of 300 went by the wayside. Later we shared the cooking and Denis showed us his new found skill in making chapatis. He had been practising with Heder over the last few days.

In 1990 we had drawn a large diagram of K7 on the side of the mess tent. Rozi Ali and our Liaison Officer Captain Arshad had charted progress up the mountain with dates and camps. Apart from the camp locations being in the wrong place, it provided some sort of tangible target to which we could relate. I decided to update the drawing, rooted out a felt pen and began chronicling the 1993 K7 expedition with everyone's names and our progress so far. I had become quite attached to the tent, we'd used it since 1986 on our first Gasherbrum IV expedition. Then our own attempt on the West Ridge of GIV had been terminated at around 21,500 ft due to avalanche danger. We had held discussions with an American team, led by Greg Child, and who were climbing on the North Ridge. We wanted them to allow us to attempt a different line on the same ridge. There had been a considerable reluctance to agree to this at the time and we consequently had to embark on moving our Base Camp around the Gasherbrum Massif to attempt the South West Ridge from another side of the mountain. The ensuing move turned out to be an expedition in itself and resulted in us transporting some 1500kg of equipment and supplies eighteen miles around the mountain, with only the eight expedition members and six porters bribed into helping us after carrying for a Spanish expedition to Chogolisa. We had originally set off with 103 men!

To commemorate this, Al Phizacklea had created a masterpiece in felt tip on the tent walls. Amidst the mountains of the Baltoro, "Uncle Sam" - a huge American Bald Eagle scowled down from GIV's summit, symbolising the opposition's reluctance to let us anywhere near their route. The drawing was a poignant reminder of the toll in effort that we had all paid for three months on Gasherbrum IV.

Despite the problems, we had not given up in '86 and now in July 1993 as we sat in the same tent below K7, I was not going to let the initial complications get in the way of giving the mountain our best. The following transcripts of tape recordings on the 26th July probably give the best portrayal of the situation and the ensuing discussions at Base.

Transcript - 26th July 1993- Diary

"We need some help up there now, to start pushing on. I think that they [Denis and Roger] should go back up there to take part in the expedition and get something out of it. The hard work has been done and it just needs a concerted effort to reach Camp 3. I am going to have a meeting later on this afternoon or this evening and we'll have to see what materialises out of it. We have got time, its only the twenty sixth today and it's the eleventh [August] that we have to be back by, I mean it's a fortnight, if everyone put their backs into it and pushed forward to the Fortress then we have a really good chance, providing the weathers's good. I can see people in base Camp getting down over it, but I've seen it before, it won't be the first and it won't be the last time. It's just up to them, whether they are prepared to put the effort into making it a successful attempt. Obviously one of the crucial things that is going to determine what happens is whether Bob's knee is going to get better. If we lose Bob then things are pretty serious as far as the attempt going on. He's a pretty stoical character and not one to give up easily. Greg's going well, he's fit and he's strong, but he would obviously not be prepared to push on with a weakened team, me likewise, I must admit I feel quite tired today, but one of the things we did was rush straight back up after coming back down three days ago and I don't think that did anyone any good apart from getting us caught in the storm. On the brighter side of things we have got ropes all the way to Camp 3, ready to move up.

I am not sure when we will go back up, that depends a lot on what goes on tonight. We have been climbing for twelve days now, many of those have been in bad weather. Really we're in the same situation as we were in during 1990, timewise, and it just needs a push to get on with it and just hope that the weather is kinder to us than it has been. Obviously we're a little bit earlier in the season and so we can expect a couple of weeks snow. The rate of disappearance on the glacier now is phenomenal so if it's good things will get better. Mark has recovered from his Giardia, back to his bouncing self- a tower of strength really and I think it would be a good thing to have him on the hill if he want's to come. It's a pity that what has happened has messed his plans up quite a lot, weather wise it wouldn't have made a lot of difference to them but now it depends on what everyone wants to do before we make a decision in any direction.

On the brighter side of life, I'm sat here at Base Camp, surrounded by Sulu peak and it's "Grand Capucin" hat of granite poking above the clouds against the snow clad backdrop of K7. Nazir peak's perfect pyramidal shape opposite. The Alpine flowers are coming out and it is a beautiful place to be in. I just hope we do our best- a summit would be really nice but that's not what it's all about. "

That evening just after we had finished our meal I spoke to the team, knowing that whatever came of it would be crucial to whether we could continue on K7.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE EVENING CONVERSATION

Dai

"Right, what I'll do is go over the situation so far and each of you can chip in and see what you think. We've been working for twelve days since we started climbing. We got straight into it, we've been pressed for time, so nobody's had a gentle introduction to the graft that is involved but we've reached the position now where we've got a line of ropes up to Camp 3. Above there lies some of the most superb climbing I've experienced in this region. With situations and granite as good as anything you could expect anywhere. Ok we've had a bad storm just now, but that's incidental, that could come at any time, it was a very severe storm that caught us out in the wrong place at the wrong time, it was just a set of circumstances.

We came here to climb a mountain, K7, and what I'd like to do now is ask all of you for your help towards whatever part you can play in this.....to try and do whatever you can on this mountain. I'm asking for two reasons, one is that we need it and we do seriously need your help and the second is that by taking part in it that you're going to get a hell of a lot more out of the trip than by sitting here at Base Camp. All that will happen, and I've seen it happen before in the past, is that you'll start blaming the food, the weather, the place and you'll have memories of a shit time. I think if you come back up the mountain now you'll realise that the effort involved in doing so will be worthwhile. There are all sorts of options for everybody and even if it's for a few days that effort will be really, really helpful in trying to push the route forward, I don't know how everyone will feel up there but there's the chance to take part in some tremendous climbing, hard climbing. If it's just to the top of Peak 3 that's fine, the route down is all by abseil, it's all prefixed. You would have to do the same on any other piece of rock. There's no particular difficulty as far as I envisage in saying, "I'm going for four or five days" What I would like to see is that we are all putting the effort in to keep people in front and put them in a position to summit. We still have a fortnight which is a hell of a long time if the weather is good. We can do an awful lot on that mountain and everyone of us can do something up there and get something out of it. I meanI'd like to see everyone up there, because once you get onto Camp 3 you suddenly realise what all the graft's been about and if the weather's good, you're in a different world all together. Anyway that's what I am asking.

Roger

"What's the help you're needing and why do you need it? Since the three of you went back up, what's come to light that's made it so obvious to you that you need the help?"

Dai

"It's the work, it's just a hell of a lot of work"

Roger

"But basically you're having such a hard time because the three of you are shifting loads. I mean spending more time shifting loads than pushing the route?"

Dai

"Well, we've pushed the route as far as we can. We have no more gear left, it has to be striped now. The intention was to work as a four man team up there, that was how everything was geared up, it has swapped around a lot from that, and help now would be tremendously appreciated."

Roger

"The three of you up there..... are you still in the same frame of mind, injuries not withstanding, that the three of you will go to the top?"

Dai

"We're just working on going peak by peak, to get as high as we can. That's all we can do. Anyway what about you ? Do you still have the same thoughts on Peak 1. Do you think you are going to do it?"

Denis

"No, not the way I feel at the moment"

Roger

"I was looking at it today. I was actually thinking about soloing it. I'd like to do it, I'd much rather do Peak 1 than climb high on the mountain, putting a direct start up a non existent route seems a bit of a f---g waste of time. You know, it's a bit daft putting a route up to straighten out a line, and make it a prettier line if the line doesn't actually go anywhere, and doesn't get to the top of the mountain. So, I mean, if it was the case that you had a bunch of people that were happy or who wanted to go up the hill and push it and you also wanted to get Peak 1 done, I'd jump up in the air and do Peak 1. I am definitely happier about doing Peak 1 than going high on the hill. I think for anybody when they've quit on a hillthere is usually a sense of dissatisfaction about not doing what you set out to do, but for me there was only a great sense of relief that I would not be screwed around by time constraints at the end, that I'd have time to get visas done, that I wouldn't miss flights etc . The relief that I felt there, basically tells me a lot and tells me I was happy about that decision. On the other hand if you lads need help and I've got time then I'm quite willing and able to help you. I'm wondering if the help is going to be worth it ? I mean coming up and doing stuff on one hand costs you , because obviously to get back down we've got to take ropes down. I've got no qualms about retreating down the mountain, I'd go on my own and get myself off. It doesn't bother me at all but it means two ropes go down. I'd be much happier doing Peak 1 than going back on the hill. If you need help then I'll go.

Denis

"Well, I just still feel wasted. I walked up to ABC today and felt quite shit. I felt like I'd just arrived again but I'm not going to feel like you've said in your introductory little spiel there. Those things are not going to occur to me, I'm not going to blame it on anything, I'm not going to turn round and say the food was bad, you were bad , the mountain was bad, the rock was bad. I'm not going to say any of those things at all. It's just the way I feel, you know, physically . I'm certainly not going to turn around and say those things you can be rest assured. I think everything's magnificent -full stop."

Dai

"How about you Mark?"

Mark

" I don't want to go to the top of K7 now. I don't have the urge... It was never there right from the start, I clearly defined my part in the expedition, I mean if I was a better climber I'd come and if my part on the team was to go to the top of K7, I would be doing that. I'd be very happy, but I came initially to carry stuff to the base of the hill . I didn't think I'd do any jumaring.... . I wouldn't be happy going to the top because I've always planned to do other things. "

Dai

" Right, so you wouldn't like to come up and help for a bit?"

Mark

"I would not be happy going up to do a section of it because..... I've come here and defined what my role is . I feel that the onus is shifting. I don't know ... I can't explain myself"

Roger

"Maybe you should clarify things a bit , Dai "

Dai

"I think that the whole situation has shifted... it's obvious that it has , it's obvious to everyone. Initially in writing the trip went down as two trekking and four on the mountain, but that changed in Islamabad to six on the expedition. It changed again to six working on the mountain and it doesn't matter as to how it started it's how it finishes that is the important thing "

Mark

"... I understand that circumstances for Denis and Roger are out of their control, possibly Roger has certain symptoms of AMS and Denis has his hands, but I still can't help feeling, I meanI shouldn't possibly say it, but I'm peeved that there is not more commitment in the team because you've come out here to do a job and you should be supporting each other, so you should say if you're not physically into it , or you should at least jump at the opportunity to go up there again. Just even lugging gear. It's come straight onto me you know, I'll always volunteer for stuff, to go back up and jumar for a few days, that's great but it's come to me "

Dai

"Well you've shown an amazing amount of commitment , determination and effort in this project and as far as I'm concerned any minute you say to me "Yeah , I want to be part of this thing" then I'd be prepared to say "Right come" , because you have shown that you have what it takes to succeed.... make no doubt about it you will not succeed on this without a great deal of hardship ,effort and grind"

Bob

"The difference is that we know that, we know what it takes, and we just ignore the hardship and grind, envisaging the greater goal. "

Greg

' ...I sense for you three who aren't so keen any more, there's that wariness of being stuck up a big mountain"

Mark

" You can't keep lumping me with "the three who aren't so keen any more" . I have the same level of keenness as I've always had, I was very , very careful right from the beginning to try and define what my role was going to be... I was never even considered as a climber on K7 I just wasn't... it's a different league. My level of commitment has not changed. My level of commitment has in fact increased a lot"

Greg

" Talking about Roger and Denis,.. unless they want to go back up that mountain.. unless they want to see it successfully climbed then I think we've got to forget them, let them go their own way"

Roger

" No.. No...

Greg

" If you don't want to go you shouldn't be forced to or maybe made to feel guilty for not going..

Roger

"...I made a commitment to do this mountain and I'm willing to help even though there's no f...g chance that I'm going to get to the summit. It doesn't matter to me that much anyway"

Greg

" That's not true"

Roger

"No it is , I don't give a shit about summits I came here to do some really good rock climbing in a great environment. That's what it was all about , the entire trip, and Dai's just painted a picture that says that I can do some of that. Even if that was the case or not I made a commitment to come on this trip and am ready ,able and willing to help, I've no qualms about getting up there, doing some hard work , baling out and leaving people in a better position to get to the top.I'd rather go rock climbing fifteen minutes from Base... I've seen stunning crack lines up stellar pieces of rock. Do a couple of them , bugger off down to Skardu and then get my flight. Have a real easy time of it.

The fact is all of us have put in a huge amount of work. The three of you have just been up again, put in even more, gone through hell and come back down again. You're still ready to go back up. Greg wasn't even part of the team in the first place. So yeah,....I would feel like a twat if I didn't go up and help you out.... there is a lot of guilt in it guilt in motivation.... . So whether it's guilt or not I don't have any qualms about it being a motivating factor in pushing me back up the hill to help you out again. . I don't want to do it....I know I'm not going to go to the summit, I'll bale out before there's any chance of that and I'll come back down to make my flight connections and do all the rest of it.I suppose it goes back to the original conversation Dai and I had, about motivation, unless you're really bang on and really gung ho about the thing then you're not likely to work as hard as other people and you know.....you folks have got to take that into account, that if I go up there I'm not going to be first up in the morning brewing up at three thirty and going "Come on lads lets go ,lets go." It's going to be more of a case of kick me up the arse and I'll give you a hand."

Greg

" I just don't think it should be like that.. it would be wonderful if we could all go , to be together on the mountain.... it would lift us all, ..especially if the weather was good and if as Dai says we hit the good times, we've got over the bad time now.... it'll be fun.... it'll be good. Your suspicions are that it is not going to be like that and that's why you're hesitating , why you're holding back, 'cos the reality is that things on mountains aren't quite that rosy. You know that , and whatever Dai says you know it's always going to be in the back of your mind"

Roger

"What's your perspective Bob? Given that you know what's coming up. I'm an idiot on ice, but ok on any rock. Denis is unfit at the moment, but usually he's fine. When does the mixed climbing and the ice get hard?"

Bob

"That's the whole point of having a team that's made up of different ingredients you know...people who are good at that type of thing can take it ...then you just have the rock to go at... I mean there's only a couple of really hard ice, mixed pitches isn't there...?"

Roger

"I guess what I mean is what would be the strongest team, if you could equate everybody's motivation?"

Bob

"It's impossible to say, I mean if you're highly motivated and you've no experience you've got as much chance as the person having no motivation and loads of experience."

Da

".....in that sense the strongest team is glaringly obvious to me at the present time and that would be Mark, you [Bob], Greg and myself.... it has to be because all the ingredients are there. I don't think anybody would disagree with that. What I would like to see is the six of us back up there pushing it further, but as Greg quite rightly said there's no point in going up there for the wrong reasons, the reasons can be all sorts of things...you can make whatever reasons out of whatever circumstances. there's only one reason for going back up there and that is if you're motivated to see the K7 project in motion, if that doesn't exist then there is no point going back up that mountain"

Roger

"I'm definitely motivated to see this team get up that hill. I don't give a shit about myself getting up but I'd like to see this team succeed, and am willing and able to put some effort in to get that to happen. If you folks acknowledge the fact that I'm going up there to help you and put you in place and that I'm going to bale out before there's a summit bid, I've no qualms about going up there and helping. There are certain ways that I'd like to help but those ways are not the most productive.....I'd like to go up Peak 1 and sort that route out"

Greg

"You see I am not convinced that we are going to be so much better off with one or two other people who are not fully committed and who are going to back off in a day or two anyway, because that is a logistical problem that the three of us will also be involved in. So I think it's a very thin dividing line really between the advantages of having an extra person or two extra people and not having them at all"

Dai

" It has mean involving all of us , in which case it would logistically make a difference.... A vast difference..... provided everybody was able to workIt might be that everybody gets back up and feels really shit and doesn't do anything . In which case it's not a disaster .. but it just hasn't achieved anything. For one person to go up and have to come back on their own is not going to make any difference to it at all. If a couple came up then, that presumably has to be you [Roger] and Mark . It could cause problems because I believe that Mark would be in a strong enough position to realise that he could continue and that would put him in the position of saying " Oh well I've got to go down now" . I think that would be a bad position to be put in. If Mark does decide to continue on the mountain then he should be in total control of doing that without the prerequisite of saying "Well ,I'll only be able to do this bit..".

Roger

" The chances are that Denis isn't going to go on the mountain at all, I'm able to go but have to come back down , Mark's hanging in the balance if he was pushed he might go up but maybe come down...."

Mark

" Not pushed... I feel that if I was psyched to do the mountain and was ready for it I would come . I would rather go to the top of Nazir Peak .. see what Sulu was like , spend a few days looking at the route and go and solo that .. not pushing myself outwith the realms of what I can do . I do not have any personal ambition to go to the top of K7 , I think it's a different man's gameit's something that I can't lead the hard pitches, I would have to go jugging. I feel now as if I am in a position of backing out I understand that I was never a part of the team but now I feel that I am and that I'm backing out not in other peoples eyes but from my own perspective. I've got the opportunity to go and do something which could be absolutely amazing... I'm discussing this as an open form of discussion ,it's easier if I don't say anything then you won't know what I think ...I would get as much out of this expedition by doing other things and it wouldn't put me in the position of being the weak link of the team and stuff like that. I would have to say I am not interested I do not have aspirations to go to the top ... I would rather be here doing my own thing . My commitment has always been the same and in terms of physical commitment I have surpassed what I thought I would do.I don't know whether it's being funny or not but I'm willing to push to the edge to do something like Driffica. It's hard to discuss.....you continually take risks , but jugging up and down ropes is a larger risk than being in complete control on something like Driffica... and before someone says it... yes , there are avalanches, but I would rather put my life on the line to do a mountain like Driffica . I would rather not put myself into the situation of jugging . I love carrying rucksacks ... it's just that jumaring continuously on ropes ...there is a small probability that something will happen"

Roger

" Well if I come up can I help you ?"

Dai

" No I don't think you can"

Final push

At two in the morning, we packed it in and crawled into our pits. I turned on my Walkman and listened to the music from "Cal". I couldn't sleep, nothing had changed save Bob's knee which was bigger. It was obvious that we would have to go back up as a three and then with one of us injured. The prospects were dismal, and it seriously looked as though we might have to abandon the attempt. If Bob decided he wasn't fit then there was only one thing we could do and that was to go back up and store all the kit at Camp 2 ready for an attempt the following year. The whole idea depressed me but no way could we contemplate an attempt with just two of us - we had too far to go and despite many hours of talking over light weight logistics, we had been unable to come up with any plan that could allow us to spend enough time on the mountain in a totally alpine style push.

Despite our "reasonable" conversation ;I did feel very bitter over the total lack of commitment in Roger and Denis. It had been my decision to invite them , and I would have to accept the fact that my expectations had not been met. It was not the first time this sort of thing had happened, in 1988 on an expedition to Gasherbrum IV, we had massive problems with the compatibility of team members - physically and mentally there was not a problem but we just couldn't get on with each other! Everyone of us could climb but only on their own, it was awful and in the end proved to be the downfall of the trip. It cost a mere four and half thousand pounds each to find out that we could drink together but would probably have an argument walking to the pub in a group! K7 was a little different, at least we could all get on. Our problem was man power, but as to how we could overcome it , I had no idea.

Morning came. I eased myself out of my pit and into the dawn. Mark was up wittering about some animals he'd seen down by the stream, they were probably the paw paws - some cross between a rabbit and a guinea pig that live in the rocks and eat all your food when you're asleep. I'd seen lots but Mark was really taken up by them and went off hunting with his camera. Bob drifted in, I asked him how his knee was and was pleased to hear it had gone down considerably. It felt a lot better but he couldn't twist it to the left. We weren't sure whether it was the arthritis tablets or the smelly stuff of Mark's that had made the difference so we decided it was best if he continued using both despite the stink. Bob smirked as he told me about putting the ointment on and then having a pee. I just wish we could have managed a picture of him lying across the stream at three in the morning trying to cool his groin down!

I told him about Mark's 'animals' and suggested that perhaps we could encourage the hunter with some different footprints. With nothing better to do we about manufacturing an enormous bird's foot out of tent poles and packing tape. An hour and a half later we had managed to create a model that would have done justice to "Jurassic Park". We were quite proud of it and set off down the side of the stream to make tracks in the mud. Surveying our handiwork, we hid the foot in some rocks and returned to the tent to see if Mark fell for the bait.

The rest of the day was spent bouldering - Roger being top dog as usual. He had managed some particularly evil mantleshelf that kept us all battling for the second ascent. Bob, in his usual maniacal manner, managed to give himself another injury as he pulled a muscle in his chest, we banned him from the competition in order to preserve what little undamaged bits of him remained.

A glorious, cloudless sky ensured the avalanches kept thundering down from the bastions of K7. The snow was clearing. I wondered how the Gasherbrum IV team were faring in the circumstances, surely it must have been as bad if not worse over in the Baltoro. Perhaps Heder would have some news when he returned?

During the afternoon we packed our kit ready to move back up the mountain early the following morning. Bob had decided that he would risk his knee, it was ok as long as he didn't twist it. Mark returned from his wanderings - he hadn't managed to find anything except a

peculiar bit of metal stuck in some rocks just below camp. He'd missed the tracks completely and thrown our handicraft away- Oh well, win some... lose some.

Mark told us he was going to solo the peak directly behind Camp ..Sulu peak. It was around 5800 m and a wide central couloir provided the way to the summit. It looked an interesting peak with a spectacular outline of rocky pinnacles one of which looked like the Grand Cap on Mont Blanc. Roger and Denis were thinking of climbing Nazir Peak but had not yet decided on the line. It had been climbed via it's North Ridge but the South Face presented an impressive challenge which would probably take two or three days. The weather forecast at 6-00pm seemed to be for good conditions. I say "seemed" since the broadcast was in Balti and without Heder, the Captain could not translate properly! The stars came out that evening and it boded well for a quick push back up and on to Camp 3 below the third Tower.

We all said goodbye to each other, Roger and Denis would be gone before we returned. It was just possible we might make the 15th August in Islamabad but they would leave well before to make sure of catching the plane.

Bob, Greg and myself set off at four in the morning for advance base, Mark had decided not to go to Sulu and had offered to carry some kit up for us. We declined, if Bob couldn't manage to walk to the bottom of the mountain with what little gear he had, then he wasn't going to go on the mountain. A little over an hour later we were gearing up to cross the Japanese couloir and begin our ascent. We were about to set off when we noticed a faint wisp of cloud come over K6, it was very high and moving very, very fast. Even as we watched the sky began to fill with the now familiar "mackerel" clouds. We looked at each other knowing full well what it meant- more bad weather. We debated the situation briefly and decided that we could not afford to be caught out again, we would need to wait and see what happened. Reluctantly we turned around and set off back to Base.

We now had another problem, Bob could not possibly get back by the 15th, it was touch and go anyway but another delay meant that it was an absolute certainty that he would miss his flight. That meant he would miss his honeymoon. I asked him what he thought but he wouldn't say much. I could appreciate the facts of the matter but that didn't help our situation. In the end I turned to Bob and said he would have to decide one way or the other, if he didn't come then we would have to abandon the expedition. I couldn't believe that any of our wives or girlfriends would want us to quit the trip because of a few days delay. I was being brutal about it and in reality put the responsibility of the expedition's success squarely on Bob's shoulders. He knew it as well and went into a super huff, not speaking to me at all as we continued down the glacier. I just had to leave it up to him- total blackmail in other words - I know at the time he must have hated me for it. The fact was that we were there to climb K7, we'd put time, effort and a great deal of money into the project and so had a lot of other people. I could not rationalise why anyone would want to quit it all for a week on a beach in Portugal, even if it was a honeymoon. If Bob was going to quit then I was going to make damn sure that he would pay the price of knowing that he was responsible for the expedition winding up. Sometimes I can be a real bastard.

The others were surprised to see us back at base, although the clouds were hurtling above us it was still occasionally sunny and in the distance large gaps of blue could be seen. It was a peculiar weather pattern, the wind was incredibly fast. Ice formations of the most amazing shapes constantly formed and then vanished as if by magic. We debated as to whether it must be some aberration of the Jet Stream. Whatever it was it, it had caused us to come back down. We sat around miserably, nobody was saying anything. At around 11-00am there was a rapid improvement, the clouds disappeared and the wind seemed to die down. I asked Bob what he was going to do. He turned slowly round to face me and said: "Of course I'm fucking coming" .. with a look that said it all. I'm sure he would have planted me one had I not quickly replied with "Good man" and beat a rapid retreat into the safety of the mess tent, smirking to myself as one does when you've been a real bastard and finally gotten your own

way.

[Bob's own diary version should be inserted here]

We had something to eat and began to pack our things again ready for a return to advance base. We were just about to set off when Mark suddenly appeared with his kit and said "I'm coming with you".... I looked around at everyone, hell we were back to four, I couldn't believe it. At last we had a chance, a real chance to do justice to the mountain. I bounced up to advance base, raring to get back on the route... this time we were going to do it.

The journey to Camp 2 was uneventful save for the brief time spent crossing the Japanese Couloir when adrenaline levels soared. The huge piles of avalanche debris at the bottom of the couloir demonstrated just how much snow had fallen during the storm.

Fortunately the snow in the upper couloir leading to Camp 2 had melted and the steps, we had put so much effort into making, still remained. That night as the four of us cooked dinner outside the tents at Camp 2, I felt we were back on track at last. Bob's knee had been ok although sore and apart from that everyone was feeling fit. The next day we would be at Camp 3 ready for the next difficult stretch of rock climbing and the Fortress was not that far off. We chatted to Base on the radios and Denis told us that Heder had returned. He had probably been waiting behind some rocks until we'd set off! He had news that the Italian GIV team had abandoned their West Ridge attempt, which was not surprising and meant that the line still remained. There was no news from the Brits, but it seemed as if everyone had been in the grip of storms for the last two weeks.

We set off early the following morning bringing everything from Camp 2, we planned to go to the Hidden Couloir and then return to retrieve the first set of ropes to the Jutting Ledge. The snow was crisp and easy to walk on. It wasn't long before we were jumaring the ropes, moving up at long last. The rock was clear of snow and everyone was in a really good mood as we laboured with our loads. Bob, Greg and Mark continued above the Jutting Ledge whilst I set about pulling the bottom four ropes up. I had released them all from the anchor points as I had ascended and my plan was to just pull them straight up. Sometimes I amaze myself with the stupidity of my actions especially since I had tried this tactic many times with dismal success. This time was no exception, after pulling about 80 metres up, the ropes jammed. They were solid. I cursed loudly and with no other alternative, clipped in my descendeur and began to abseil down to free them. Luckily I could see the knot causing the problem about one and a half rope lengths down. I paused on a ledge just above the knot and flicked it free. I knew the rope was bound to catch again and so decided to pull up the remainder from where I was and stack it on the ledge. It all went very well until I tried to reascend the rope to the Jutting ledge. I had made two moves above when my trailing rope swung across and knocked a coil off the pile stacked on the ledge. Within seconds several hundred feet of static line was zipping off into space like the coils of Ka in the Jungle Book scene. Bollocks- I should have known better, I did know better and yet I had just wasted all that bloody energy for nothing. I pulled at the rope and yes... it was jammed again, this time somewhere near the beginning of the Tower. Two hundred and fifty feet lower down I found the pathetic little knot that had superglued itself to the tiniest of excrescences on the granite. I freed the line again. This time I was not going to be caught out. I wrapped the rope into a huge bundle of loops, strapped it across my back and set off back up.

Arriving at the Jutting Ledge for the third time that day, I untangled myself from the mass of rope, stuffed it into a rucksack and sat down for a smoke. I could hear Bob and Mark talking to each other above me on the headwall. They must have returned for the last of the loads whilst I had gone back down. I guzzled down my lunchtime Mars bar and shouldered my sack to start jumaring on the final section to the Hidden Couloir. The rope leading across the Jutting Ledge lay diagonally up a ramp and was anchored to a thread about thirty feet up so you could pull yourself across on the tension. I moved up to the thread but in order to retrieve the rope I

needed to untie the anchor point and that meant I had no way of preventing me from swinging out right wards over the edge. I decided that I would pull a loop of rope through the thread and abseil a few feet to allow me to move right and more in line with the pull of the top anchor. I clipped into the rope with my descendeur and leant back. Immediately the anchor failed and I felt myself falling. Rope and rock whizzed past as I plummeted over the edge of the Jutting Ledge. Shit, I had blown it- really blown it this time. I screamed expecting to hit the couloir a thousand feet below. Suddenly I slammed into a ledge and stopped. It hurt, but I was alive. I gathered myself together and realised that one leg had jammed in a wide crack, the other was wedged behind me, I could wiggle everything and so pulled myself out of the crack and surveyed the situation. I'd made a massive pendulum right wards from the left end of the Jutting Ledge. My descendeur had pulled free from the loop and it had been a jumar clipped into the end of the rope that had arrested my fall. I pulled on the rope, it seemed ok and I gingerly began to jumar back to the Ledge. I was one lucky son of a.....

As the adrenaline began to wind down I started to think about why the anchor had failed. I thought that the thread itself must have broken but as I moved back across to the left end of the Jutting Ledge one look told me everything. The two ends of the tape used were waving free- the knot had failed. It had been an overhand tape knot, tied for convenience and worst of all tied by me. It had been pulled and tugged in all directions by all of us for days - but now it had failed. It was a sobering lesson that rules are there for a reason, and I had just very nearly paid the price for disregarding them. Accidents do happen but this had been stupidity in the extreme. I vowed never to use the knot again.

I began to feel some pain in my leg, there was blood oozing through my Helly Hanson suit - I decided to investigate and breathed a sigh of relief to realise that it was only a massive graze. Unhooking the next anchor point felt unnerving, and I tried to jumar as quickly as I could to reach the rest of the team. Three hundred feet later I rejoined them all at the Storm Camp near the Hidden Couloir and expounded upon my adventure. Needless to say there were a few "Well, I did think it was a bit dodgy" comments. C'est la vie.

That afternoon we all moved up the Hidden couloir and onto the snowpatch leading to Camp 3. Mark paid out the 200m static line whilst I ploughed up to the top of the Tower. It wasn't very steep but putting a line down the slope meant it was much easier for bringing the loads up. One by one the rest of the team arrived, and we erected the tents in the two spaces we had made in 1990. There was far more snow and ice about but it was great to be there. Above us the huge walls of Peak 3 beckoned and the panorama of the Charakusa glacier unfolded below. Camp 3 was the first camp to be sited right on the the crest of the SW Ridge itself and it made an impressive setting. As we cooked dinner that night we joked about our time here in 1990 when some huge black birds came and stole all our salami and cheese during the night. We nicknamed them the "Smorgenporkers" after the label on the salami and as a pun on the enormous "Smorgenborgen" birds from Sinbad the Sailor. We hadn't seen them this year and everyone had begun to treat the whole story as a joke.

The next day we all descended to collect the remaining food and equipment. There was too much to do in one trip and so Mark and myself volunteered to go back for another load whilst Greg and Bob started the climbing on Peak 3. After descending to the gear dump at the site of the "Storm camp", it became obvious that there was still too much kit to move in one carry. We needed to leave about twenty ration packs and would have to collect them and the ropes above during the following day. We climbed back into the camp and watched Bob climb towards the steep crux section of Tower 3. Here, three parallel cracks ran up the gently overhanging wall. Luke had led this pitch in 1990 and had found it hard. I would be glad when we had cracked it, as the top of the Tower and the Coffin Bivvy were then not far away. It was getting late, Greg decided to leave the pitch until the following day and the two of them abseiled down straightening the ropes for the jumar. Bob told us that there was far more ice in the cracks than last time, but the Triple Cracks seemed to be free. It looked as though we might reach the top of the Tower the following day if the weather held. The Captain confirmed a good

forecast during the evening's radio conversation and everything seemed to be set for reaching the Coffin Bivvy the day after.

Mark and I set off early to get the food and ropes below, whilst Bob and Greg jumared up the Tower. Mark had gone first and I watched him round the corner in the Hidden Couloir. As soon as he had disappeared from view a piercing yell echoed from below. The usual reaction to such a noise is to think something has happened to the person, but as the sounds died away I realised exactly what had occurred, when a huge black bird rose into view and began to circle above me. It was a Smorgenporcker. I quickly rapped down to join Mark who was shouting "Bastard, Bastard" and gesticulating towards the tatty mess of feathers hovering above. I looked around, the snow was littered with plastic and food wrappers - the whole works. The damn bird had had the lot. We started to pick up what we could, and it began to dawn on us just how much it had taken. There were a hundred mars bars missing, all the biscuits had gone and most packets had holes in where he'd had a sampling session. We could see debris strewn down the slabs below us, but couldn't reach it. The only packets he had not managed to get into were the special menus for the Fortress. These had been packed in an extra layer of heavy gauge plastic. Although we had bought enough of these bags for all our menus we had eventually plumbed for saving weight and not bothered with packing the menus for the first section of the hill. Well, it served us right - we knew all about the birds and because we had begun to treat them as some sort of joke, we'd been stuffed.

Mark gathered all the remaining bits into his head scarf and set off back to camp. I followed and retrieved the three ropes placed in the couloir, arranging the abseil points for our return as I ascended. We had a quick brew in camp and I left Mark to sort out what remained of the food, whilst I jumared up to bring more rope to Bob and Greg. Greg had cruised the Triple cracks, I was pleased, it meant we would make the top that day. Unfortunately the lads had put one of the 11mm tugboat ropes in place on the jumar up the Triple Cracks, that meant you bounced up and down like a yo-yo until about half way up. It made it hard going. I could see Bob peering over the edge at me from the saddle above and I stopped to take some video footage of two white helmets acting like puppets against the sky. The saddle is a spectacular place, the ridge here is only a couple of feet wide. In fact the whole of Peak 3 is not a dome as it would appear from below but a huge curving fin of granite with a knife edge crest. From the saddle you look straight across to the Fortress, with its enormous sweeping walls plummeting thousands of feet down the mountain side. The complexity of K7's architecture is astounding, walls, buttresses and pinnacles big enough to justify themselves as major undertakings in their own right, arc just swallowed up by the scale of the place.

Looking up from the saddle, I could see a bit of our old rope frayed and dangling from the summit of the Tower. Further right the curious perched block - The Diamond marked the position of the next camp- The Coffin Bivvy. The ridge continued in pinnacled disarray to drop down into the col between Peak 3 and the start of the Fortress. On the right of the col, a wind swept hollow indicated the site of the Hollywood Bowl and a hundred metres above lay Camp 5 at the foot of the Fortress. Although we were at practically the same level as Camp 5, and not particularly far away in horizontal terms, it had taken four days to reach it from the saddle in 1990. I doubted we would do it any faster this time.

As Greg climbed, I tied into a loop of rope and climbed out along the airy ridge to get a better angle for filming. In 1990, when we first saw this place it was gripping, but now we just seemed to take it in our stride. Greg yelled down that he was safe and Bob started up the rock, whilst I spied out imaginary lines on the orange granite of the Fortress. Another pitch brought us to an overhanging arete which marked the final section of the Tower. Bob was tired and so I swapped over to lead the last section with Greg. Greg was worried that he was going to have another headache since he'd done a lot of climbing that day, but agreed to do one more pitch.

In 1990 we had tried two ways of overcoming this particular pitch, the first had involved a gripping toe traverse out left on ever steepening rock with no hand holds and terrifying

exposure. Fifty metres of that had convinced me that it was a no-goer and we had finally climbed an overhanging finger jamming crack using some aid. This time I thought we could avoid the aid by climbing an evil off width chimney to the left. I launched into it and puffed and wheezed my way skywards. Maybe there's something perverse about me, but I loved offwidths and this was no exception. Forty thousand kilojoules of energy per centimetre gain seemed the going rate as I gasped onto the top of the ridge. Greg declined to follow and I set up the abseil to return to camp. Tomorrow we would be in the Coffin Bivvy- things were going alright.

Back in camp Mark had been busy with a list of what food remained. It was not good news, we had lost a lot of our rations and all our mars bars in those menus attacked. I lived on mars bars, it was serious. In order to conserve supplies for higher up we would have to go on short rations. The only saving grace was the fact that an error in packing potato powder meant we had lots of it. I secretly thanked Denis for being lazy and not searching all the menus as I had asked him to at advance base when we had discovered the error in the packs. If he had done the job properly we would not be in the fortunate position of at least having something to fill our bellies with after the Smorgenporker attack.

The radio call that night brought bad news, the weather was breaking. That meant problems since there was little space at the Coffin Bivvy and I didn't know if we could put one tent up there let alone two. In the morning we decided to all move and packed up everything- it was going to be extremely hard work since we had so much to carry. If we managed to get to the Coffin all very well but we would not be able to retrieve the ropes at the same time. We talked it over and decided that it would be best if only two of us went to the Bivvy that day whilst the other two made another carry of gear and equipment to the top of the ropes. Bob and myself were to move in front, Greg and Mark would follow the day after. Three hours later we were descending from the top of the Tower to the snowfield leading to the Coffin Bivvy. It was an awkward descent, not very far but on a blank slab. We had to abseil this short section and needed to fix a rope in order to do so. The side we were abseiling on offered no anchor point and some tricky rope work was necessary to fix the line securely. Bob jammed himself in a rock crevasse leading to the slab's edge whilst he lowered me over the overhanging far side of the ridges's crest. Twenty feet down, it was possible to swing in and bang a peg into a crack and anchor the rope. The snowfield led easily to a short rock wall which proved deceptively difficult in the icy conditions. Above this lay the Coffin Bivvy, it was a large slab of granite seemingly suspended by nothing other than faith. Now it was covered in snow and ice and offered little hope for erecting the tent. We decided to try and pitch the tent on the edge of the ridge's cornice. The cornice itself overhung by some ten feet, Bob and I tied ourselves on and began to excavate a trench to try and break it off. In half an hour we had tunnelled through some fifteen feet but still the cornice hung on. I asked Bob to put me on a sticht plate and jumped on the overhanging portion. It worked and several tons of ice blasted down the face below. I pulled myself back up on the rope and we flattened the snow around us. There was just enough room to get the tent on with the foot end overhanging the edge. It would do but we made damn sure we were tied on. Mark and Greg arrived bringing some of the kit, we had a brew and they departed for Camp 3, we would see them the following day if the weather held. It had been cloudy for most of the day but had not snowed much, maybe the forecast was not so bad.

Bob and I settled in to our new perch, we were in good spirits, at least we had a tent here this time, in 1990 we had just slept out. Above the bivvy lay a 4" wide overhanging crack, nicknamed the Smorgen Fissure after our avian pals. We had climbed it's desperate forty metres in 1990 only to be thwarted in our attempt just another pitch along the ridge. The climbing was possible but there was no way that any kit could be transported over such difficult and time consuming territory. In the end we had been forced to make a 400ft left wards descent from the bivvy to reach the upper section of the Japanese couloir where it met the Fortress. this time I had been hoping we might find another way to cross this section of ridge but inspection soon made it obvious that there was no other option than to lose height

again and gain the col and Hollywood Bowl by the way we had previously used. There was an enormous cornice just where the abseils began and we spent some time chopping away yet more ice to make it safe to descend. Bob was supposed to film the final bit when the cornice fell but as I made the supposed last blow to the ice mass, my adze jammed into the thing just as it began to move. I thought I was going to follow it but luckily it only moved an inch or so. I gingerly extracted the axe and gave it a final tap only to hear Bob tell me the tape had finished. So much for on site drama.

That evening the clouds parted and the sun came out. It was an incredible place to be. 6000m up the SW Ridge of K7 on a postage stamp- brilliant. I rattled away to the lads at base during the radio call gloating in the fact that they were missing it. We couldn't have asked for anything else - the place was perfect.

Those thoughts didn't last long. Two hours later we were in the grip of another storm, it just sped in from across the Kondus and K6, without warning. Once again we felt very vulnerable on our tiny perch as the wind hammered onto the tent walls and snow piled against the entrance. I asked Bob if he thought the weather was better in Portugal- he didn't rise to bait, but I'm sure both of us would have teleported immediately had the option been available.

The storm raged throughout the night and we woke to an icy wasteland. The ropes were frozen to the core and we couldn't even bend them. At 8am we radioed to Mark and Greg. They'd had a reasonable night being in a better camp, but there was no way they could move in the conditions. We spent the rest of the day in our pits, bed dancing to the Blues Brothers, which is probably better not explained. The weather eased around teatime and I dragged myself out to descend across to the crevasse and pick up a load, whilst Bob cooked tea. The evening radio call only confirmed what we already feared in that the weather was not going to change. Roger and Denis had abandoned any plans to climb, they too had had a load of new snow. The night brought further snow but the morning was better. We decided to put the ropes down into the Japanese couloir, at least it would be something to do. The descent brought back strong memories from 1990. It had been during this descent that Bob Wightman had dropped his sack containing everything he owned apart from the clothes he was wearing and his crampons and axes. It had been a worrying time as the diary extract from that day shows:

" It must have been around 9am when we heard the shouts. Bob and Luke were out of sight at the bottom of the ropes and Bob [Brewer] and I were just starting the abseils to join them. It wasn't really the shouts I heard first but a noise I've heard many times before, that of a rucksack tumbling down a slope with it's contents spilling into the void. There's a sickening ring to that noise, there's usually something else that goes with it and that's a body. I remember screaming down to the lads, trying to establish what had happened, my heart was pounding, whatever it was it meant trouble. Eventually after what seemed an eternity, the faint calls of both Bob and Luke drifted up. More shouting followed, and we managed to ascertain that they had lost a sack. Our immediate thought was hat the expedition was over but we chewed things over and decided that the worst thing apart from the loss of the radio was Bob's sleeping bag. Bob and I tried to zip our two pits together but they weren't compatible. We pushed on down the ropes to talk to Bob and Luke. Neither said very much, all I could gather was that they had cocked up in hanging the sack on the ropes whilst they put their crampons on. Bob said he wanted to continue despite the dangers and we decided that we could probably use our spare kit for Bob to sleep in. I must admit I'm worried about the vulnerability of being up here without a pit, but we shall have to see.

Bob [Brewer] managed to film all the action today, I reckon we've got some good stuff, there's nothing like a crisis to get good footage!"

Bob spent another five days without a pit before the attempt was abandoned due to lack of fuel and food. It had been a brave effort on his part. We never found his sack, but somewhere amongst the Charakusa glacier lies a hell of a lot of expensive camera gear!

We didn't have the same problems this time as we laid the ropes down the face to reach the Couloir. The snow was very deep and Bob set off following the left edge. It was a wallow in thigh deep, crystalline disgusting snow. I followed in Bob's steps and brought up our last two remaining ropes. The weather was worsening and so we decided to return to camp since if the ropes became icy there was no way we would be able to get back up. It remained bad for most of the day but Bob managed another load carry from the crevasse. Greg and Mark had not been able to move as the ropes were still frozen. We didn't really want to make the radio call that night, we were fed up with hearing the same old depressing story on the weather.

We had now been on short rations for three days, and although we had plenty for a main meal at night there wasn't much for breakfast or during the day. Bob had more will power than me and saved some goodies but I usually scoffed everything at teatime and during the night. This meant I needed to beg from Bob during the day as penance for my greed. I longed for a mars bar, it didn't even have to be a king sized one.

On the morning of the 5th August the weather cleared sufficiently for Greg and Mark to make a move. They would start as soon as the sun started to free the ropes from ice. Bob and I were going to try and put the last two ropes up the couloir and then come back to meet them later in the day. We moved off early and began carving a three foot deep trench in the couloir's snow. It was heavy going as we needed to move tons of rotten snow to get a purchase on the more stable ground below. Finally we tied off the last rope about 100m away from the Hollywood Bowl and returned to camp. We had a brew and continued down to meet the others. I had expected them to have been quite close to the summit but we met at the saddle. They had had a hard time with icy ropes, and had found it difficult to coil the ropes as they retrieved them on the way up. Bob loaded his sack with gear and went back up with Mark whilst I went down a little lower to get the ropes Greg was pulling up from the Triple Cracks. Towards the end of the afternoon we had all regrouped at the Coffin bivvy and we dug out another platform on the Coffin itself in order to put the other tent up. It was good to be back in the same same place together, we seemed to have always been separated on this trip. Now we could swap tales of the last few days. Greg told us he had had a little accident with the stove- in fact it had blown up. It was the gas cartridge that had exploded when they put the canister too close to the heat. It had shot into the tent and burnt an enormous hole in Greg's pit. He described with enormous hilarity the antics involved in repairing the defect by stripping all the duct tape off their clothes and around the tent. That night we celebrated our reunion with one of the remaining full menus and I got to eat my mars bar.

The following morning saw Greg and Mark packed ready for the push to the Hollywood Bowl. Bob and I would set the ropes up and carry some kit across before moving up to join them the next day. Crossing the couloir proved quite dangerous there was an awful lot of unstable snow and little avalanches kept tumbling down. We helped to build the platform for the tent and then reluctantly set off for our third jumar back up the ropes and fourth night at the Coffin Bivvy. It was however to be our last - and that was worth a final effort.

At 5am on August 7th Bob and I packed up the tent and started down the ropes. It was a cold and misty morning, but at least it wasn't snowing. We grunted our way down into the couloir carrying heavy loads. We needed to leave the abseil ropes in place, to facilitate our return, but we would collect the ropes in the couloir. We reached the Hollywood Bowl around 9am to be greeted by Mark and a welcome brew. Greg had already passed us on his way to collect some gear from the far side of the couloir. Above the camp lay a short wall and overhanging crack. I set off with freezing hands and reached a ledge above. It was here that we had come across the first signs of the Japanese team's passage, a rotten electron ladder lay wedged in a crack and the first of their 400 bolts stood proud of the granite to support it.

The snow started again and Bob and I pushed on up towards Camp 5. A short but strenuous ice pitch led to easier slopes and we soon reached the vertical rock wall protecting the camp site

from debris falling off the Fortress. We anchored the ropes and returned to the Hollywood Bowl to collect more kit. The weather was worsening and by the time we had returned to Camp 5 the wind was gale force. We flattened the camp site and began putting the tents up. The Photon went up ok but the wind intensified as we desperately tried to secure the Phortress. It became a real battle just to hold onto the thing, but we won in the end and gratefully crawled inside for shelter. We were all tired after six days of storm but at least we had reached the Fortress and once we had cracked the three hundred metres above it would be plain sailing or so we thought. As usual everything depended on the weather and on the 9th August, it was not looking good.

At tea time another problem surfaced. Bob could not get a gas cartridge to screw onto the stove. Inspection revealed it to have been cross threaded. We played about with all sorts of things and eventually managed to get the stove assembled with the canister at an odd angle. It was not particularly safe and we doubted as to whether it would be possible to get another cylinder on after that. We had made a real mistake in not bringing a spare, in fact it was such a stupid a mistake, I still to this day cannot imagine how we managed to do it. The problem had occurred on the change over when Greg came back up - with three of us we had only taken two stoves, one acting as a spare. The number had not been increased when Mark came up. There we were with a stove about to fail some twenty thousand feet above sea level, just when we needed to push forward to have a chance at the summit. To make matters worse, the other lads stove was looking as if it was going the same way. We decided the problem was one of wear since the valve on the stove was alloy and the cylinders steel. The lesson of using old instead of new kit came home to us all once again.

Morning brought a bonus in that the weather had brightened up. Bob and Greg set off to the left of the camp to climb an icy groove system leading to the bottom of the Fortress. Mark and I waited a while and then went up to meet the others at a flat area just below the Tower. The Fortress is deceptively steep, overhanging in fact. Despite the apparent multitude of lines there are very few places where one can feasibly think of free climbing. Many of the crack lines finish well before they reach it's base and others peter out into vast areas of blank rock. The line chosen by the Japanese in 1984 followed a huge flake chimney and then a dog leg crack. It had been climbed with considerable aid then and we had free climbed it with considerable difficulty in 1990. There really was not much else in the way of alternatives except a slanting groove system leading to a ledge on the edge of the tower overlooking the main ice fall on the SW Ridge's left flank. We couldn't see where it might lead but decided that we would have a look anyway. Greg climbed across to the base of the ramp, which became alarmingly un-ramplike as one approached. I started up the ice, it was steep but pleasant and led to a good belay on the edge of everything - if anybody wanted exposure then this was the place to be. Several thousand feet below I could make out the site of camp 2 and further away the whole of the Hushe valley unfolded it's treasures.

Greg quickly followed and we spent a few minutes trundling boulders over the edge. I don't think I've been anywhere where it took so long for a rock to hit solid ground. Once more the true scale of K7 began to sink in. We were way above the middle pinnacle now and that was at least as big as Trango Tower. The mountain was just enormous and we still had another 900 vertical metres to go never mind the horizontal distance that need to be covered. Perhaps it was best not to try and think of it.

We scanned the rock above for possible lines, there were things that could be done but they would be desperately hard and we could not be sure if the lines even went anywhere since the rock overhung so much. Eventually we plumed for discretion rather than the valour bit and decided to go back down and tackle the flake chimney again, that had been hard enough and it made sense to give ourselves the best chance having come so far. We took a few photos and abseiled down to camp, the day was over. We rounded off a fairly non productive day with the final demise of the stove. We had failed to get another cartridge to stay on and so I had given the fitting some minor surgery with a hammer. This turned out to be not such a good idea as

the resulting multitude of pieces would bear testament to. We now had to share a stove between four and that was not an inviting prospect for another week on the mountain.

The 10th August was a glorious day- it was our twenty eighth day on K7 and probably the best day we had had in all that time. Greg was going to go and retrieve the ropes from the ramp and I would climb the first pitch of the Flake chimney with Bob. Unlike 1990, there was little ice in the chimney, but much more powder snow. It took a lot of wallowing to get started and established in the dark confines of the flake. Bob Wightman had led this in 1990, it had looked a hard pitch. Ascending it confirmed my thoughts and the superb quality of the climbing. Previously Bob had belayed in the cold of the chimney, I now knew better and moved out to a hanging belay where the sun was. Greg had decided to do the next pitch and swapped with Bob, he jumared up the chimney, clinking and clanking with hardware hitting the walls.

At about 50m a horizontal crack ran out from the flake and into the face. Above lay an off width overhanging crack. Bob Brewer had led this before. We had tried to warn Greg about it but he was keen to give it a go. I settled into my slings and paid out the rope as Greg manoeuvred into position under the crack. I smiled as I could see his expression change from reasonable optimism to utter disbelief at the horror above him.

“Go on Greg, it’s alright” I lied.

Below I could see Bob watching and although I could not make out his face I knew damn well he would be smirking. Greg made a few rather pathetic scratching type actions at the rock above. He was not a happy man. I needed to encourage him since he had now started calling us a load of bastards for tricking him into the pitch. We hadn’t tricked him - we just perhaps had not offered him a full version of what was involved. I mean that’s not lying is it?

Things like “Go on Greg, it’s not far to go.” and “ Well, Bob pissed up this last time” did little to help his confidence and I decided to be nice and told him to just take his time. Eventually he went for it, there was much huffing puffing, cursing and a few screams at one point, but he did it. I do remember that he was not a happy man when I arrived at the stance. Apart from the physical and mental trauma his good duvet was in tatters and we didn’t have any duct tape left.

Above us the line continued as a superb hand jam crack, I had led this before and so swapped the belay with Greg who swarmed up it. That is until it became icy and he seemed to experience some difficulty hanging on. I was trying to film at the time, which is always disconcerting for a leader in extremis. Eventually I complied with his request to watch the rope which was a good job since the next action on his part was to plummet down towards me. Undeterred Greg got straight back on the rock and clawed his way to the belay. A superb effort in appalling conditions.

I followed on jumars trailing the 200 m static rope behind me. The stance had been our previous high point and above was new territory, it still looked as desperately hard as the day we abandoned the attempt in 1990. We arranged a belay, tied on the rope and descended back to camp. It was getting dark when we stumbled back into Camp 5. The lads had a brew on and as we sat drinking tea, we told them of our progress. We had had a good day but some very hard climbing still remained.

Up until this point in the expedition the climbing had not been new to Bob and myself. Although K7 was a fantastic place to be, the pure excitement of climbing unknown territory has always been my reason for climbing new routes. Now we were in that position again and I longed to see where it would lead us.

In the early morning of the 9th we were woken to the sound of wind and hail battering the tent. It was another bloody storm. The captain had said as much on the radio but the sky had

been clear as a bell the night before. We just seemed to be destined for bad weather on this trip. Breakfast took ages to get over, melting water for four people on one stove is neither fun nor fast. Bob and myself set off in rotten weather to try and push the line forwards. The Fortress was covered in ice and so were the ropes. In order to jumar you needed to clean every inch of the rope before moving up. Every so often the jumars would slip and with your heart in your mouth you'd attempt the next step up. It was time consuming climbing the 70 metres of overhanging 9mm static to the belay. I had come up with my sack on and had found it very hard. I shouted down to Bob that I would haul his sack up and that he should tie it on to the rope I was about to throw down. I pulled the sack up but it hung up on a knobble some thirty feet below me. Bob freed it when he came past. The weather was rapidly worsening as we arranged ourselves on the stance. We decided to wait and see if any improvement came. We spent the next hour, sharing the odd cigarette and stomping our feet to keep warm. At one point Bob's foot went through the ice into a hollow, inside he could see metal. It was our old gear dump from 1990. It gave us something to do as we excavated some thirty odd pegs and bongs from their hiding place of three years. Even Luke's "half friend" was there which we had all denied could have possibly been left behind after our retreat!

The snow eventually stopped and I started up towards an overhanging slot that seemed to offer the way forward. It was incredibly steep, an old Japanese rope hung over the edge to our left. The rock appeared to overhang about twenty feet in the next thirty metres. We had said it looked awesome back in 1990, and that appraisal had not altered. The slot was an ice filled chimney, something very similar to Strapiombo at Tremadog but slightly wider so you could just wedge your shoulders across it as you faced inwards. I grovelled up into it's depths, protection was practically non existent and it was extremely strenuous trying to stop gravity taking over and being spat out into the void. At 25m I was becoming worried, there was just no respite and the ice at the back of the chimney had given out to just a few blobs on the walls. Feet were practically useless in such an overhanging situation and I needed to summon up all my courage to pull up on the tiny bits of ice. Some two and a half hours later I had reached the relative safety of vertical ice and managed to get a peg in. I relaxed a little and made the moves above past an enormous ice mushroom suspended by thin air. It was the sort of thing that if you touched it it would fall and take you with it. I breathed a great sigh of relief after passing it and having found a decent nut slot in which to arrange the belay. Hanging onto the ropes I climbed back down a little, shouted to Bob and kicked the mushroom off. It thundered down the chimney exploding over the walls below and dissipating in a cloud of ice crystals, most of which landed on Bob. He followed cursing in the narrow chimney. We arranged the abseil and beat a retreat back to camp. Above the climbing looked far easier, we had cracked the Fortress.

Back in camp we talked over tactics and I bubbled about the pitch we'd led that afternoon. Although we seemed close to the top of the Fortress we knew we still had a long way to go. Our main problem was now one of food. We only had two days left. We had plenty of gas but only one stove. Our original plans had been for us to have been left with a weeks supply of food after cracking the Fortress, but that plan had been devastated by the birds and the weather. There was really no alternative but to pack up camp 5 and make a concerted push to the summit of the Fortress and camp 6 the following day. We would leave one tent behind and hope that we could get a snow hole above, there would definitely be a chance of finding one higher up. We would also leave the ropes in place on the Fortress, the thought of abseiling down such territory in a storm was too horrible to contemplate.

The 11th August surprisingly brought good weather and Mark and Greg set off to ascend the ropes. I asked them to drag two 9mm ropes behind them and haul their sacks once one of them reached the first stance. It was just too hard trying to jumar with the sacks on. Greg said he'd get a pulley rigged. Bob and I were going to wait for a while since it would take some time before they were up. Some time later I set off up the ropes to begin our push. As I reached the small snowfield below the tower I could see Mark still at the bottom. Greg was pulling his sack up on the static line not on the other ropes as I asked them to. I shouted up to Mark about what they thought they were doing. Mark replied that he had said to Greg that they should haul on

the other rope but Greg had insisted on using the static, and since he was more experienced he had accepted it. I snapped and told him that he should bloody try to think for himself for once and he had to begin to look after himself. I shouldn't have said it but I did, we were all very tired and I had forgotten that Mark had come to help us, he was never supposed to be a lead climber. Mark laid into me about being a bastard, he was quite upset - the strain in all of us was beginning to show. At least Bob and I knew what it was going to be like up on K7 for so long, Mark didn't. I felt ashamed that I'd hurt his feelings but we were coming to a situation where really everyone had to look after themselves, we were out on a limb. I moved up to join Mark at the stance and said I was sorry, but I didn't care if he thought me a bastard, because the one thing I had to do was look after getting everybody off the mountain at the end of the day. If that meant some home truths then so be it, but Greg's action had cost us valuable time and we could have been jumaring by now if Mark had followed his own instincts instead of letting Greg think he knew better.

Greg finally threw the static rope down and Mark started up the rope. Bob appeared dragging the remaining ropes from below and I helped him coil them. He would wait for me to haul the sacks before starting up himself, in case something became caught. The jumaring up the long rope was spectacular and made you feel pretty small against the huge walls of the Fortress. It was the one place where you really started to worry about jumaring, two hundred feet in space is a long way. Greg had arrived at the top of the overhanging chimney by the time I reached the first ledge, he was busy setting up a pulley system with Mark. I set about hauling Bob and I's kit from below - I preferred to just pull the rope in hand over hand it was quicker but tiring. We soon had the gear up and I began attaching loads for Greg to pull. Unfortunately the arrangement of the ropes made it very difficult to get a proper pull on the system and it seemed to be taking a long time to move the kit above me. I think everyone was beginning to feel the strain of four weeks on the mountain. Eventually Bob and myself joined the others on the stance above, I had wanted to take some film of the jumaring but as usual when pressed with other things, it had been forgotten and the camera lay buried in Bob's sack. I asked him to try and get some footage of the next section and set off in the lead with Mark belaying. Although the pitch above looked straightforward, once on it I realised that it was in fact overhanging - the Fortress just never gave in. Thirty feet of hard mixed climbing led to an easier section, the ground was beginning to lie back. Thank God I thought as I arranged an anchor and brought Bob up. Mark and Greg were going to keep hauling the gear as we two climbed. Another deceptively difficult groove led to large ledges. From below it looked as though we might get a camp on one but in reality they sloped at a very steep angle. I continued over a series of small walls and ledges to a huge flake belay just below what looked like the summit of the Fortress. Bob jumared behind he was very slow. I kept shouting to see what was up until he eventually appeared carrying both our sacks. He looked knackered, it had been an amazing effort. Time was pressing and although the day had been generally good, the clouds were rolling in and the wind was picking up. We were in for another storm. Looking above we could see a small col, there had to be a camp site just above.

I set off across a blank slab but couldn't make any moves to reach the ice above. A little bit further left I could make out a tattered loop of Japanese rope emerging from the ice. If I could reach it I would have a chance of pulling onto the face. I teetered across more on faith than friction in my crampons and hooked an axe into the loop - I pulled carefully and it seemed to hold, it didn't really matter whether it did since I was committed to making the move or falling. I didn't relish the latter. I looked back at Bob he was a long way from me and there was no gear in between us, I would have to do it. I pulled up feet scrabbling for a purchase. I smashed an axe into the ice above and moved, it was over quickly and I was on better ground. I climbed on steepening ice that varied from good to Danish pastry consistency, heading for a large projecting block on the cornice. As I neared the cornice, my hopes of finding a camp were shattered, we were not on a dome but on another pinnacled ridge. The col I had thought might mark the summit snowfield of the Fortress was in fact just a col between enormous pinnacles. On the other side just space, three thousand bloody feet of it. The way forwards lay over several difficult and time consuming pinnacles plastered in rime ice. The ridge curved

round in a huge sweep to the right and I realised that the Fortress was in just the overhanging south wall of this section of ridge. I just couldn't believe it, we were stuffed. There wasn't a chance of getting a camp or a snowhole and the storm was worsening. To add to it all there wasn't a belay point for me to rap down on, I'd have to reverse the whole lot, how I'd get down the final section I had no idea.

I looked through the swirling clouds and mist at the summit of K7 in the distance, it might have been a million miles away, we just hadn't a chance. Knowing what we did about the climbing on the SW Ridge it was obvious that we would need at least another week to crack the top section, it was miles, bloody miles and we'd already spent thirty days on the damn mountain. The effort we'd all put into it, the sheer hard graft, the multitude of miserable nights, the injuries. What more did we have to do to climb this mother? I didn't know anymore - it had all become unreal.

I tried to shout to Bob but the storm drowned out my voice. I just hoped he would realise I was coming down and start taking the rope in. I started the descent, I remember thinking I should be scared, but there was no point, the only person going to get me off this was me and I might as well just get on and do it. As I neared the bottom Bob saw what was happening and took the rope in. I surveyed the way I had come and the alternatives. There weren't really any and so I inched my way down to the last bit of ice and reached down to try and clip a jumar on the Jap rope. I managed to get it and lock off on one arm whilst I took my axe out from above. I lowered myself slowly down until below the loop. But I couldn't reach back up to get the jumar off. I had to pull back up and clip a krab in, I pulled through one of my lead ropes and used it as a back rope after taking the jumar off. I made it. Bob was plastered in snow and the wind was howling. It had become very cold. I told him of the way forward and we decided to go down and see what Greg and Mark were doing, it was nearly 5pm and darkness approached. To descend we needed to take our ropes with us and we spent another fifteen minutes untangling frozen coils before we could set off. The lads were about fifty metres below. I told them the score. We had to get a camp, we couldn't sit out this storm on a poxy bivvy. There was nowhere to run but back down to Camp 5. We were shattered, we'd put everything into forcing the Fortress and still it had not been enough. We only had two days food and that would be down to one by the evening. At the most optimistic we needed three more days for a summit attempt and three more to descend. If the weather came in again we were in deep trouble and with the one stove about to break we really were chancing our lives in trying to remain on K7. For the second time in three years I turned to everyone and said it was over. The Fortress had won another battle.

Greg and Mark went first, and Bob and I collected the gear and ropes. If we were going back then we would need four ropes to abseil on. We battled in the storm to pack more frozen coils and descended to the top of the overhanging chimney pitch. Although we were going back down, I still didn't know what to do, if the weather miraculously improved, we still had a line to the top of the Fortress. I talked with Bob and we decided to leave the remaining gear at the stance, if it was all over we would come back and collect it before going down the mountain. It turned out to be one of the most stupid decisions we have ever made.

It was dark by the time Bob and I arrived at camp 5, the others had put the Photon tent back in place which was a godsend. We dived in, it had been a long, long day. The weather continued to storm, it was no good we just couldn't wait it out we were starving and if we tried to split the rations any more none of us would be able to do more than get out of the tents. We spoke to Base at around 8pm and told the captain that we were coming down. It was a sad time. After all the planning and knowledge gained from 1990, we were in exactly the same position. Out of food and in the grip of storm still at camp 5. Three years ago we'd tossed a sugar coated spoon to see which two of us could have the last food and stay to attempt the summit. Then, the weather had put paid to any idea of staying that and it just wasn't an option now. We knew how dangerous and difficult the descent was. If two of us had tried to go down alone last time they would have still been there today. The decision was out of our hands, it had to be down.

Morning brought worse weather, the wind was ferocious. Greg and I tried to return up the ropes to get the gear but were forced back three pitches from the tent. We lay in our pits wondering if we would be able to retrieve it at all. At four in the afternoon, some slight improvement came and Bob and I ventured out - the jumars up the Fortress were horrendous, two or three inches of ice covered everything and at one point Bob did a fifteen foot slider on his jumars before stopping. It was nearly dark by the time we had reached the dump, we stuffed everything into our sacks and rattled back down the frozen ropes. We would have to leave them in place, any semantics over environmentally friendly expeditions are usually forgotten when your life depends on it. This was no exception.

On the 13th August we set off on the fifty or so abseils to safety. The weather had abated but snow was piled everywhere. K7 glistened white, you could have been forgiven for thinking it was a snow peak and not composed of mainly granite towers. The Japanese couloir was waist deep in powder and the ropes forming our lifeline to the Coffin Bivvy were araldited to the rock by ice. Our sacks weighed so much, it required every last ounce of energy to make even six inches of progress upwards. We cursed and swore our way back up, demented beings in a hostile world.

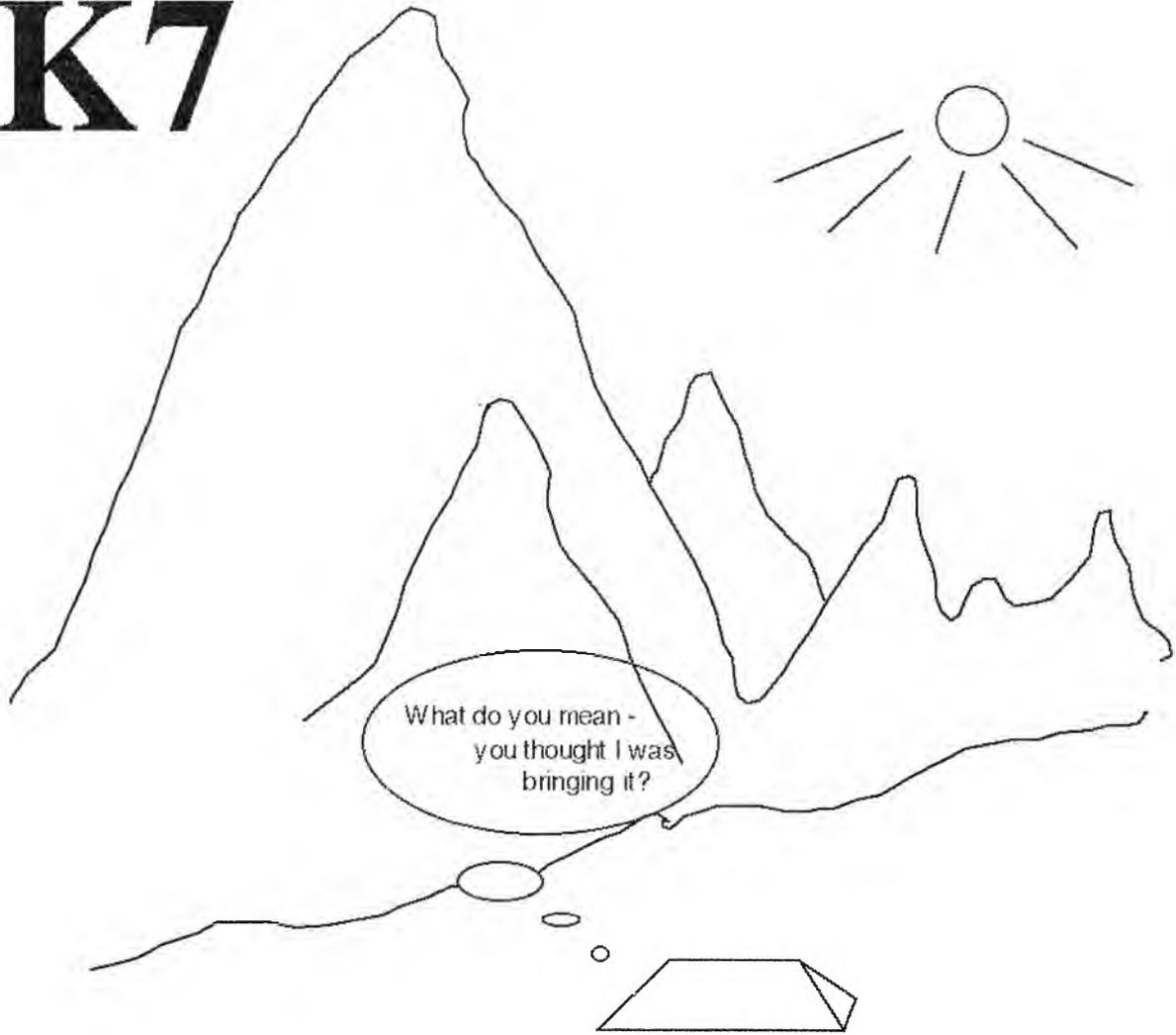
We stopped at Camp 3. We could have continued but it was a long way to Camp 2. We'd tried to get there in 1990 and had ended up having a real epic in the dark and rain, and losing two of our four ropes. It was not something I wanted to repeat. That evening our remaining stove finally failed. We were all glad it had happened there and not in some snow hole above the Fortress.

An early start on the 14th enabled us to reach the foot of the mountain by about 2pm. I don't want to remember the details, suffice to say none of us could actually lift our sacks back on once we had taken them off at advance base.

We couldn't see Heder or the Captain and so began walking down towards Base. The glacier had changed completely, it was just hard ice now. A month had made a lot of difference. A few hundred metres down we met Heder, he'd seen us coming and had brought the Primus stove and lots of grub. The captain soon followed and we greeted each other - physical beings instead of radio voices at long last. We made the effort to take some team photos with the mountain behind us - which was a first, and headed down to Base. It was all over, Bob wouldn't catch his plane, SJ would miss her honeymoon, Mark had sacrificed his mountains, Greg had cured his headaches, we had only managed two more pitches than in 1990 and we had spent more time in close confinement than most partners in a marriage do in a lifetime. It was a strange feeling to be suddenly released from the effort. We wouldn't have to get up in the morning and chip out ice for a brew, but inside of me there was an emptiness. As I stole a last look at K7, I somehow had the feeling that we'd be back.

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K7



Logistics

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Environmental notes

Mountains are still amongst the wildest places on Earth and are therefore a precious part of the heritage of all people. With the ever increasing number of visitors the need to protect this wilderness is more urgent than ever before. For this reason, a conference was held in Italy during October of 1987 to discuss the problems. This was attended by some 300 international mountaineers who proposed certain guidelines that should be observed by all future expeditions. The following points have been extracted from the resulting "Declaration of Principles" of the Biella Conference and the Mount Everest Foundation strongly supports the general direction of this initiative.

Do not use wood fires- the mantle of vegetation is disappearing fast enough and it takes a very long time to be restored.

Do not abandon equipment on the mountain. If forced to retreat in an emergency every attempt should be made to erase all traces of your passage.

Protect flora and fauna. Take garbage out with you, simply burying it is not good enough. If you could carry it in you can carry it out.

To summarise, you should aim for a clean expedition nothing left on the mountain , nothing left at base camp.

Support

The Expedition gratefully acknowledges the assistance given by the following organisations and individuals, without whose help, our task would have been so much harder.

The Porters and people of Baltistan

The Government of Pakistan Tourism Division

The Mount Everest Foundation

The British Mountaineering Council

The Sports Council for Wales

The Foundation for Sport and Arts

Duracell (UK)

John Gatrix - technical dept - Duracell

Expedition Freight Ltd

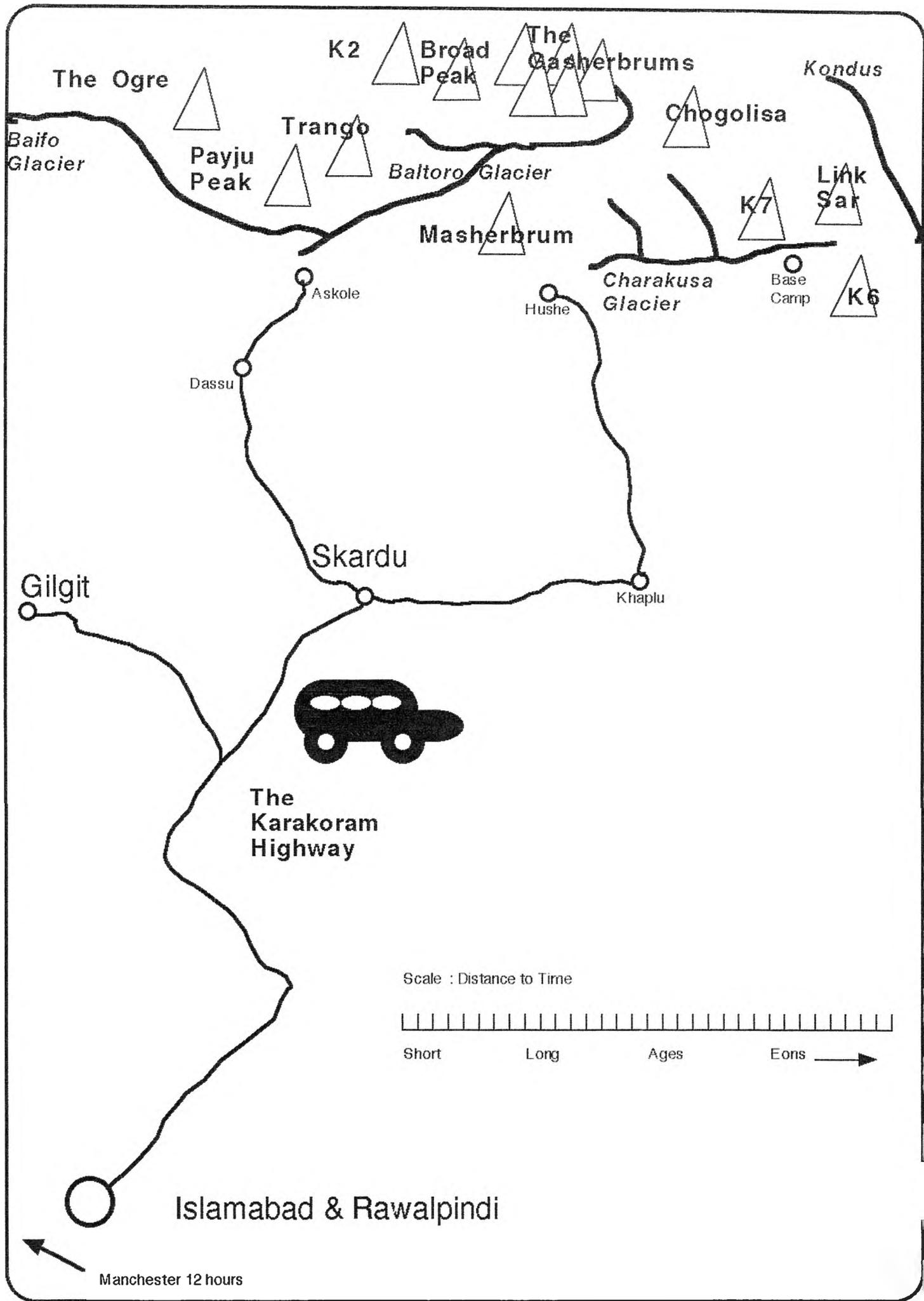
Nigel Bonnett of the Intec group

Mohammad Iqbal and the guys from Baltistan Tours, Pakistan

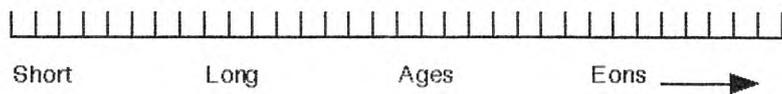
Special thanks go to Bob's mum who made the fruit cake.

Our wives and girlfriends who let us go on this crazy mission in the first place.

Finally to Mark for having the guts to come with us when we needed him.



Scale : Distance to Time



Islamabad & Rawalpindi

Manchester 12 hours

Diary of events

- 27th June Fly with PIA to Islamabad from Manchester . Meet Roger for the first time
- 28th Arrive Islamabad - met by Nisar of Baltistan Tours. Stay in Shawnze Hotel
- 29th Purchasing Rawalpindi - Food- Insurance for porters-Deposit for Environmental fee in bank-Realise that unannounced three day holiday about to start -Meet Tali Mohammad in Ministry-Change money-Collect equipment from forwarders-Arrange flights to Skardu
- 30/1/2/3 July Holiday
- 4th Set off on KKH
- 5th Reach Skardu
- 6th Shopping Skardu - Jeep drive to Skardu
- 7th Packing Hushe
- 8th Walk to Saitcho
- 9th Held back by weather in Saitcho-Greg ill with altitude
- 10th Push to Base in 1 Day-Meet David Hamilton at Base Camp
- 11th 10 porters to advance base camp.
Snowing heavily and have to lend them all our clothes
- 12th View route.
- 13th Denis and Greg start route on Tower 1 - Roger ill with Hushe bug. Bob, Dai sleep at advance base-Decide to change line up first Tower.
- 14th Bob and Dai climb to C1. . Push 1 rope up couloir with Greg. Stay the night at pitch 3
- 15th Mark carries several tons of gear to base of hill-Push to couloir but too horrible to continue. Bob and Dai Camp I. Others sleep pitch 3. Dai gets tent from upper dump at midnight-Everyone wet.
- 16th All to C1 weather awful - strip ropes to C1. Roger on Mountain but feeling rough. cramped night at C1
- 17th Reach C2 hard going return to Camp 1 for night.
- 18th Move to Camp 2 - Bob, Roger climb to Jutting Ledge. Greg and Mark descend to Base
- 19th Carry to Jutting Ledge and Denis and Dai push ropes up two pitches on headwall
- 20th Bob / Denis climb- Dai and Denis reach Hidden Couloir

- 21st Make decision to go down and bring Greg up.
- 22nd Back up with Greg. Denis and Roger stay at Base
- 23rd Caught in storm at ledge between Camp 2 and 3
- 24th Push ropes to snowfield during lull.
- 25th Storm worsens forced descent to C2
- 26th Descend to Base in loads of snow
- 27th Wait for weather to improve
- 28th Back up but return early in morning due to change in weather Mark decides to come on mountain. Weather improves at noon. Return to C2
- 29th Reach C3
- 30th Collect gear and ropes from below. Greg and Bob start tower 3
- 31st Birds eat food- Greg Bob climb to col -Dai / Greg reach top peak 3
- 1st Dai Bob to Coffin Bivvy
- 2nd Storm
- 3rd Rope down and up couloir
- 4th Two more ropes up couloir. Down to meet Greg and Mark. All at Coffin Bivvy
- 5th Mark / Greg to Hollywood bowl
- 6th Dai / Bob coffin to Hollywood. All to C5
- 7th First day on Fortress. Attempt route to left
- 8th Start Flake Chimney system
- 9th Climb overhanging ice pitch
- 10th Push to summit. Forced back in storm.
- 11th Collect gear
- 12th Descend
- 13th Descend

Route Description

K7 - South West Ridge ABO VII 6,500m

A long and committing mixed route at altitude. Retreat could prove difficult in bad weather. Several bivouacs may be necessary. Abseil points are in situ from the summit of the Fortress. The route is a free climb on rock and ice with several obligatory passages of VII +. Start on the left hand side of the Japanese Couloir's avalanche cone, at a wet vertical chimney.

1. 45m. Ascend a few feet until a vague groove can be climbed on the left wall. Cross a bulge at 35m and continue to a flat ledge. 5b.
2. 45m. Climb above the ledge and continue up slabs to a poor belay. 4b.
3. 50m. Continue to a steepening and climb the line of flakes on the left hand side of the wall. A large ledge is reached with spike belay. The Massage Parlour. 5a.
4. 60m. Move right along loose ledges to V-Groove. Follow the groove to easy ground and move up right to a niche in the wall above. Thread belay. 4c.
5. 50m. The Floral Fist Jam. Climb out right and up the rounded crack. A difficult few moves and a crucial vegetated fist jam lead to easier ground. Climb the wall above and into the wide crack which leads to a good stance and belay. 5c
6. 30m. Delicately up avoiding poised blocks to below a V-groove leading leftwards.
7. 40m. Up the groove to a thread belay below a steep featureless wall. 5a.
8. 50m. Climb the broken gulley on the left until possible to move into the middle of the wall. Continue to a thread belay on a large broken area. 5a.
9. 50m. Climb round to the left and back right to reach ledges at the top of the spur. Camp 1. 4c.

It is better to continue up along side the flanks of the first tower to the first slight steepening. Climb this slab for 6m then move down and left around a boulder to an excellent flat, sheltered campsite overlooking the couloir. There is water here. Originally the route continued along the side of the tower for 4 pitches (5b,5a,--) until a descent could be made into the couloir.

Move down into the couloir and up mainly on the left side to reach the crest of the spur running from Tower 2. This separates the initial couloir from the main icefall running down the left of the SW Ridge. Camp 2 is situated on large ledges on the left side of the couloir's crest. Water is available in the couloir, 100ft below. The view from the ridge directly above the campsite is worth looking at.

Ascend for 400m over broken ground to reach ledge systems running into the side of Tower 2 about 100m to the left of the lowest rocks. Start climbing at a gradually steepening groove which is just right of a large groove containing a prominent triangular shaped block at 15m.

10. 50m. Climb the groove and crack gradually increasing in difficulty. A sloping stance is reached in a small bay. 5c.
11. 25m. Climb the back of the bay and move left into a wide chimney / groove. 4c.

12. 50m. Climb the cracks above leading to a shallow square cut groove. Continue to a ledge and huge flake just below a hanging prow and ice filled groove. 5c/6a
13. 50m. Climb the wall to the left of the ice filled groove above, moving right at 30m onto the arete. Up this to a sloping stance. 5b.
14. 25m. Continue up the crack to the start of a ramp system leading rightwards. 4c.
15. 50m. Up the ramp moving rightwards to the wide ledge- The Jutting Ledge. Belay beneath the layback flake at the right hand end of the ledge. 4c.
16. 50m. Layback up the flake to a belay below the continuation groove. 5b.
17. 50m. Climb the groove to a roof. Pull out left into a rounded wide crack. Continue with increasing difficulty, heading for an undercut flake. Undercut leftwards in a position of considerable exposure to reach an exfoliating flake in the middle of the wall. 5c.
18. 50m. Make a descending traverse leftwards to gain a crack system 6m away. Climb the crack until it fades and traverse right to gain the groove above the belay. Hanging Stance. 5c.
19. 25m. Delicately up the groove on crystals to reach the top of the spur overlooking the Hidden Couloir. 5c. Site of the "Storm Camp".
20. 50m. Up broken ground to a large pinnacle. Descend into the couloir by a short overhanging section and belay on the left wall a few feet higher. 5a.
21. 200m. Climb the couloir with a short section of III to the bottom of the Snowpatch leading to the crest of Tower 2.
22. 200m. Up the snowfield to the crest and good campsites. Views and excellent trundling .
23. 50m. Climb towards the base of Tower and make a rightwards traverse to a hanging stance on the slabs. III
24. 50m. Traverse delicately right and into the flake groove. Up this to a series of ledges. 5b
25. 50m. Move up and right to the base of a groove leading back left. Climb the groove to a hanging stance. 5a.
26. 30m. Climb cracks above to reach the base of three prominent cracklines. The Triple Cracks .5a.
27. 40m. Up for 3m then move into the left crack, climb this until a horizontal hand traverse leads into the righthand crack. Pull over the bulge and into a small niche with spike belay. The Bomber Belay. 6a.
28. 25m. Continue up the groove to the saddle on the ridge. 4c.
29. 30m. Climb wall to stance . 5a
30. 50m. Up and left to corner groove. Climb this to easier ground. Thread belay. 5a.
31. 30m. Up rounded arete and swing into bottomless chimney/ wide crack. Thutch up this

to emerge at The Curious Hole. 5b.

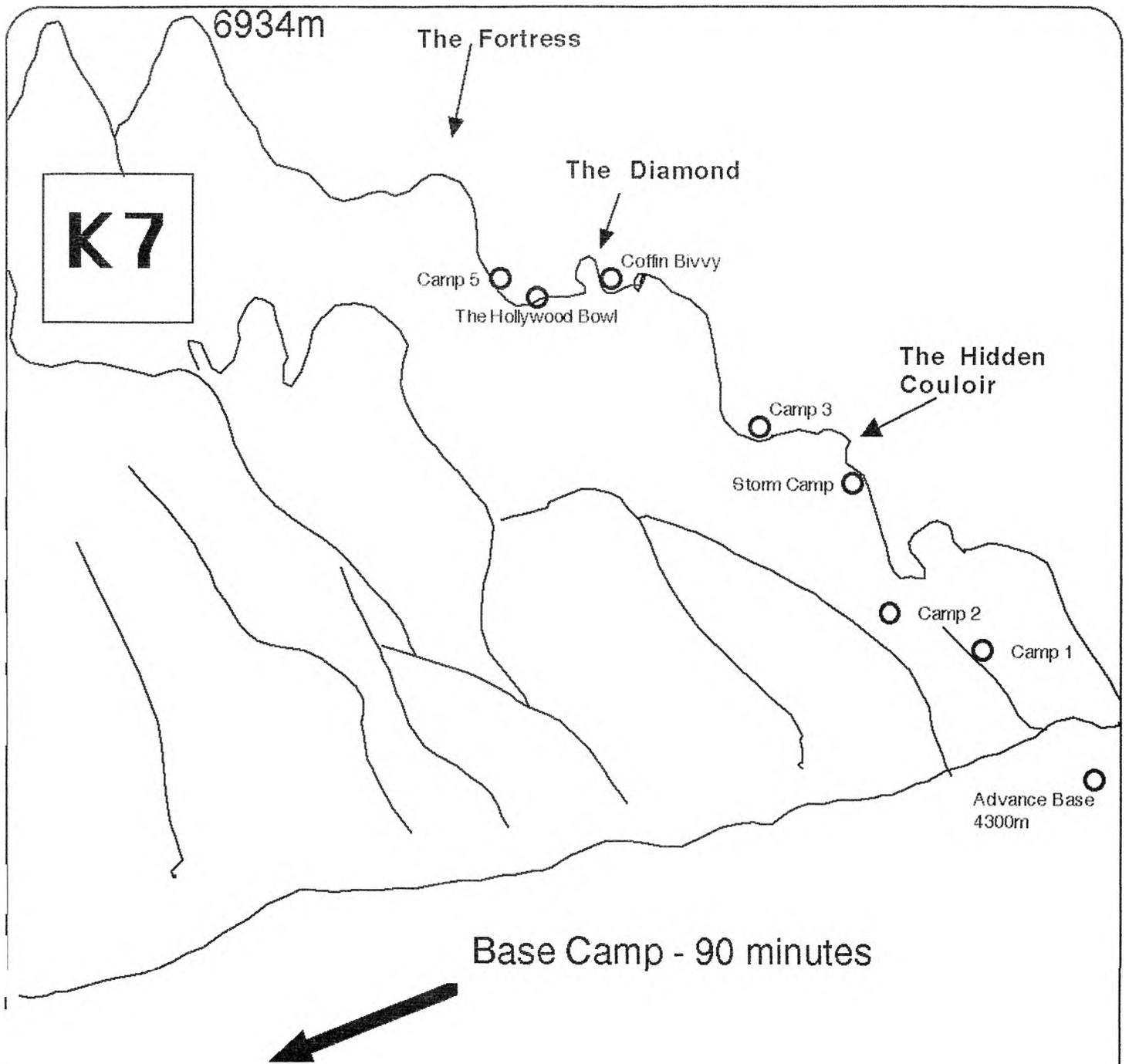
32. 50m. Traverse left along knife edge ridge to crevasse. Descend slab to left and hand traverse to snow patch.
33. 60m. Cross snow to belay below steep wall.
34. 25m. Climb wall to ledges below wide overhanging crack. Camp 4. The Coffin Bivvy. 5b.

The wide crack leads to a small col from which forward progress becomes difficult. The crack is the Smorgen Fissure. E3 5c, initially climbed in 1990. Instead, descend from the Coffin bivvy for three ropes lengths gradually working leftwards (facing out) to reach the Japanese Couloir just before the col between Tower 3 and the Fortress.

35- 38. Descent.

- 39-44. 250m. Climb the left side of the couloir on disgusting snow. After three pitches begin a rightwards traverse to the far side of the couloir. This is the Hollywood Bowl. III
45. 50m. Climb crack system above the Bowl to another overhanging crack. Climb this to a spike belay. Climb the edge of the blank slab past two Jap bolts to a ledge of chicken heads and peg belay. 5b.
46. 50m. Go up right on snow ramp and climb overhanging icicle to flake belay on edge of snowfield leading to the Fortress. IV/V
47. 200m. Up snowfield to rock wall. Camp 5 on right below wall.
48. 150m. Move left to icy rocks and vague groove line. Up this bearing slightly right to flat area before the Fortress. III
49. 100m. Cross snowpatch and up leftward ramp to block belay 6m right of massive flake chimney. II
50. 50m. Move left to base of flake chimney. Climb this sustained. V/VI to a hanging belay where a horizontal crack breaks out right across the wall.
51. 25m. Move right to small niche below evil offwidth. Summon up the energy and climb it to where the angle eases. Hanging belay. 6a
52. 50m. Up the superb jamming crack. Some icy patches if snowy. Belay on small ledge left of overhanging chimney. 5c.
53. 50m. Up small groove to enter tight chimney which overhangs alarmingly. Climb strenuous and sustained ice in back of chimney. VI+ Continue to block belay.
54. 50m. Up overhanging crack above VI+ . to short walls heading slightly right. Belay left of a large groove heading back left.
55. 50m. Descend round into icy groove climb it to its top . Up a short wall and pull over next wall by a boulder. Huge flake belay 10m above. VI.
56. 50m. Move left and up slab to ice. Climb up rotten ice to pinnacle summit. The summit of the Fortress lies 200-300m away along a corniced knife edge ridge. It is not a snow

dome as views from below would have you believe. From the top of the Fortress ,there remains approximately one third of the SW Ridge to go. The ground looks mixed and similar to what has gone before. The ridge remains very narrow until the final summit cone. We believe that another weeks climbing might have been necessary to reach the summit. This is as far as we got in 32 days.



The South West Ridge of K7 from the Charakusa Glacier

The Team

Dai Lampard

Expedition Leader, 37 years of age living in Nant Peris , Wales. Married to Rhona, with two daughters, Anna aged 3 yrs and Janie aged 18 mths. Qualified as a veterinary surgeon, plasterer and unrewarded entrepreneur. Six previous expeditions to Pakistan and still unable to attain a summit.

Bob Brewer

29 years old , living in Cardiff. Married to SJ and very nearly divorced over this trip. No kids yet, but we've all got a bet on the date. Qualified as a geologist, surfer and budding film maker. The only other surviving member of the original 1990 K7 foray with three Pakistan trips under his belt.

Greg Cotterill

Aged 39 years, living in Leeds. Qualified as an instrument engineer, El Cap nailer and Marathon runner. Fit as a butcher's dog and bald enough to join the dolphins. Possessed with the driest sense of humour we have ever come across. Greg was originally asked to come as a member on this trip but declined due to previous altitude problems- it's a funny old world.

Mark Berrisford

Aged 28 years, living mainly in Cardiff, Hawaii or Australia. Qualified as a glaciologist, hypochondriac and smooth talker. There is no one on this planet that Mark could not strike up an instant conversation with. Stopped climbing for a year due to tendinitis but this trip blew that excuse away for good. Possessed with a boundless enthusiasm for anything except when suffering from Giardiasis.

Denis Gleeson

Aged 38 years, living in Bolton, Lancashire. Working in the outdoor education department of Bolton Metro College , he says the aerobic classes keep him going since the demise of the college's climbing wall status. Occasionally referred to as "Gripper Gleeson" due to his large hands- well , that's what he says. We should ask Ann?

Roger Whitehead

Aged 35 and living in Boulder, Colorado. A doctor of Psychology, master of Yosemite and talented impersonator of a wood nymph at night. Outbouldered everyone at base camp and even managed to get Denis to part with enough money to buy his beer all night for disbelieving he could do a problem. Has a capacity for whiskey that defies belief. Roger is also pretty good at tight rope walking and for some strange reason so are the rest of us now.

Major Tariq Khan

Tariq started as a captain with our expedition and finished as a major , which obviously must mean something. Lives in Swat, loves life and a great guy to have around. His boredom threshold must rank amongst the world's highest since he spent the best part of the expedition on his own, making human contact only through the radio calls. He builds bridges for the army whilst not on expedition.

Heder Ali

Rozi Ali's brother, aged thirty six. Came with us in place of Rozi who was working for the Italian GIV expedition. Good cook , story teller and collector of expedition gear. Despite taking a week to fetch extra supplies from Hushe, we still love him and are looking forward to visiting him again when we will collect our kit..

Peak fees

Height of Peak	Royalty in US\$	Extra for every additional member over five persons
K2 8611m	9 000	1 000
8 000 - 8 500	7 500	700
7 500 - 8 000	3 000	300
7 000 - 7 500	2 000	200
6 000 - 7 000	1 200	150
< 6 000m		

Why are peak fees so high?

Because the UK is so wet they know we have to go to Pakistan to climb.

How do we apply for permission?

Fill in the application form [Annexure A] together with the list of members [Annexure B]. Send two copies of each together with the Royalty to the Pakistan High Commission in London. A further copy of Annexure A & B should be sent with a photocopy of your Royalty cheque directly to :

The Tourism Division

College Road, F-7/2
Islamabad.

Who is the payment made to?

Make cheques and drafts out to:

“1391 Fees, Fines and Forfeitures” for the accounting of the receipt relating to royalty/trekking fee realised from Mountaineering and Trekking”

Try getting that on a cheque.

Must the full amount be deposited?

Yes

When can we apply?

Between January 1st and December 31st of the preceding year. The High Commission will forward the application only upon receipt of the application form and the royalty payment. Peaks are allotted on a first cum first served basis.

What if we cannot get the peak we want?

If you are definitely not interested in another peak other than your chosen one, do not put alternatives down. You are bound to accept what the Government of Pakistan allots you if you have put alternatives down. You cannot get a refund if you decide not to proceed.

What if we do know know the final composition of members?

Apply stating the fact in a covering letter. Peaks can be provisionally booked but formal permission will only be given when full particulars are received by the Tourism Division. If details are not received within three months of a party arriving it may delay their departure from Islamabad until security clearance is obtained.

Should we include reserve members in our application?

Yes, include as many as possible for the reasons stated above.

What if we change team members after submitting details on Annexure B?

Send the new details as per Annexure B to the Tourism Division with a covering letter as soon as possible.

Can we apply for more than one peak?

Theoretically yes. However you may not apply for more than one 8000m peak in the same season. Obviously you will have to pay the appropriate royalties involved.

Can anyone be involved in more than one expedition per season?

No, though we know of several people who have been on multiple expeditions. It is an interesting point as far as commercial expeditions are concerned since trekking/ mountaineering companies often climb more than one peak with the same leaders or guides.

When can we expect a reply from Tourism Division?

Theoretically within 60 days of receipt of the completed application and royalty. However we have often received permission only a month before departure. Generally, "No news seems to mean good news"

What about cancellation?

If a party cancels it's trip, Royalty will not be repaid and it cannot be brought forward to the next year. This has important implications since the rise in peak fees, you can lose a lot of money. When the Government allots a peak, it has effectively stopped another expedition from climbing that peak. It is fair that they receive compensation for the loss of revenue expected from an expedition arriving in Pakistan. It is no different to booking a holiday and not turning up at the last minute expecting a refund.

We have talked to the Ministry about extenuating circumstances and we believe that should there be humanitarian reasons for not proceeding, it may be possible to retrieve some money.

Is a change in the expedition dates possible?

Yes, it may be possible to adjust this, but try and give as much forewarning as possible.

What if the Pakistan Government cancels the permission?

You will receive a refund in this case.

Will a peak be allotted to more than one expedition?

Yes this is often the case. Particularly so on K2, Broad Peak and Gasherbrum I and II. Although parties are often given different routes, they generally converge on the same routes on all these mountains. If you are planning a new route seek to describe the requested route and specifically ask for that route. It would be very disheartening to arrive and find your dream has been climbed.

What if we find an expedition party on a peak they shouldn't be on?
Imagine it was your expedition they destroyed. Tell the authorities.

What if we cannot climb our peak?

Tough- life's like that. If you think that you can scoot off and climb something else forget it. Not only do you have an obligation to follow the rules but you will be dealt with very severely should you be caught. This will mean jail, two thousand pounds fine each, loss of passport and deportation. Remember that this area is militarily sensitive and it is not your country, you are Pakistan's guest. Your actions will affect other climbers so please think before you decide to disobey the rules.

Annexure "A"

Application form for mountaineering expeditions

1. Country of expedition's origin

2. Name of expedition

3. Name of Leader

4. Nature of expedition (tick applicable)

- (i) Sports
- (ii) Sports-cum-scientific
- (iii) Exclusively scientific

5. If sports or sports-cum scientific tick applicable

- (i) Mountaineering
- (ii) Mountaineering-cum-scientific

Note No. 1 - Explanatory notes, if any, may be added in the form of Annexure.

6. If exclusively scientific tick applicable

- 1. Geological
- 2. Geographical
- 3. Zoological
- 4. Botanical
- 5. Medical
- 6. Other - please specify

7. Particulars about arrival/departure:

- (i) Approximate date of entry into Pakistan
- (ii) Name points of entry
- (iii) Approximate date of arrival at Rawalpindi / Islamabad
- (iv) Approximate date of return to Rawalpindi from mountains

8. Total number:

- (i) Members including leader
- (ii) Reserve
- (iii) Total

Note No. 2 Attach details of each member , including leader and reserves, in Annexure B.

9. Transport / Porters (required):

- (i) Jeeps
- (ii) Trailers
- (iii) Animals
- (iv) Low altitude porters
- (v) High altitude porters

10. Particulars of peak(s) to be climbed:

- a) List at least four peaks in order of preference

(b) For identification attach:

- (i) Area map
- (ii) Route map (please identify important places)

Preference No. 1

- (i) Name of peak
- (ii) Height
- (iii) Latitude
- (iv) Longitude
- (v) Distance from Pakistan border
- (vi) Route to be adopted. Identify important villages/ places/ face / ridge through which the Peak is to be attempted.

(vii) Location of base Camp

- (viii) Is the peak virgin? Yes No

- (ix) If no, enclose resume of all the parties that have conquered it. Also identify the years and names of persons conquering it.

Note No. 3 Applicants asking for allotment of peaks in the Karakoram Range may identify as an alternative choice one peak from the Hindu Kush Range.

List other preferences as above including items (i) to (ix) in respect of each peak.

11. Is it a foreign -cum- Pakistani expedition? Yes No

12. If yes indicate the following;

- (i) Total of Pakistani members including deputy leader
- (ii) Reserve
- (iii) Total

Note No. 4 Attach particulars of each Pakistani member, including deputy leader and reserve , in proforma at Annexure "I".

13. Is it a Pakistan-cum-foreign expedition? Yes No

14. If yes, indicate the following:

- (i) Total of foreign members including deputy Leader
- (ii) Reserve
- (iii) Total

Note No. 5 Attach particulars of foreign members including a deputy Leader and reserve , in proforma at Annexure B.

Note No. 6. Score out such columns as are not applicable (Items 11-14)

15. (a) Do you propose to shoot a film? Yes No

(b) If yes, is it of commercial or academic interest

(c) Size of film

(d) Approximate length of film

16. I hereby declare that the information given by me is true to the best of my knowledge. I further declare that I shall abide by the current terms and conditions , laid down by the Government of Pakistan for climbing peaks, which I have read carefully.

- 1. Signature of Leader
- 2. Name in Block letters
- 3. Date

Countersignature by Embassy of Pakistan_____ (Place)

Annexure B

Particulars of Leader and members of an expedition party

1. Name of Member/ Leader Mr / Mrs / Miss
2. Nationality
3. Residential address
4. Occupational Address
5. Date of birth
6. Place of birth
7. Passport Number
8. Date of issue of passport
9. Place of issue of passport
10. Most recent dates of visits to Pakistan with places (for one year only)
11. Duties to be performed during climb

Annexure "I"

Particulars of Pakistani Leaders/deputy Leaders and members of a party

1. Name
2. Father's name
3. Place of birth
4. Date of birth
5. Occupation/ designation
6. Postal address
7. Permanent address
8. Climbing experience if any.

Insurance

Expedition Insurance

Who did you insure with and do you need it?

We used the BMC Policy underwritten by Perkins Slade. As with any insurance it is going to cost you especially on technical high altitude climbing. It was particularly disheartening to have been given so much support by the British Mountaineering Council and then having to part with all of it to an insurance company. However, a helicopter is going to cost you a lot more. At the end of the day Insurance is a necessary evil.

What about communal and personal equipment?

We only insured £3000 of communal equipment. Personal equipment was insured under our own household insurance policies. This is usually a far better way of insuring sports gear in transit than on the terms offered by the Perkins Slade policy. Personally we would rather see the BMC Policy limited to Rescue and Medical costs - there is far too much abuse in personal gear insurance and this has led to the increases in premiums.

Porter Insurance

Do porters have to be insured?

Mandatory for official expeditions. Porters must be insured before the Ministry briefing can take place. Any expedition should insure their men, accidents can and do happen. It is a small price to pay for their service.

Where do you insure them?

At present the ALPHA insurance Company Ltd is used.

ALPHA Insurance Company Ltd

National Bank Building
2nd Floor
Bank Road
Rawalpindi.
Tel: 568349 & 562249

There is also a branch near the Ministry of Tourism.

What if we need extra porters later on?

It is well worth making provision for some extra porters even if you don't end up using them. It is not very expensive and saves wasting if you do need more men than you originally planned for.

What period does the insurance cover?

Make sure the period of cover allows leeway especially for delays. At present it seems as if the minimum period of insurance is now one month. This is adequate for any standard expedition and will cover the men on their return after carrying to Base Camp.

How much does it cost?

Premiums are approximately 63Rs/- per man per month for low altitude porters and cooks/mail runners. Liaison Officers cost about three times the amount.

Insurance for 34 porters inwards and twelve out plus LO and cook for two months cost this expedition £100.

What about the return porters?

Remember to insure your return porters, as a general rule you will need about one third the number used on the inward journey. Make sure you allow leeway for a change in the return date.

Visas & Travel Procedures

Are visas necessary to go to Pakistan?

Visas are necessary in order to travel and stay in Pakistan. Transit visas for up to three days can be arranged at Islamabad airport if you are only passing through, but they can take some time to arrange.

Where can you obtain a visa?

Apply to the addresses below for application forms or call personally at the various Pakistan High Commissions.

Pakistan High Commission - LONDON

Consular Division
34 Lowndes Square
London SW1X 9JN

Tel 081- 235- 2044

Pakistan High Commission- BRADFORD

Tel 0274- 661114

Pakistan High Commission- MANCHESTER

Where is the best place to obtain a visa?

If you live in the North then Bradford or Manchester is the place to go. For some reason visas are slightly cheaper than in London. You can either post your application or deliver it in person. Check with the individual offices as to exactly what their procedure is, since it always changes. In Manchester and London you will need to hand in the completed applications one day and collect one or two days later. In Bradford it is possible to get a visa the same day.

What are the costs?

Approximately £30-00 per person. If all members are going and coming back together, then get a group visa it is much cheaper, but you must travel as a group.

How do you pay?

Payment is usually requested to be made by postal order- check this up before hand as it might save you a lot of frustration after queuing for hours and then being told the High Commission cannot accept cash or a cheque.

Can you apply by post?

You can post applications but leave plenty of time.

Do all team members have to go in person?

No. All members of a party do not have to go individually to get visas- send the person who has sold the least T-shirts!

What length of stay does a visa allow?

Ask for a visa that you gives enough leeway in the event of delay- 90 day is usually adequate.

What else will I need for my visa?

You will need two passport photos per application and these should be signed on the back.

Air transport

How do you get to Pakistan?

We have always used PIA, and nowadays consider the airline to be on a par with most other long haul operators. They do not have alcohol on board but you can buy your own at duty free and drink it on the plane. Do not attempt to carry any into Pakistan. Food is reasonable and business class is great.

Is it not cheaper going via Karachi?

Unless you need to save some money by flying to Karachi and catching a connection to Islamabad, we would always recommend flying directly to Islamabad. Karachi does have a new international terminal now and the difference is indescribable compared to the horrors of days gone past. Stay in the Airport Hotel if stopping over in Karachi. It is still very reasonably priced and has a pool and reasonable food. In reality you will not save that much money by travelling via Karachi.

Who flies to Islamabad?

Many airlines fly to Karachi but only British Airways and PIA go to Islamabad. Times are changing so that other airlines may fly there in future. PIA's prices take some beating and will probably remain as the most competitive.

What is the advantage of PIA apart from price?

PIA often give a baggage allowance of 40kg per person. This is a lot of baggage for a small expedition, especially when you also have several hundred kilos of hand luggage which seems the norm with British climbers.

Will we get this allowance on the way back?

No. It is important to remember that you will get no more than your normal 23kg allowance on the return journey. The airline has become much stricter on this over recent years and you will have to pay excess baggage for any extra. This costs approximately 1% of first class fare per kilo. It is a lot of money.

Whom do you contact for flights?

For information on fares and current bookings contact PIA in Bristol to speak to Marion Lawrence, or Victoria. The staff there cannot be more helpful and we have been bailed out of all sorts of situations by their assistance.

PAKISTAN INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES (Bristol)

Royal London Building
42 Baldwin Street
Bristol
BS1 1PN

Tel: 0272 272788

Internal Flight Information

What about internal flights?

Flights in Pakistan are all with PIA. You can pre book in this country but it is no guarantee of getting on the plane.

What problems can occur with internal flights?

Weather and various other factors cause delays all the time. If you are hoping to fly from Islamabad then even if you have booked from the UK you must reconfirm your flights as soon as you can on arrival within the country.

Where book flights and reconfirm tickets?

PIA has booking offices in both Islamabad and Rawalpindi but you can only book Northern Areas flights from Rawalpindi. The office is situated in the Mall not far from the Pearl Intercontinental.

PIA Reservation and Enquiry for Gilgit & Skardu

The Mall
Rawalpindi

Telephone: 568071/ 78

For flight information telephone : 114

I've been told the flights are booked up continuously?

It is worth remembering that although flights may be fully booked, you can generally get on with first class tickets. First class costs little more than economy for some reason.

Arranging flights seems like a hassle?

An agent can take care of all these arrangements for you and allow you to enjoy your time in the city without recourse to banging your head on the wall every ten minutes or so.

What's the journey by air like?

In good weather the flight above the mountains of the Karakoram is a tremendous experience and one well worth taking. The introduction of a Boeing 737 to Skardu has resulted in flights being able to take place far more regularly than when Fokker Friendships were used. The flight to Gilgit still uses the latter and you can often see the Gilgit plane bouncing about in the Indus Gorge below, as you fly above at 10,000 metres in the Boeing. PIA now put on special trips to fly around the mountains of the Karakoram, which would be a stunning trip if you were lucky enough to get a clear day.

What about baggage?

Excess baggage and equipment can be carried but for large parties it is better to send it in advance by road. If you do wish to send it by PIA give the airline plenty of advance notice. Excess baggage costs 12Rs/- per kg.

What if the plane does not fly?

If you do decide to fly from Islamabad to the Northern Areas, don't bank on the plane taking off. Delays are very common. Many expeditions abandon their plans to fly North and take the road because of delays and weather.

Any other information on the flights?

You cannot take gas cartridges on any internal flights. The authorities are extremely vigilant, a Japanese Expedition was caught last year and got into big trouble.

Travel in Pakistan

Do you need to register with the police in Pakistan?

Yes, unless you are a commonwealth citizen.

What documentation do you need to carry in Pakistan?

Your passport, visa and a copy of your International Airline ticket Locator Number. You should also carry with you an extra four passport photos for emergency use - laws are always changing. Passport photos are very cheap in Islamabad, about £1-00 for four.

What about passport copies?

It is vital you carry photocopies of the relevant pages in your passport - personal details and visa. You will always need them for travel and for booking flights both internally and back home. Take 6 sets each.

How do I reconfirm flights home?

A new law from 1993 only allows you to reconfirm your return flight by showing your original passport. This is a real pain since you need your passport to travel up country. It is best to leave your tickets and copies of your passport with someone who can try and reconfirm your flights in Islamabad. This is one of the advantages of using an agent. Failing that you should reconfirm your flight before setting off on your trip and try and reconfirm at one of the Northern offices in either Skardu or Gilgit. Nowadays things are improving in efficiency but reconfirmation is always a pain.

Is any other documentation needed?

For travel within Pakistan make at least ten copies of every ones personal and passport details. This saves much time at check posts.

Name	Visa No	Date of Issue	Favourite colour	Birth sign etc etc

Name	Passport No	Occupation	Destination	Purpose
David Roy Lampard	815184T	Veterinary Doctor	K7-Hushe	Mountaineering
Robert Iain Brewer	784626T	Builder	K7-Hushe	Mountaineering
Denis Micheal Gleeson	OO8810303	Teacher	K7-Hushe	Mountaineering
Roger Whitehead	B290355	Lecturer	K7-Hushe	Mountaineering
Mark Samuel Berrisford	N780503D	Research Scientist	K7-Hushe	Trekking
Gregory Charles Cotterell	OO9032406	Engineer	K7-Hushe	Trekking

Road Transport

Can you get to Skardu by road?

Yes, along the Karakoram Highway. This incredible road was built as a cooperative effort between Pakistan and China. It was only opened to foreigners in the 1980's. The journey to Skardu is some 900 km and takes the traveller alongside the Indus river for most of it's length.

What methods of transport are available for the Karakoram Highway?

Private hire / jeeps / cars/ minibuses and coaches. Generally an expedition will use either a minibus or a coach depending upon size.

Public buses travel regularly but are used only by "silk road travellers" and vegetarians.

How many people and how much luggage will these take?

A minibus will take 6 people and 600kg of gear comfortably. A coach will take 8 to 10 people plus 2000kg of gear.

What do they cost?

Approximately 8000 Rs/- for the minibus and 12,000 Rs/- for the coach.

An interesting point is that if you buy all the seats on one of the public minibuses going to Skardu or Gilgit it will only cost you about 2500 Rs/- compared to hiring the bus itself. Worth trying. The public bus costs about 10 Rs/- or something equally ridiculous and takes about eight weeks to arrive. This can be an interesting experience if you haven't died of bacillary dysentery on the way, or been bored to death by some "twitcher" on his way to Kashgar to photograph the three-lipped wogga donga bird in full mating colours. On the other hand you might be lucky and bump into a soulmate searching for the "Meaning of Life", in which case you can jettison the expedition and disappear into the Chinese sunset without having to frighten yourself rigid for days on end on some freezing cold granite spire of dubious significance.

Where do you hire them from?

What?

The buses?

Oh yes, sorry..... from the bus stations (and before you say it) at the following addresses:

Government Transport Service and Northern Areas Transport Service

Pirwadhai General Bus Stand
Tel: 860283

Government Transport Service NWFP

Tel: 861181

Kohistan Bus Service

Pirwadhai
Tel: 861755

Masherbrum Tours - Transport for Gilgit

Pirwadhai

Your LO or agent will organise this for you. Check that there are two spare wheels with your vehicle before you set off. Pay half the cost in Pindi and half on arrival.

How long will the journey take?

The journey can be done in a single push but if you haven't seen the Indus Gorge before it is better to travel during the day and stop somewhere like Besham. We recommend the Hotel Prince, but unfortunately it is becoming a little posh for us after the installation of a shower in one of the rooms. Take plenty of bug killer.

Total driving time to Skardu is between 20 and 30 hours. It is very uncomfortable, especially if you sit behind the rear wheels of a big bus. Gilgit is about 12 to 15 hours from Pindi.

All the drivers are escaped lunatics complete with mate. The escaped lunatic drives flat out whilst talking constantly to his mate and not looking at the road. He never lets his mate drive even if he is about to plunge over the edge into the Indus due to lack of sleep. All this takes place to the incessant drone of Indian pop music which would be better used as a weapon of modern warfare. Occasionally Mr Lunatic lets you put your music on for a minute but it will only be a minute until something like....." Ayah jeeby jeeeeeby jeeby joowa " comes on at full blast again. There is only one song in India and Pakistan and by the time you start your climbing , your mind will have been brainwashed into mentally singing that horrible repetitive little ditty over and over and over again.....you will sing it on bivvy ledges , on the summit and on the loo - probably for ever.

Are there check posts on the KKH?

Yes, remember to have all your passport and visa details ready as previously described in travel arrangements.

How many fish are there in the Indus?

Six.

Jeep Transport from Skardu

How long does it take to get to Hushe?

Anything from five to ten hours. You usually stop in Khalpu for a brew.

Askole?

The road head goes most of the way to Askole nowadays. Five years ago you had to walk for three days from Dassu which is 50 km from Skardu to reach Askole. The jeep track means you can do it in a day but it is very scary and dangerous along the Braldu Gorge. Mind you the walk along the Gorge was just as scary.

How much do the jeeps cost?

2000 to 2500 Rs/- each way.

How much will they take?

A big Toyota cargo jeep will take between 20 to 30 loads. A smaller passenger jeep 6 people and their kit comfortably.

Where are they hired from?

Use your agent or ask at the hotels in Skardu.

What about coming back?

You will be sending someone back from base to order porters for your return [unless you have set a fixed return date] , just send a message with them and it will get to Skardu somehow, jeeps appear at Hushe and Askole most days.

Hotel & Accommodation

Where is it best to stay?

There are many hotels and guest houses in Rawalpindi / Islamabad. For official expeditions as opposed to “trekking peak” parties (climbing below 6000m), it is definitely better to stay in Islamabad. Most of your business with the Ministry of Tourism will be carried out there and you can attend to matters with the minimum of travelling. However the majority of reasonably priced hotels are in Pindi.

Why stay in more expensive hotels?

We have stayed in many hotels, some good , some bad. We believe in staying in reasonable hotels since becoming ill before the walk in begins is definitely not to be recommended.

What are the main problems with food and water?

It is rarely the food that causes problems but the water. Treat all your water, do not brush your teeth in untreated water and remember that soft drink bottles are stored in untreated ice- use a straw. Cooked food rarely causes more than mild stomach upsets. Avoid dairy products like the plague. All unaccustomed team members should be thoroughly instructed on following these simple rules whilst on route to Base Camp, a severe dose of the “Rawalpindi Revenge” will make the initial stages of an expedition into a nightmare for those afflicted. In short, drink Coca Cola. If you insist on drinking untreated water then you will definitely experience dysentery.

Do you need air conditioned rooms?

Islamabad is very humid in the summer, rooms that are not air conditioned are hell holes.

Are there any surcharges?

10 % CE duty and 7.5% Bed tax is added to all hotel bills in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. This is not added in Northern Areas.

Hotels in Islamabad

Shawnze International
Markaz F-6
Tel: 823703 / 211771-4
Fax: 823519

Costs between 700 and 900 Rs/- for a double room.

This is very close to the Ministry of Tourism, next to a taxi rank and shops and is reasonable enough. The service in the restaurant is very slow. If you stay up until the early hours of the morning you will experience a change in your television picture as the staff try tuning into pornographic movies on the satellite system. They haven't yet managed to separate their nocturnal viewing habits from appearing on everybody else's screens!

Marriot
Aga Khan Road
Tel: 826121

Holiday Inn (formerly Islamabad Hotel and not linked to the Holiday Inn chain, which has caught quite a few people out)
Civic Centre
Melody Chowk
Tel: 8273111

Both the above are very expensive but good for your corporate image- Al Hinkes would stay here if he was doing another modelling session for Berghaus. We made some photocopies in the business centre once.

Shehrazad Hotel (near Shawnze)
Supermarket
Tel: 822295

OK - medium hotel.

Camp site (Foreign Tourists only)
Near Aabpara G6-4
Ask directions- it is quite a reasonable facility if you're into urban camping. Lots of "Silk Road" travellers stay there and you might have to sing religious songs at tea time and swap woggles.

Youth Hostel
Garden Road
G6-4
near Aabpara
Tel: 826899

Hotels in Rawalpindi

Pearl Continental
The Mall
Tel: 562700

Shalimar
Off the Mall
Tel: 562901-09

Swimming pool. Approximately £40-00 per double room for bed and breakfast. Contact Karakoram Experience in Keswick for booking details as they have concessionary rates available.

Paradise Inn
109 Adamjee Road
Tel: 568594

Excellent medium budget Hotel. Close to markets, has an airport pick up service. Phone to arrange being met on arrival. Double room will cost approximately 550 Rs/- per night. Extra bed will cost 100 Rs/-. Has storage room. Fairly good food in what is described as the "Ala-a-Carte" restaurant. Telephones in rooms, telly etc. Our recommendation for Rawalpindi accommodation unless you want to stay in the Shalimar.

Flashman's
The Mall
Tel: 581480

Traditional stopping place but fairly expensive. Run by the PTDC (Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation), they can hold places for the Skardu flight on priority. Plenty of room and gardens for packing gear etc. Swimming pool.

Holiday Hotel
232 Iftikar Road
Tel: 568068

Reasonable food and accommodation but no gear storage.

Pine Hotel
Iftikar Road
Tel: 563660

As Holiday Hotel but more room to arrange gear etc.

Most hotels have room service and television. You can also make international phone calls from most.

This list is by no means comprehensive, new accommodation is being built all the time. There are numerous cheaper hotels and guest houses, the impoverished and inquisitive reader is invited to investigate these salubrious premises as part of their cultural experience.

We generally budget on £20-00 per day per person whilst in Islamabad. It is definitely possible to live much cheaper. A "Silk Roader" would probably survive for several months on twenty quid. Mark Berrisford, in fact went to India for three months with less than £70-00.

Hotels in Skardu

What's available?

There are many hotels in Skardu now, we have only stayed in the K2 Motel, which has traditionally been the Expedition Hotel. It is becoming much more popular with the influx of trekking groups and so you do need to book in advance. The hotel has recently undergone improvements and is set in nice grounds with individual garages available for storing gear.

K2 Motel

Skardu
Northern Areas
Pakistan

Tel:

Costs?

Double rooms	650 Rs/-
Triple rooms	750 Rs/-
Breakfast	45 Rs/-
Lunch	90 Rs/-
Dinner	100 Rs/-
Coffee	10 Rs/-
Tea	8 Rs/-
Cold drinks	10 Rs/-
Mineral water	40 Rs/-
Garage per day	50 Rs/-

Alternatives?

We have been to look at most of the other hotels in the area. Although they are cheaper, in our opinion, the K2 offers the best facilities all round. A good, new hotel, the Pioneer, is located just by the airport but it is a long way out of town and not really that convenient for expedition parties purchasing stores from Skardu. A lot of people stay in the Indus Motel.

Can we buy food and equipment in Skardu?

There are good markets in Skardu, fresh vegetables and many other items of food and equipment can be bought at only slightly higher prices than you would pay in the capital.

What else is there in Skardu?

Places to visit and things to do are very limited in Skardu, apart from the market, the old fort is worth the walk and a jeep drive to Satpara Lake alleviates the boredom if waiting for a flight. You can fish in Satpara for about 50 Rs/- per day, unfortunately there appears to be only one fish which is rather elusive.

Money & Foreign Exchange

Travellers cheques or cash?

Personally we think cash is the best thing to have with you, although the encashment of travellers cheques is fairly straightforward in most places.

Where do we change money?

The American Express bank in the Blue area of Islamabad is the most efficient we have used to change money. Generally the whole concept of money changing has improved dramatically over the last five years and it is not a problem. Try not to change money at the airport, the rates are high.

There are official money changers in the Blue Area of Islamabad giving good rates. The black market is never more than one or two rupees above bank rate. Remember it is an offence to change money anywhere other than at a bank or official money changer.

Theft and crime?

Be very careful with money in Karachi as crime has soared there in the last few years. We have heard of a few tales of money being taken but they are very rare. The Pakistan people are very honest and we have never had anything taken anywhere in the country, which is more than can be said for the UK.

Currency?

Sterling is readily accepted but US Dollars are the usual currency. The deposits for the environmental and helicopter bonds are made in Dollars. Do not on any account take Scottish bank notes or you will have to make a return journey very quickly- they will not take them. We've ticked this one and it caused great problems for us in 1988.

What denominations?

You will need some smaller notes for taxis and small purchases but in the main keep to high denomination notes of 500 and 1000 rupees. These are easily changed nowadays. This also keeps the weight and volume of money down considerably. In 1984 we had a rucksack full of small denomination notes, after somebody told us we would be unable to change anything up North. This was pure codswallop.

Changing money in Northern Regions?

The National Bank in Skardu is well acquainted with changing money.

Money for porters?

Try and arrange to count out money for the porters before you set off and then you don't end up doing it in the pouring rain or snow at Base Camp.

Can we reconvert rupees?

Budget so as to leave the very minimum of rupees at the end of your trip. It is difficult to exchange them for hard currency. Also you are not supposed to take more than 100 Rs/- out of the country. You might get rid of them in a Yorkshire curry house, all else failing.

Currency stability?

Over the last few years we have been lucky in the sense that the pound has been strong against the rupee, this is not the case any more. It is important to ensure you have contingency for emergency. This should be 10% of budget. Lack of money causes all sorts of problems and also impinges on other people should they have to bail you out, so do make adequate provision.

Helicopter Deposit

What is it?

Mandatory for official expeditions . US \$4000 needs to be placed on deposit in case of your expedition needs helicopter assistance. You have to have dealt with this before your briefing can take place.

How do you deposit it?

There are two ways of doing this -either you can place the money directly in the Ministry of Tourism's call deposit account or you can use an agent to bond the money on your behalf.

How should we bring the money?

If you wish to deposit the money in the bank, it is seriously worth bringing cash dollars. This just saves time and effort.

What do we do?

Deposit the money in the Supermarket Branch of the National Bank of Pakistan. This unfortunately is a rather drawn out process. Get your LO to help you with this , the environmental bond and the clean up fee. (The latter two being in a different bank). You will receive a receipt for the deposit which should be given to the Ministry of Tourism on your briefing.

How do we get our money back?

If you have not used a helicopter, your LO will inform the Ministry and they will issue you with the authority to collect the deposit. The disadvantage of using a bank is that you will receive travellers cheques back at the end of your trip, not cash. You will be charged commission on these cheques as well. An agent will just give you your money back.

How long does all this take?

Usually a day for one person.

Is there an easier method?

Using an agent is much simpler, just give them the money in travellers cheques or cash and go and get a beer from the Aussie club. They will sign an undertaking to be responsible for any helicopter payment necessary or environmental fee payable. Of course you still need to bring the money with you but you will not waste days hanging around in banks.

How do you raise the initial deposit?

We have usually all chipped in a share of the \$4000 dollars or borrowed it off whoever was richest at the time and paid interest and bank charges to that person. Alternatively you could raise a bank loan against the insurance policy. To do this you will need to speak to your bank manager. Inform him of what you require and ask the insurers to contact the bank directly to confirm that the loan will be covered by the policy in the unfortunate event of needing helicopter assistance.

What about the Embassy Undertaking?

Some foreign embassies will sign an undertaking / guarantee that helicopter fees will be paid on behalf of an expedition party . The expedition needs to be insured. This alleviates the need for bringing out the money but the British Embassy will not sign these undertakings under any circumstances.

What happens if we need a helicopter?

If you have to use a helicopter, the Ministry will not refund anything until the bill has been settled by themselves and the Military, so you have to wait for any dues to come back to the UK. It can take a long time. Insurance will normally only be paid on receipt of a bill from the Pakistan Authorities and so the whole process can drag on for ages. The simple moral is - don't get ill and don't fall off.

The Environmental Bond & Clean up Fee

What are they & how much do they cost?

From 1992 a deposit has been required to be placed as an assurance that expeditions leave their Base Camps clean and take out their litter. The Environmental Bond is another US \$1000 that has to be brought out. There is also a non refundable contribution of US \$200 for the Environmental Protection Fund [clean up fee].

Who pays these fees?

Every mountaineering party irrespective of it's size is required to pay the US \$200. The Environmental bond is applicable only to official expeditions.

Where do you pay them?

The Clean up Fee is Payable into:

The National Bank of Pakistan

Civic Centre Islamabad.

Deposit under " Receipt of Tourism Division 130000-139000"

Use your LO to help with the procedure, obtain a receipt and show the Ministry at your briefing.

The Environmental Bond of US\$1000 should be similarly dealt with. Again ,obtain a receipt to show at the briefing.

Do we get the money back?

The Environmental Bond US\$1000 is refundable if your LO says you have complied with the environmental regulations. The Ministry will issue you with the necessary documentation to obtain a refund from the bank on your return.

Is there an easier way?

By using an agent , you can forgo depositing the Environmental Bond money in the bank. The agent will guarantee payment should the need arise. You will still need to deposit the US \$200 for the Clean up Fee, in the bank.

What happens if we don't keep our base clean?

The amount is subject to forfeiture in full or part on failing to comply. Failure to comply with the above may also lead to a four year ban on your climbing in Pakistan and you may be proceeded against under the relevant laws.

Liaison Officer (LO)

What expeditions does a Liaison Officer apply to?

Official expeditions that are climbing above 6000m. and paying a royalty fee.

Who is he?

Usually a volunteer from the Pakistan Army. The usual rank is that of Captain , though some are Majors. In the last year several civilian LOs have been appointed and it is anticipated that more of these will be used in the future.

Why do you need an LO?

The LO is there to help you with procedures and language difficulties. He is also there to make sure you obey the rules. Generally expeditions new to the area will find their help invaluable. He should be treated with the respect accorded to any other member of the expedition and kitted out accordingly. Make the LO your friend and you will have a valuable ally .

Do we have to provide him with kit and equipment?

Yes, a list is attached. He should be provided with the same quality kit as the expedition members, though in our case it had to be better since ours was so battered !

The one sure way to create problems on an expedition is to prance around in super duper new kit and expect the LO to wear your cast offs. If you have specialised clothing for high on the mountain keep it until you are up there and don't wear it at Base.

Does the LO keep his kit?

Yes, apart from things like tent and climbing hardware. If expedition members are contributing their own personal kit towards the LO gear ,make sure they understand that they will not get it back. It is much better to buy the kit from the outset and budget for it in the overall costs of the expedition. Some things can be bought in Islamabad these are detailed in the list.

How do we know what size the LO is?

His measurements will be sent to expedition before it leaves the UK. Boot size is always a problem since the authorities do not send sizes but an outline drawing of his feet - these are not always accurate.

If a party does not receive the measurements before leaving they may bring standard [medium] sized kit and this will be accepted.

Do we have to pay for the LO?

During the stay of a party in Islamabad/ Rawalpindi a party shall pay for food , accommodation and transport for the LO. If a party cannot share these arrangements or the LO prefers to make his own arrangements then he shall be paid US \$20 per day for his stay from the date of reporting to the date of leaving for the mountains. This also applies to the party returning from the mountains to the date of debriefing.

What about in the mountains?

A party must pay for the LO's food , accommodation and transport from the date of leaving for the mountains to the date of return. If the LO opts to have independent food arrangements then he should be paid US \$10 per day as an allowance.

What about cooking arrangements?

The LO and the expedition usually share a cook. Forbidden items such as pork should not be served to the LO.

Does the LO carry his own kit?

Theoretically but he should be provided the services of a porter. Although most LOs are reasonably fit, they are not usually familiar with mountains. Do not expect an LO to carry a full S.B.M.L [Standard British Mega Load]

Will the LO be expected to handle expedition money?

Definitely no. They are specifically instructed not to handle money on behalf of the expedition.

Disputes?

If there are disputes, don't battle it out in the field. The Leader should put such disputes in writing and try and settle things later in the debriefing. Just try not to get yourselves in any sort of conflict. In simple terms, unless there are life threatening complications swallow your pride and shut your mouth. Don't criticise procedure, religion or culture - you are there to climb not to debate politics.

Will the LO expect to climb with the expedition?

Big problem this one . LOs get a badge or something when they hit the 5000m mark and they probably get a bigger one when they go higher. It's like the scouts I suppose. If you do not want the LO to go with you , you should explain why only when the time is right. Do not come straight out and tell him he cannot move above Base as soon as you meet him- that is only an insult to his ability and you do not know what that is. A good leader should be able to judge when the time is right to explain what part an LO can play on the mountain. On a technically difficult mountain it is obviously a no goer, but on a big snow ploddy thing you may well find you need his help or company. Use tact and discretion over this matter and you won't hurt anyone's feelings and your relationship.

LO Kit

Clothing

Thermal under wear	2 sets leggings and tops
Wool shirts / sweat shirts	2 pr
Pullovers/ fibre tops	2 pr
Jeans	2 pr *
Salopettes	1 pr
Duvet jacket	1 no
Cagoule	1 no
Overtrousers	1pr
Gloves any warm ones	4pr
Balaclava woollen	1 no
Suncap	1 no

Footwear

Walk in boots	1 pr
High Altitude	1 pr
Socks	4 prs
Gaiters	1 pr
Overboots	1 pr

Bedding

Sleeping bag	1 decent one
Karrimat	1 no -

Shelter

Tent	1 two man
------	-----------

Equipment

Rucksack	1 no
Axes	1 set
Crampons	1 set
Headtorch	1 no**
Helmet	1 no
Glacier glasses	1 pr

* Buy in Pakistan

** Not mentioned in official kit but bring one otherwise one member will end up giving the LO their own.

Cook

Do you need a cook?

Definitely if you want good meals. You must hire a cook if you are accompanied by an LO. Having one also means you don't have the tedium of cooking. You are there to climb a mountain and the last thing most people want to do at Base is cook. Do not believe anyone who says they will cook at Base, they never do and it just ends up an argument. Nobody wants to cook- believe it.

Where do you hire one?

Ask at the hotel if one hasn't already thrust his battered testimonial into your hand within two minutes of arriving in Skardu. An agent will also arrange a cook for you. Beware of bogus cooks, check that they have cooked for expeditions before.

How much do they cost?

A good cook can cost 300 to 400 Rs/- a day. Some are less expensive - you get what you pay for. Arrange the rate of pay before you take him on and ask the LO to check out his cooking ability.

What equipment do they need?

This is listed below, remember they should have good kit, look after them and they will look after you.

- Rucksack
- Sleeping bag
- Duvet
- Cagoule
- Overtrousers
- Fibre pile tops
- Thermals
- Fibrepile salopettes
- Balaclava
- Headtorch
- Gloves
- Socks- 4pr
- Walk in boots
- Moon boots for Base
- Glacier glasses
- Tent two man
- Radio cassette for Base

Do they keep the kit?

Not if you arrange this beforehand. You may choose to give them some things after the expedition. Kit is looked upon as the spoils of war and cooks vie for who manages to collect the most. They are not usually bothered about wearing it afterwards. One traditional thing that cooks do expect is to be given the kitchen equipment. We don't give it away anymore but we make sure that they know the score. We do usually end up giving them a lot of clothing and the rucksack

Briefing & De-briefing

What do they mean?

The briefing is the means by which all arrangements made by an expedition are checked to be satisfactory to all parties. Matters such as LO kit, insurance arrangements, food rations and Environmental & Helicopter deposits are confirmed. The expedition is informed of its obligations within the rules of mountaineering. Parties should make sure that all such obligations are completed before requesting a briefing. Generally 24 hours notice is required by the Ministry to arrange the meeting. Remember that Friday is a holiday.

The de-briefing is held as soon as an expedition returns from the mountains. The LO will inform the Ministry as to whether you have kept to within the rules and it is also a chance to provide information for future use by the Ministry. Any disputes that may have arisen between the LO and the expedition party will be ironed out one way or another. The Ministry people are very fair and are seasoned campaigners- you are well advised not to try and bend the rules- it is far easier to familiarise yourself with procedure before rather than after an expedition.

Does the briefing have to be completed before we leave Islamabad?

Yes

How long will we need before a briefing can be arranged?

Normally the work involved before being able to request a briefing will take four or five days.

How much notice do you need to give the ministry for a briefing?

Twenty four hours.

Should we submit a report at the de-briefing?

Yes, but if you feel it necessary to include anything controversial, think about whether it is going to serve any real purpose. Disputes that arise are usually due to misunderstandings by both parties, you cannot be expected to understand each others ways immediately. Many parties new to Pakistan find it hard to accept certain things, particularly the need to give the LO his kit to keep. Things like this are laid down in the rules, it is up to you to familiarise yourselves with these and accept that you have to comply.

Import & Export of Equipment / Kit

Is importation of mountaineering equipment subject to customs duty?

No, Equipment and Non-consumable stores will be allowed temporary entry free of customs duty and sales tax subject to an undertaking (Annexure F) being given by the leader of the expedition that the equipment will be re-exported out of the country on completion of the expedition. No part of the equipment shall be sold or otherwise disposed of, otherwise duty and sales tax shall be paid.

What about consumable stores and medicines?

The same conditions apply. If a party wishes to donate its unconsumed stores and medicines then it should seek permission to do so from the LO or Ministry.

Can we attend to this ourselves?

Yes, but it is a real hassle. We strongly advise parties to use an agent or failing that a clearing agent.

What's the difference?

The agent is someone who will oversee all aspects of the logistics involved in the expedition. You may only want him to clear your equipment and store it for you until you arrive but he can also iron out all sorts of problems for you and deal with the necessary procedures much more efficiently than you could.

A clearing agent only deals in clearing goods from customs and their subsequent storage until you arrive. They are usually freight forwarders as well. An agent will deal with these people on your behalf.

How do we get equipment to Pakistan?

The only sensible way is by air. You can send it by sea but it is much longer and fraught with problems. We strongly advise you send equipment directly to Islamabad International Airport and not by any other circuitous route.

Who do you recommend as freight forwarders in the UK?

There are obviously many companies working in this field, most are small operators who pass the work down the line to the main agents. These latter people have the major concessions with the airlines involved and consolidate the freight from the small companies.

We recommend SOS Cargo in Manchester Airport, they are on site at the airport, they have warehousing there and regular PIA flights leave Manchester direct to Islamabad.

SOS CARGO

Room 101-102
Building 308
Cargo Centre
Manchester Airport
Altrincham
Cheshire
WA15 8UX

Tel: 061 437 0521

Fax: 061 499 1361

How much does it cost to send freight?

Most people ask for the cost per kilo. This doesn't mean very much since there are other charges on top of this, such as handling, warehousing, documentation and terminal charges. As a rough guide freight will cost you between £1-50 and £2-00 per kilo to get it to Islamabad.

How should we pack the equipment?

Plastic chemical barrels with wide resealable tops are the best method. Capacity varies but the 60 litre sizes are the most convenient. Other sizes can be obtained such as 40 and 120 litres. Porters find the larger sizes very difficult to carry. Barrels should be clearly numbered both on the sides and the tops. If you just mark them on the side you cannot identify a particular barrel when they are all stacked together. Use a spray or ordinary gloss to paint the number on. We always make a plastic flexible stencil to paint the expedition name on as well. We use wire to fasten the lids, there is not much point in using padlocks since the customs may need to look in the barrels and they will cut the locks off.

Obviously some kit will not fit into these barrels, make sure that such equipment is well protected and packed, ie base camp tent poles should be in a heavy duty bag or tube, put pole jointing pieces in a barrel. Over rather than under package, there is nothing worse than arriving to broken solar panels, tent poles etc.

Should we pack barrels to 25kg?

Unless you are certain you will not need to touch the contents before Base Camp, don't bother. You will end up packing and re-packing barrels many times before you reach Base. If you manage to find a way not to have to do this, we would like to know!

Should we list the contents?

You will need the contents listed for Annexure F and for your own records to find gear later on. Make sure this list is comprehensive and that things like clothing is indicated as belonging to a particular expedition member

What is a "piece"?

A "piece" refers to one individual item of packaging. It may consist of numerous items but collectively they form one unit for the purposes of shipping. Box, Barrel, Pallet would constitute a "piece"

What about costing the items?

This is nominal unless you are bothered about insuring things in transit. We always mark down costs on consumables- they are not coming back so it doesn't matter.

Do you insure goods in transit?

No, it is very unlikely that the plane will go down and it is a direct flight so the chances of losing goods are very slim.

Who is the consignee?

The person or company to whom the goods are sent in Pakistan. You can consign the goods to the Expedition itself if you are going to organise clearing the kit.

Otherwise consign it to your agent or clearing agent's address.

So what does a freight forwarder in this country require from us?

Your equipment, a copy of the Annexure F and Packing lists, and some money.

What if we want to use an agent?

If you are using an agent see the notes further on in this section about further documentation you should send in advance.

How far in advance should we send the equipment?

If you want it waiting for you on arrival, send it at least four working days before you arrive. Remember Friday and Saturday are holidays. If you are clearing it yourself it , make sure you have collected or received the original airways bill before you leave.

What is the airways bill?

The shipping document that allows you to prove the shipment is yours. Sometimes documents are sent with the shipment [Documents enclosed] , but you should always have a copy before leaving the UK.

What about getting equipment back to the UK?

This is straightforward providing some important points are borne in mind. You will need to use a Pakistan Freight Forwarder, we have indicated Galaxy as our choice. Sending equipment back is more expensive than sending it out- almost twice as much.

In order to minimise any hassle in sending kit back the following important directive should be noted :

If you want to send equipment back then it must be equipment that has been included on your original Annexure F for importing the equipment in the first place. That sounds straight forward but what happens is that expeditions bring a lot of equipment out as accompanied baggage ie on the plane . This is often the very equipment you are going to be bringing back - climbing hardware, valuable things like radios / solar panels etc etc. Now, if you could bring back the same equipment on the return plane , all well and good, but you do not have the same baggage allowance. This means you have to ship some of the equipment by freight, but you have no record of actually importing it in the first place (Annexure F). The original Annexure F is needed for your freight forwarder to send the kit back so it is stalemate.

This situation keeps happening to expeditions and we have done it twice. You should therefore assess what you are likely to be bringing back - check the weight, if you cannot manage with 23kg plus hand luggage then you will have some freight to send back from Pakistan. Work out what this is likely to be and send it with your freight from the UK. Make up your UK allowance with consumable stores like food or rope.

To put it simply , if you have not included the equipment you intend to re-export from Pakistan on the original Annexure F , you will have hassles in sending it back home.

How do you send dangerous goods like gas or oxygen cylinders?

These are problem areas and it can be very expensive sending it yourself especially for small quantities. Nowadays you can arrange to pick up gas in Skardu or Islamabad by contacting the Expedition Logistics Company - MLM Systems. This can save you a lot of hassle and although it still costs a fair amount of money to purchase gas your worries are over. You cannot buy gas in Pakistan.

MLM SYSTEMS
TY GWYN-NANT PERIS
GWYNEDD
LL55 4UE

Tel or Fax: 0286 871184

If we want to use an agent what documents do we need?

The following documents are enclosed as an example of how to ensure efficient clearance of your equipment.

Checklist for forwarding and clearing equipment in Pakistan

1. 1 original copy of forms 1,2,3
2. 3 clear photocopies of Leaders passport
3. 3 copies of Annexure F
4. 3 copies of packing lists (form No 4)
5. 3 copies total packing list (form No 5)
6. 3 copies of expedition letterhead (if available)
7. 3 copies of airway bill (See note below)

How should we arrange these?

Each of form 1, 2 & 3 should be accompanied by a copy of the leader's passport, expedition letterhead [if you have one] and a copy of the airway bill [if you have received it]. Do not worry if you have not been given a copy before the goods are air freighted.

Each Annexure F , should have completed packing lists (form 4) and a final page(form 5) attached to it.

Do all forms have to be personally signed?

Yes, photocopies are not acceptable, all forms should be originals.

How do we send them?

Tell your freight forwarding agent that you are sending your equipment with documents enclosed. Give the above documents to the forwarder to be handed to the consignee [your agent] upon arrival in Islamabad.

What if we do not know the airway bill number when we give the forms to the forwarder?

Don't panic, the forwarder will enclose documents with the shipment so that the agent can clear the equipment. You will however, need to inform the agent of the airway bill number and the time of arrival of the shipment in Islamabad airport. You can either phone or fax your agent with the airway bill details. The forwarder will know the airway bill details by the time the shipment flies.

Should the expedition leave the UK if the gear has not been cleared?

Whatever happens the last person should not leave the UK unless you have confirmation of your gear landing at Islamabad and that the agent has the documents. Trying to sort out unexpected cock ups from Pakistan is a nightmare. Good organisation is not always proof against things going wrong.

Can we do this without an agent?

You can bring the Annexure F forms with you personally to Islamabad and then clear the equipment. You will have to give a copy of Annexure F to your forwarding agent for shipping purposes but not the rest of the forms in this case. There will be a delay in clearing the equipment on arrival of at least two days. Remember to bring an original copy of the airway bill. You will need to visit the Ministry of Tourism to get the Annexure F signed and you will still need a clearing agent to finalise the business at the airport. It will take one or two people at least two days to complete this job.

Should we keep copies ourselves?

Yes, both for your own records and in case something goes wrong.

Can you recommend an agent in Pakistan?

We will recommend Baltistan Tours, whom we have used for ten years. There are other agents, you should try to speak to an expedition who has used them before so you can get an idea of their track record. Many companies are springing up and not all have the knowledge and expertise to ensure a smooth passage for your trip. Others however are very good, we are probably biased towards Baltistan !

Mr Mohammad Iqbal

BALTISTAN TOURS
PO BOX 128
HOUSE NO 14 STREET NO 44
ISLAMABAD F-6/1

TEL: 51 220338
FAX: 51 218620

Can you recommend a clearing agent / freight forwarder in Pakistan?

Mr Anwar Khan or Mr John

GALAXY FORWARDERS
1ST FLOOR BLOCK 6-B
SUPERMARKET F-6/3
ISLAMABAD

TEL 010 9251 825475
FAX 010 9251 823849

We have used this company for many years and can thoroughly recommend them.

What do they charge?

This does depend on the amount, but to give you an idea aim for approximately £65 to clear one hundred kilos of kit into Pakistan.

It cost us £275.00 to send 89 kilos back last year (1993) plus charges of £108.00 for clearance in the UK.

What would an agent charge to do this?

Very variable you need to check up with individual companies if you purely want an agent to oversee clearing your kit rather than do other things for the expedition. As mentioned in the section on agents, costs for all expedition support varies from US \$ 500 upwards.

The Assistant Collector
Pakistan Customs
Islamabad International Airport
Islamabad

Ref: Clearance of Expedition equipment from Custom Authorities under
Airway Bill No. _____

Dear Sir,

As Leader of the _____ Expedition, I hereby
authorise _____ as our agents for clearance of our
expedition equipment shipped under Airway Bill No. _____

Enclosed herein is the Annexure "F" duly approved by the MINISTRY of TOURISM,
Government of Pakistan along with the packing list, photocopy of my passport and other
relevant documents for your attention.

Please accord all possible assistance to _____ for the
clearance of our equipment.

I thank you for your time and consideration over this matter.

Yours faithfully, (sign here)

Name: _____ BLOCK LETTERS

Leader of: _____ EXPEDITION

Passport No. _____ Nationality _____

Date and Place of issue _____

Signed _____ Leader of the Expedition

Date _____

Enclosed:

Annexure "F"
Packing list
Copy of Passport

FORM I

The Deputy Chief of Operations
Ministry Of Tourism
Government of Pakistan
Markaz F 7/4
Islamabad
Pakistan

Ref: Appointment of Expedition Handling Agent in Pakistan

Dear Sir,

I wish to inform you that as Leader of the _____ Expedition, I have appointed _____ as our agents in Pakistan for processing the clearance of our equipment. I enclose the relevant Annexure "F" forms together with packing lists and costing of equipment and provisions.

On behalf of the expedition , I would ask that all possible assistance is given to our agents in processing the documents necessary for clearance of our equipment. I enclose a photocopy of my passport and other relevant information.

May I offer my thanks for your cooperation and assistance in the matter.

Yours faithfully, (SIGN HERE)

Name: _____ BLOCK LETTERS

Leader of: _____ EXPEDITION

Passport No. _____ Nationality _____

Date and Place of issue _____

Sign d _____ Leader of the Expedition

Date _____

Enclosed:

Annexure "F"
Packing list
Copy of passport

FORM 2

The Cargo Manager
Pakistan International Airlines
Islamabad International Airport
Islamabad

Ref: Clearance of Expedition equipment from Custom Authorities under
Airway Bill No. _____

Dear Sir,

As Leader of the _____ Expedition, I hereby
authorise _____ for clearance of our
expedition equipment shipped under Airway Bill No. _____

Enclosed herein is the Annexure "F" duly approved by the MINISTRY of TOURISM,
Government of Pakistan along with the packing list, photocopy of my passport,
AIRWAY BILL copy and other relevant documents for your attention.

Please would you release our equipment to _____ and accord all
possible assistance to them for the clearance of our equipment.

I thank you for your time and consideration over this matter.

Yours faithfully,

SIGN HERE

Name: _____ BLOCK LETTERS

Leader of: _____ EXPEDITION

Passport No. _____ Nationality _____

Date and Place of issue _____

Signed _____ Leader of the Expedition

Date _____

Enclosed:

Annexure "F"
Packing list
Copy of Passport
AIRWAY BILL COPY

FORM 3

Packing List
(photocopy for more forms)

Expedition Name _____

Airway Bill No _____

Piece / Box No. (as detailed on actual piece)

Items/ Details	Quantity	Cost per item	Total cost price in US\$
----------------	----------	---------------	--------------------------

This page TOTAL in figures (US\$) _____

This page TOTAL in words (US\$) _____

Leader's signature _____ Name (BLOCK) _____

Passport No. _____ PAGE No

FORM 4

Packing List

Final page

Expedition Name _____

Airway Bill No. _____

Total No of pieces in shipment

Total No of pieces in words

Total cost in US\$

Total cost in words US\$

Leader's signature _____ Name (BLOCK) _____

Passport No. _____ PAGE No

Total No of Pages

FORM 5

Annexure "F"

The Secretary
Tourism Division
Government of Pakistan
Islamabad

SUB: IMPORT & EXPORT OF MOUNTAINEERING & TREKKING EQUIPMENT MATERIAL
MEDICINES & CONSUMABLE STORES.

BY: _____
(Name of Leader)
LEADER of: _____
(Name of Expedition)
TO: _____
(Name of Peak)

Dear Sir,

I propose to import the mountaineering and trekking equipment , material , medicines & consumable stores as per list enclosed herein for the above mentioned expedition/trekking party. Price in US\$ is mentioned against each item.

I hereby undertake that our non consumable equipment & material as imported will be exported out of Pakistan on completion of our mission and that no part of it will be sold or otherwise disposed of in Pakistan, failing which I shall pay customs duty and sales tax leviable thereon plus penalty if any as may be fixed by the Government.

I further undertake that our consumable stores including food and medicines as imported by us will be used for the purpose for which they will be imported and will not be sold or otherwise disposed off in Pakistan except in accordance with Pam 36 of the Terms and conditions , failing which I shall pay customs duty and sales tax if any as fixed by the Government of Pakistan.

Sincerely yours,

Leader's Name _____ Passport No _____

Date & Place of Issue _____

Enclosed: _____ Pages Dated _____

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (TOURISM DIVISION)

NO _____ ISLAMABAD _____

Countersigned and sent for immediate attention with reference to C'BR's Notification No S.R.O 881(1)/85 dated 18th September 1985.

SEAL _____

A copy is forwarded to the leader/deputy leader of the above party & the custom clearing agents.

Porters

Where are porters hired?

For expeditions leaving from Hushe, porters are nearly always hired in the village on arrival. For those expeditions heading up the Baltoro half are supposed to be hired in Skardu and half at the road head, which nowadays is in Askole. Generally most are hired in Askole.

Do you need to get the men to sign the undertaking?

We used to bother with this, but it is only more paperwork. Some LO's insist on it and if it is your first time it is probably a good idea. At least everyone has something written on which to agree wages. You need three copies- one for the expedition, one for the local administration and one for the men. Some porters cannot write so bring an ink pad and they can put their thumb print on the paper. A copy is given in this report- get more photocopied in Pakistan.

Who is the Sirdar and do you need one?

The sirdar is really the foreman. It is his job to make sure all the loads arrive at base and he keeps the men in order during the march. With a large number of porters he is a very useful guy to have around since you do not have to worry about checking up on everything. We normally use one with more than 25 porters. He will not carry a load except for his personal kit. He may want a sleeping bag, Karrimat and a better pair of shoes or boots than the men. He does not normally keep anything though we tend to give him the boots. He will cost the same as the porters but with a nominal 10 to 20 Rs/- a day extra.

How are porter wages worked out?

Porter wages are based on the stages they travel. These have been set over the years and traditional stopping places form the basis of the payment stages. The distance between stages together with the territory covered and altitude have no bearing on the amount payable, a stage is a stage. Sometimes it can take all day to cover one stage and at other times you can cover one in less than three hours. The daily wage contains an element for their return journey from Base, of half the daily wage.

Every seventh day is deemed a rest day and the wages have to be paid for this.

What about food?

For short walk ins from the Hushe valley it is better to pay money in lieu of food. This saves you having to provide it and the men would rather have the money. They will carry their rations for three days as well as a load.

In the Baltoro you will need to provide both the food and some porters to carry it since the journey is much longer.

Cigarettes?

We always provide cigarettes. Traditionally K2's used to be in vogue, now it's Red and White. Next year you may have to use Benson and Hedges. Handing out ciggies to the men after a hard day is a good way to make friends and gives you chance to talk to the men. It is quite surprising that quite a few porters don't smoke and are quite aware of the dangers. Which means there's more for us!

Equipment?

In the Hushe area arrange to pay money in lieu of equipment. Since glacial travel is minimal there is no requirement for clothes and shoes other than those the men would wear normally. You will need to barter with the men to set a price on this. In the Baltoro, it is different and equipment is usually provided for the long journeys to Concordia and beyond.

What equipment do they need?

The scale of equipment as laid down by Government is :

Gas / Oil / Petrol Stove	1 no per 8 persons
Tarpaulin - 4m x 4m with eyelets and cords	1 no per 8 persons
Rain coat or Plastic Sheet 6ft x 6ft approx 150 gauge	1 no per person
Shoes/ boots	1 pair
Socks	1 pair
Sun glasses	1 pair
[Gloves]	1 pair [not stipulated but worth getting]

Do they need glacier glasses?

Not in the Hushe valley, but if going onto large glaciers the men should be provided with good glasses. Do not give them out until they are needed as they will have been sold off on route and everyone gets snow blind.

We have always bought good sunglasses from one of the discount / bankrupt stock stores in the UK - they are cheaper than in Pakistan and better quality.

Where do you buy the equipment?

Either in the Rawalpindi markets or in Skardu. An agent will arrange to provide the equipment for you if necessary.

We always bring our own tarpaulins. In the past we have used building vapour barrier plastic in 1000 gauge. This comes in 4m width and you get 25m for about £35-00. Buy large plastic eyelets and just fold the edge over by 4 inches and put in 5 eyelets along each edge. These provide very heavy duty tarpaulins which can be used for all sorts of shelter and cover at base.

There are lightweight , reinforced plastic tarps available in the UK but these are generally quite expensive. If you can afford them they are worth it because they weigh much less. Pakistan tarps are generally not very good quality and are made of heavy canvas.

How do you know what shoe sizes to get?

You don't , just get a mixture of sizes mostly 7,8 & 9. The men will sort it out in the end.

What sort of stoves do you use for the porters?

For the trip to K7 we did not provide stoves. For the journey up the Baltoro stoves need to be provided. Usually a wick burning kerosene stove is used. These are very cheap. Fuel wise, half a pint per man per day is adequate. These stoves have no working parts and therefore cannot be damaged easily like the primus types.

How much will we pay for all this equipment?

It should cost no more than 250 Rs/- per man

What did you pay to get to K7 Base?

The number of stages to K7 Base is 4. There are only two camps before Base so where the fourth stage lies we have no idea and neither do the porters. It is probably a ruse to get more money out of expeditions. The wages we paid last year amounted to 200 Rs/- per day, that is 800 Rs/- for the trip per man. This amount covers money in lieu of food, an amount in lieu of equipment, return money and the daily wage.

Should we give bonuses to the porters?

This is often a bone of contention. If expeditions give the porters a lot of money above the fixed rate then expeditions following are expected to pay the same. It might seem like a good idea especially when you have lots of money but it can cause a lot of problems for those with tight budgets. Having said that, we have always given more as the men have had to endure terrible hardship and weather. We have never promised to pay above the rate at the beginning of an expedition. It is only after we have arrived at base that any extra has been given. This year we gave each man a bonus of 100 Rs/- since they had carried in atrocious weather.

What about goats and cigarettes?

Goats do not usually smoke. Perhaps I should have phrased this differently. We usually buy a goat / goats for the men and give them cigarettes.

How do we know what the wages are for a particular year?

The Government will send you details before you leave [usually].

We have heard that wages can rise suddenly?

Yes, you must be prepared for a possible 25 % increase in wages. Note that this is specifically mentioned in the rules and regulations and it is up to you to be prepared for such a rise. This is why you should carry contingency funds as a matter of course.

What if we are held up by weather?

You need to still pay the men full money if held up. They usually work in quite atrocious weather but the leader should use his discretion as to whether it is better to wait. Often the men will make up for lost time by doing two stages the next day. You will still need to pay for the stages though.

How much weight do the porters carry?

25kg. They will also carry three or four days ration. If you treat the men well they will always help out by carrying a little more if necessary.

How do we weigh loads?

Use a spring balance reading to at least 30 kg. If you use a balance with a maximum of 25kg, errors will occur because the spring stretches and you end up with lighter loads. Have the sirdar weigh loads with you then there are no disputes.

How do the men carry loads?

Usually they strap them to their backs using rope, quite ingenious really and painful if you ever try it yourself. They very often carry rucksacks by this method instead of using the straps. You should always have spare nylon cord available to strap odd items on. Be careful in dishing out rope since if you give it to one the rest will want some. Rope is a very valuable commodity!

At what time of day do the porters usually start walking?

From 4am onwards in order to avoid the heat of the day. You should be up early to repack loads if you've been using tents etc for the overnight stops. With a large number of men a lot of delays can occur if members are still sleeping when the men want to move.

Do the men stop for a break?

Yes ,unless the stage is particularly short. A good point to remember here is that you should assign the kitchen equipment and the day's food to a fast porter, so that you are not left waiting for the stoves and food to arrive when you either stop for a break or reach the next overnight camp. We once had a kitchen equipment porter who regularly used to arrive two hours after everyone else- no fun.

Paying off the men?

Save yourself some hassle and count out the money in Skardu before you set off. It just means you do not have to keep the men waiting long in bad weather when you have arrived at Base. They will travel back all the way to Hushe after reaching K7 Base and obviously want to get off as soon as possible. The LO will oversee payment, and check that the right man gets the right wage.

We always give them some bonus and cigarettes, they have usually deserved every penny.

What happens when they leave?

We all heave a great sigh of relief since the hassles of reaching base are over. I think it is in Jim Currans book on Trango where he describes the greatest sight on earth as "seeing the backs of dozens of Balti porters disappearing into the distance."

Having said that ,your time with the men of Baltistan will probably be something you will never forget, they are a great bunch of guys. Make no bones about it, if they weren't there, you'd never even reach most of the Baltoro, let alone have the chance to climb amongst Pakistan's magnificent mountain scenery.

Annexure "G"

Scale of rations for low altitude porters per day

1.	Atta(wheat flour)	22oz
2.	Ghee(cooking oil)	2.5oz
3.	Sugar	2oz
4.	Tea	0.5oz
5.	Milk	2oz
6.	Salt	0.5oz
7.	Dal Chana (fried)	2oz
8.	Dal (pulses)	1oz
9.	Cigarettes	10 No.
10.	Match Box	1 per week
11.	Meat	3.5oz
12.	Onions dried	0.25oz
13.	Condiment powder	0.25oz

Annexure "H"

Scale of rations for high altitude porters per day

1.	Atta(wheat flour)	22oz
2.	Ghee(cooking oil)	4oz
3.	Sugar	4oz
4.	Tea	0.5oz
5.	Milk	4oz tinned
6.	Salt	0.5oz
7.	Dal Chana (fried)	4oz
8.	Rice	6oz
9.	Cigarettes	10 No.
10.	Match Box	1 per week
11.	Meat	7oz
12.	Onions dried	0.25oz
13.	Condiment powder	0.25oz
14.	Multi vitamin tablet	1 No.

Annexure "J"

Undertaking by porters

I, Mr _____

s/o _____

Having No. _____ of Village _____

Tehsil _____ District _____

do hereby solemnly undertake:

(i) That I shall abide by the terms and conditions for grant of permission to the mountaineering expedition _____ parties which have been explained to me and I have understood them clearly.

(ii) That I shall work on the basis of daily wages of RS/- _____ for a specified period with the party led by Mr _____

(iii) That I shall not desert the party nor shall I insist on increase in wages during a march.

(iv) That I shall serve the party diligently and faithfully during the period of my contract.

(v) That if I do anything in violation of this contract or in violation of the terms and conditions referred to in para (i) above I shall make myself liable for forfeiture of daily wages. In addition to the above I shall make myself liable for any other action which may be taken against me under the relevant laws by a local administration.

_____ Signature/ Thumb impression

Name _____ NID Card No. _____

In the presence of :

- (1) Representative of the local administration
- (2) Liaison Officer

Medical

What do we need in the way of vaccinations?

Tetanus
Polio
Cholera not usually done now
Typhoid
Hepatitis vaccine or immunoglobulin

When do you need them?

See your doctor 6 weeks prior to leaving.

Malaria?

As advised by your doctor. We never remember to keep taking the tablets and haven't caught malaria yet, but maybe we're lucky. Although Pakistan is not high risk, people have gone down with it.

Dental treatment?

Ensure all necessary work is completed well before leaving, or you will have to extract teeth without anaesthetic at Base. **This is really important.** Make sure all members understand the implications of having tooth problems high on a mountain. It bloody hurts.

Dai lost a filling two hours before leaving for Pakistan on this trip and it took some frantic phoning to get a temporary filling done. Geoff Hibbert nearly died at GIV Base Camp in 1988 due to septicaemia from a tooth abscess. Remember you are a hell of a long way from help on these mountains and you cannot rely on a chopper coming to bale you out.

Dentists are good in Islamabad, but it is far better to try and avoid these problems by a visit to the dentist before you go.

What emergency treatment can you use for toothache / damage?

Every member should have oil of cloves in their personal emergency medical kit. A temporary filling kit is useful, speak to your dentist about current products.

Should we write our wills?

Morbid or not you must think about this one. Every member should make sure this is attended to. People do die. If you have not written a will, it can mean real problems for your family, especially when money grabbing Uncle Herbert whom you haven't seen for fifty years decides he's entitled to a slice of the cake.

In the unfortunate circumstances of your untimely demise, if you are having any difficulty in finding an appropriate resting place for your wealth, we would consider it an honour to accept any such offerings.

What happens if someone dies?

Apart from the emotional aspects, there are very often enormous practical difficulties involved. All members should give very serious consideration to exactly what the consequences would be. We have always maintained that should someone die in Pakistan, they would not be brought back to the UK by the expedition. The expedition leader should make sure that this is fully understood by both the members and their immediate family, it is no use just asking the member involved.

You may decide that this is not acceptable to your expedition, in which case you should be aware of the procedure in repatriating a body to the UK. Every year the staff of the British Embassy have to deal with some deaths and very often it is them personally who have to embalm a body and arrange for the special procedure to fly it home.

Pakistan is Muslim, everybody is buried within 24 hours of dying, there are no cremation facilities.

If an accident happens high on a mountain then the leader must accept that everybody's lives could be put at risk in trying to bring a body down. You do however need to consider the implications of leaving a body where other mountaineers might find it and the consequences of lack of a body later on. If you do leave a body, however distasteful you may find it, you should make a photographic record. Not only will this help in the legal side of death certification but it might be the only tangible thing a close relative might have in order to be able to relate to the death.

You are likely to be a long way from civilisation and help.

Although the above makes grisly reading, you should be aware of these things as it can save a lot of trauma to all concerned should an expedition be unfortunate enough to lose a member.

Who do we notify if an accident occurs?

Tell the LO who will report the matter to the nearest police station and also get in touch with the Deputy Commissioner of the area for any assistance that may be felt necessary. If assistance is required from the Pakistan Army then the LO will ask the DC to arrange such assistance.

What if we need a helicopter?

If a helicopter is needed the FCNA and local administration will arrange this on a payment basis. You will have needed to have deposited the Helicopter bond (see relevant section). A helicopter will not be entertained if you have not deposited this money or cannot find the funds to pay.

Who furnishes a death certificate?

The District Commissioner, you must obtain this before leaving the area.

What about accidents or death involving the porters?

Action should be taken on the above lines. If disablement is involved the LO should obtain a certificate from the civil surgeon involved. Expedition parties are responsible for the medical treatment and evacuation of their porters. If a porter dies the party should arrange for the body to be transported to the deceased's village.

What about pay during a porters illness?

A party shall pay half the daily wages of a porter from the time of illness to the time the expedition departs for Rawalpindi / Islamabad. Make sure your men are fit when you hire them!

What about the LO?

Payment for treatment and evacuation of the LO will be borne by his detailing authority. Obviously the party should do everything possible to assist in whatever is necessary to get the LO to hospital etc.

Do we pay for medical facilities in Pakistan?

Generally these are provided free. Members should always be provided with clean syringes and needles for use in Northern area hospitals, though Islamabad medical care is very good. An expedition should be adequately insured for medical and repatriation costs with it's own insurance policy in spite of the above.

About water treatment?

DO NOT DRINK it without proper treatment. Chlorine or iodine are the usual chemicals needed . These are available from chemists and climbing shops in the UK. Make sure you allow adequate time for the tablets to work. You should have these chemicals in your personal medical kits. Buy tablets that are suitable for the size of container being used - 1 litre for water bottles, 25 litre for Camp water containers.

The awful taste of both can be removed after treatment with a portable activated carbon filter system, there are many about. Some filters claim to remove Giardia and amoebic cysts - check them out as they do not always do what they say they will .

Watch out with drinking from coke bottles etc. they have always been stored in ice and it will be made from untreated water. Use a straw.

Brushing your teeth with infected water is another common trick. DONT DO IT.

Prevent gastro-enteritis low down and you will save yourself great distress and not burden the expedition with your illness on the way into Base.

Do we have to have a doctor with us?

You should always have someone who is trained in first aid with you, and quite frankly you owe it to yourself to familiarise yourself with such training, look after yourself and you look after the team. You cannot expect to become an instant diagnostician but you should be able to deal with minor injuries and fracture immobilisation.

Parties over 5 in number must have a first aid specialist or doctor under the terms of mountaineering in Pakistan.

The medical kit?

We will not go into detail over what is involved , there are several good publications about mountain medicine. We will list the items that every member of the team carries personally on our trips, but the main medical kit should be put together with your doctor or other knowledgeable people. There are a few comments we would like to make in the hope that they may prove useful to parties in the future.

Make sure the medical kit is always easily accessible. You will often need to treat porters and villagers for minor ailments. We use two small tool plastic tool boxes from B&Q, they are tough and ideal for the job.

We pack one box with mainly bandages, ointments and suture materials. The other has the majority of the drugs in it.

Take lots of aspirin - 500 at least. .

Worming syrup is very useful for the many children who have a heavy worm burden.

Inflatable splints are extremely useful as cushions.

We consider morphine and its derivatives as dangerous in unskilled hands and we do not take them on the hill.

Diamox is for softies, you should get an oxygen bottle and go on an Everest trek instead.

Consideration should be given to carrying a hyperbaric chamber on the high mountains especially those at the head of the Baltoro. These can save lives in situations where descent is not possible due to weather, difficulty or sheer distance involved, such as in the Baltoro. They can be purchased or rented at far less cost than the loss of your companion.

Buy the biggest container of powder for "Stinkfoot" you can get hold of.

As soon as your stomach feels bloated with gas, take Flagyl, it's always Giardiasis!

Some of our members use sleeping tablets, there are pros and cons. The best thing for sleeping difficulty on the hill is some strange weed that grows a lot in Pakistan, but the Latin name escapes me for the moment.

Personal Medical Kits

Zinc Oxide plaster	1 roll
Steristrips	2 pkts
Soft bandage	1 x 2"
Water purification	25 x 1 litre tablets*
Amethocaine drops	2 tubes*
Needles	2 x 21g*
	2 x 23g*
Syringes	2 x 2ml*
Aspirin	100 tablets
Cocodmol	20 tablets
Melolin dressings	2 No
Oil of cloves	1 vial

* not taken on the mountain in personal kits

Food Rations

Why bother with food?

Food played an important role in our logistics. We knew that we had to survive for nearly thirty days on the mountain, and that we needed to carry sufficient in terms of calorific value to allow us to function for such an extended period. Past experience showed us that quality food payed dividends and so we opted for a range of menus and did not bother with weight constraints. We had to move some 105 kg of food up the mountain with us. In the event it was worth the effort, though Greg might not agree!

What did you use?

The menus are listed below with “common items” included in every menu. The “specials” were packed for above the Fortress and contained more calories for when we would really need them. All menus are for two man days and are designed to be cooked with one Epigas250 propane/ butane gas cylinder.

What stoves did you use?

We used Markhill Stormy stoves adapted by ourselves. I will outline the problems and adaptions separately.

What about vegetarians?

Vegetarians are strange people, on our expeditions they have never failed to convert to meat eating when the going gets tough. Forget about them and leave them to carry hundreds of kilos of lentils up the hill to wallow in their own personal gas cloud in a separate tent. Alternatively, throw away your gas canisters, take a long piece of 10mm diameter polythene tubing and use them to fuel your burners.

COMMON ITEMS

TEA BAGS	8
COFFEE SACHETS	4
CUP/SOUP	2
MILK POWDER	2OZ
SUGAR	4OZ
MENTHOL SWEETS	2 TUBES
SALT SACHET	2
PEPPER SACHET	2
HOTCHOC	2
OXO CUBES	2
POTATO POWDER	12OZ

MENU 1

OATMEAL BISCUITS	4OZ
MARGARINE PKTS	2
MARS	2
SNICKERS	2
SALTED PEANUTS	4OZ
CORNED BEEF	1 TEN
CRUNCH BARS	2
PEPPERAMI	2
CHEESE SPREAD	1 TUBE

MENU 2

MUESLI	6OZ
MARS	4
BEANFEAST	1 PKT
CRUNCH BARS	2
FRUITCAKE	4OZ
CUSTARD	3OZ
RAISINS	4OZ
PEPPERAMI	2
CHEESE AUSTRIAN SMOKED	2
PRIMULA	1 TUBE

MENU 3

BISCUITS	4OZ
MARS	2
FUDGE	2
SALTED PEANUTS	4OZ
BATCHELORS	4OZ
APPLE OR	2OZ
RAISINS	4OZ
CUSTARD	3OZ
PEPPERAMI	2
CHEESE	2
PRIMULA	1 TUBE

MENU 4

SUPERNOODLES	2PKTS
MARS	2
SNICKERS	2
CRUNCH	2
PASTA CHOICE	1PKT
BISCUITS	1 PKT -6OZ
PEPPERAMI	2
CHEESE	2
PRIMULA	1 TUBE

MENU 5

AUSTRIAN CHEESE	2
MARS	4
SALTED PEANUTS	4OZ
CRUNCH	2
TUNA	1 TIN
OPAL FRUITS	2 PKTS
PEPPERAMI/	2
CHEESE/	2
PRIMULA SPREAD	1 TUBE

SPECIALS

MARS		2
SNICKERS		2
FRUIT CAKE		4OZ
MARGARINE		2 PORTIONS
CUSTARD		3OZ
SUPERNOODLE		2
CRUNCH		2
CHEESE		2
PEPPERAMI		2
PEANUTS		4OZ
BISCUITS		1 PKT
PASTA CHOICE	6 MENUS	
BACHELORS	4 MENUS	1 PKT
BEANFEAST	6 MENUS	
TEA BAGS		8
COFFEE		4
CUP/SOUP		2
HOT CHOC		2
SALT /PEP		4
MENTHOL		2
SUGAR		4OZ
MILK		2OZ
POTATO		12OZ

What comments do you have on these menus?

Potato Powder

We originally budgeted on 4oz per two man day ration, but since the packets came as 6oz we left them in tact. An error in packing meant that we double packed potato powder resulting in 12oz per pack! This had extremely important consequences since it was only by this error that we had enough food left to continue when the birds attacked our food dump below Camp 3. In reality , we needed something like 9oz per day between two, in order to give us anywhere near our food requirement on such an extended push.

Biscuits

Although bulky, everyone agreed they were worth taking. The problem with hill rations is usually there is no bulk, biscuits do fill this gap and give the illusion of being full (at least for a few minutes)

Salt and pepper sachets

We had never used them before- excellent idea

Sauce sachets

Much appreciated - tomato brown and tartar

Oxol Vegetable stock cubes

Too many , one per pack would probably be adequate.

Oatcake / flapjack bars

Greg and Mark brought these, they are very filling , full of energy and well worth considering as part of the ration perhaps in exchange for Mars bars which some people find too much!

Dehydrated Meals

Beanfeast - disgusting , why we always take it I just cannot comprehend.

Pasta Choice - reasonable but needs something like supernoodles to bulk it out.

Batchelors catering packs- excellent, the best stuff around. Cheap , many varieties and highly edible. Buy big 2kg packs and divide to individual portions, cook in 10 minutes.

Primula cheese tubes

Great treat

Austrian smoked cheeses

A must for your final course.

Tins of tuna and corned beef

Heavy but always a favourite.

Custard powder

Not all of this was used , except towards the end of the trip when we were starving.

Muesli

We took very little since it has always been the item left in past expeditions. Greg and Mark would have eaten it , Bob and I used biscuits instead.

How did you package the food?

We used 100 gauge clear plastic bags in double thickness for all rations except the "Specials". We packed the "Specials" in an extra 500g polythene bag and taped the ends with packing tape. If we had done this to all menus the birds would not have done any damage to our food since they could not break through this heavy gauge plastic very easily. The empty bags were useful for vapour barrier socks and protecting various bits of kit as we progressed.

What about menu rotation?

Menus were marked in felt tip 1 to 5 to ensure rotation . We were very strict about the proper rotation , since unless you are , people will always try to get more of a particular menu, being the greedy, deceitful organisms they are. Never trust your companions when it come to food!

Where did you get your food?

We just went to a local cash and carry and bought everything. It just does not seem worth the effort to write to numerous food manufacturers for 10 pot noodles or a couple of bars of Kendal Mint Cake- notice there was none of this on this trip- and nobody missed it.

Can you buy food in Pakistan?

A list of food available is given below. Note that most things are now available in the country and there is really not any great benefit in shipping loads of food over to Pakistan unless you have money to burn or free food. Dehydrated foodstuffs are not available except for milk powder and Tang

Food list available in Pakistan

FRESH FOODS

Potatoes	Onions	Cabbage
Tomatoes	Garlic	Ginger
Lemon	Beetroot	Mangos
Bananas	Eggs	Apples
Peaches	Apricots	Oranges

OILS & DAIRY PRODUCTS

Corn oil	Olive oil	Sesame oil
Peanut butter	Cheese spread	Tinned cheese
sunflower oil	Ghee	

BISCUITS & BREAD

Many varieties	Digestive	Ritz(salty)
White bread (sweet)	White (french)	Cakes various

DRIED FOODS

Milk powder	Spaghetti	Soups various
Noodles	Macaroni	Porridge
Corn Flakes	Custard	Jelly
Oats	Puddings various	Dates
Raisins	Currants	Peanuts
Walnuts	Almonds	Pistachio
Cashew	Mixed fruit	Apricots
Rice	Atta (wheat flour)	Sugar
Chickpeas	Kidney beans	Dahl various

DRINKS

Tea black	Tea green	Tea jasmine
Coffee	Ovaltine	Hot chocolate
Orange (dehydr)	Soft drinks	Fruit juices packs
Mineral water	Tang	

TINNED FOOD

Tuna	Sardines	Corn beef
Chicken curry	Hot dog sausages	Baked beans
Peas	Pears	Peaches
Pine apple	Fruit cocktail	Luncheon meat
Pakistan curries!	Sweet corn	

OTHERS

Jams various	Marmalade	Honey
Boiled sweets	Ice cream	Salt
Curry powder	Chili powder	Ginger
Pickles hot	Chutney	Mustard
Mint	Vinegar	Soy sauce
Tomato paste	Tomato ketchup	Garlic
variety of spices	Sweets various	

SOME NON FOOD ITEMS OF INTEREST

Kitchen roll	Toilet tissue	gas lighters
Soap	Tooth paste	Tooth brushes
Towels	Shampoo	Vaseline
Insecticide	Cotton wool	Film (slide not common)
Batteries(not good)	Sunhats	Nicad batteries for cameras etc
Head scarves		

What isn't available?

Dehydrated foodstuffs are not generally available. You cannot get potato powder in Pakistan yet. Chocolate type products are available but not of the same quality as in the UK. Good batteries are not available except for nicads.

What about the prices?

Prices are reasonable compared to European market prices and taking into account freight charges. Prices of a few items are :

Sardines	45Rs/-	Comed beef	75Rs/-	Luncheon Meat	55Rs/-
Hot Dogs	85Rs/-	Tomato Sauce	54Rs/-	Soup Pkt	15Rs/-
Custard Powder	16Rs/-	Tuna	50Rs/-	Peanuts 4oz	6Rs/-

Is this comprehensive?

The above has been put together to give you an overview of what is and what is not available. It is not totally comprehensive but should help you in deciding menus and possible purchases in Pakistan.

Where can you get these things?

There are many shops selling these goods in both Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Traditionally many expeditions purchase goods from :

Esagees and Sons

General merchants
Kasmir Road
Rawalpindi

Telephone 01092 51 568483

Can we pre order?

You can write to the store and order goods ready to be picked up. The owners will also get you anything else you require from the local markets.

What did you use for the walk in and at Base Camp?

We budgeted on needing a total of 10 man days per person to cover both the member's requirement and the LO and cook's stay for 35 days. We expected to be on the hill very quickly and only spend a maximum of 3 days at Base. The following list gives a breakdown. This would have lasted us very well but since we all spent more time at Base than we had hoped to, we needed to send down for more kerosene, milk and sugar.

What did your LO and cook eat?

They shared with us, like most Pakistanis they did not eat much chocolate. Chapatis, rice and dahl still form the basis of their diet. They had some goat meat that the porters gave us.

Did you treat your water at Base?

No, though several of us contracted Giardiasis. More fool us. We had lots of chlorine and iodine tablets.

Is water readily available at the K7 Base?

Yes, there is a stream just by the camp.

What fuel did you use at Base Camp?

We used a combination of butane gas and kerosene. We could only get one cylinder (20kg) of gas and this lasted 10 days for 8 of us. If you can use gas it is better and far less messy than kerosene.

How much kerosene do you use?

Usually we budget on half a pint per person per day.

What containers do you use for carrying kerosene?

Local containers are available, but it best to bring your own from the UK as they will not leak or split. Most plastic in Pakistan is of very poor quality though better products are now emerging onto the market. RS RYDERS of Warrington produce a superb 25 litre container.

What do you carry your supplies in?

We use a variety of plastic resealable barrels and canvas sacks together with rucksacks. We tend not to take more than 30% of our loads in barrels since we need to bring them back. You can buy barrels in Rawalpindi or Skardu for about £10-00 or buy and ship them from the UK at the same price. 60 to 80 litre sizes are best though 120 litre are good for things like the kitchen equipment. Canvas sacks can be purchased from the Sadar bazaar in Pindi. There is one shop which sells very large [4ft x 2ft] size haul bag types for about 150 Rs/- , these are excellent, really strong and a real bargain. Bring plenty of good quality plastic bags from the UK from 6"x 8" to dustbin size. Preferably in heavy gauge plastic. Pack all loads even those in barrels in large plastic bags. Also bring some bivvy bag size bags to store loads at dumps etc.

WALK IN & BASE CAMP FOOD FOR 8 MEN OVER 10 DAYS

Item	Allowance P.M.D.	No of days	Total Quantity	Items not available Pakistan	Suggestions as alternative
Egg Powder	various	10	0.45kg	* * *	fresh eggs
Salt	7g	10	0.5kg		
Oil	56g	10	3.5kg		
Jam	various	10	3kg		
Cornflakes	1pkt/4	5	7pkts		
Milk Powder	75	10	6kg		
Sugar	112g	10	6.8kg		
Mars	1	10	60	* * *	Boiled
Snickers	1	10	60	* * *	chew sweets
Sardines	1 per 2	5	20 tins		
Luncheon meat	1 per 2	5	20 tins		
Tea	14g	10	2kg		
Coffee	4 Cups/Day	10	1Big Tin		
Dahl	56g	10	4.5kg		
Atta	336g	10	27kg		
Rice	110g	5	7.0kg		
Potato Fresh	3x0.5kg	3	12Kg		
Onion	0.5kg	10	5kg		
Spices	various	10	1kg		
Garlic	various	10			
Pickle	various	10	1kg		
Tomato Sauce	various	10	4kg		
Sweet Corn	2 Tins	2	1kg		
Oats	1 per 2	3	12pks		
Dried Potatos	3oz	4	2.7kg	* * *	BRING
Soup	0.5 litre	10	20pkts		
Dehydrated Veg	1.5kg	10	1.5kg	* * *	BRING/Fresh
Custard	56g	5	2.25kg		
Apple Flakes	42g	3	1kg	* * *	various
Tinned Fruit	1 tin per 4	5	10 Tins		
Appeal	1 pkt per 2	10	40 pkts		
Biscuits	1 pkt per 3	10	30pkts		
Hot Dogs	1 per 2	3	12		
Oxo/Chicken	16	2	16		
Raisins	3kg	3	3kg		
Corned Beef	1 per 2	4	16 Tins		
Cheese Tinned	1 tin per 4	4	12 Tins		
Green Tea	0.5 Kg	10	0.5kg		
Tuna	1 tin per 2	3	12		
Salted Peanuts	125g per 2	10	5kg		

Expedition equipment and gear list for members - K7 1993

- Footwear** High altitude boots with toe and heel welt for clip on crampons
Spare laces
Alveolite or fibre inners
Gaiters - not yeti type
Walk in boots - make sure they are comfortable
Teva sandals - brilliant
Socks- 6 prs loop stitch
few prs light weight
Down or fibre pile socks
- Headgear** 1 wool balaclava
1 Damart motorcycle type balaclava (small hole)
1 helmet with provision for holding headtorch
1 pr ski goggles
1 pr glacier glasses.
1 sunhat
1 large headscarf- can buy in Pakistan
1 headtorch with two spare bulbs- batteries provided by expedition
- Hands** 2 prs Dachsteins
6 prs undergloves
1 pr overmitts light weight
Wristwarmers - cut thumb and finger holes in old socks
- Body** Cagoule with hood that fits over helmet
Duvet - down
Overtrousers/ salopettes with full length zips
Helly hanson one piece suit
Lifa wear or equivalent
Various tops / jumpers but remember you'll be carrying them a long way
Salopettes for climbing in or dossing about / full zips
1 pr Y-fronts - any illegal prs will be burnt
Swimming trunks
Shorts
Various t-shirts
Towel
Sleeping bag approx 1000g of good down
Goretex bivvy bag
Karrimat - expedition
Light weight trousers for walk in
Some reasonable clothing for the Embassy Club
Razors/ tooth brush / paste etc
Foot rot control methods
- Climbing** Harness - make sure the leg loops are big enough to go round
your legs when all clothing is on/ same with waist belt
Sticht plate and descendeur
1 pair of axes with spares
Crampons - clip on essential
Swiss army knife with thing for getting stones out of horses hooves
LARGE RUCKSACK- at least 80 litres
2 x 50m ropes each - remember you'll be jumaring on them
1 pair jumars/ petzls etc

1 set of rocks nos 1 to 9
Selection of tapes and tat - 20m each
4 "Friends" to be sorted at departure

Climbing boots 1 pr of comfortable rock boots that you can wear with a thick pr of socks

Peripheral kit Sony Walkman
Various tapes - sort out at packing
Books as above
Writing paper and pens
Diary everyone should keep one
You can buy pre-stamped airmail in Pakistan
Batteries for personal stereos. Base Radio/ cassette batteries provided by the expedition

Camera Film - slide only please
Cleaner
Lens tissue
spare batteries
Blow brush

Other
Money for poker games
Spending Money

Notes

Put tapes on all your clothing zips to ease closing them in adverse conditions, you should be able to use the zips with Dachsteins on.

Put new tapes on axes and jumars before you leave the UK.

If someone is not familiar with carrying heavy loads on jumars, do yourself a favour and practice before you go. Unless you are jumaring on vertical or overhanging ground, any caving techniques are a waste of time. Chest harness jumars are a hindrance.

Put all your gear in your rucksack and weigh it - then throw most of it out - remember you will be carrying it.

Communal Equipment

Tentage	1 Clycan Mess Tent 14ft x 14ft* 3 Wild Country Quasars* 1 Trak two man* 1 Phoenix Photon - Goretex* 1 Phoenix Phortress*
Karrimats	12 No*
Binoculars	1 pr*
Radios	3 Kenwood*
Cameras	1 Sony Hi 8 camcorder* 1 Tripod - 6ft undampened head* 12 hours of Hi 8 Sony tape*
Tape recorder	1 Sony Walkman professional* 8 Sony Metal tapes (90minutes each)*
Tape recorder & Radio (Base)	1 Panasonic cheapo bought in Islamabad 1 set of Walkman external speakers
Batteries	300 Duracell AA 80 Duracell flats 30 Duracell U2 eq
Bulbs	12 spare headtorch*
Stoves	1 Bibler set* 2 Markhill with Epigas 3005 burner heads* 3 Epigas 3005 burner heads* 4 Spares sets- washers/jets and prickers
Base Stoves	1 double gas burner - on loan from Rozi Ali 20kg butane gas cylinder 1 double kerosene burner 1 set spares and prickers 1 metal kerosene container 25 litre
Lanterns	1 Epigas 3016* 1 spare glass* 3 mantles
Gas	80 Epigas 250 cartridges
Haul bag	1 No
Rucksacks	3 No various

Rope	400m 9mm static* 100m 8mm static* 155m 11mm tugboat dynamic? 200m 9mm dynamic*
Karabiners	69 Stubai snaps* + (70 various left on route from 1990) 12 Stubai HMS*
Ice screws	3 Stubai large screws*
Pitons	80 Stubai - three sizes of Blades/Kingspins/Angles* + (80 approx. left in situ from 1990) 12 rurps* 2 Copper heads* 3 sky hooks - various* 6 Tube chocks 5" to 8"* 6 Bongs 2" to 4"* 1 Set of Hexentrics 1 to 12 4 Sets of rocks 1 to 9 2 sets of Friends 0 to 4 1 Camalot No 4 2 Crack'n'ups
Tapes	50m 1" tube tape* 80m various tat
Pulleys	3 Petzl lightweight side opening*
Tool kit	Pliers Junior hacksaw + spare blades File Adjustable spanner Flat and Phillips screwdrivers Rivets and washers 20m Thin wire PVC tape Packing tape Duct tape Tent poles various sections 25m
Sewing / Mending	20m 5mm shockcord Nylon cord 50m Superglue Araldite Bostick No 1 Darning wool + needles Strong nylon thread Sewing awl / stitcher Various needles Duct tape Nylon patches

Spare Equipment	1 set crampons*
	2 axes*
	1 sleeping bag*
	1 harness
Kitchen	14 Plastic water bottles 1 litre
	14 large , deep plastic plates
	14 large (1 pint) plastic mugs
	14 knife fork and spoon sets
	3 aluminium pots with lids 10,8 & 5 litre
	2 pans 1 & 2 litre
	1 pressure cooker 10 litre
	2 frying pans
	1 chapati maker
	1 rolling pin and board
	1 large mixing pan for atta
	1 large sieve
	1 sharp chopping knife & steel
	2 ladles
	3 large serving spoons
	2 wooden spoons
	1 tea strainer
	2 can openers
	2 aluminium kettles - large and small
	1 fish slice
	1 roll Aluminium foil
	1 washing up bowl
	2 rolls of steel wool
	Cloths various
	3 litres washing up liquid
	1 water container plastic 25 litres
	Jelly moulds- Peter Rabbit and Mr Blobby.
	Mrs Beeton's "Cooking for six on 3 Rupees a day"
Barrels	10 x 60 litre from UK*
	1 x 120 litre from UK*
	12 x 60 litre left at Hushe during 1992
Bags	6 No Haul type (4ft x 2ft) with sewn on handles from Sadar bazaar - Rawalpindi
Plastic bags	500 No 6" x 8" 100g*
	250 No 12" x 15" 100g*
	100 No 15" x 18" 500g*
	3 No Single Bivvy bags
	6 No 4ft x 2ft 500g
Packing tapes	6 rolls ordinary brown 2" Tape
	1 roll duct tape
	2 rolls heavy duty packing tape
	1 roll black pvc 2" wide
Pens / writing	Wide Indelible Markers / Biro's 50 / Ink pad

Mail 30 prepaid airmail sheets
 30 K2 Motel postcards and stamps

Scales 1 spring balance reading to 30Kg

Games Large scrabble set
 Cards

* Provided from our expedition pool of equipment

The Expedition Accounts

ITEM	PROVISIONAL	ACTUAL
PEAK FEE @ £618.00	618	618
INSURANCE	920	920
TRANSPORT TO AIRPORT	70	70
AIRFARES- MAN/ISL ISL/MAN	2801	2801
FREIGHT	500	689.85
FREIGHT CLEARANCE	130	68.29
IN TRANSIT EXPENSES	85	102.49
FOOD UK	405.61	405.61
EQUIPMENT UK	300	287.75
LO AND COOK GEAR UK	250	264
MEDICAL		28.7
VISA FEES	132	132
INTERVIEW EXPENSES	120	120
TELEPHONE/VARIOUS	100	100
OTHER MEMBER EXPENSES		50
TRANSPORT ISL/SKU RETURN	492.85	
SKARDU BY BUS		207.31
JOURNEY EXPENSES		47.92
RETURN FLIGHTS		184.87
EXCESS BAGGAGE		9.75
TAXIS PAKISTAN	100	70.85
HOTEL ISLAMABAD/ FOOD @20-00 DAY	1120	976.41
LO ACCOMMODATION LO EXPENSES	195	46.82
ENVIRONMENTAL FEE OF \$200	134	130.36

INSURANCE PORTERS/ LO AND COOK	100	100.21
JEEPS TO HUSHE AND BACK	333	195.12
COOK EXPENSES/WAGES	300	307.31
PORTERS INWARDS \ (INC GOAT)	647	1021.95
PORTERS TO BASE OF MOUNTAIN (8)	40	48.78
PORTERS OUTWARDS	247	234.14
FOOD /FUEL/ EQUIPMENT PAKISTAN	300	427.19
HOTEL SKARDU FOR 2 NIGHTS	280	160.14
HOTEL EXPENSES HUSHE	50	48.78
PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY	150	146.34
<hr/>		
TOTAL	10,373.89	11,021.94

TOTAL RECEIPTS**£ AMOUNT**

Member contributions @ 1300 for 5	6500
Roger Whitehead	632
Dais Freight 20kg @ £1.5	30
Grants	4000

LESS money not received from Denis and Roger	-20
TOTAL RECEIPTS	11,142.00
BALANCE	120.06

NOTES

Roger paid for his insurance and flights separately.

Dai shipped some of his own equipment out with the expedition gear

Denis & Roger owed £20.00 on contributions

Money Changed in Pakistan

Sterling	Rate	Amount Rs/-
£3000	41.5	124500
£140	39.9	5586
£245	39.49	9677
£600	42	25200
£450	42.22	19000
TOTAL RUPEES PURCHASED		183963
TOTAL RUPEES SPENT		181828
Balance of Rupees		2135

BREAK DOWN OF COSTS AS % SPEND IN UK AND PAKISTAN

TOTAL BUDGET	£11,142.00	
MONEY SPENT IN PAKISTAN	£ 4,435.00	39.80 %
MONEY SPENT IN UK	£ 6,414.81	57.57 %
STERLING BALANCE	£ 120.06	
RUPEE BALANCE	£ 52.07	

PAKISTAN COSTS IN RUPEES

	RS/-	RS/-
Local transport and taxis Islamabad	2330	2330
Hotel charges		
inward	16053	
Outward	8722	
		24775
Food and light entertainment		
British Club	10500	
American Club	3148	
Australian Club	1200	
		14848
Porter Insurance		4109
Personal spending money		6000
Environmental fee		5345
Purchases Islamabad		
Sacks	600	
Esagees	6500	
Photos	55	
Aspirins	200	
Photocopies	320	
Radio/ clock etc	2195	
Writing paper	127	
		9677
Custom clearance inwards		2800
Liaison Officers kit		1920
Transport to Skardu bus		8500

Stopover costs and journey expenses		
Hotel Prince	1277	
Other food etc	688	
		1965
Skardu purchases		
Food/Cigarettes/ plates etc	5794	
Postcards and stamps	340	
		6134
Taxis Skardu		
		575
K2 Motel		
Inwards	4378	
Outwards	1850	
Indus Motel dinner	338	
		6566
Jeeps		
Inwards	4000	
Outwards	4000	
		8000
Hushe hotel		
		2000
Cook equipment		
		1704
Goat purchase		
		3000
Porters inwards		
22 @ 1100	24200	
10 @ 1300	13000	
1 @ 1500	1500	
Extra	1100	
		39800
Porters Outwards		
12 @ 800	9600	
Extra food for base	2000	
		11600
Cook wages		
		12600
Flights out including excess baggage		
		7580
Total Rupees spent		
		181828

Useful addresses

W.H. Ruthven

Hon Secretary, Mount Everest Foundation (MEF)
Gowrie
Cardwell Close
Warton
Preston
Lancs
PR4 1SH

Alpine Club Library and Himalayan Index

55 Charlotte Road
London
EC2A 3 QT

Tel: 071 613 0755

Expedition Advisory Centre and RGS Map Room

1 Kensington Gore
London
SW7 2AR

Tel: 071 581 2057

Mountain Medicine Data Centre

c/o Dr C Clarke
Dept. of neurological Sciences
St. Bartholemew's Hospital
38 Little Britain
London
EC1

British Mountaineering Council

Crawford House
Precinct Centre
Booth Street East
Manchester
M13 9RZ
Tel: 061 273 5835
Fax: 061 274 3233

Government of Pakistan - Tourism Division

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Pakistan

MLM Systems

Consultation and Logistics

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