

acc 25843

93/50

SUNSHINE SPIRE.

1993.

+443

Members of the Expedition.

Mark Charlton  
Dino Citrone  
Lee Clegg  
Chris Dale

Objective.

To climb in the Cul-de-Sac Glacier area of the southern Alaska (USA) range. Main objective: south face of Sunrise Spire.

Travel.

Gatwick(UK) - Seattle (USA) fly.  
Seattle(USA) - Talketna (USA Alaska) drive.  
Talketna (USA) - Cul-de-sac Glacier fly.

References.

American Alpine Journals, various on the general area, only one with specific mention to Sunrise Spire AAJ53 vol XX1 no. 1 1979.

Duration.

Early June - early July 1993.

## Introduction.

A successful trip in many ways in achieving the first ascent of a difficult and impressive line. The time of year chosen for the trip was to try and allow two different types of routes to be attempted. By going in early June we were hoping to try a big ice climb while still cold enough, to be followed by a rock route big wall style. On arrival at the Cul-de-Sac Glacier the warm weather did not allow the chance of a safe ascent on ice. So we chose to start at once on an attempt of the south face of Sunrise Spire. After the ascent of Sunrise Spire the weather was a warm but stable air mass which prevented attempts on the lesser peaks in the area due to dangerously unstable snow. For future trips to try to mix the two types of climbing as we did would need a great deal of luck.

For ice, even though the period we were out (early to late June) seems a little late in the season and late April to early May would seem better, skis might be a necessary mode of transport then. June through to September may offer good enough weather for rock climbing.

The Kichatna range does not have a great elevation, Kichatna Spire the highest summit at 8,985 feet. The whole area can be subject to savage storms as this is the first mountain range met by the Pacific Ocean storms.

The 24 hour daylight in June is a great advantage.

## Finance

Money was given by the Mount Everest Foundation and the British Mountaineering Council. Most of the equipment bought ie. specialist gear was for big wall style climbing that we did not already own.

### Group:

Portaledges	£500 x 2	= £1000
Static Rope	£200 (400m)	= £200
Other Hardwear	£200 (pegs)	= £200
Flight UK to USA	£600 x 4	= £2400
Flight to Glacier	£200 x 4	= £800
Car Hire and fuel	£1000	= £1000
Food		= £200
		= £5800

Other miscellaneous items (financed personally):

- Sun cream
- Film
- Batteries
- First Aid

## Equipment:

Standard summer alpine clothing and camping equipment were used with no problems.

400m of rope was fixed on the ascent and some was left for the descent.

- 2 A5 double portaledges
- 2 hanging gas stoves (home made)
- 60 assorted pegs, mainly knife blades
- 2 full sets of friends
- 4 full sets of Wild Country rocks
- 20 expansion bolts
- 1 MSR stove 5 gallons(US) of gas used
- 1 large black plastic sheet (used mainly for melting snow)
- Large selection of food, weight no problem on this type of trip.

Report:

June 5: Landed in Seattle, arranged food supplies.

- " 6 + 7: Drove to Talketna Alcan Highway.
- " 8: Flew to Cul-de-Sac glacier with Hudson aviation of Talketna and arranged a pick up for the 24th June.
- " 9: Day spent organising camp area. Snow hole dug for food supplies and a communal kitchen.
- " 10: Charlton and Dale climb a few pitches of the proposed route. Clegg and Citrone organise food and water supplies for the climb.
- " 11: Poor weather, spent time around the camp, more eating done than anything else. Some local exploration.
- " 12: Citrone feels ill and spends the day in tent. Clegg and Dale push more of the route leaving some fixed lines, Charlton hauls some of the equipment up the fixed lines. The night was spent discussing the plan for the rest of the route. Some disagreement as how to tackle the final summit ridge. Majority decision taken to go as light as possible and to take the ridge on its crest which is rock rather than ice/snow shelves to the side.
- " 13: Charlton and Citrone go up fixed line light weight and force route further. Clegg and Dale bring up the rest of the equipment plus all of the water. Face devoid ledges hence no snow or water.  
Night spent in/on portaledges, still some grumbling about choice of route higher up.
- " 14: Clegg and Citrone set off up the face to push the route on. Hard aid sections and very slow progress. Dale unhappy about planned route and decides to rapel off rather than to continue. Clegg and Citrone return to ledges after a long day.
- " 15: Charlton, Clegg and Citrone go higher taking everything and push the line through some more hard aid sections, through some big roofs and spend the night below them. Decision made to go for an all out push for the summit the following day. Stormy night, ledges very good.

- " 16-17: Charlton and Clegg set off light weight leaving some fixed lines for Citrone to follow up with minimal equipment. Mostly free climbing leads up to the summit ridge. Summit reached at about 4 am in poor visibility, no views. Descent back down by some down climbing on the summit ridge, rapel back down the face leaving some fixed rope through the big roofs and across a traverse line to the ledges, sleep.  
30 hours of climbing.
- " 18: Rapel back down with all the equipment.
- " 19-23: Warm damp weather prevents further climbing but some exploration done.
- " 24: Weather clears, camp broken, plane arrives on time. Night spent celebrating in Talketna.
- " 25-26: Drive back to Seattle.
- " 27: Dale flies back to the UK.
- June 28-2: Five days spent climbing in the Cascade  
July mountains, Washington State.
- July 3: Fly back to the UK.

Notes.

The Kichatna Mountains of Alaska hold enormous potential for climbing Alpine and big wall style routes. Movement around the area, once in and the potentially bad weather are the greatest drawbacks. In case of accidents the only available assistance would be the local pilots and the party themselves!

A fantastic but serious area to visit and climb in. We saw not one person for the whole duration of our stay.

Mark Charlton.