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BRITISH HIMLUNG EXPEDITION

1994

EXPEDITION REPORT

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## OBJECTIVES

This was to be our second attempt to climb Mt. Himlung (7126). We were aiming to achieve the first ascent of its South Face/Ridge. This would also represent the first British ascent of the mountain and only its second ascent to date.

## Mt. HIMLUNG HIMAL - ITS HISTORY

1963	S	Japanese	East Ridge (from SW)	Unsuccessful
1964	A	Dutch	E & W Sides	"
1982	S	Jap/Nepal	NE Ridge from SE	"
1983	S	Jap/Nepal	NE Ridge from SE	"
1983	A	Jap/Nepal	East Ridge (from SE)	Successful *(note 1)
1984	W	Japanese	East Ridge	Unsuccessful
1987	S	USA	South Ridge	"
1988	W	Japanese	West Ridge	"
1991	W	British	South Ridge (W.Spur)	"
1992	A	British	South Face	"
1992	A	Japanese	West Ridge	Successful *(note 2)
1994	A	British	West Ridge (from S)	Unsuccessful

A = Autumn

S = Spring

W = Winter

\* Note 1: In retrospect this was the 1st. ascent of Mt. Nemjung (7140m) and not Mt. Himlung as believed at the time.

\* Note 2: All expeditions prior to 1992 including the British Expedition of that year believed they were on Mt. Himlung. It is now alleged that they were actually on Mt. Nemjung. If this is the case, then the Japanese success of 1992 would have been the 1st known attempt of Mt. Himlung as well as being the 1st ascent of that mountain. See Appendix ref. Article in Japanese magazine regarding these two ascents.

## THE TEAM

Peter Hudd.	Age 33	Expedition Leader
Ray Harris	" 37	
Brian Ottewell	" 46	
David McCarthy	" 30	

Both Peter Hudd and Brian Ottewell were members of the 1992 Himlung Expedition.

### **Kathmandu to Base Camp. 2nd Oct. to 12th Oct.**

Three days were spent in Kathmandu making final arrangements for the forthcoming expedition. As in previous years we were using Himalayan Expeditions Pty. Ltd. to act as our local agents and provide all logistical support.

Our route to base camp starting from the road head at Besisahar took a period of six days. Base camp was situated near the head of the glacier in exactly the same location as two years previous. Little seemed to have changed. It was refreshing however to detect no evidence of our previous presence. For details of the route taken to Base camp, see Appendix.

We used a total of about 30 local porters as well as 10 donkies to carry our loads to BC. These were all engaged at the roadhead town of Besisahar by prior arrangement.

In addition to the four climbers, we also had with us our Sirdar of previous expeditions, Nima Tamang, a Liason Officer, one cook and two kitchen hands/helpers.

### **Base Camp to Camp 1. 13th Oct. to 15th Oct.**

The decision to attempt the West Ridge by gaining it from the col instead of by joining it part way up as intended during our 1992 expedition was based on two factors.

Firstly, from the perspective we gained of the South face of Himlung during the walk-in (we approached BC from the opposite side of the glacial moraine as to our previous visit in 1992, thus gaining a better view of the whole of the South face) we could see that the distance between our high point and that of the West Ridge was far greater than we had thought at the time. The terrain also appeared overly complicated and suggested no obvious line of ascent.

Secondly, during our 1992 attempt, the route to our high point was largely on snow and ice, and totally so between our camps 2 and 4. This year however, there seemed to be much less snow covering the face. This, we anticipated would not only make the climbing more difficult but also increase the objective danger from stonefall, a risk that was already pretty high on this mountain.

Camp 1 was established on the glacier at a height of 4850 mtrs. within a huge basin above the glacier headwall. From BC our route took us across the glacial moraine which consisted of huge and unstable blocks towards the middle of the glacier. We then proceeded diagonally to the glacier headwall that was taken on its extreme left hand side, close to the rock buttress of the opposite side of the valley. Once within the basin above the headwall, one could see the immense scale of things ahead of us and just how foreshortened they all looked from below. The glacier at this

point was heavily crevassed and constantly adhering to the stresses and strains imposed upon it. There was also continuous avalanche activity that was threatening from all three sides. Altogether, the Basin Complex presented us with quite a spooky location for our first camp on the mountain. This we situated at the far side of the basin area adjacent to a huge boulder that we hoped would protect us from any falling debris. We were also within only a couple of metres of a cavernous crevasse that would not only provide us with additional protection from avalanche debris originating from the West Col but would also act as a convenient receptacle for our more natural needs.

Camp 1 was established on 15th Oct. with one 2-Man Vango tent. An additional 2-Man tent was added a few days later, both sited on a small platform strewn from hard glacier ice.

The time required to reach C1 from BC varied enormously depending upon the extent of load carried and our general level of fitness and acclimatisation prevailing at the time. We were also often severely hindered by frequent snowfall making progress across the glacial moraine doubly difficult. On average, our quickest one way upward journey between BC and C1 would be in the region of 4 hours.

#### **Camp 1 to Camp 2. 16th Oct. - 22nd Oct.**

Camp 2 was established on 22nd October at a height of 5325 mtrs. This comprised one 2 - Man tent situated on a very exposed and narrow rock ridge.

The route above C1 followed easy snow slopes for about six hundred metres to the foot of the main rock buttress that would have to be climbed in order to reach the col. These snow slopes presented some of the most subjective dangers of the whole route, being prone to ferrying majority of the avalanche debris to the glacier below from higher up the mountain. We all had our near misses on these slopes, each of us having to negotiate them several times during the course of the expedition in order to carry supplies to the higher camps. It would appear however that no alternative viable route leads from this basin complex up towards the col.

From the top of these snow slopes to the site of our C2, the route was entirely on rock, much of it loose and very unstable with the constant threat of stonefall from above. The route, including the fixing of rope as required was pioneered over a period of three days by PH and DM. The mountain presented numerous bits of technically absorbing climbing, never excessively difficult but maintaining interest from the route finding point of view. One or two rock sections did necessitate the use of aid, these occasionally resulted in 'dead-ends' and would have to be back tracked.

After the site was found and levelled for the tent, we returned to base camp whereupon a rest day was had. All four of us do a carry to C1 on the 20th. PH, DM, BO stay at C1 whilst RH returns to base camp still not

fully acclimatised. The 21st Oct. three loads are carried to C2 from C1. We all return to C1 and spend the night there. The next day PH, DM, & BO do another carry to C2. DM returns to C1 and spends the night there with RH who has brought up a load from base camp. PH & BO remain at C2. It snows heavily during that afternoon and evening. The quickest time between C1 to C2 using the Fixed Ropes was about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours.

### **Camp 2 to Camp 3. 23rd Oct. - 1st Nov.**

This was without doubt the most interesting and absorbing part of the climb, and from where most enjoyment was probably gained during the exploration of various lines of ascent. It also provided most of the technical challenges, and consequently where most of the fixed rope was used. It also provided what probably turned out to be the most dangerous single part of the whole climb. This involved three to four pitches of mixed rock and ice climbing following a narrow iced up gully formed between the junction of the main rock buttress and ice serracs to our right. Large blocks of ice and rock were constantly breaking free from these serracs and the only route available to the glacier below was down this gully. It was a very atmospheric and scary place, and certainly not one to linger.

From C2 on the narrow spur of rock, the line we took ascended easy but heavily indented snow and ice slopes back to the main rock buttress, once again under fire from falling debris from above. There now existed about six pitches on rock, loose in places but generally straight forward with shorter harder sections, where occasionally aid tactics were adopted. This led to the upper snowfields that we could see from below and was about half distance between the site of our C2 and the top of the rock buttress.

The snow slopes were easy being alot less steep than they appeared from below. We were now on the upper rock section. Once again this provided a good deal of absorbing climbing, steeper than on the lower section as we were now following the main face of the buttress. Near the top of the steep section, a tricky crack and open chimney line led to an easing in the angle, followed by a series of short walls and broken ground leading to a large sloping platform immediately adjacent to the hanging serracs referred to above.

The verticality and overall difficulty of the rock wall above the platform was far too great for us to even consider. The route, up until now from C2, once past the lower ice slopes was generally safe from rockfall. However, having now reached this platform we could see that the only obvious way onwards was to ascend between the righthand side of the rock buttress and the serrac wall. The first pitch was on steep ice that then led back diagonally leftwards and had thus overcome the initial overhanging section of rock. Another short section of broken gully and we were on a superb small ledge, protected from any impending serrac collapse. Good rock anchors were placed affording the fixing of a rope to the platform below. Although all subsequent ascents of this pitch was done on jumars using the fixed rope, in places it hung free



from the rock and thus presented a strenuous challenge at this altitude. From the platform, ropes were fixed leading diagonally rightwards across delicate snowed up rock slabs back into the bed of the gully and into the line of fire of any rock or ice fall. After a further one and a half rope pitches, we were on easier angled snow, not quite on the snow plateau as yet but certainly above the rock buttress that had been the major obstacle separating us from the col. An easy but airy traverse on inclined snow along the edge of the rock buttress and we were at a small collection of boulders that afforded a small haven of security and one that we would use as an intermediate dump for the temporary storage of gear, food and equipment. The route between C2 and the top of the rock buttress had taken four days to pioneer including the fixing of ropes. From the boulders atop the rock buttress, PH and BO led out one more length of rope on steeper snow to its junction with a sharp snow arete that would lead indirectly to the upper snow plateau. It appeared that we had at last broken through, and that night returned to C2 in an optimistic frame of mind. Whilst PH and BO had been pushing the route out beyond C2, RH and DM had been making daily load carries between camps and up to C2. Consequently, our C2 was well stocked with food and equipment.

All four climbers descend to base camp on 27 Oct. for a couple of days rest. Unfortunately the weather worsens and is cold and windy with fresh falls of snow during the afternoon and evenings. This has been the general pattern of things so far.

Sunday 30 Oct. PH and DM ascend from base camp to C2 whilst BO and RH carry loads to C1. It had been intended that PH and DM go back up to the previous high point and then push the route out to set up Camp 3. Dave was not feeling too well however on the morning of the 31st so decided to descend to C2; and he would be replaced by BO. In the meantime, PH does a load carry back up to the high point and decides to have a further look beyond, carrying just a tent and a couple of ropes. In the process, two more ropes were fixed along the snow ridges until the flat plateau was reached. The col was now easily defined and the terrain in between looked reasonably easy, it was not however without risk as several crevasses had either to be crossed or out flanked. To the right, the ground fell sharply to a huge snow bowl that would hold all the snow and debris from the South face of Mt. Himlung. To the left and across the glacier, several thousand feet below was the huge bulk of Gyajikang (7038m), and a completely new system of peaks and ridges. Straight ahead was the col, a distance of approximately 800 metres and about 250 to 300 metres height gain. It was so exhilarating to be alone in such magnificent surroundings and to know that nobody had ever been that way before. Having found a suitable site for camp 3, a platform dug in the snow and the tent erected, I headed back over the plateau, descended the snow ridges and abseiled down the snow slopes to the boulders at the top of the rock buttress. The airy snow traverse on fixed ropes along the top of the buttress led to ice gully leading down between the serracs and the rock. This was followed by the awkward downwards diagonal traverse across the rock slabs and finally to the small ledge where it was possible to sit and rest, and relax in the knowledge that you were safe from falling debris from above, a far cry from the uncertainty of the ice gully above. On more than one occasion, from the confines of this

ledge, we witnessed large chunks of ice breaking free from the serracs and tumbling down the gully, only a short distance away from us.

The rock section below this ledge had by now become familiar to us and it was a case of using the fixed ropes in order to descend. It would take about one and a half to two hours from here to reach our C2. That night, I am joined by B0 at C2. It snows heavily, it appears that the weather is generally deteriorating with frequent snowfall most afternoons coupled with poor visibility.

' ..... Only the hardest day ever !' That is what I wrote in my diary at the time. PH and B0 set off from C2 with the intention of carrying everything in order to firmly establish C3 and to be able to sustain staying there for at least three days. This meant that our rucksacs were very heavy, making progress on the fixed ropes incredibly hard work. At the overhanging section we had to take our sacs off and haul these up separately, this caused other problems of getting them jammed and altogether on this section alone we must have lost at least one hour. At the boulders, we collected what extra gear we could carry, mainly rope and food, but were unable to take everything that was there. As it was already late into the afternoon, the snow underfoot was becoming soft, making progress that little bit tougher still. The light was also fading and by the time we had reached the flat section of the plateau, it was already dark. We were trying to follow my footprints from the previous day but this was not easy and we frequently lost sight of them and had to back track. We were also aware of the crevasses that still lay ahead and although we moved roped together, due to our heavy loads and overall fatigue, I don't think neither of us were fully confident in our ability to arrest a fall should the need come about. Needless to say therefore, it was with great relief that we eventually found the tent and were able to crawl inside and rest. In retrospect, I believe we had been a little ambitious in the loads we had carried, it had taken nearly nine hours to reach C3 and we had both taken a lot out of ourselves in so doing.

Unbeknown to us at the time, both DM and RH were feeling unwell and had returned to C1 and base camp respectively. The plan had been for them to carry additional food and equipment up to C3 in order to sustain upward progress by PH and B0 who would initially sleep at C3 and then move up to a higher camp at the col and collect provisions from the lower C3 left there by the other two. At the col we would erect the large 4-man Vango tent which would accommodate all four of us. We would then be in position to make our summit bid up the West Ridge.

#### **Camp 3 to Camp 4. 2nd Nov.**

The previous night had been the coldest so far with temperatures below minus 20°C and also very windy. It was now snowing, but unusually the sun continued to shine through a thin layer of cloud making conditions inside the tent unbearably hot. We were still exhausted from the previous day and found everything such hard work, the sun was so strong and the expanse of the snow plateau offered no protection whatsoever, at times it seemed more akin to being in the Sahara Desert rather than the

Himalayas. However, it would frequently cloud over and then it was a totally different story. It was really quite uncanny.

From our tent, we followed a route in a more or less direct line towards the col, exposed again in places from avalanche debris coming down off of the South face of Himlung. Nearer the col we had to ascend some steeper snow slopes of about 45° and then follow a short system of snow ridges until beneath the col itself. It was not possible though to gain the col directly at this point; the ice walls leading down from the col were severely undercut and were separated from the plateau by a large bergshroud partially filled with a mass of fallen ice debris. The whole lot looked very unstable. We gingerly followed the downslope edge of the bergshroud passing one or two rotten snow bridges until we found what appeared to be a suitable place to cross the 'shroud and thus gain the col. This consisted of what was once a more substantial snow bridge but even this had now severely reduced in size and presented a very marginal crossing point. We had however reached the col.

We were unable to see much of the West Ridge due to poor visibility and the relentless wind that was blowing the snow about. What little of the ridge we could make out though appeared to be much more difficult than it had seemed from below.

It was necessary to excavate a large pit below the surrounding snow level so as to try and provide some shelter for the tent, the lying snow was windblown and therefore very loose making pegs absolutely useless. Instead we had to parcel up several bags of snow and secure the guylines with these. The wind was increasing in strength, and coupled with already extremely low temperatures, the windchill factor was quite intolerable.

As there was little reason to remain at the col we headed back down to the relative comfort of C3. We had hoped that DM or RH would have made it up to C3 with a load but it soon became apparent that this was not to be the case. We were now beginning to get short of a few things especially gas.

### **The Ridge. 3rd Nov. 8th Nov.**

That night was once again extremely cold, and also very windy. The morning dawned clear and sunny making it unbearably hot inside the tent. Outside, the wind took away any feeling of warmth, so we couldn't win either way.

We had been hoping to move up to C4 today and stay the night, and at the same time to investigate the ridge. Until we secured additional resources from below however, this would be a pointless exercise. We would also be wasting valuable time and resources by staying put at C3. We decided therefore to drop down to the intermediate dump at the top of the rock band in the hope that either DM or RH had been able to do a carry to this point. Unfortunately the cache was as we had left it a few days



before. We returned to C3 empty handed, with the exception of one solitary gas cannister that we had been unable to squeeze in during our previous carry. We were both dissapointed; and also frustrated at not being able to continue with the route above the col. To make matters worse, it snows heavily during the evening and all through the night.

The following day we had little choice but to descend. From the top of the rock band we could hear the occasional shout from below, so we dropped down a little further until we could see the others coming up. They had intended going all the way through to C3. As we were low on food and gas though and that there was still things to bring up from below, it was decided that DM and RH would descend from here to C2 and one person to C1 and then reascend the following day to C3. PH and BO would carry the remaining food and fuel up to C3. It became apparent that both DM and RH had tried to reach C3 the previous day but had made it only as far as this platform below the final steep rock section. They had cached their loads here and returned to C2. That same day we had come looking for the fruits of their load carry, we had stopped short at the top of the final rock section, only half an hour from where the loads had been left.

The following day, PH and BO set off from C3 towards C4. After we cover about half distance, its clear that the weight of our sacs is too heavy and are slowing us down too much, especially in light of the steeper and more risky ground that lay ahead. We take enough out of the sacs to make up one additional load. After reaching C4, BO returns to collect this load.

At C4 we were using a 4-Man Vango tent. And although it was a welcome relief to have ample space around us, it did mean that the temperature inside the tent was always as a result that little bit colder. It was also incredibly noisy due to the incessant wind tearing at the tent fabric, making rest hard to come by.

That night there is no sign of the wind abating, temperatures drop to about minus 25°. Its pretty much the same the following morning preventing any thought of venturing out onto the exposed ridge.

The col is at an estimated altitude of approximately 6250 metres, leaving just over 900 metres in height gain to the summit. From below it always appeared that the terrain would generally be of a non technical nature, and consequently we had anticipated being able to climb this and return in one single push from the col. We had carried with us to the col a spare lightweight bivvy tent should we decide that an intermediate camp on the ridge would be necessary; we had always hoped though that this would not be the case.

From our site at the col, it was clear to see that we had under estimated the complexities that lay above, we could also now see a pinnacled rock section that may present further difficulties just past the midpoint of the ridge. The ridge itself was also overhung with huge and unstable snow cornices, and also interspersed with small ice and snow steepenings, sculptured by the wind, thus adding further to the difficulties and therefore slowing down our progress, the time factor was now becoming

quite critical, especially in view of the fact that it would take a good few days to derig the mountain.

Our thoughts for the present however were still focussed on an upwards progress and by about mid-day when it seems that the wind has abated slightly, PH and BO set out from C4 to investigate the ridge.

A short distance from the tent, the ridge steepens, gently at first but then more severe, with ice up to about 55° and maybe slightly more in places. As we were climbing unroped at this stage, we knew we could ill afford to make any mistake, and consequently the combination of high wind and very low temperatures meant that this margin of error was far too slight. We decided therefore to return to C4 and hoped that the wind would ease so as to allow another try the following day.

From our high point on the ridge we had been able to look down towards C3 and see that DM and RH had arrived, distant specks on the wide expanse of the snow plateau.

That night remains windy but by the following morning it has eased somewhat to what was probably the calmest it had been at the col during the last four days. Temperatures remain cold with low cloud, and instead of the high wind, it has snowed heavily and continues to do so.

DM and RH are suffering a bit and probably not fully acclimatised to the new height. They decide to remain at C3.

Meanwhile, PH and BO return to the previous days high point on the ridge. We continue a little further in the hope that more of the ridge ahead will be revealed, and maybe things would be a little simpler after all. From what we could see though this did not appear to be the case. Just ahead of us was a much steeper section of ice slope. Even if we climbed it unroped, we should still need to fix abseil anchors to make safe our return. As far as we could see this was just one of many other obstacles between us and the summit.

The weather once again was also slowing down our rate of progress, visibility was intermitantly very poor and the gusting wind and snow was quite unnerving in such an exposed position.

We had reached a height of approximately 6475 metres. It was at this point that we decided to abandon our attempt upon the mountain and we descend the ridge back to our tent at the col.

## **Conclusion.**

Once inside the tent, we question ourselves as to the merits of our decision, and whether that perhaps we should have continued further up the ridge. If the weather had been better, we moreorless definitely would have done so. I think it likely however, that the eventual outcome would have been the same. We quite simply had insufficient time and resources available in order to safely overcome the difficulties that lay ahead.

The adverse weather had obviously been a major factor in bringing about the position we now found ourselves in. And was also continuing to do so. It was not though the underlying reason why we turned back when we did.

PH and BO stay the night at C4. It snows heavily for most of the night making any movement in the morning that much more difficult. In the morning BO does a carry down to C3 whilst PH starts to dig out the iced in tent at the col. DM and RH climb up to the col from C3 and assist with derigging C4. All four climbers stay the night at C3, the first time we have been together for quite a little while. That night, it snows heavily again, with visibility in the morning down to near zero, and temperatures remaining extremely low; it sort of helped us to justify our decision to retreat.

Despite the poor weather, DM left C3 early with a huge load in an attempt to reach base camp later that day so as to arrange for porters to be waiting for us on our return to base camp. He would then reascend to C1 or C2 to further assist the derigging process. RH carries large load down to C1, where he stays the night, to return to C2 the following day, 10th Nov. Meanwhile PH and BO try to clear all the fixed ropes between C3 down to C2, but fail to do this mainly due to ropes becoming jammed in the ice gully just below the level of the snow plateau. We also receive what probably turned out to be the heaviest fall of snow so far, further hindering our clearing of the route. PH and BO stay the night at C2. Reascend the following day in blizzard conditions to free the jammed ropes in the gully, then return to C2 clearing all the fixed ropes as we descend. We meet RH at C2 who has come up from below to do another carry down to C1. PH and BO stay another night at C2, where it continues to snow all night long.

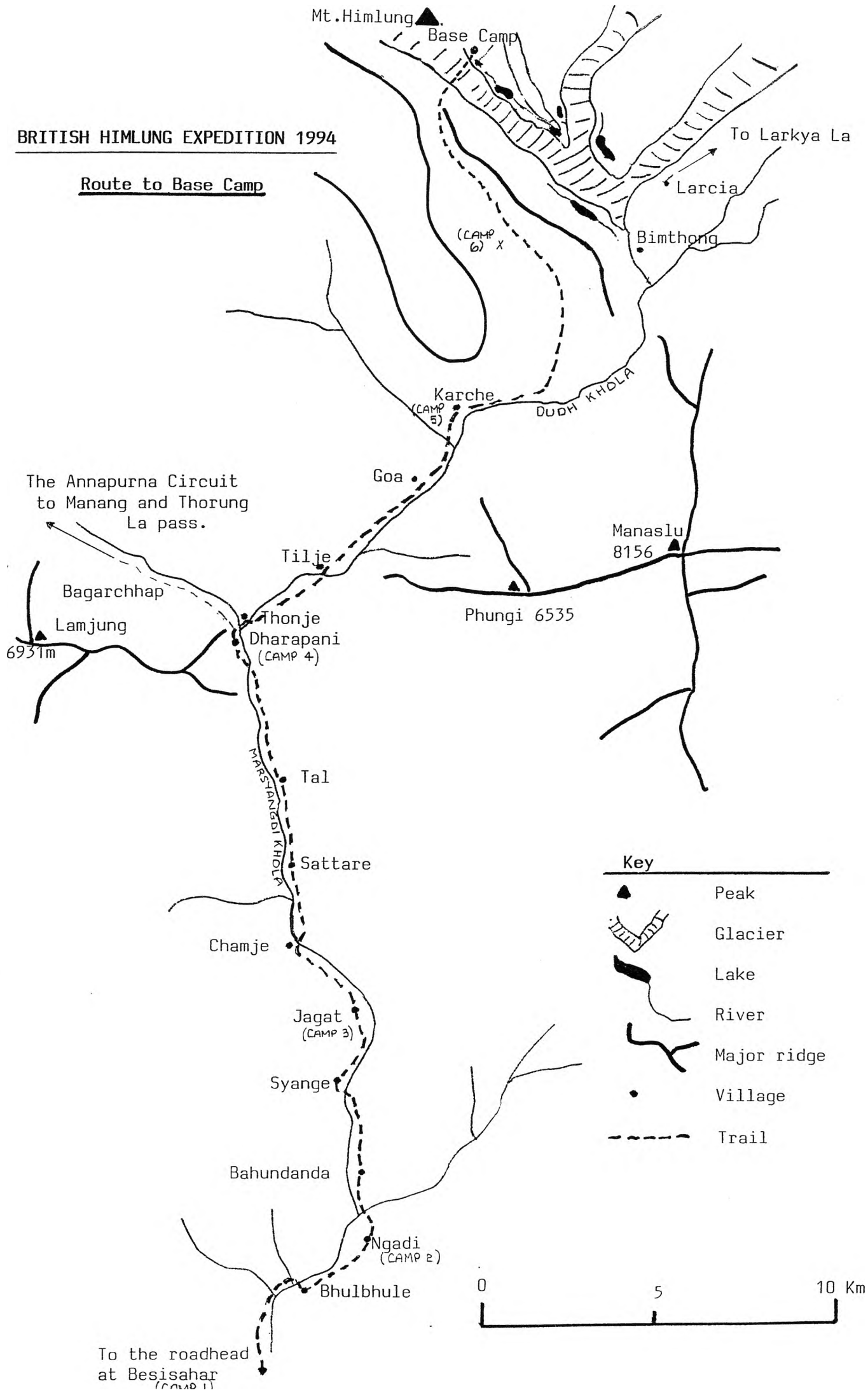
The following day, 12th Nov. BO descends part way with heavy load and leaves it at prearranged location for RH to collect on his way up from C1. BO returns to C2 and together we dismantle the tent and derig the fixed ropes all the way to C1 where RH is waiting. Due to the ropes being well and truly iced-in, this seems to take an eternity and we arrive at C1 pretty shattered. After a brief rest at C1 we all set off down for the last time to base camp. Due to all the recent snow we'd been having this final leg of the journey proves to be very hazzardous, due in the main to the frequent avalanches coming down off of Gyajikang as we descend below the headwall of the glacier; each of us at some time or other being caught in the aftermath of one of them. Fortunately, we were far enough away so as never to be in the direct line of fire, but we were never certain as to whether the next avalanche was going to be bigger than the last. We also needed to take extra care with the crossing of crevasses as some of these were now obscured from view by fallen snow. Negotiating the glacial moraine also took twice as long as usual due to a combination of the very heavy loads we were each carrying and the deep snow.

We arrived at base camp about 8pm. Some of the porters were already there, the others were due to arrive early the next morning.

So on Sunday 13th Nov. base camp is dismantled and we begin our six day trek back to Kathmandu arriving there on Friday 18th Nov.

# BRITISH HIMLUNG EXPEDITION 1994

## Route to Base Camp



# LOGISTICAL ANALYSIS

## NIGHTS SPENT AT WHICH CAMP

	PH	DM	B0	RH	TOTAL
CAMP 1	5	12	3	11	31
CAMP 2	10	5	10	4	29
CAMP 3	5	3	5	3	16
CAMP 4	3	0	3	0	6
<b>TOTAL NIGHTS ABOVE BASE CAMP</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>82</b>
BASE CAMP	5	12	3	11	30
<b>TOTAL NIGHTS AT/OR ABOVE BASE CAMP</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>132</b>



## WEATHER

We seemed to be dealt our unfair share of bad weather whilst on the mountain. Although we were two weeks earlier than our previous visit a year ago, the weather was alot less reliable with snow on at least twenty days of the twenty eight we were actually on the mountain.

Any fine weather would normally be early morning, with then the gradual build up of cloud from either down valley or from behind us from the North over the col. By mid morning and nearly always by mid day, base camp would be affected by cloud.

Minimum temperatures at base camp normally fell to about  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Daytime temperatures at base camp would normally rise to above freezing level but would soon fall to below freezing level if the cloud persisted. During the daytime, temperatures on the mountain and especially on the plateau would often be higher than at base camp due to receiving more of the sun, although this benefit was rapidly lost due to the presence of cloud or wind and often a combination of both. The lowest night time temperatures were probably felt at the col where we estimated them to drop to around  $-25^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Inside the tent these severe temperatures were no more than a mere discomfort, and were anyway to be expected. The major handicap was during the daytime when the combination of high strength wind and low temperatures resulted in a dangerously severe windchill factor.

## EQUIPMENT APPENDIX

Most of the equipment we used on the expedition was pooled from previous trips to the Himalayas.

All base camp equipment including tents and cooking gear was arranged for us by our agents, Himalayan Expeditions Pty. Ltd, a company we have now used on several occasions.

On the mountain we used a combination of Wild Country Gore-tex single skin tents and Vango Hurricane tents, at C1 we used a 3-Man conventional Vango ridge tent and our highest camp at the col consisted of the very large Vango Odyssey 600 tent. This would comfortably sleep four people but as it turned out was too large for just the two of us.

All the tents seemed to stand up to the harsh conditions they were subjected to, the Vango Hurricanes are probably not the best choice where heavy snow is expected as this seems to accumulated upon the hooped roof of the tent. The Vango Odyssey performed very well to withstand the high winds at the col, its a good choice where lots of space is the main consideration, due to its abundance of nylon however, it can be very noisy inside due to this wind effect flapping the outer fabric. The tent also requires to be pegged down at several points, which may be a problem in soft snow such as we encountered at the col, and can also be a little fiddly to erect.

Both of the Wild Country tents we used performed exceptionally well, one was a Gemini GTX, the other was the smaller Mountain Gemini which I believe is no longer manufactured. The latter is a smaller and lighter version of the GTX without a porch canopy and although equally stable and easy to erect (infact, its a little easier) it suffers somewhat from being just 'too small' and the absence of the front porch means that it is very difficult to cook when its either snowing or windy, two conditions that are commonly found in the High Mountains. As an emergency shelter or a bivvy tent, it would be hard to beat.

A total of eight sleeping bags were used between the four of us. For base camp we hired reasonable quality down sleeping bags from Kathmandu, these remained at base camp the whole time. On the mountain we had two Rab Premier down bags, one Mountain Equipment Everest and one Karrimor Makalu, all good quality expedition rated bags that seemed to perform equally well. We all used Goretex bivvy bags above base camp, these provided extra warmth and also helped to keep our sleeping bags dry.

Once above base camp we relied entirely upon EPI Gas 'Alpine' stoves for all our cooking and melting ice. We had a total of four, which allowed for one stove in each camp. Fifty five 250g gas cylinders were taken to the mountain of which we had no surplus, and towards the end, we had to take measures in order to conserve fuel. A total of 82 man nights were spent at C1 and above (see appendix). This represents a gas consumption rate of 0.67 gas cylinders per man per day, ie: 55 divide by 82 = 0.67.

We could have probably done with an extra ten gas cylinders to make matters a little more comfortable.

Due to the nature of the route, we ended up using very little technical ice gear, with the exception of snowstakes which were used almost exclusively on the plateau and also for securing the tents. They would also have been used on the ridge (we actually used two) should we have continued with the route. A couple of ice screws were used on the steep ice section leading up onto the plateau. Apart from this, conventional rock gear was used throughout. Approximately 1000 metres of rope was used for the purpose of 'fixing', generally between camps one to two and between camps two to three. Of this total, 300 metres of it was static line, purchased in Kathmandu, the remainder consisted of 8mm and 9mm climbing rope.

## FOOD APPENDIX

All the food we consumed at base camp and during our trek to and from the mountain was taken care of by our agents, and consisted generally of breakfast, cooked lunch and cooked evening meal.

Our food whilst above base camp was in the main brought with us from the UK. It consisted mainly of single portion freeze dried 'heat in the bag' type meals supplied to us by Raven Foods Ltd. Although they were satisfactory, mainly due to their convenience, all lacked a certain appeal especially towards the end of the expedition. We also supplemented the freeze dried meals with tinned fish and tinned meat which both provided a more palatable alternative. Most foods (with the exception of large quantities of freeze dried) can easily be purchased in Kathmandu which is well used to the demands of climbers and trekkers.

Our food at base camp was also regularly enhanced with fresh goat, potatoes and apples obtained by a 3 to 4 day return trip down valley by one of the kitchen hands.

We obtained all our chocolate and most of our other luxury foods and goodies duty free en route at Dubai. By doing this, you can be sure of not only obtaining fresh non-imitated products at a good price but also as a means of avoiding the weight restrictions imposed by the airlines on the amount of luggage you can carry.

## FINANCIAL APPENDIX

The Accounts below do not represent the full picture of the 'true cost' of the expedition. They do not take into account the cost of personal equipment or clothing that we either already possessed or had to buy, or even other items such as medical inoculations, photographic film and other bits and pieces. Perhaps the greatest cost to us was the potential loss of earnings or even the risk of our jobs.

EXPENDITURE:		£
International flights with PIA		2160
Other sundry transport costs		200
Peak booking fee (\$2000) and telex transfer		1360
Admin costs/Fax charges/Stationery		320
Climbers Insurance		680
Medical		175
Visa fees		100
Goods purchased in UK: Communal Equipment	150	
Freeze dried & sundry food	360	
Chocolate (duty free in Dubai)	<u>160</u>	670
Agency fees:		
Private road transport within Nepal		
Porters to and from base camp		
Food & fuel on trek & at base camp		
Services of Sirdar, cook and two base camp helpers		
Base camp tents and Set-up		
Insurance for local employees/porters		
Porters' food allowance		
Liason Officer wages plus clothing allowance and all messing.		
Trekking permits & Visa extensions		
Six nights hotel accommodation b&b.		6100
Goods bought in Kathmandu: Communal Equipment	400	
Food for on mountain	160	
Gas cannisters, 55 No.	325	
Hire of sleeping bags	<u>80</u>	965
Miscellaneous/day to day living whilst in Kathmandu & on trek		287
Exgratia Payments to porters, sirdar and kitchen crew		160
Post expedition costs/Reports/Sponsors		<u>100</u>
Total Expenditure		<u>13277</u>

## INCOME:

Mount Everest Foundation	750
British Mountaineering Council	800
Foundation for sport and the arts	1500
Resale of communal equipment	150
Members' personal contributions	<u>10077</u>
Total Income	<u>13277</u>



## POSTSCRIPT

Japanese Article relating to the misnaming of Mt. Himlung with reference to Mt. Nemjung subsequent to 1st Ascent of Mt. Himlung during the Autumn of 1992. by a Japanese expedition.

### NEPAL

#### **Himlung Himal(7126m)**

The Hokkaido Univ. Alpine Club team, led by Yukio Niwa(51), comprised 11 members, started their climb from Phu Khola then by the NW Ridge and finally made the summit in Oct. Though the Hirosaki Univ. Alpine Club and Nepal Joint team claimed they had first climbed this peak by the SE Ridge in 1983. Niwa, however, conjectured according to the latest map issued in Nepal Nemjung (7140m) is designated close by the south of Himlung Himal(7126m) and the point that Himlung Himal used to be designated—28°44'N/84°28'E—was modified to 28°46'19"N/84°25'19"E by the Nepalese Govt. Accordingly, the former so called Himlung Himal must be Nemjung and original Himlung Himal probably has never been scaled. Basing upon this conjecture the Hokkaido Univ. team approached from the western side—Phu Khola and attempted and reached the summit. The topography on the spot was just the same as the map shows—Himlung Himal and Nemjung were ranging from north to south and a nameless peak was located inbetween these two peaks.

They, after placed BC(4850m) on Sep. 25, pitched three more camps on the NW Ridge and on Oct. 3 Akira Koizumi(37) and Nima Sherpa(32) first made the summit. Then Osamu Hanai(40), who felt chilly at his toes and returned C3, also made it three hours later. And on Oct. 5 Kazuo Higuchi(30), Osamu Shimizu(32) and Dawa Sherpa(30) made the summit, too.

The Hokkaido Univ. team, thus, succeeded in the first ascent of Himlung Himal and, at the same time, it came to be known that the Hirosaki Univ. and Nepal Joint team made the first ascent of Nemjung in 1983. (cf. map on p. 34 and photos on p. 35)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The British Mountaineering Council

The Mount Everest Foundation

Foundation for sport and the arts

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Karakoram Experience Ltd. for organising flights.

To Nima, our Sirdar and to the rest of our base camp crew to whom we owe so much for their undivided attention and unwavering support throughout the expedition.

And finally to our porters, for their cheerfulness throughout the toil of earning a few days pay whilst allowing us to carry out our chosen adventure.

## FURTHER READING

Himalayan Journal 1992, Bombay, India.

Expedition Yearbook 1992, 1993, 1994

High Magazine, March 1993

High Magazine, June 1995

American Alpine Journal 1994/5

The IWA TO YUKI Japanese magazine, Tokyo

The Hokkaido University Alpine Club Magazine 1993

BMC Expedition Report for British Peri Himal Expedition 1993

BMC Expedition Report for British Winter Himlung Exped. 1991

This Report compiled by Peter Hudd, Expedition Leader.

May 1995