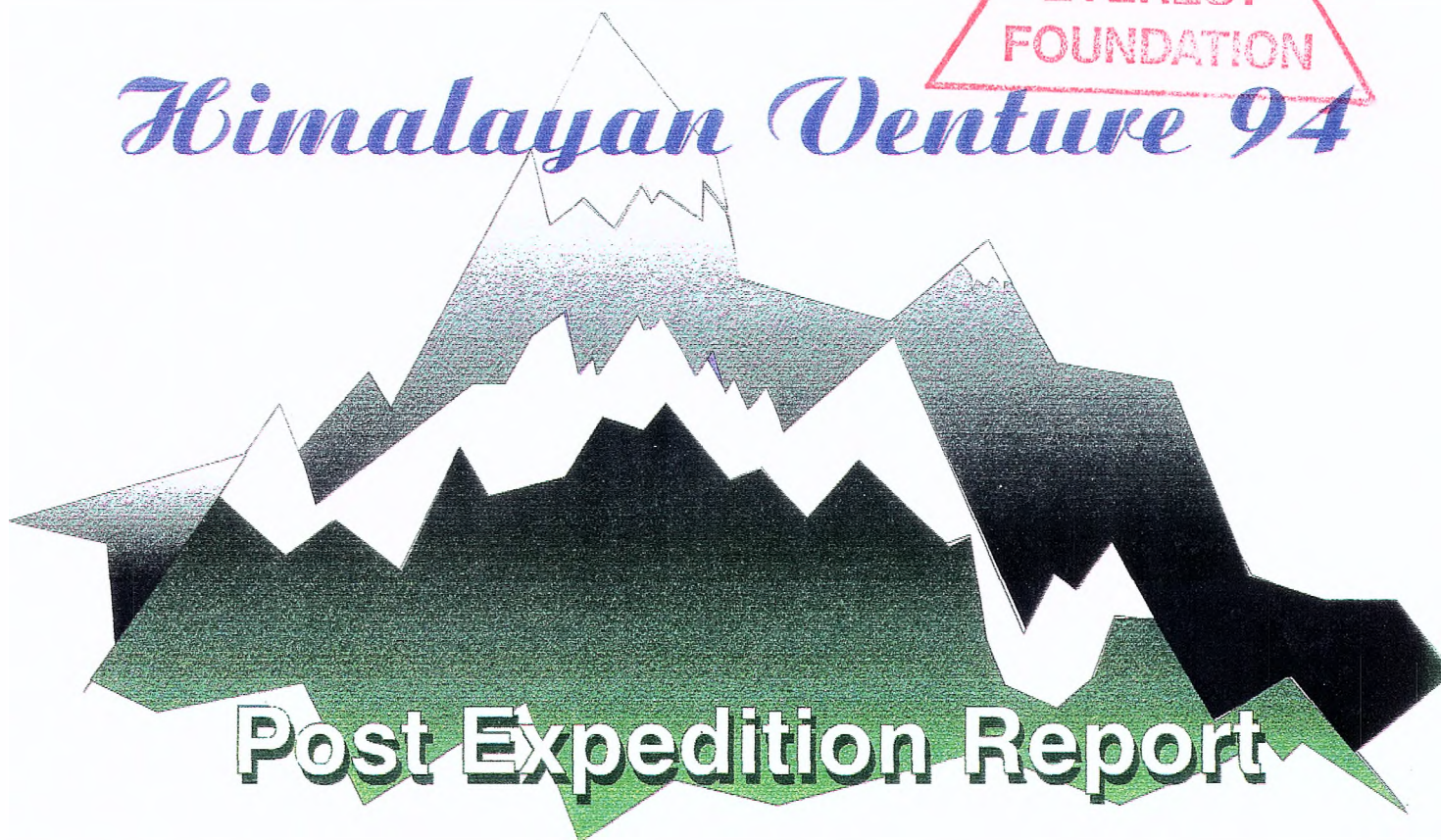




Himalayan Venture 94



Post Expedition Report

A mountaineering expedition to Tilicho in the
Nepalese Himalayas and an expedition to trek
around the Annapurna circuit by 19 members
of the
Royal Air Force Mountaineering Association

7th September 1994 - 4th November 1994

Leader: Flight Lieutenant C Scott RAF
Patron: Air Marshal Sir Roger Austin KCB AFC FRAeS RAF

30th September 1995



Standing L to R, Tom Barbour, Mike Milmo, Rick Lay, Andy Heathfield, Brian Mannion, Neil Daniels, Kev Hewkin, Tim Payne, Guy Beaumont, Phil Cockcram, Hugh Gould, Dougie MacDonald, Chris Rawlins,

Kneeling L to R, Val Singleton, Andy Craig, Colin Scott, Nigel Hodgson, Phil McLachlan, Jenny Stewart.

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Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

Some years ago the Royal Air Force Mountaineering Association (RAFMA) decided to embark on a series of expeditions to the greater mountain ranges. The aim was to provide opportunities for experienced mountaineers to climb challenging routes at altitude whilst also encouraging the less experienced club member to experience a major expedition through a place on the trekking group which would run in conjunction. The latest in this series was Himalayan Venture 94 - an expedition comprising a climbing and a trekking team each with their own objectives.

In June 1993 the RAFMA committee appointed the expedition leader and advised him of the chosen objective - the unclimbed South Face of Tilicho (7134m) in Nepal. Suggestions were made as to the team size and time of year to attempt the climb but in general he was given a free hand. The expedition leader decided that the expedition should comprise both a climbing and trekking team each consisting of 12 members and despite having their own objectives a unified team spirit should be encouraged.

The South Face of Tilicho, which lies 9 km due north of Annapurna had been attempted only once before, by a 6 man team from the British Army in 1990. The team had reached the height of 6500m before abandoning the climb due to poor snow conditions. Information on this route was therefore limited to the expedition report of this team together with some photos kindly sent by one of the team members. The position of Tilicho, desire to maintain a unified feeling within the expedition as a whole, and RAFMA's absence from Nepal since 1988 strongly influenced the choice of trekking objective. A trek of the 280 km Annapurna circuit together with an attempt to climb the trekking peak Pisang (6091m) was seen as a worthwhile objective. In addition a detour off the main trail into the climbing groups Base Camp towards the end of the trek was felt to be a desirable addition.

The expedition leader decided that the primary tasks were to begin raising the necessary financial support, selecting the 2 teams, and establishing contact with a reputable Trekking Agency in Nepal. To this end he invited Squadron Leader Tim Payne to take on the role of expedition Treasurer and chief fund-raiser.

Chapter 2 - PRE-EXPEDITION PLANNING

TEAM SELECTION

In consultation with both the RAFMA Chairman and Expeditions member the leader decided that each team should consist of 12 persons with one of the places on each team being offered to the other services mountaineering associations. A newsletter outlining the objectives, probable cost and dates of the expedition was sent to all eligible members of RAFMA and to the Chairmen of both other service mountaineering associations.

CLIMBING TEAM

COLIN SCOTT

TIM PAYNE

TOM BARBOUR

PHIL MCLACHLAN

IAN SINGLETON

KEVIN HEWKIN

ANDY HEATHFIELD

GUY BEAUMONT

NIGEL HODGSON

RICK LAY

CHRIS RAWLINS

Having read the Army expedition report and discussed the route with one of the Army team members the team leader decided that only persons competently leading grade 3 or above Scottish winter routes should apply for a place on the climbing team. The technical difficulty of the route, much of it at altitude, convinced him that the climbers needed to be competent on very steep ground and have experience of some big mountain routes. However, he was of the opinion that the team should not consist solely of members with Himalayan experience but should aim to introduce suitable new blood. Whilst there was no laid down minima for the trekking group a broad experience level of mountaineering in Britain was expected.

Applicants were invited to outline in detail their previous Scottish winter, Alpine, Himalayan or other expedition experience with details of particular routes if appropriate. A total of 54 applications were received, 33 of which were for the trekking team. The leader then made an initial paper selection for both teams together with a suggested list of reserves. In order to ensure that all applicants received a fair appraisal the merits of all applicants were discussed at a meeting of the leader, RAFMA Chairman and the expeditions member before a final team was selected. The criteria for selection were based upon experience, compatibility, physical and mental robustness, and to a degree the applicants support for the association.

Once the teams were selected, together with a list of reserves, a letter from the leader was sent to all applicants advising them of their selection or non-selection. Specific tasks were then allocated to members of both teams.

In order to foster team spirit and provide an opportunity for the teams to get together 2 training weekends were arranged. The first was held at Fort William in March 1994 and the second in Northumberland during May. Both proved very successful, allowing not only much climbing to be done but a great deal of face to face discussion on the plans.

TREKKING AGENCY

The Nepalese government requires all expeditions entering Nepal to work through a Kathmandu based trekking agency. With over 300 agencies operating in Kathmandu the leader decided that advice from the British Defence Attaché Kathmandu may be prudent. Summit Nepal Trekking, a subsidiary of the Summit Hotel, were recommended as they had been used by previous service expeditions including the Joint Service 1992 Everest expedition.

The leader made contact with the agency who then acted as the expeditions representatives in Nepal and liaised regularly between the team and the Nepalese Ministry of Tourism.

TRAVEL TO NEPAL

The team left UK on 9 September and flew by Royal Nepal Airlines via Frankfurt and Dubai to Kathmandu. The stopovers were only for refuel and crew changes and the team arrived in Nepal on 10 September. Due to the size of party a special rate was negotiated with Royal Nepal Airlines together with an increased baggage allowance. In addition, 2.5 tons of food and equipment were freighted on Nepal on the same aircraft, again at a discounted rate.

EXPEDITION ADMINISTRATION PHASE

KATHMANDU

On arrival at Kathmandu airport the team was met by Mr Kit Spencer, the manager of Summit Nepal Trekking. He and his staff proved invaluable in steering the team and our baggage through the airport administration before whisking the team away to a reception at the Summit Hotel which was to be the base for the administrative phase of the expedition. The next 3 days were spent making the required official calls, clearing the 2.5 tons of freight through customs, obtaining permits for the peak and radios, and purchasing the fresh rations and cooking utensils that we would require at base camp. Throughout these few days the staff of Summit Trekking worked incredibly hard to keep the team on schedule but unfortunately a minor discrepancy on the list of imports prevented access to the freight until 14 September, a day behind schedule.

KATHMANDU TO POKHARA

Due to the problems encountered with the customs department and the flooding and landslides caused by the monsoon rains it was considered advantageous to move the majority of the team to Pokhara as planned on 13 September whilst the expedition leader, treasure and equipment member remained in Kathmandu. The journey to Pokhara by bus for the advance group took 16 hours but the relief at getting on their way and spectacular scenery along the route took everyone's mind off the bone jarring ride. The group frequently had to get off and walk round landslides whilst the bus skidded and slid over the washed away road. Back in Kathmandu the freight was finally released by customs and at 6 am on 14 September the remaining members of the team, along with all the kit, left for Pokhara. Thankfully the rains had eased and the road gangs had repaired much of the damage caused by the landslides and at 7 pm the team was reunited in Pokhara. It was to be the last night together as a complete group as the following day the teams went their separate ways.

Chapter 3 - EXPEDITION WALK-IN PHASE

Much of the equipment still required sorting before we could leave Pokhara by bus for the roadside shanty town of Niapal. The boxes of food and gas had to be split between the climbers and trekkers and loads of tents, rope and equipment made up before we could move off. The monsoon seemed far from over as loads were sorted in the pouring rain. However, after a couple of hours we were ready and final farewells were said. It would be a few weeks before we would see the trekkers again and so we wished them a safe journey and good luck for their attempt on Pisang. With our bus loaded we set off on the last leg of our journey before the walking began.

15 September - Niapal to Birethani

Just after midday we arrived at Niapal, a collection of wooden huts on the side of the road.

It was still the monsoon season and early for treks to begin and so porters were not found in abundance. It had been our original plan to hire porters in Pokhara and ferry them to Niapal by bus. However, due to the inclement weather, those we found demanded double money. With 84 loads to move this was beyond our budget and a decision was made to try and recruit from villages nearer the trail. As we unpacked our bus word spread that an expedition was in need of porters and soon we had about 25 willing workers. The walk to Birethanti, where we would spend the night, was only a couple of miles and with many of the porters carrying double loads and making 2 trips we finally sifted all our equipment to the village. For the first 5 days of the trek we planned to sleep and eat at the numerous lodges which are found along the trail. Not only would they provide shelter from the continuing monsoon rains but they also allowed us to conserve our stocks of food. Our lodge at Birethanti although basic was warm and dry and provided an excellent evening meal. There was a definite air of excitement amongst the team as we relaxed at the lodge. After months of effort in UK and the hectic activity of Kathmandu it felt good to be on the trail at last and on our way to Tilicho.



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16 September - Birethanti to Banthanti

Our sirdar had been very busy the previous evening trying to ensure that enough porter arrived to get us on our way. He had done a good job and as we sat enjoying our breakfast of omelettes and Tibetan bread a constant stream of porters appeared. By 08.30 the last of the team members left the lodge and set off along the trail. Nearly all the loads had been picked up and the sirdar was taking care of the last few. Being early on the trail would mean there was no problem getting accommodation in any of the villages but our progress would still be governed by the speed of the porters. This is no bad thing as it was important that we all took it easy for the first few days and arrived at base camp in a healthy condition.

The team was soon strung out along the trail as we settled into our own pace, some deep in their own thoughts and others chatting to one another. There was plenty to see as we

followed the Bhurungdi Khola river, passing through the small villages of Sudam and Hille. Numerous stops for hot sweet tea were made, especially once the steep 5000 ft climb to Banthanti was begun. By mid afternoon we were at over 2000m and all feeling the effects of our first day. Thankfully the changing scenery helped take our minds off the tiredness as we passed from the open terraced hills into thick dense forest. It was a weary team that arrived at Banthanti with thoughts of only food and rest.

17 September - Banthanti to Tatopani

As we breakfasted outside the lodge many of our porters passed by. For many of them the previous day had proved hard with their heavy loads and they had rested further down the hill. Now in the cool of the early morning they were eager to make up lost ground and therefore be able to rest during the heat of the day. We had only an hour of ascent today before reaching the village of Ghorapani at 2855 m. Here we hoped to get our first views of the 8000m peaks Dhaulagiri and the Annapurnas. Sadly the monsoon clouds obscured the panorama and so after a quick cup of tea we commenced the 1700m descent to Tatopani. It was frustrating to be losing all of the height gained the previous day but the thought of a soak in the natural hot baths at Tatopani spurred us all on. The team seemed to be getting on well together with stories and tales of previous experiences being swapped as we made our way along the trail. Often we would discuss plans for our attempt on Tilicho, throwing ideas and thoughts around for general discussion. By 5 pm we were all wallowing in the hot sulphur baths, surrounded by lush steep green hills rising to over 3500m and with the roar of the nearby Kaligandaki River in the background. Not surprisingly the team spirits were high.

18 September - Tatopani to Ghasa

Tatopani is one of the few places along the trail that contains a Bank and as most of the team needed to top up their dwindling supply of rupees we had opted for a late start in favour of some financial transactions. Sadly the bank was enjoying a holiday, a fact we did not discover until 10.30 am. So having enjoyed a very leisurely breakfast we set off for the village of

Ghasa. Our rest points each evening were suggested by our sirdar who we had hired from Summit Trekking. In addition to ensuring that our equipment was following he was responsible for guiding us to base camp, an often difficult job when many of the paths are washed away by the rains at this time of year. Once again we were gaining height as the narrow eroded path wound its way along the side of the Kalignadaki. By lunchtime the monsoon rains had returned, making the going quite unpleasant and reminiscent of a day in Scotland. Despite the rain the scenery was spectacular as we passed through the steep sided gorge with the raging river far below. The rain continued throughout the afternoon and it was a welcome respite to reach the warm and dry of the lodge at Ghasa. Once changed into dry clothing most of the team wrote up their personnel diaries and rehydrated with steaming mugs of sweet tea.

19 September - Ghasa to Lete

The rain had continued throughout the night but had slowed to a drizzle as it neared the time for our departure from Ghasa. The walk to Lete was only short as it was our last day on the trail proper. We hoped that the porters, many of whom were at least a day behind us, would catch us ready for the last few days walk to base camp. There was a tremendous team spirit developing now as we neared our objective and everyone was looking forward to their first view of the mountain we had come to climb. Despite the knowledge that the day would be short we all moved off reasonably early, eager to reach the lodge at Lete and relax for the afternoon. Two hours later we crossed the river and arrived at Lete Khola, our abode for the night and, settled down to read and enjoy the remainder of the day. A cheer went up every time one of the porters arrived and our equipment member checked the loads in. This continued throughout the day and well into the evening until finally everything was accounted for. We enjoyed our last night on a mattress and our last night of ledge food as from now on we would be in tents and at the mercy of our cookboy.

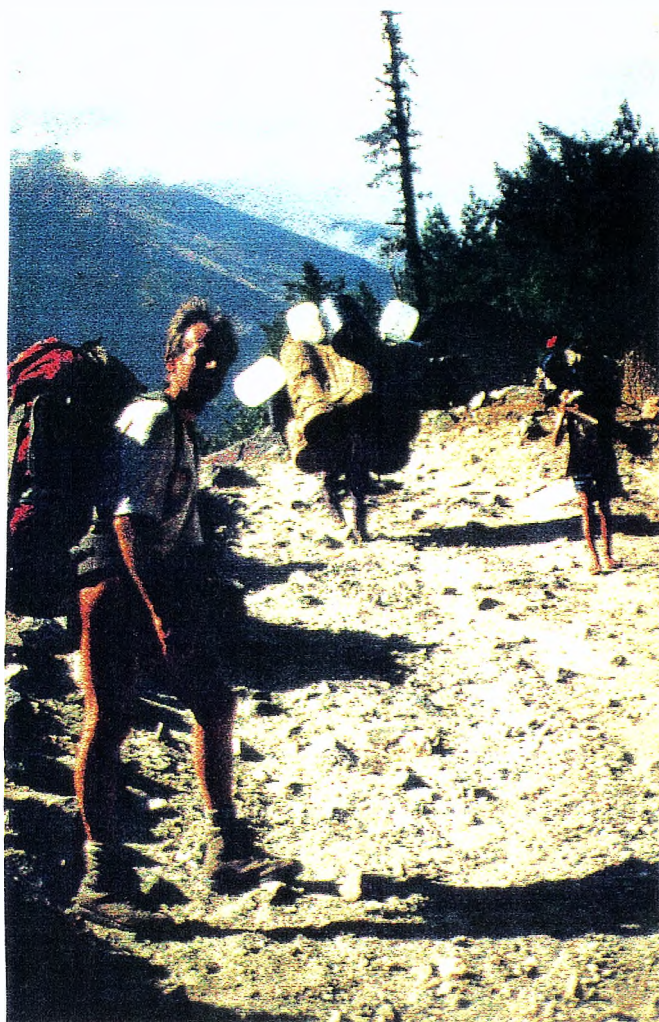
20 September - Lete to

After the relative order of previous days the start to this one was chaotic. The rains of the past few days and the reputation of the difficulty of the path we would follow for the next few days had taken its toll on the porters. They refused to continue for less than 500 rupees per day, a fee that our budget could not possibly meet and so we were left with no alternative but to pay them what they were owed and look for some more. The trekking season was now beginning and the porters could earn good money remaining on the Annapurna trail rather than enduring the difficulties that would face us over the next 4 days. Thankfully we managed to rally a band of 30 porters together who, after some heated negotiation, would complete a load carry for 200 rupees per day providing we paid them half rate for the walk out. Our sirdar assured us that all the equipment would get to base camp eventually, even if the porters had to make 2 trips. Though not completely to our satisfaction it was all we could do and so we set to the task of splitting the kit into that we would need immediately and that which could come later. The morning had passed before we left Lete and with our much reduced convoy we headed off for the foothills. We had only been going for a couple of hours before we made camp for the evening. The steepness of the terrain we would be crossing meant that suitable

camping areas would be few. This, coupled with our need to be close to supply of water, governed the length of the days. Despite the difficulties of the morning we were still in good humour although all worried that our progress on the mountain might be slowed by lack of kit.

21 September -

The cookboy was now earning his pay as he woke us each morning with tea and then prepared breakfast whilst we struck camp. It was important to rise early as the porters could not leave until the tents were packed up together with the cooking equipment and we did not want to give them any excuses for further delay. After 20 minutes walk the path started to climb up steeply through dense forest where the wet ground made going quite difficult. Most of us were wearing Vibram soled boots and had only light bags whilst the porters with their loads of 30 kilos were clad at best in flip flops. How the managed to make progress on the slippery ground was a mystery. The path wound its way up through the trees until we reached a small clearing at 3200m. Here we rested and awaited the arrival of Himal Singh, our sirdar. As expected he announced that we would make camp as the steep climb was hard for the porters and there was no water higher up. Once again we settled down to an afternoon of relaxation, breaking open a couple of boxes of compo to supplement our main meal of Chilli potatoes and rice.



22 September

The weather seemed to be improving daily and as we climbed steadily higher we were rewarded with magnificent views of Dhaulagiri. The trail took us up to a height of 4200m where everyone felt the effects of altitude in one way or another. The pace was much slower now and rests were taken at frequent intervals, allowing the porters to remain with the group for much of the day. There was no point in reaching the nights' rest point too far ahead of the porters who were carrying all the tents and food. After descending to 3800m we set up camp at a small flattish area used as base camp for attempts on Nilgiri South (689m). The mists of the

afternoon obscured much of the mountain only allowing fleeting glimpses of its South Face towering above. Tilicho still remained hidden from view by the shoulders of Nilgiri but we all hoped we would see it soon. The cold evening air drove most of us to the warmth of our sleeping bags as soon as the evening meal was over. The porters meanwhile formed a shelter with our loads, covered it with a tarpaulin and huddled down together for warmth.

23 September

The monsoon seemed well and truly over as we awoke to glorious sunshine and stunning views of Annapurnas North Face. The porters had remained huddled together until the rays of the sun caught our campsite but soon there was the usual morning chaos as loads were repacked and they got on their way.



There was an almost carnival atmosphere amongst the team as we hoped to reach base camp by mid afternoon. The scenery was dramatic as we contoured round the shoulder of Nilgiri before following a tortuous path down to the melt waters of the Annapurna Glacier. On reaching the river it was obvious that we would have to spend another night a few kilometres short of our objective. Although the team could have walked to base camp it was evident that it would be too hard a day for the porters who did not relish the thought of another night above 4000m. Frustrating as it was we were left with no alternative but to accept the delay. However, the irritation did not last long as the magnificent surroundings and infectious laughter of our porters and cookboys soon took our minds off the delay.

24 September

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Breakfast was a rushed affair as the team and porters were anxious to get on the move. Once again the weather was clear and bright making packing up so much easier. The path followed the river up the valley, gently rising and providing more outstanding views with every step. At last we could see the upper headwall of Tilicho. It looked steep and committing and conversation became centred on the various features of the mountain. The valley continued to open out as we gained height and after 2 hours we reached the glacial moraine. For many of the team it was their first visit to the Himalayas and they were overwhelmed by the sheer size and vastness of the Annapurna glacier and the magnificent North Face rising above. The pace quickened as we were all eager to reach base camp and sit and take in the full magnificence of the surroundings. At midday we arrived at the large flat area of moraine that was to be our home for the next month. Old prayer flags fluttered in the breeze and the walled enclosures and memorial cairn were reminders of the numerous expeditions that had used this area before, many with tragic results. Sadly this was not the only evidence of previous occupation as Korean spray painted graffiti and a pile of multi national empty cans scarred the area. The camp site was an area of frenzied activity as porters arrived with their loads and tents were erected and equipment sorted. The cook area was covered and our cookboys were soon providing tea for all. We paid the porters, bidding them farewell as the setoff back towards Lete, many of them planning to make a return trip with the remainder of our equipment. A silence descended over the camp once they were gone, leaving only our team of 11 and 3 cookhands. The remainder of the day was spent erecting mess tents and sorting gear and equipment. There was much to be done as ropes needed to be cut into manageable lengths and gas and food arranged into loads for future carries. We were all fit and well and looking forward to phase 2 of the expedition, the climb itself. Dinner that evening was an enjoyable affair as we crammed into the mess tent and discussed plans for the coming days, cracking a bottle of Grouse to celebrate our arrival.

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Chapter 4 - BASE CAMP

Site Selection

Having had some communication with the Army team that attempted Tilicho we were aware of the suitability of the base camp area that we had aimed for. Flat and safe from avalanche or rockfall meant it was ideal for long term occupancy and would provide comfortable surroundings for team members to recover following a few day high on the mountain. Whilst in Kathmandu we had been advised that Ukrainian expedition had permission for an attempt on the North Face of Annapurna and may well use the same base camp as ourselves. However, we would be first to the site as they had plans on another mountain first. The Ukrainians never arrived during our stay.

Kitchen

Previous expeditions had built large walled enclosures suitable for use as cooking and storage areas. A roof was created using some logs, bamboo wands and a large tarpaulin. Food, kerosene and kitchen utensils were stored in an adjacent enclosure.



Mess Tent

A large Octagonal tent was erected close to the cook area and served as a mess tent throughout the expedition. Large flat rocks were situated around the edge of the inside of the tent to provide seating and although a tight fit the entire expedition could eat together. Lighting consisted of Kerosene lamps and candles.

Although the tent was a tight squeeze at the beginning of the expedition it became comfortable once team members began occupying higher camps and was an excellent location for team briefings and discussions.

Water Source

Base camp benefited from the presence of 2 water sources close by. Therefore one was designated as the source for drinking water and use by the cook whilst the other was for washing of clothing and personal hygiene.

Accommodation Tentage

All members of the expedition used Vango MK4 tents at base camp. Tents were shared apart from the leader who had a tent to himself. The cookboys used a dome tent that belonged to Summit Trekking. No problems were encountered with the use of these tents which were roomy enough for 2. As climbing pairs were not always the same as tent pairs some privacy was possible once higher camps had been established

Latrines

A 3 sided shelter had been constructed by previous expeditions at the edge of the base camp area down overlooking a large drop to the glacier below. The latrine boasted a continuous automatic flush facility by means of a small channel diverting water from the main source. Water, natural erosion of the moraine, and the 300 ft drop ensured the latrine area remained relatively hygienic throughout.

Rubbish and Burning

The disgust at finding a pile of empty cans on arrival at base camp ensured that both climbers and the cookboys were aware of the need to remove all traces of our expedition from the camp when it was time to vacate. To this end we set aside several of the plastic drums for use as waste bins. All combustible material was stored until the end of the expedition and then burnt whilst empty gas canisters and food tins were flattened and carried out. No waste was buried at base camp or during the walk-in or walk-out.

Communication

A base set radio was centred in the mess tent and powered by a 12 volt battery and recharged by solar panel. This was used for communication with parties on the mountain using small handheld set. The batteries for the handsets were recharged at base camp by solar panels.

Weather

The weather throughout our stay at base camp was good. The days being generally warm with plenty of sunshine. Cloud tended to build up after 2 pm and often by 5 pm views of the upper mountain were obscured. Mist usually filled the valley between 7 and 10 pm but cleared later to provide starlit nights. Winds throughout our stay were, on the whole light.

Comments

The base camp area was a most pleasant location and had ample room for more than one expedition. The existing stone shelters provide excellent storage areas and the base for kitchen areas. A good supply of running water exists and the area is safe and free from avalanche danger.

In retrospect we should have taken a slightly bigger tent for us as a mess tent and fold up chairs rather than stone seats would have been an additional luxury.

Chapter 5 - CLIMBING PHASE

BASE CAMP TO CAMP 1

25 September

During the planning stage it had been decided to follow the lie used by the Army team in 1990. They spent some days looking for an alternative before following the route that they took and it seemed pointless to waste time searching ourselves. Therefore we were aware that we needed to climb the scree slope directly above base camp for 2000 ft before following a rock then snow gully to the ridge above.

The day after arriving at base camp we decided to recce the route to the base of the climbing proper. This would not only assist our acclimatization but would also enable us to move some of the rope and equipment higher up the mountain ready for use in the future. At 07.30 eight

members of the team filled their sacs with gear and headed off up the scree. The Army report had mentioned a suitable ledge at the top of the scree for stashing gear and it was this that we aimed for. Everyone's pace was different as we came to terms with the heavy loads and increase in altitude. There was no pressure at this stage for anyone to push themselves beyond a comfortable limit and we all monitored our bodies performance carefully. After 2 hours we reached the platform that would serve as a gear dump and changing area for the remainder of the expedition. The scree slope would be easy enough in light boots and tracksters and we would leave our climbing clothing and technical gear at the ledge.

Above we could see the gully that we intended to follow. It looked straight forward at the bottom but the exit from the rock onto the snow was bared by a large hanging serac. We would be fixing rope on all the difficult sections and hoped therefore that we would not spend too much time under the serac. Our loads safely stashed at the ledge we descended to base camp in 40 minutes.

That evening we discussed plans for the following day, with Tom, Tim, Phil and Andy getting the chance to fix the first ropes.

26 September

Our plans were for there to be lead pair of climbers always on the face with a pair in support. The remainder of the team would be involved in load carries between the camps or resting prior to their spell at the front.

The lead 4 fixed rope from the ledge across the scree to the foot of the gully. Loose scree and then easy rock lead up for the first 300 ft. Evidence of the Army fixed ropes still showed at the foot of the serac, much of it in tatters from the stonefall and exposure to the elements.

They climbed the steepening gully to appoint level with the bottom of the serac before lack of rope and the heat of the sun forced them to descent to base camp. There are conflicting views on the way we should tackle the serac and so I decided to put myself in the team for the next day.

27 September

We were up early and after tea and crunchy nut cornflakes ascended the scree in the dark. The slog up took 2 hours but by 5.30 am we were geared up and starting up the fixed ropes. About 1 hours 30 minutes later we reached the tope of the fixed ropes and the foot of the serac. It was bitterly cold in the gully but easier going now it was daylight. The fixed rope stopped at the foot of a large overhanging crack which led up to the gully above. Although safe from stonefall and away from the edges of the serac we decided that it would prove to hard to climb and incredibly tiring to jumar. Therefore we opted to follow the route used by the Army team which ran up the right hand edge of the serac.

Ian led a sort but delicate traverse from the top of the ropes to a wet corner at the edge of the serac. The creaking and groaning of the serac did little to settle the nerves and we were anxious to get clear of it as soon as possible. With Ian belayed in the corner I led up a short overhanging wall and into the gully above. Hard ice greeted me for the next 20 ft and then good snow. I moved into a large open crevasse and brought Ian up. We fixed the rope and then continued up the gully. The going was easier and we ran out 600 ft of rope. We were tempted to push on to the ridge but having used up all the rope and with the sun now on the gully we thought it prudent to descend. As we abseiled past the foot of the serac a cascade of water was flowing and rocks started to fall from above. We would have to ensure that we were clear of this area by midday in future.



By 3 pm we were all safely down at B and tucking into sup and chapattis and watching the loads for the following day being prepared. We discussed plans for the following day, deciding that Tom and Chris should spend the day consolidating the belay points of the existing fixed ropes and if possible fixing rope to the ridge, which we estimated was only 250 ft higher than we had reached.

28 September

Whilst Tom and Chris were on the mountain some of the team carried loads to the ledge ready to move them up to camp 1 when it was established. The porters from Lete had arrived with our remaining equipment which was a major boost as we were starting to run low on kerosene. The lead pair returned at 2.30 pm having reached the ridge and proposed sight form Camp 1. The feeling amongst the team was one of jubilation as we had made good progress and were on schedule. At dinner we celebrated by cracking a bottle of Scotch.

29 September

Having fixed the route to Camp 1 we were now keen to get it established and occupied in order to make progress on the route above. Andy and Phil were the fortunate pair chosen to move up with Tim and Nigel load carrying to camp 1 in support. Load carries to the ledge continued in earnest as we would need to keep camp 1 supplied with food and equipment. The pair at camp 1 checked in on the radios at 6 pm, reporting that they were both feeling fit and well and were witnessing an outstanding cloud inversion. Sat at base camp shrouded in mist we were all envious and wished we were up at camp 1 with the.

CAMP 1 TO CAMP 2

30 September

Our cookboy Dawa and his 2 helpers were now settling into the routine of rising at 3 m to provide tea and hot milk for the team members load carrying to the ledge or camp 1. It was always difficult to drag oneself from the warmth and comfort of the sleeping bag, get dressed and then step out into the chill of the moonlit night. However, the load carries were a prerequisite for a couple of days out at the front and nobody wanted to lost those.

On 30 September, Tom, Ian, Rick and Kev filled their sacks with food, gas, rope and ironmongery and carried it up to camp 1. Setting off from base camp at 3.30 am meant they would be down before the stonefall started. Equipment that would be needed later in the climb but was not immediately essential at camp 1 was moved up to the ledge. In the event that the team got strung out over the mountain it would be possible for the occupants of camp 1 to abseil down to the ledge, collect essentials and then jumar back up.

Meanwhile, Andy and Phil began to fix rope up the broken rockface above camp 1. The report by the previous expedition, together with the photos they had lent us, suggested that a continuous snow ridge led up from camp 1 to camp 2. This was sadly not the case for us as the light monsoon had left approximately 250m of loose rock exposed. Although not desperately steep its looseness meant that sound belay points had to be found if we were to move safely up and down the area throughout the remainder of the expedition.

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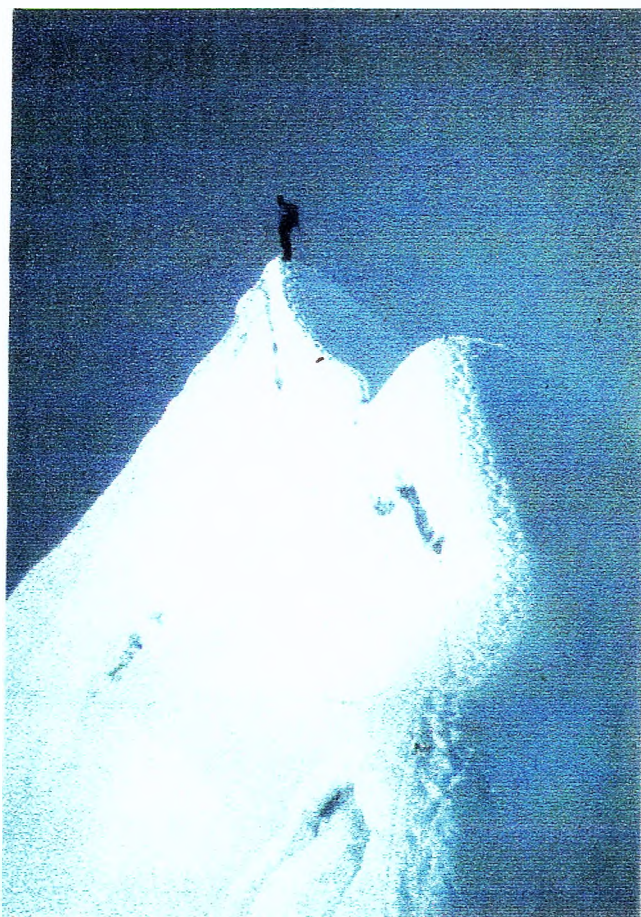
Once again the radio call at 6 pm was received with excitement. Andy and Phil were pleased with their initial progress and showing no signs of altitude sickness. They would stay up for another days climbing before descending for a rest.

1 October

With Andy and Phil planning to descend the following day it was important to get a new pair established at camp 1. Tim and Nigel were due a couple of days at the front and eagerly accepted the invitation to go up. By rotating the team every few days I hoped to get as many acclimatized as possible and therefore have strength in depth for higher on the mountain. There was still a long way to go and I needed all team members acclimatized if we were to support a serious attempt on the summit.

Andy and Phil concentrated on fixing the rope up the remainder of the rock. It was desperately loose and the slightest touch triggered off falls of loose stones. However, they finally reached the top of the rock and moved onto easier snow slopes. Securing the rope to a large snow stake hammered into the snow they descended to camp 1 where Tim and Nigel were settling down for their first night at 5300m.

Base camp was obviously a quieter place now that 4 of the team were on the hill and it would get even quieter once we had 2 camps occupied. The evening meals continued to provide the chance to sit together and discuss our plans and of course speak to the teams on the mountain at the 6 pm radio call. Invariably they would demand certain items of food that they did not have available whilst advising us of the technical equipment they required for the next few days. These transmissions would in general be short and to the point in order to conserve the batteries, but our base set was always on should they have an urgent message to transmit. Sadly, with Tim on the hill our Bridge 4 was now one short and with no volunteers to replace him I settled for an early night.



2 October

Andy and Phil were due down to base camp for a rest soon and it was the turn of myself and Ian to move up to camp 1. In addition to us moving up some of the team were doing load carries to camp 1. It was important that an early start was made from base camp as no one could start down until the last man was off the fixed ropes. The last of us was away by 3.30 am, headtorches flickering off the rocks all the way up the scree slope to the ledge. Once again the weather was fine and as we climbed in the cold iced up gully the first rays of sunshine hit neighbouring Nilgiri. The climb to camp 1 was now familiar with each pitch having its own features. The most unpopular was the short overhanging wall to the right of the serac and it was the scene of many an epic struggle as jumar refused to bite on the iced ropes and crampons snagged in the makeshift etrier. The covering of snow in the gully above the serac had now all gone, leaving a base of hard ice covered by small stones and loose rocks.

Whilst we were moving to camp 1, Tim and Nigel were busy fixing rope to the beginning of the now ridge. Unlike the Army team in 1990, we planned to fix rope the length of the ridge. The extra effort involved seemed a small price to pay for the additional safety it represented. The photos we had seen showed it to be knife-edged and any fall would be difficult to arrest.

After a few brews the load carriers descended to basecamp leaving Ian and myself to relax and enjoy the view. We were eager not to exert ourselves too much as our bodies needed to acclimatise to the rarer atmosphere. The peace and tranquillity was not disturbed until Tim, Nigel, Andy and Phil returned from the ridge at 3 pm but it was a welcome disturbance as they brought good news. They felt sure that we would reach the proposed sight of Camp 2 the following day and reported that the ridge looked relatively straight forward. We celebrated the news by tucking in to Steak and Kidney Pudding and Dumplings followed by Fruit Cake in Butterscotch Sauce.

3 October

The sun hit the tent at 7.20 am and the struggle to dress in the confines of the tents began. By 8 am we were sat in the sunshine brewing up and enjoying the magnificent views. Tim and Nigel were first sway, jumaring up the ropes to the high point. Andy and Phil began to descent whilst myself and Ian waited for our turn to move up. After 2 hours we had all reached the beginning of the ridge and Tim began fixing the new sections. Ian and I were fulfilling the role of support climbers, our bags weighed down with coils of rope ready for fixing. The situation was exhilarating as the knife-edged ridge rose ahead of us and the Annapurna glacier swept by below. We progressed quickly along the ridge, driving 3 ft snow stakes into the snow approximately every 100 yards. Despite the steepness of the ridge we could relax and enjoy the feeling of being on a big mountain and for the meantime free from the dangers of stonefall.

After a further 2 hours climbing the ridge began to broaden out and descend slightly. We had reached the site for Camp 2. The upper headwall of Tilicho's South Face loomed above us

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just 800 yards away, but for today, we would be content with our achievements. We dumped any remaining rope and equipment, took a couple of photos and then started back along the ridge for Camp 1. Back at Camp 1 we radioed our breakthrough to the rest of the team at Base Camp.

4 October

The job of erecting tents at Camp 2 fell to myself and Ian. Tim and Nigel were descending for a well earned rest and Chris and Tom were moving up to replace them. We had waited for the sun to hit our tent before moving and it was 0930 before we began to jumar up the ropes towards Camp 2. Our rucksacs were laden with rope, tents, gas and food, enough to support Tom and Chris for their first couple of days. Surprisingly it took only 2 hrs 30 minutes to reach Camp 2, although we were both quite breathless on arrival. After relaxing in the sun we erected 2 tents, securing them with snow stakes and ensuring the snow valences were covered with enough snow to hold them down in high winds. It was tiring work and we had to rest every 5 minutes, once again the altitude taking its toll. Happy with our work we descended to Camp 1 where we found Tom and Chris laying in their tent nursing headaches. We brewed up and sought shelter from the sun which had already taken its toll on our lips and exposed skin. I wrote my diary and began to pack my kit ready for our descent to base camp in the morning.

5 October

Once again it was time for a reshuffle. Ian and I were on our way down whilst Kev and Rick were on their way up. Andy and Phil restocked Camp 1 with food and equipment and Tom and Chris carried loads up to Camp 2. It was one of the few days where no forward progress was made, but a necessary adjustment if we were all to acclimatise properly, and avoid burning ourselves out too early.



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The route up to Camp 1 caused some concern as there was significant stonefall early in the morning. A large rock had narrowly missed Kev and he was severely shaken on reaching Camp 1. The snow which had been present in the gully when we arrived has now gone, leaving hard ice covered in a thin layer of shale. Loose rocks and boulders clung precariously to the slope and were dislodged by the slightest touch. Unfortunately we did not have the time to seek an alternative line but with the majority of equipment now at Camps 1 and 2 it was hoped that transits up and down this section could now be reduced.

6 October

Having stocked Camp 2 with the necessary equipment and provisions and having benefited from the load carry in terms of acclimatization, Tom and Chris moved up to Camp 2. They spent the afternoon studying the face above, looking for a route to follow. They sounded in good spirits during the evening radio call and reported that they could see some old ropes hanging down the rock above and would be going higher in the morning. Kev and Rick at Camp 1 also reported that they were fit and well and would be joining the others at Camp 2 the following day. There was a feeling of quiet confidence amongst all members of the team as we entered this new phase of the expedition.



CAMP 2 AND ABOVE

7 October

Tom and Chris spent an exhausting day fixing rope up the 300m snow ramp leading from Camp 2 to the foot of the upper headwall. From the tents the route followed a slowly rising

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snow slope for 800m, crossing several avalanche runnels before reaching the base of a small rock buttress. Staying to the left of the buttress and right of a large dangerous looking chute the snow led up to towards the main face. The quality of snow was poor and the surprisingly steep angle made for difficult going. However, they persevered, reaching small ledge and sound belay at the foot of the rock face. Exhausted, they descended to Camp 2.

The upper headwall was undoubtedly going to provide the most difficult climbing of the expedition. The altitude coupled with the steepness of the face were sure to challenge the lead climbers both physically and mentally. For this reason the leader was anxious to ensure regular rotation of lead pairs where possible. It would be possible for 8 of the 11 climbers to be above Base Camp at all times, the 4 at Camp 1 ferrying equipment up to Camp 2 as required and replacing a lead pair if necessary.

8 October

Rick and Kev, who had moved up to Camp 2 the previous day, were getting their first taste of the upper headwall as support for Tom and Chris. A cold night made for easier progress as they jumared up the ramp of snow. Above, the proposed route zigzagged up between small snow patches on the steepening rock. Evidence of the Army attempt in 1990 was abundant in the form of old fixed rope and provided some guidance as to the suitable line to take. The rock in places was loose and the intermittent stonefall was always cause for concern. Having fixed the majority of the rope they had carried and having tied off any surplus at the high point the team descended to the relative safety of Camp 2.

9 October

With Chris feeling slightly tired, Rick teamed up with Tom to try and push out the route. Unfortunately the weather and the mountain had other ideas. Having reached the previous days high point they found themselves subjected to an almost constant barrage of falling rocks. However, despite this, they continued to make upward progress until 2 pm when it began to snow. Quite rightly they decided that enough was enough and descended to Camp 2. That evening on the radio Tom expressed his concern at the volume of stonefall and questioned the viability of continuing to follow that line. He believed that an alternative might exist to the right of planned route and that it should be investigated.

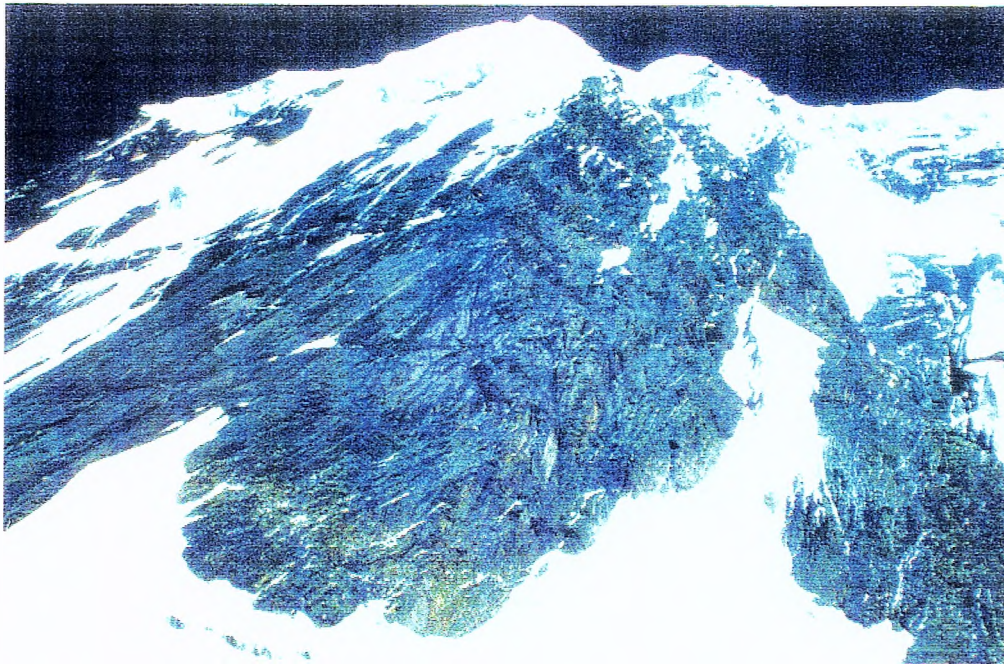
The mood at Base Camp was subdued as a result of the news, especially since we had wasted 2 days climbing. However, time was still on our side and Dawa's speciality of Spring Rolls, Chilli Sauce, and Vegetables helped reduce the air of despondency.

10 October

The snow of the previous day had now cleared and once again the day had dawned bright and clear. Having moved up to Camp 2 yesterday, Andy and Phil were now the pair at the front, whilst Tom and Rick came down for a rest. The altitude had prevented both Andy and Phil

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from getting a good nights sleep and they both felt lethargic and jaded on waking. They opted for a rest day rather than burn themselves out further, instead, spending much of the day studying the face looking for an alternative route. Tim moved up from camp 1 to join Andy and Phil, his planned partner, Guy, having to descend due to illness.



11 October

With the weather settled once again, Andy and Tim made significant progress on the new route. With Phil carrying lengths of rope in support they succeeded in finding and fixing a rising traverse that gave access to a loose but climbable gully. Myself and Ian moved up to Camp 1 ready for our days at the front.

12 October

The momentum was once again maintained as Andy and Tim reached the top of the gully and managed to get a look at the route above. This was completely new ground and we were anxious to get confirmation that we were not following blind alley. Their report was promising. The route above their high point looked climbable as far as they could see, but having run out of rope they were unable to investigate further. We had now fixed rope for 600m above Camp 2 and although the climbing was on dreadfully loose rock we appeared to suffer little rockfall from above. Myself and Ian were waiting for them on their return to Camp 2, eager for all the news on conditions above. Movement of the rest of the team was now minimal as nearly all the equipment we required was at Camp 2 and rest periods were becoming vital to recharge the batteries after exertions up high.

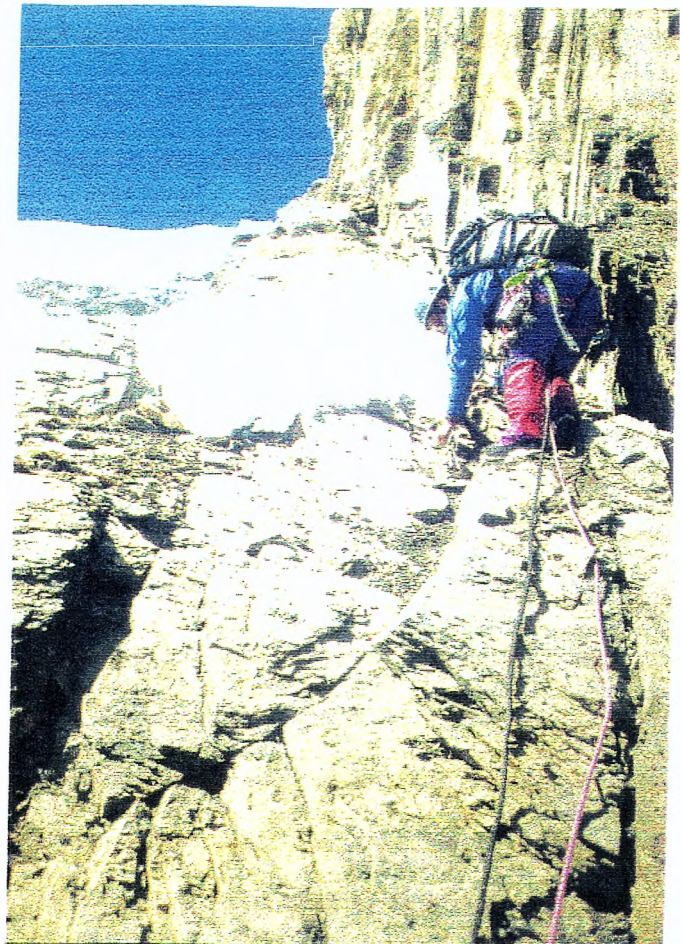
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13 October

There was a noticeable change to the weather as Ian and I set up the fixed ropes. Our sleep had been disturbed by the flapping of the tent in a strengthening wind and when we moved off high cloud and a cold wind replaced the normally clear skies and warm conditions. Perhaps it was an omen, for when only 200m up the fixed ropes I developed severe pain in my lower back. Having suffered similar pain before I knew that to continue would be foolhardy and I must descend and rest. Ian elected to continue to the top of the ropes and tie off the rope he was carrying whilst I abseiled carefully to Camp 2. A sizeable dose of Nurofen helped ease the pain and I hoped for better luck the next day. It was frustrating after the successes of the previous 2 days but I hoped it would not be a prolonged set back.

14 October

Tom and Chris had joined us at Camp 2 the previous day and we were planning a big push. Once again the wind had been strong over night and although the sky was clear when we woke we could see a front out to the west which looked particularly threatening. Sensibly we decided to try and find a more sheltered spot for the tents before attempting any climbing. After an hour, during which we moved 3 tents 150 yds, the storm hit us and we were forced to retire to the tents and sit out the snow storm for the rest of the day. There was nothing we could do except remain ensconced in our tents and listen to the wind and snow and hope for an improvement. Conditions at base camp were not much better although they did not get much in the way of snow.



15 October

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Surprisingly, after high winds throughout the night, the morning dawned fine and clear. The 4 of us set of up the ropes with our sacs laden with rope and gear, anxious to make up for the past 2 days inactivity. Above the high point a step loose corner led up to large overlapping broken blocks. As with the rest of the route protection was sparse and far from ideal but Chris and Ian made good progress and by the end of the day we had gained a further 250m of height. We new that we still had a long way to go but there was a feeling of optimism amongst us all as we descended to our tents. Happy with our days achievements we sat outside our tents in the sunshine watching the shadows creep across Annapurnas North Face. Regardless of the outcome of the expedition the effort and toil was worthwhile just to experience the sunsets from this high vantage point.

16 October

Myself and Tom left the tents just after sunrise, moving up the new familiar snow slope and rocks to our high point. Jamaring up the steep overlapping blocks was exhilarating in the warmth of the sun. After 5 hours of steady jumaring we reached the top of our fixed ropes and started up the new ground above. The angle seemed to ease although the rock became even more broken. We quickly led out 2 rope lengths, each 100m, and reached the bottom of a snow fell at regular intervals. It was obvious we would have to continue straight up but the ground did not look too difficult and we hoped the snow gully would lead us to the upper snow field. Tom tied off the last 60 ft of roe that we had before I began to abseil down. After 10 ft of abseiling I was airborne a the rocks to which the ropes were belayed all began to shift. Fortunately the last piece of rope that Tom had tied off held and my fall was arrested after 20 ft. Bruised and winded I waited whilst Tom attempted to reattach the anchor point. After several abortive attempts this was achieved but it was a very tentative pair that abseiled down to camp 2.

Safely down at camp 2 we relaxed and rehydrated with endless brews. The four of us discussed plans for the route, each airing their thoughts. It was a unanimous decision to have a rest day on 17 October and then try and establish a camp 3 above the gully from which we could push for the summit. The events of the day had confirmed all of our feelings that the route was extremely loose and dangerous and that the less days spent moving up and down it the better. We relayed our plans to the rest of the team, instructing Phil, Andy, Tim and Rick to come up in anticipation of a second summit bid but also to act as a



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consider spending the night where we were. The decision to descent seemed the only sensible option.



Almost immediately we set off down, each deep in thought and hugely disappointed with our lack of progress. It was whilst descending that, as expedition leader, I made the decision to abandon the attempt. We were all incredibly tired, both physically and mentally. The looseness of the rock and snow coupled with the absence of protection and belays of any significance convinced me that to continue would be increasing the risk of a serious accident beyond an acceptable limit. Our days on the mountain were running out and were not enough to try and find an alternative line. We abseiled in silence, not wishing to discuss what was probably in each of our minds.

At 5 pm we were all within a short walk of Camp 2. Tim, Rick and Andy were all eager for news of our day. I waited until all 7 of us were together before outlining my decision. It was perhaps a reflection of the tightness of the team that the decision was accepted without debate.

We are all incredibly disappointed but realistic enough to realise that it was the sensible option and that we would not reach the summit. It is difficult to describe how we all felt as we sat drinking tea, eating our evening meal and watching the sun set over Nilgiri. No so much a sense of failure more a sense of loss.

We discussed plans for stripping the route and clearing Camp 2 before drifting off to our tents for some rest.

19 October

We were all eager to descend to Base Camp now that the decision had been made to cease climbing. Tim, Andy and Rick planned to remain at Camp 2 and begin the clear up whilst myself, Tom, Ian and Chris descended. There was a chill wind blowing as we filled our sacks with everything we could possibly carry and set off along the ridge for camp 1 and eventually Base Camp. The snow conditions along the ridge and at camp 1 had deteriorated considerably since we had last been there. Large holes had appeared and the tents at camp 1 had subsided. The gully down to the foot of Tilicho was completely bare of snow and the rocks dangerously loose as they sat perched on the ice.

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On reaching the gear ledge we found Kev, Guy and Nigel had come up to meet us and assist with clearing the ledge of all unnecessary gear. We chatted briefly before heading down the scree for breakfast.



It was good to be reunited with the rest of the team after 9 days on the mountain. The atmosphere was relaxed and they were all supportive of our reasons for calling it a day. After washing, eating, drinking, more eating and more drinking we began the clear up operation - determined to remove every possible trace of our presence. The mail runner headed off down valley to rustle up the porters and to send word to our trekking agency and to try and find our liaison officer who had left base camp some weeks before.

20 October

Four of the team went up to camp 1 to help Tim, Andy and Rick bring kit down. The remainder of us set about drying tents and sorting equipment into loads ready for the arrival of the porters. The weather was still good which made the task much easier than when we were packing to walk in. The team members at camp 2 managed to bring down everything to Camp 1. However, there was still an abundance of food and gas at Camp 1, too much to get down in one day, and therefore a further trip up the following day would be necessary. This was not a problem as we had plenty of time, although getting volunteers to go up again was not easy.

21 October

Myself, Chris, Tom and Ian sipped tea and nibbled biscuits in the mess tent at 04.30. Our early morning conversation was only interrupted by the constant stream of avalanches pouring down the North Face of Annapurna. We left in pairs for the walk p the scree and then climb up to Camp 1 for final lean up operations. Tom and Ian had left the ledge by the time Chris and I

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arrived and so we geared up and set off across the scree. On reaching the gully we were met by a constant stream of rockfall which pinned us down in the central section of the gully for 30 minutes. Every time we attempted to gain height we were greeted by further falls of rock. We tried shouting up to Ian and Tom but got no reply and decided it was best to wait back at the ledge. Some hours later they returned with huge sacks. They had completely stripped Camp 1 of all gear and equipment but were now exhausted after abseiling down with such big bags. The rockfalls had been caused as they jumared up, freeing the ropes from the ice that had formed over night. We split the loads and ran down the scree for the last time.



CLIMBING GROUP ITINERARY

- 9 September - Expedition members fly to Kathmandu
- 10-12 September - Administration in Kathmandu
- 13 September - All expedition members depart Kathmandu for Pokhara by lorry.
- 14 September - Climbers depart Pokhara for base camp on 14,000 foot.
- 18 September - Climbers arrive at base camp.
- 19 September - Climbing begins
- 28 September - Establish Camp 1 (approx 5350 m)

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6 October	-	Establish Camp 2 (approx 5700 m)
12 October	-	Establish Camp 3 (approx 6500 m)
15 October	-	1st Summit bid
25 October	-	Climbing complete ,all personnel at base camp
26 October	-	Walk out to Pokhara begins
31 October	-	Arrive Pokhara
1 November	-	Depart Pokhara for Kathmandu
2 November	-	Arrive Kathmandu
4 November	-	Expedition members fly to Gatwick

CLIMBING PHASE - ITINERARY

24 Sep	Base camp established	All
25 Sep	Reconnaissance to base of route and loads to ledge	Scott, Payne, McLachlan, Heathfield, Lay, Barbour, Singleton, Hewkin.
26 Sep	Rope fixed up gully to foot of serac	Barbour, Payne, Heathfield, McLachlan
	Loads to ledge	Scott, Lay, Hewkin, Singleton.
27 Sep	Rope fixed above serac and up gully	Scott, Singleton, Lay, Hewkin
	Loads to ledge	Hodgson, Rawlins
28 Sep	Rope fixed to Camp 1 and all belays checked.	Rawlins, Barbour
	Loads to ledge	Payne, Hodgson, Heathfield, McLachlan
29 Sep	Camp 1 established and occupied	Heathfield, McLachlan
	Loads to Camp 1	Payne, Hodgson
	Loads to ledge	Scott, Singleton, Hewkin, Lay, Beaumont.
30 Sep	Ropes fixed towards Camp 2	Heathfield, McLachlan
	Loads to Camp 1	Barbour, Singleton, Lay, Hewkin
	Loads to ledge	Rawlins, Beaumont
1 Oct	Rope fixing between Camp 1 and Camp 2	Heathfield, McLachlan

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	Move up to Camp 1	Payne, Hodgson
2 Oct	Rope fixing continues to Camp 2	Hodgson, Payne
	Move up to Camp 1	Scott, Singleton
	Loads to Camp 1	Barbour, Beaumont, Lay, Hewkin
	Descend to Base Camp	Heathfield, McLachlan
3 Oct	Rope fixed to sight of Camp 2	Hodgson, Payne, Scott, Singleton
4 Oct	Camp 2 established	Singleton, Scott
	Move up to Camp 1	Barbour, Rawlins
	Descend to Base Camp	Hodgson, Payne
5 Oct	Loads to Camp 2	Rawlins, Barbour
	Move up to Camp 1	Hewkin, Lay
	Loads to Camp 1	Heathfield, McLachlan
	Descend to Base Camp	Scott, Singleton
6 Oct	Camp 2 occupied	Rawlins, Barbour
	Loads to Camp 2	Hewkin, Lay
	Loads to Camp 1	Payne, Hodgson, Beaumont
7 Oct	Climbing on upper headwall begins- snow ramp fixed	Barbour, Rawlins
	Move up to Camp 2	Hewkin, Lay
	Move up to Camp 1	Heathfield, McLachlan
	Loads to Camp 1	Singleton, Scott
8 Oct	Climbing on upper headwall	Rawlins, Barbour
	Support for lead pair	Hewkin, Lay
	Loads to Camp 2	Heathfield, McLachlan
	Loads to Camp 1	Payne, Hodgson
9 Oct	Climbing on headwall	Barbour, Lay

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	Move up to Camp 2	Heathfield, McLachlan
	Move up to Camp 1	Payne, Beaumont
	Loads to Camp 1	Singleton, Scott
	Descend to Base Camp	Rawlins, Hewkin
10 Oct	Move up to Camp 2	Payne
	Descend to Base Camp	Lay, Barbour, Beaumont
11 Oct	Climbing on Headwall	Heathfield, Payne
	Support for Lead pair	McLachlan
	Move up to Camp 1	Singleton, Scott
12 Oct	Climbing on Headwall	Heathfield, Payne
	Load carry Camp 1 to Camp 2	McLachlan
	Move up to Camp 2	Scott, Singleton
13 Oct	Climbing on Headwall	Singleton, Scott
	Move to Camp 2	Barbour, Rawlins
	Loads to Camp 1	Hodgson, Beaumont
	Descend to Base Camp	Payne, Heathfield, McLachlan
14 Oct	All Camps Stormbound	
15 Oct	Climbing on Headwall	Singleton, Rawlins
	Support for Lead Pair	Barbour, Scott
	Load carry Camp 1 to Camp 2	Hodgson, Beaumont
16 Oct	Climbing on Headwall	Barbour, Scott
	Support for Lead Pair	Rawlins, Singleton
	Move up to Camp 1	Payne, Heathfield, Lay
	Descend to Base Camp	Hodgson, Beaumont
17 Oct	Rest Day prior to summit bid	Barbour, Rawlins, Scott, Singleton
	Load carry Camp 1 to Camp 2	Lay, Heathfield, Payne
18 Oct	Summit Bid	Scott, Singleton, Rawlins, Barbour

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	Move to Camp 2	Heathfield, Payne, Lay
19 Oct	Descend to Base Camp	Scott, Rawlins, Barbour, Singleton
	Strpping Route	Payne
	Load Carry Camp 2 to Camp 1	Lay, Heathfield
	Strip Gear Ledge	Hodgson, Hewkin, Beaumont
20 Oct	Descend to Base Camp	Payne, Heathfield, Lay
	Strip Camp 1	Hodgson, Hewkin
	Strip Ledge	Barbour, Singleton
21 Oct	Strip Camp 1 and Ledge	Singleton, Barbour, Rawlins, Scott

Chapter 6 - WALK-OUT PHASE

BASE CAMP TO POKHARA

22/23 October

A relaxed atmosphere permeated the camp as we set about readying ourselves for the walk out. Tents were aired and packed, ropes coiled and karabiners counted. Roads were packed and labelled and tins flattened and bagged up ready for the arrival of the porters. In between, we entertained ourselves with a game of baseball, stopping frequently to make new balls when the old one got hit onto the Annapurna Glacier. Throughout the weather stayed fine, although the breeze began to strengthen in the afternoon, perhaps a sign that the winter was beginning to creep in. Mealtimes once again became noisy affairs as we all crammed in to the mess tent. It had been a long time since we had all sat together both the team humour and spirit had not been lost. On our final night at Base Camp Nigel ousted our cookboys from their kitchen and produced an excellent curry with rice and Bombay Potatoes.

24 October

Tea was brought at 6 am and as we left our tents the porters were anxious to be on their way to Lete. It was bitter cold, probably the coldest night we had experienced, whilst on the mountain, and the tents cracked as we folded them and jammed them into the barrels. Dawa hovered with hot tea, milk and chapattis which we ate in between last minute packing. By 07.30 we were ready to leave. The 25 porters each had loads, or in some cases double loads, and we had our sacks. Equipment which was surplus to requirements was left in a pile and the porters helped themselves, sometimes doubling the size of their load as a result. As they headed off down the valley we completed a final sweep of the area, ensuring that all our rubbish was burned or carried out, and as the sun crested Herzog's impenetrable barrier we left as well.

We were all eager to reach the main trail and planned to reach Lete in at least 2 days. The porters we knew would take longer but we were prepared to wait in Lete for them rather than linger on the trail. Our stopping point for the night was Nilgiri base camp which we reached in cool of the afternoon mists, once again out of sight of Tilicho.

25 October

Sunrise over the Annapurnas was particularly impressive as for the last time we packed our tents. Once again it was cold and the previous night's frost was uncomfortable for the scantily clad porters whose only consolation was the fact that they were earning more for the services on the rugged walk out than they would have earned on the main Annapurna trail. It was nearly all down hill to Lete and at 06.45 we set off, safe in the knowledge that the land of lodges, mattresses and beer was not far away. By 2 pm we had all arrived at the lodge at Lete.

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Khola and our resting place for the next 36 hours. Some of the porters drifted in late in the afternoon but many were still out on the trail and we would not see them until the following day.

26 October

Rest day

27 October - 29 October

With the trekking season now in full swing porters were not easy to obtain and those that had moved us out from Base Camp were not willing to carry as far as Pokhara. We therefore left Dawa and the 2 cookboys at Lete to organise porters and mules whilst we headed off back down the trail. Our walk out followed the route of the walk in but was covered in shorter time. We stopped in the village of Tatopani on the night of 27 October and Gorepani on the night of 28 October before reaching Niapal on 29 October.

We had sent word to our trekking agents Summit of our estimated arrival date in Niapal and requested a bus for all and our equipment. However, with our kit a day behind we left the bus in Niapal and travelled by the local bus to Pokhara where we were reunited with the trekkers. It was a good feeling to have the whole expedition reunited and to swap tales of our exploits.

30 October - 31 October

The weather in Pokhara was now warm and settled in comparison to the torrential rain we had experienced at the beginning of the expedition and we all enjoyed some sightseeing. Haircuts and shaves were the order of the day for most of the climbers, with massages thrown in for just a few extra rupees. Buffalo steaks and plates of chips were consumed by the dozen as we attempted to replace the pounds that many of us had lost over the weeks. The pleasures of baths and showers were not lost on us either as we adjusted to life back in civilisation.

Reliable as ever, Dawa arrived on the bus with all the kit on 31 October and we made plans for the last leg of our journey back to Kathmandu. Our staff from Summit were eager to return to their families but also for the festival of Dawaili which began on November 2.

RETURN TO KATHMANDU

We left Pokhara at 7 am for the 8 hour journey back to the Summit Hotel. The journey passed uneventfully with occasional stops for tea and food. As we followed the main highway back to Kathmandu flags depicting the various political parties of Nepal hung in all the villages. Elections were due in the middle of November and the country was gripped with election fever. The dry weather meant the roads were easily passable and we arrived safely in Kathmandu at 7 pm. Our expedition funds had taken quite a pasting from the extra portage costs and expenses of the Liaison Officer and we therefore planned to stay in cheaper

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accommodation for our last few days in Kathmandu. Once again everything had been arranged for us by the trekking agency and we were booked in to the appropriately named Hotel Tilicho in Tamel.

2 November - 3 November

Before we could depart Kathmandu there were several courtesy visits to be made. These included the British Defence Attaché and Nepalese Ministry of Tourism, both of whom were interested in the outcome of our expedition together with information on any problems we had encountered. Equipment had to be repacked, counted and the appropriate customs declarations completed and cleared. As ever we relied heavily on the expertise of our trekking agency to steer us through this potential minefield. It was not without its complications but finally it was all achieved.

The remainder of our time was spent sightseeing and experiencing the fascinating cultural side of Kathmandu.

THE TREKKING GROUP HV 94

Neil Daniel

Mick Milmoe

Jenny Stewart

Hugh Gould

Brian Mannion

Dougie MacDonald

Andy Craig

Phil Cockram

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Chapter 7 - TREKKING TEAM REPORT

POKHARA TO PISANG

We said our goodbyes to the climbers and boarded the bus along with our porters for the short journey to the road head at Sisw. The normal start point for the Annapurna Circuit at Besisahar was inaccessible due to a huge landslide blocking the main road. We arrived at the wet and muddy bus station and spent an hour in the nearest tea house whilst our porters sorted out their loads. Eventually we were off along a good track heading for Tarbes, eager but somewhat apprehensive as to what the next six weeks had in store for us. A steady plod for four hours brought us to Tarbes but no campsite. This was no bad thing as the rain was never ending. Fortunately a very generous family offered us the top floor of their house for a small fee of 20 rupees each. It was not long before we had our first of many boil in the bag compo rations bubbling away on the stove.

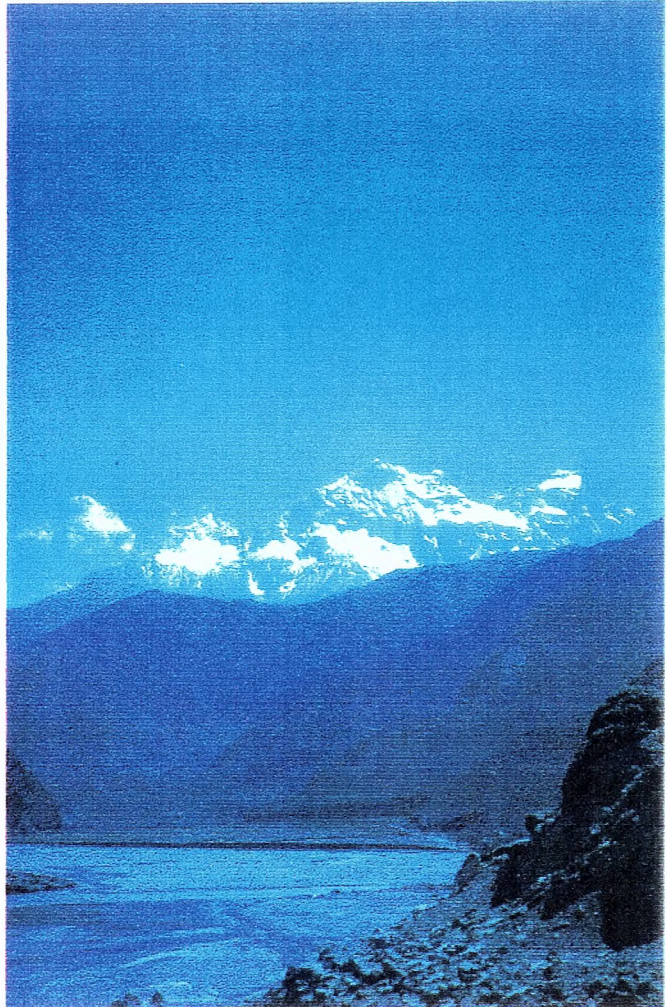


After a good night sleep we were up at 0530, a time we were to become familiar with, packed and on the trail again at 0700 heading for Shyauli Bazaar. We crossed the same river five times and climbed steadily for 3000 ft through lush green jungle to the first police checkpoint. At last the sun showed its face and our spirits lifted. Suddenly being chased by hornets or drained of your blood by the leaches did not seem so bad. We marched on, tiptoeing through paddy fields, watching the monkeys swinging through the trees, and constantly looking around at the wonderful sights which most of us had never seen before. Shyauli Bazaar, in contrast to the other villages encountered so far, was very primitive. No bricks and mortar here - the houses were built of clay with thatch roofs. Our sherpa, Dorje, decided it was safer to camp a short distance away from the village and warned

us not to leave anything outside the tents. We established our camp for the night on a rocky piece of ground which was also home to the local scorpion who decided to take refuge in one of the tents. Needless to say the alarmed occupants wasted no time and carefully removed him back to his more familiar surroundings.

The following day was very hot and the heat took its toll on the steep ridge climb to Nalma where we had a welcome rest at a basic but comfortable lodge. We had 2 more days of easy walking, split by a night stop at Baglung Pani, before joining the main trail at Khudi, and leaving the leeches behind.

These first few days gave us an insight into a rarely visited part of Nepal. The most noticeable thing about joining the main Annapurna Circuit at Khudi was the number and quality of tea houses and loges. On the main trail we encountered children begging, something we had not encountered during the first few days. The sight of fellow westerners also brought home to us how lucky we were to have spent the first part of the trip away from the growing band of trekkers.



After crossing an incredible suspension bridge constructed from bamboo we ate a quick lunch and headed for Bhule in the rain again. No leeches, only the mosquitoes to annoy us now.

On the steep ascent to Bahudanda, which means Brahmin Hill, the blistering hot sun came out. Lunch was spent here watching the local carpenters, busy sawing perfect planks of wood using the most basic equipment. The scenery was becoming more dramatic now, but the big mountains were still out of sight. Our night stop at Syanje was highlighted by the group shower at local waterfall - freezing cold but refreshing. Here we met a group of Spanish firemen from Madrid who were

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going to climb the North Face of Tilicho, and in our pigeon Spanish we told them of our team on the South Face.

We left Syanje at the now routine time of 0700 hrs and followed the river towards Chanje, climbing gently and passing marijuana plants growing freely all around. We passed through steep sided gorges, listening to the roar of the river far below, before finally arriving at Chanje for a well earned lunch stop. The gorges opened out into a wide valley and the small town Tal, reminiscent of the American Wild West. The name Tal means lake, and the village so named as the whole of this wide valley was once a lake. We were now at the district border with Manang. The differences across from the Lamjung district were striking. The people were Buddhists of Tibetan ancestry and mud and thatch houses gave way to stone buildings with flat roofs. Thankfully, the rainfall in the area is considerably lower than other parts of the circuit, and sub-tropical vegetation starts to give way to the firs and pine trees of the highlands.



The monsoon was behind us now and we left Tal for Koto in glorious sunshine. We were rewarded with our first glimpses of the high Himalayan mountains. Annapurna II showed her face along with Manaslu at the head of the Larkya valley. The Buddhist influence was all around and we passed many prayer wheels and mani walls, even getting to look inside a small Gumpa at Bagarchap for a small donation. Fields of maize, barley, and potatoes were passed before giving way to the orchards of peach and apple trees which surround the village of Bagarchap. We arrived in Koto shortly after lunch and set up camp for the night.

PISANG - THE MOUNTAIN

Pisang village was our destination for the day, and the next phase of our expedition. The route continued through forests of pine and fir to Chame. En-route we crossed a concrete bridge over a

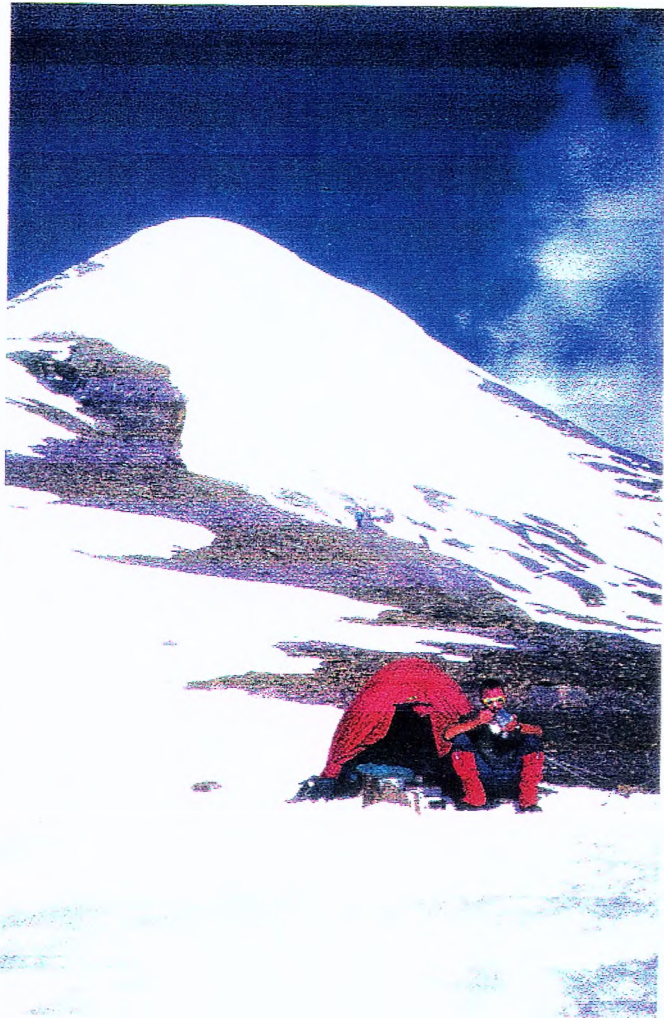
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powerful waterfall, inhabited, according to legend, by a water demon. A large white gate with a corrugated roof marked the entrance to Chame, the district headquarters of Manang, and the towns hot springs were inviting but sadly we did not stop long enough to sample them. On arrival in Pisang village we were met by a group of inquisitive children. Our rucksack straps were pulled and bear skin pinched by this mischievous bunch as we sat at the road side until we could negotiate a campsite across the river away from the main thoroughfare. From the village we could see Pisang Peak (6091 m) rising high above, and could pick out our route up the SW ridge which we were planning to climb.

Pisang village lies at the height of 3200m and the trek to it had been good for our fitness. Apart from a team dose of flu and odd coughs and colds we were in reasonable shape and all confident that we could reach the summit.

With our campsite finally established we relaxed and enjoyed a rest day on 24 September, our first since beginning the trek. We spent the day catching up on our washing, staring in wonderment at the magnificent views surrounding us.

Pisang is split into Lower Pisang and Upper Pisang (at 3300m) where little has changed for centuries and the place had a positively medieval atmosphere to it. Whilst we were all relaxing and enjoying our well-earned rest our porters wasted no time and had found themselves work harvesting the buckwheat.



The next morning, with some of our porters we moved up to advanced base camp (ABC) at 4400m. Once the tents were up the porters wished us luck and departed back to the village. Some of us were already higher than we had been before and of our team of 8 only 3 had made a previous trip to the Himalayas. Here, one of the team decided that he had been high enough and opted to stay at ABC to act as safety man should we run into any snags higher up.

With all of us sleeping reasonably well we used the next day as an acclimatization day, carrying loads up a grassy ridge to where it joined the SW ridge of Pisang at 5100m. After establishing our

gear dump we descended back down to ABC. Away sharpish the following morning we moved heavy laden back up the route to pick up the loads that we had dropped off the previous day. On arrival at the cache we discovered that an intruder had got their before us. A days supply of boil in the bag food had been ripped open and a plastic boot was missing. We were to find out later and again to our cost, that these intruders were a flight of huge ravens that soared the ridges and scavenged for goodies that climbers left lying about. After a quick search the boot was discovered 200 ft below in a scree and snow gully and was duly recovered. From the food cache we headed along the SW ridge which was similar in places to the rocky ridge of Crib Goch in North Wales but with the odd snow field thrown in for extra interest. A further ascent of 200m brought us to the site for our high camp at 5300m. This was a well used site and despite being partially snow covered it required little preparation for our three tents. As we only had about 800m of ascent from high camp to the summit we waited until it was light next morning to make our attempt. Again we were blessed with perfect weather conditions and at 7 am we set off for the summit. The snow was good and cramponable as we moved unroped along the snow fields on the side of the ridge until it met the summit cone of Pisang. Here we roped up as the ground, although not technical, was steep and a slip would have been extremely hazardous. We moved together on a rope of three and two ropes of two. The rope of three did stalwart work by pushing ahead and kicking lots of steps in the higher and softer snow nearer the summit. By midday we had all reached the summit ridge. The snow was very poorly consolidated and was becoming worse as the temperature rose. On reaching the recognised summit we wasted no time before beginning our descent back down the mountain, constantly aware of the deteriorating snow conditions. The descent was not as rapid as expected as the snow was balling on crampons and we remained roped up until we reached the relatively safety of the ridge proper.

From above high camp, litter could be seen around the tents and we discovered that our friends the ravens had paid us a visit, scattering all our rubbish around the tents. To get the rubbish and in search of food, they had ripped the tent doors and fly sheets and virtually ruined three new tents. However, despite the hassle from the ravens we had all had an excellent day with new personal height bests for 5 of the group and a safe return with no injuries or altitude problems to mar the climb. So, it was a weary but happy lot that collapsed into the tents that night.

We slept soundly that night, waking early to break camp and make our way down to ABC, where our safety man greeted us with lots of tea and coffee. Our porters arrived a couple of hours later and we all descended to our original camp site in the village and another well earned rest day.

PISANG TO JOMSOM

Rested and feeling pretty pleased with ourselves we left Pisang for Manang, the largest village in the valley. The trail climbed steeply through the woods but we were rewarded by fabulous views and a well earned drink from the teahouse on reaching the top. The North Face of Tilicho could just be seen and we all wondered how the climbers were doing on the other side of the mountain.

The airstrip at Ongre/Humde did not resemble Heathrow but then Nepal does not resemble London, but the small settlement does boast the longest prayer wheel walls in the region consisting

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of 266 wheels which run straight through the centre of the village. The approach to Manang was very impressive, as was the cheese on toast purchased from one of the many hotels. Our campsite for the night was established in the field adjoining the Yak Hotel from where we could marvel at the views of Lamjung, Annapurna II, Annapurna IV, the false peak of Annapurna III, Gangapurna and Tilicho. We also took the opportunity to attend the lecture by the Himalayan Rescue Association on the signs and symptoms of altitude sickness. Although we were already acclimatised the lecture was both informative and entertaining for all. Manang is a good base to acclimatise and has some good excursions to Tilicho Lake or to Tsumkhang, a hermitage high up on the northern cliff that rises above Manang. Here a Lama conducts a short puja for trekkers about to cross the Thorung La pass.

Our trek from Manang to the Thorung La was broken up by a night stop at Letdar followed by an easy walk to Thorung Phedi. The weather was still settled with very cold mornings until the sun was up and then warm clear days. Fit and well acclimatised we did not anticipate any problems when crossing the 5416m Thorung La Pass. However our porters were not as acclimatised as us and so at their request we left Phedi at 0300 am to allow them plenty of time. The path to the top was very similar to the tourist path on Ben Nevis but nowhere near as boring. We arrived on the saddle of the pass as the sun was rising and waited for all the porters to catch us up and took the opportunity to take team photographs and watch a group from the Nepalese Army climb up Khatung Kang the southern peak that rises up from the pass, the northern being Yakawa Kang. Meanwhile our sherpa changed prayers and placed a khata, white scarf, around the prayer flags.



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The descent of 5000 ft into Muktinath was sore on the knees and quite steep, hence the recommendation that the pass be crossed from Phedi. On arrival we once again set up camp. For Hindus Muktinath is the next most holy place in Nepal after Pashupatinath and has been attracting pilgrims, both Hindu and Buddhist, for centuries. Muktinath's fame rests mainly on a natural phenomenon that can be seen beneath the altar in the Jwala Mai Temple. A nun lifts the curtain to reveal, deep within the cavity, a thin blue flame of natural gas burning from a hole which also emits a trickle of water. The Hindus believe that this miracle of lighting a fire upon water was an offering made by Brahma himself. The fact that this is now very much a Buddhist temple does not seem to worry Nepali Hindus with their mix-match approach to religion. We took the opportunity to explore this fascinating place.

The road to Jomsom was busy with hundreds of pilgrims making their way to Muktinath. We passed through Jharkot, slowly making our way downhill and along the Kali Gandaki riverbed, which is about a kilometre wide in places, before arriving in Jomsom. This is a fairly large modern town, which since the early 1970s has been the capital of Mustang district. Here it regularly gets extremely windy after about 1000 hrs causing dust storms which cover everything and everyone in dirt. This wind is caused by the wind blowing between Annapurna and Dhaulagiri, reputedly the deepest valley in the world. Jomsom boasts a busy airstrip and the Thak Khola lodge which claims Jimmy Hendrix slept there in Room No 6 in October 1967. The words painted on the restaurant wall, "If I don't see you in this world I'll see you in the next one. Don't be late" were supposedly written by the man himself.

JOMSOM TO TILICHO BASE CAMP

After a rest day we followed the Kali Gandaki river, passing through probably the most picturesque village in Nepal - Marpha. The trail wound its way gently downhill through the village of Larjung and to a bend in the river which is the bottom of the world's deepest valley. Dhaulagiri (8167m) and Annapurna I (8091m) are 35 km apart on either side of the valley, and at an altitude of 2540m, we were 5.5 km below the summit of Dhaulagiri. We marvelled at this thought before marching on to Lete.

It was here that we left the trail and followed the same route as the climbers to their base camp, the same one that Herzog had used years before. It took 3 days to reach base camp where we were rewarded with the luxury of Walkers Rich Fruit Cake and no Compo for 2 days!! It was good to see the challenge the climbers were up against. The total isolation of their base camp surrounded by the splendour of the magnificent mountains of the Himalaya was unique and an experience to remember.

Sadly the days passed by too quickly and it was soon time to leave for the long hard climb over the col named by Herzog's expedition as the Pass of 27th April and make our way back to Lete and the main trail. Back on the main trail once more we headed south for Pokhara, the bulk of our trek now complete. The hot springs at Tatopani were enjoyed by all of us before retiring for the night in one of the splendid lodges found here.

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Although our trek was nearing its end it still had a sting in its tail with a 1900m ascent from Tatopani to Ghorepani. Fortunately there were many team houses along the way, and they all did a roaring trade as we plodded slowly up. On the 34th and last full day of the trek we walked from Ghorepani to Beirhanti, descending the flight of 3000 stone steps which the climbers had walked up many weeks before. Down in Birehanti we camped for the last night before walking the last 20 minutes to the road head where we haggled with the bus driver for a competitive rate for the journey back to Pokhara.

In Pokhara we paid the porters and sirdar and said our goodbyes to these special people who had helped to make this a successful and enjoyable trip. After sorting out the kit we put our feet up with a beer and awaited the arrival of the climbers, each of us spending a few quiet moments to reflect on a most memorable expedition.



TREKKING GROUP ITINERARY

- 9 September - Expedition members fly to Kathmandu.
- 10-12 September - Administration in Kathmandu.
- 13 September - All expedition members depart Kathmandu for Pokhara by lorry.
- 14 September - Pokhara to Besisahar.
- 16 September - Besisahar to Pisang via local villages (5 days).
- 21 September - Attempt on Pisang peak (19 900 ft) (6 days) .

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- 27 September - Pisang to Phedi (2 days).
- 29 September - Rest day before crossing the Thorung La Pass.
- 30 September - Phedi to Mukintath crossing 18 500 ft pass.
- 1 October - Mukintath to Tatopani (3 days).
- 4 October - Tatopani to Tilicho base camp (3 days).
- 7 October - Rest day.
- 8 October - Spend 5 days observing and possibly assisting the climbing groups activities on Tilicho.
- 13 October - Rest day.
- 14 October - Tilicho to Tatopani (3 days).
- 17 October - Spend 5 days trekking around the Tatopani area..
- 22 October - Tatopani to Pokhara (3 days).
- 25 October - Remain in Pokhara and await the arrival of the climbing group.
- 1 November - Depart Pokhara for Kathmandu.
- 2 November - Arrive Kathmandu.
- 4 November - Expedition members fly to Gatwick..

Some leeway had been built into the itinerary to allow for both sickness and bad weather. This was reflected in the number of days spent in Pokhara at the end of the expedition.

Chapter 8 - FINANCIAL DETAILS AND DONATIONS

HIMALAYAN VENTURE 94 FINANCIAL REPORT

1. **Introduction.** Preparation for Himalayan Venture 94 began in August 1993. Fund-raising is without doubt the most arduous part of any expedition's activities. For Himalayan Venture 94 this was no exception. It was essential to produce the right expedition image if fund-raising efforts were to be fruitful. we acknowledged that we would be directly competing with other expeditions for funds. Headed note paper and an expedition prospectus, giving concise information of the aim and details of the expedition, were produced using desktop publishing facilities. For ease of management and to allow the transfer of funds overseas, bank and VISA accounts were opened which allowed both the Team Leader and Duty Team Leader/Treasurer to sign cheques on behalf of the expedition. The Treasurer's juggling act with the team's finances has to be one of the most unenviable jobs of any project. One must always be aware of the current status of bank accounts, expected outgoings and promised additions. A key point in the planning was to draft an initial budget for the expedition. Historical data from previous RAFMA expeditions was used as a starting point. This budget was then adapted as more information became available. It also served to identify the inescapable fixed costs from those which were adjustable within the overall proposed expenditure. Support for the venture came from 3 main areas: Individual contributions, Service grant-giving organisations and Commercial sponsorship.
2. **Individual Contributions.** The total expected cost of the expedition was initially gauged to be £28,000. It was decided that individuals would contribute 50% of the expected expenditure. Thus individual contributions were set at £700 each. Team members were asked to contribute £100 per month, this allowed the flexibility to pay early bills and for the capital to earn a small interest.
3. **Service Grant-Giving Organisations.** There are a number of organisations within the Service which can be approached to assist in the financing of expeditions. Each organisation has its own criteria for giving money and require applications well in advance and in a certain format.
 - a. **Trenchard Memorial Award.** The Trenchard Memorial Award has recently embraced the Hawker-Siddeley RAF 50th Anniversary Award Scheme.
 - b. **RAF Sports Board Lottery.** The RAF Sports Board will consider requests for financial assistance towards expeditions. Although it is not compulsory, personnel who request such grants are advised to be members of the lottery.
 - c. **Joint Services Expedition Trust.** The Joint Services Expedition Trust awards grants to major Service expeditions. Applications for grants must be supported by a

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presentation giving expedition aims and a financial breakdown of income and expenditure.

d. RAF/Command Central Funds. Grants may be awarded from RAF and Command Central Funds. Applications should be channelled through Unit PEd and Accounts Flight.

e. RAF Mountaineering Association. The RAF Mountaineering Association contributed a significant proportion towards the cost of HV94. The grant included the cost of the Peak Permit and Trekking Permit.

f. Mount Everest Foundation. The Mount Everest Foundation (MEF) is a civilian organisation which receives requests for grants from many large expeditions, it was significant that HV 94 received endorsement from the MEF.

4. Commercial Sponsorship. Commerce and industry were approached in an effort to gain sponsorship. We were greeted with a mixed response; over one hundred prospectus' were dispatched but, although most replies were sympathetic with our cause and wished the expedition every success, financial sponsorship could not be justified in the current climate. Notable exceptions were mainly confined to the Defence Industry: Marconi, Landrover, British Aerospace and Siemens all contributed towards the cost of the expedition. Where a company were unable to donate cash the possibility of discount on equipment was explored. Cotswold Camping, Philips Communication Systems, Camping Gas and Harcostar Ltd all contributed towards the expedition in this respect. Smaller, local firms were approached by individual expedition members. Contact at a personal level proved to be a winning formula. A full list of commercial sponsors is shown in the balance sheet.

5. Expenses. The total cost of the expedition was initially gauged at £28,000 for the twenty members. Final accounts showed the expedition to cost £30,707 for the nineteen members who finally took part. The extra costs incurred were mainly due to additional freight and portage charges. The major areas of expenditure were broken down as follows:

a. Travel. Air and surface travel were by far the most significant areas of expenditure. Nepalese Airlines were able to offer a discounted price for travel between London and Kathmandu.

b. Equipment. Very little equipment apart from Camping gas and stoves was purchased specifically for the expedition. However, the expedition was required to equip both the liaison officer, cook and cook hands.

c. Freight. The expedition took nearly 3 tons of freight from Heathrow to Kathmandu. Over half the amount was in composite rations. Although we received favourable rates for freight transport it was at considerable cost to the expedition. Likewise on the return trip Nepalese Customs and excise stipulated that we take back

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all freight less any consumable items (i.e. food). Although we were well below this limit, as all our fixed rope had been disposed of, we were still forced to pay the full balance of the amount.

d. Porterage. Estimating the number of porter loads to be carried proved to be problematic. It was difficult to budget accurately on the amount required to pay porters and a great reliance was placed on the integrity of the Head Sirdar. Difficulties encountered during the expedition resulted in the costs being more than anticipated.

e. Summit Trekking. The expedition dealt exclusively with Summit Trekking, a climbing and trekking agency based in Kathmandu. Peak fees, trekking permits, Liaison Officer, the hire of Sirdars and cooks and the hire of porters was all arranged in advance through the agency. Although some costs, particularly those incurred by the liaison officer, were higher than expected, the expedition was grateful to Summit Trekking and would recommend to any future expedition that they go through a similar agency.

f. Accommodation. Team members were accommodated in Kathmandu whilst final arrangements were made for the expedition. Due to a delay in getting the freight through Nepalese customs, the stay was extended thereby incurring additional costs.

6. Conclusion. Raising sufficient funds for the expedition was an arduous but not insurmountable task. Results were achieved through a strong commitment, a clear understanding of the team's objectives, a professional approach, ingenuity and persistence in large amounts. A key feature in the planning phase was to produce a first draft of the expected budget which provided a cornerstone from which further changes could be made. Individual contributions amounted to approximately half of the overall cost of the expedition. Additional support for the venture came from Service grant-giving organisations and commercial sponsorship.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

1. EXPENDITURE

	£
Air Travel	9804
Tilicho Peak Permit	1889
Camping gas and stoves	618
Visas	900
Team Polo shirts	326
Water Filter	153
Freight (out)	3500
Kitchen equipment	166
Use of Radio Fee	233

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Food	300
Airport Tax	186
Hotel Accommodation	362
Custom charges	173
Transport - Pokhara	441
Equipment allowance cook and cook hands	380
Liaison Officer equipment allowance	780
Transport	220
Trek Sirdar Wages	236
Tilicho walk in wages	211
Cook wages	110
Kitchen hand wages	186
Mail Runner wages	93
Summit Trekking stores	66
Annapurna Conservation fee	122
Trek Sherpa wages	218
Porterage (Climbing Team)	3320
Porterage (Trekking Team)	2000
Food and Transport - Porters	400
Hotel Accom - Kathmandu	1110
Hotel Accom - Pokhara	298
Hotel Accom - Pokhara	272
Freight (back)	1000
Freight charges - Heathrow	134
Food	500
TOTAL	30707

NB: Balance to pay outstanding CILOR account.

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2. INCOME

	£
Participant (£700 x 19)	13300
CILOR	2200
RAFMA	4700
Adventure Trg (PTC)	2000
Trenchard	2200
JSET	1000
HQ 2 Gp	400
RAF Sports Lottery	3500
Mount Everest Foundation	200
RAF West Raynham	50
RAF Honington	100
RAF Leuchars	250
Civilian Sponsorship:	
Siemens	50
Land Rover	200
Marconi	500
Airteq	50
B Longstaff	25
STAEFA Control Systems	50
RAF Prestwick	40
Elgin Animal By Products	100
R Urqharts (Solicitors)	50
Cursity Air Ticket	100
Personal Donations	120
British Aerospace	50
Sponsorship (Miscellaneous)	350
TOTAL	31585

DONATIONS

Many civilian organisations were approached either for financial assistance or support in the form of equipment. The following companies were kind enough to support the venture.

BAXTERS - 144 Cans of soup

WALKERS - 12 Rich Fruit Cakes

SILKINGS - 2 Sets of Silk Thermals

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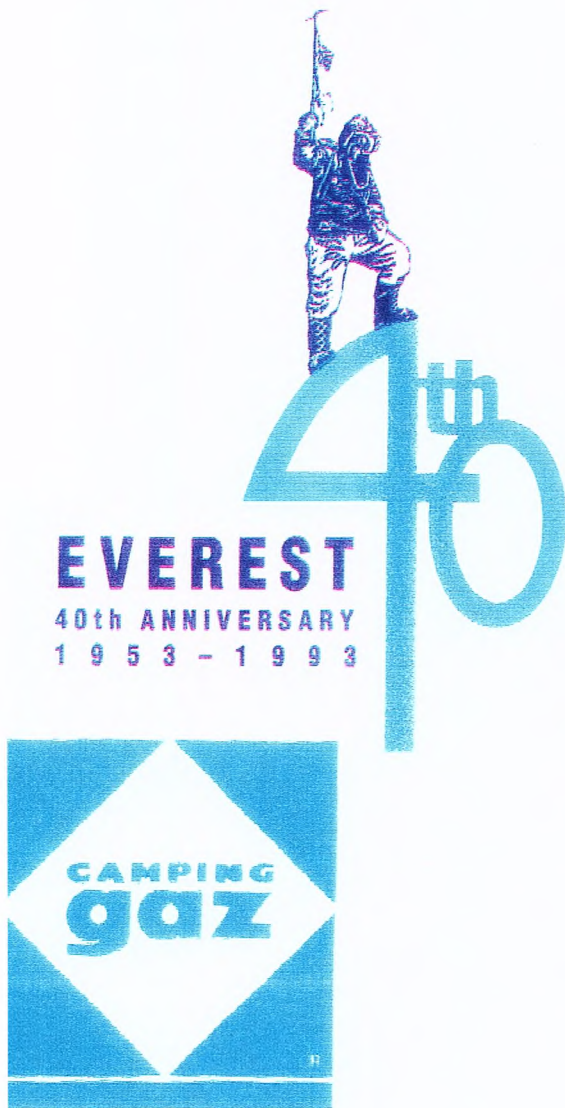
HARCOSTAR - 40 Large plastic barrels

COTSWOLD CAMPING - Discount and Buffalo tops

PHILLIPS TELECOM - Loan of radio equipment and solar panels

CAMPING GAZ - Supply of Gas and Stoves at trade prices

Donations and Sponsors

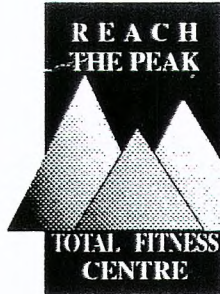


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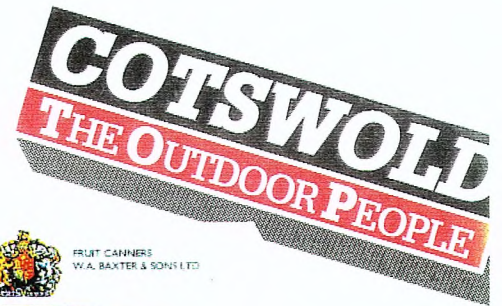
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INTRODUCTION

1. This report gives brief details of relevant events that occurred during the expedition. Fortunately there were no serious injuries and all illnesses were diagnosed as well as might be expected. The base camp medical kit, which is listed at the end of this report, was in constant use as were the personal first aid packs issued at the start of the expedition.

EXPEDITION PREPARATION

2. All members of the expedition received immunisations at their own units. Advice on immunisations was given by Sqn Ldr B. Kirkpatrick, who was to have been the expedition doctor, but who had to withdraw at a late stage in the planning. A list of the immunisations required is at the end of the report. A small booklet issued by the RAF IHMT at RAF Halton was sent to all expedition members and gave useful information on health and hygiene for travellers to Nepal.

CHOICE OF DRUGS AND MEDICATIONS

3. The decision on what drugs and medications to take was made by Sqn Ldr Kirkpatrick. With there not being a doctor available at base camp and the fact that base camp was a good few days away from proper medical help it could be argued that more drugs should have been issued.

DRUG APPLICATION

4. As might be expected in a third world country like Nepal, the most common medical problem we were to encounter were Gastro Intestinal upsets of varying degrees. These occurred mostly in the first and last weeks of the expedition whilst we were living in the towns and cities. There were a few cases outwith these times but only one case which resulted in the casualty losing out on time on the hill. Medication for these problems ranged from Dioralyte and Immodium to Codeine Phosphate and in the one severe case Ciproxin.

5. Infection of the respiratory system was also a common problem, with most expedition members suffering chesty coughs, sore throats, and other flu like symptoms. Medication for these ailments was limited to Codeine Phosphate, Aspirin, Paracetamol, Bradsol lozenges, and Otrivine nasal spray.

6. As one would expect of a high altitude mountaineering expedition there would be sun burn. However most members had their own supply of creams and pastes to protect themselves with. No serious cases of sun burn, sun stroke and heat exhaustion were experienced. A tube of Amethocaine eye drops was supplied for the treatment of snow

blindness. This was not used but I would have preferred to have been supplied with two tubes in case of damage, loss, and multiple victims.

7. Each expedition member was given 14 x 250 mg Diamox capsules in their personal medical kit. In addition to this there were 30 in the group medical kit. All expedition members acclimatized at different rates, most suffering at times with head-aches, loss of appetite, and a feeling of extreme fatigue even after a small amount of effort. There were no serious cases of acute mountain sickness. There was a feeling of distrust in the benefits of Diamox and as a result not all members used it. In addition to Diamox, Dexamethasone tablets and Adalat Retard capsules were issued to the medical pack. These were separated from the main pack and left at camp 1 and later camp 2 as we progressed up the mountain.

8. Various other minor ailments were noted throughout the expedition ranging from mouth ulcers, cold sores, back pain, and minor cuts and sprains. A side effect of taking Paludrine is the possibility of mouth ulcers. Once these started developing Paludrin was stopped and the condition improved. Paludrin was not necessary for most of the time as base camp was over 4000m. Cold sores were treated with Zovirax cream. Only one tube was supplied and there was a risk of cross contamination, however no serious cases were encountered. A couple of members suffered from back pain whilst on the mountain. No medical treatment was administered and a days rest enabled further activity to be resumed. This highlights the need for a thorough medical screening prior to leaving the UK, and if there is any prior history of any injury/illness which is likely to reoccur then suitable drugs etc. should be carried in the personal medical kits. Cuts and scratches were a high risk area for infection. A high degree of personal hygiene should be maintained. Any cut should be cleaned and dressed at the earliest opportunity. At altitude the body takes longer to repair itself and as such cuts tended to take a long time to heal fully. There was no antiseptic cream and the elastoplasts issued were next to useless. Treatment for cuts was to clean the affected area and apply Cicatrin powder, then cover the wound with elastoplast tape or Zinc oxide tape which proved even better. Blisters were treated in much the same way each member having his favourite method of treatment.

DRESSINGS

9. Again as there was no major surgery required the dressings remained largely untouched. The elastoplast tape was in high demand owing to the 10 day walk in and the inevitable blisters. A roll of 2" Zinc oxide tape proved to be more useful owing to its size and ability to go further. The tubigrip was used to help take the strain off painful knees which incidentally can also be relieved by the use of ski poles. The surgical gloves were used for treating the porters, see next para. I would have liked to have had more of these as once they had been used to treat a porter they would have been unusable for any of us.

INCIDENTALS

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10. In this paragraph I shall briefly cover the porters, cooks and locals who needed treatment. Again we were lucky in that no major problems were encountered. As mentioned earlier a porter had a rather nasty open wound on his lower back caused by his basket rubbing as he walked. It was very difficult to emphasise to the Nepalese the need for cleanliness, so he was liberally blot, banged and rubbed with Cicatrin powder, taped up with Melolin and Zinc oxide tape and sent on his way to the nearest medical post. No further reports were received so we had no way of knowing if the treatment worked. Other injuries were foreign bodies in the eye, head-aches, diarrhoea, and sprained ankles. These were all looked at, suitable sympathetic noises made and either an Aspirin, a vitamin pill, a Paludrin tablet or an elastoplast were administered. The casualty went away happy and usually cured, a firm believer in western medicine. I wish it could be as simple all the time. We were wary about giving drugs to the Nepalese as all the books advise against it. Aspirin was the strongest we ever administered.

CONCLUSIONS

11. The expedition would have preferred to have had a doctor/nurse throughout. When it was known that this was not possible then a larger medical pack should have been considered, with extra training for the medic designate. The book "Medicine for Mountaineering" is very useful and a copy of this or an equivalent should have been included with the medical pack. A section at the rear of the book lists suggested contents for various types of medical packs.

IMMUNISATIONS RECEIVED AT PARENT UNITS

Typhoid
Polio
Tetanus
Hepatitis A
Meningitis A + C
Anti-Malaria tabs
Rabies (not all members)

PERSONAL MEDICAL KIT CONTENTS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>QTY</u>	<u>USE</u>
Paracetamol tabs (500 mg)	10	Painkiller
Diamox (250 mg)	14	Acclimatization
Puritabs	12	Purify water
Amniotome caps	7	Diarrhoea
Elastoplast	Assorted	Cuts/blisters

GROUP MEDICAL KIT CONTENTS

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<u>DRUGS, Oral</u>	<u>QTY</u>	<u>USE</u>
Paracetamol tabs (500 mg)	40	Painkiller
Brufen (600 mg)	30	Anti-inflammatory
Dihydrocodeine tabs (30 mg)	40	Painkiller(mod-severe)
Codeine Phosphate tabs (30 mg)	40	Painkiller(mild)
		Dry coughs
		Diarrhoea
Diamox tabs (250 mg)	30	AMS
Dexamethasone tabs (2 mg)	20	HACO
Adalat Retard caps (20 mg)	20	HAPO, Frostbite
Amniotome(loperamide)caps(2 mg)	40	Diarrhoea
Senokot tabs	20	Constipation
Stugeron tabs (15 mg)	20	Nausea
Hismanal tabs (10 mg)	30	Allergy/Hay fever
Asilone tabs	20	Indigestion
Bradsol Lozenges	24	Sore throat
Diorolyte sachets	20	Re-hydration
Ciproxin (250 mg)	20	Antibiotic
Puritabs	96	Water purification

DRUGS, Parenteral

Voltarol Injection (75 mg)	1	Severe painkiller
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DRUGS, Topical, Rectal

Anusol ointment	1	Haemorrhoids
Chloramphenicol eye ointment	1	Conjunctivitis
Zovirax cream (10g)	1	Cold sores
Cicatrion powder	1	Infected wounds
Hydrocortisone ointment 1%	1	Insect bites/stings
Amethocaine eye drops	1	Snow blindness
Otrivine nasal spray	1	Nasal congestion
Canestan cream	1	Fungal infection

DRESSINGS & SURGICAL KIT

Bandage triangular	1	
Bandage crepe 10 cm	2	
Micropore tape	1	
Elastoplast tape	1	
Tubigrip roll	1	
Melolin dressing 10 x 10 cm	4	
Cotton wool balls	5 pkts	
Gauze swabs 10 x 10 cm	10	
Chlorhexidine sachets	4	Antiseptic

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Gloves surgical	1 pair
Syringe 5 ml	2
Needles 25g	5
Mersilk suture 2/0	2
Steristrips	1 pkt
Xylocaine 1%	1 bottle Local anaesthetic
Scalpel disposable	1
Guedal airway	1
Heat retaining blanket	1

EXTRAS BOUGHT BY INDIVIDUALS

Anusol Suppositries
 Vitamin tabs
 Zinc Oxide tape 2"
 Aspirin
 Foot Powder
 Melolin Dressings
 Strepsils
 Compeed (Blister Treatment)
 Ciproxin
 Optrex eye drops

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Chapter 10 - EQUIPMENT

<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>ITEM</u>
7	Quasar Tents (standard)
4	Quasar Tents (mountain)
8	Vango Tents Mk 4
14	9 mm Ropes
7	300m Hawser Laid Ropes
1	200m Abseil Rope
2	60m Abseil Ropes
50	Karabiners Screwgate
50	Snaps
50	Pitons
30	Ice Screws
1	Rack of Assorted Rocks
10	Deadmen
40	Snow stakes
40	Super Blues
20	Hawser Laid Slings
5	Petzl Jumars (pairs)
1	300m Roll Paracord
100	Headtorch Batteries
1	Snow shovel
1	Entrenching Tool
2	Sleeping Bags (spare)
250	Tywraps
250	Poly bags (all sizes)

1	Tool kit
60	Candles
8	Cooksets
25	J Clothes
25	Scourers
1	Araldite
1	Altimeter
600	Gas canisters
12	Gas stoves
6	Handsets (Radios)
1	Base set
2	Battery Recharging Units
1	Solar Panel

OBSERVATIONS

1. **Tents.** Vango Mk 4 tents were used at base camp by the climbing team. As expected no problems were encountered. Quasars were used on the mountain and proved stable in high winds and robust enough for continuous use. Some condensation was experienced daily and as a result most climbers slept in bivi bags to avoid soaking their sleeping bags. The Quasar was also used by the trekkers and no major adverse comments were made.
2. **Gas.** Both groups used Camping Gas stoves and cartridges throughout the expedition. The butane/propane mix worked well at all altitudes and cooking was clean and efficient.
3. **Rope.** The climbers used 9 mm Kernmantel rope for climbing but used 8 mm Hawser Laid Rope for fixing. The Hawser Laid rope stood up well to continual use for jumaring and abseiling with only limited sections requiring replacement.
4. **Water Filters.** A Katadyn water filter was purchased for use by each team. This produced clean water without the after taste that is experienced with sterilization tablets.
5. **Radio Comms.** Phillips Telecom kindly loaned Radios and Batteries for use by the climbing team. This was not only an excellent way of ensuring that the lead climbers got the supplies that they required quickly but also ensured that the expedition leader could maintain

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control of events from anywhere on the mountain. The radios were also a reassuring line of communication should an accident have occurred. They worked well throughout the expedition at all altitudes.



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Chapter 11 - COMMUNICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The expedition leader believed that having communications with teams anywhere on the mountain was a most desirable situation. Not only would it be useful for command and control purposes but would also provide a major safety link. The ability to ensure the necessary food and equipment was where it needed to be would greatly enhance the teams chances of success. Furthermore, team spirit is greatly enhanced by knowledge of what is happening above and the evening progress reports provide a focal point for all members.

Although a communications link would not be maintained with our trekking agency the company suggested that the hiring of a runner would greatly increase the speed at which we got messages out and would also prove invaluable in the event of an emergency.

MOUNTAIN COMMUNICATIONS

It is common for expeditions to use VHF portable radios on the mountain. Light and robust they prove reliable, easy to use and provide good quality communications. However, they are expensive items and are generally borrowed from companies if available.

SPONSOR

Letters were sent to many of the major companies requesting assistance and Phillips Telecom kindly offered to assist. Having explained our requirements Phillips suggested use of their PRP 73 Model in conjunction with their PRF 1061 Base Station. Six handsets, 12 rechargeable batteries, 6 recharging units, and a base station were loaned by Phillips for the duration of the expedition. The expedition had intended to borrow solar panels, for the purpose of recharging the batteries, from an alternative source. Unfortunately this arrangement fell down at the very last moment and Phillips once again kindly offered their assistance, delivering the panels within a day of request.

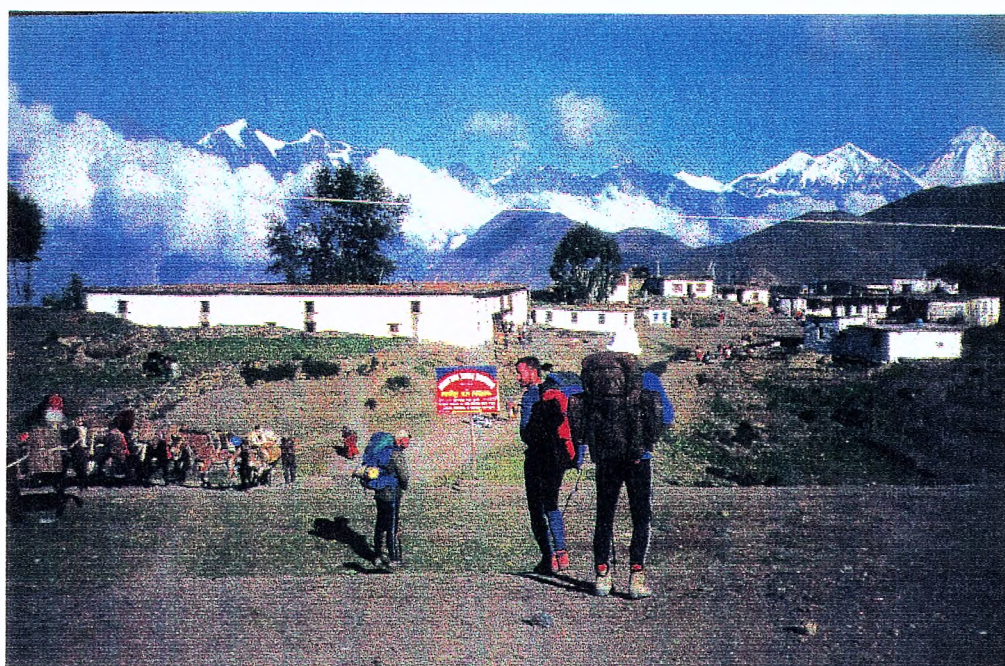
PERFORMANCE

The radios performed exceptionally well throughout the expedition. Communication was excellent from all but the most shielded locations. The expedition purchased a 12 volt car battery in Kathmandu for powering the Base set and this was recharged as necessary. Battery recharging for the portable radios was achieved without any major problems and provided the batteries were kept warm when in use high on the mountain a reasonable period of use could be relied upon. Although the base set remained on receive throughout the day, normal daily calls were only made at between 5.30 and 6 pm.

REAR COMMUNICATIONS

Prior to leaving Kathmandu the expedition leader was briefed by the British Defence Attaché on the actions to be taken in the event of an emergency and the requirement for casualty evacuation. The 24 hour telephone number for the British Embassy was provided which could be used from the numerous Police Checkpoints along the main trail. The Casevac procedures were outlined and then briefed to all team members by the expedition leader. The expedition leader appreciated that a team member should accompany the mail runner to the nearest village if assistance was required and raise the alarm.

The mail runner was used during the expedition to send situation reports to the trekking agency and also to collect mail from Pokhara.



Chapter 12 - RATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Having selected both teams certain tasks were immediately allocated. One of these was the unenviable job of Rations Member. On such a long trip it was obvious that food would play a particularly important role, not only in maintaining strength and health but also in maintaining morale. For this reason Chris Rawlins was selected as the Climbing teams Rations Member. His experience of previous expeditions, altitude experience and the fact that he actually enjoys cooking made him an obvious choice. The trekking groups Rations Man was selected for the sole reason that he served at the same unit as Chris and therefore communication between the two was easier.

Chris was tasked with providing a selection of items that would enable our cookboy to produce some edible and hopefully appetising meals and also with ensuring that we had enough high altitude meals for life above Base Camp.

RESOURCES

For the duration of the expedition we were entitled to claim either cash in lieu of rations (CILOR) , Army Composite rations, or a mixture of both. In addition a high altitude supplement was available for those days to be spent above a certain altitude. It was decided very early on that whilst the composite boil in the bag rations are convenient and nourishing we needed to offer a more varied menu. Therefore we chose to take a mixture of Compo and shop bought food and to supplement this with rations purchased in Nepal from the CILOR allowance. The trekking group chose to take predominantly Compo and to supplement with occasional delicacies purchased from their CILOR allowance. Once this was decided Chris set about making up specific meal packs for high on the mountain and booking the quantities of Compo that would be required.

- a. CILOR - Advice on both CILOR rate and the supplement rates was sought from DGST(N) at Endsleigh Mil who in turn forwarded the necessary authority to the leader.
- b. COMPO - The COMPO requirements of the expedition were outlined to RAF Kinloss Catering Flight who, once authorised, ordered the requested number of boxes. The expedition uplifted 42 boxes of ten man boil in the bag ORP.

COOKING ARRANGEMENTS

Like most expeditions the climbers would enjoy the luxury of a cookboy and 2 cookhands at Base Camp. The trekkers would be cooking for themselves throughout, except

when they joined the climbing team at base camp for a few days in the middle of their trek. On the mountain the climbers would cook for themselves.

A cook and 2 cook hands were hired by the expedition. All were members of the Summit Trekking Agency Staff with the expedition paying their wages whilst attached to us.

COOKING EQUIPMENT

The Rations Member was also responsible for ensuring that the cook had the necessary utensils and equipment for his use. All items were purchased in Kathmandu where they are cheap and readily available and were all bought after consultation with the cook.

Cooking stoves were purchased in Kathmandu as again they are reasonably cheap but they also run off the sometimes dubious kerosene that is available locally. The quantity of fuel required was recommended by the Trekking Agency who have vast experience of the normal consumption rates of an expedition the size of ours.

Stoves for use by the trekkers and the climbers on the mountain were purchased in UK. Numerous avenues were tried before the expedition secured a favourable deal with Camping Gas. The Camping Gas Bleuett 206 stoves were used in conjunction with C206 Expedition Butane/Propane mix cartridges. We estimated that we would require 1 cartridge per person per day and therefore purchased 600 in total, 300 of which were allocated to the trekking group.

FRESH RATIONS

The climbing group purchased fresh vegetables, eggs and cooking oil in Kathmandu prior to departure for the mountain. In addition, sacks of rice and flour were bought as these would be required to feed the porters and cookboys on the walk in. Quantities of these items were once again suggested by the trekking agency together with advice on where to purchase them and what price to pay.

DONATED FOOD

Several major firms were approached with requests for donations of food as a form of sponsorship. Response was limited to Baxters and Walkers who both kindly offered to support us. Baxters donated 144 cans of soup whilst Walkers gave 12 Dundee Fruit Cakes. Their support was very much appreciated by all team members.

RATIONS LIST

Climbing Team

12 boxes of 24 hour boil in bag Compo

2 lb	Cornflakes	64	Chicken oxo
2 lb	Frosties	64	Veg oxo
2 lb	Rice Crispies	64	Beef oxo
2 lb	Coco Pops	4 kg	Sage and onion stuffing
4 lb	Harvest Crunch	2 ltr	Barbecue sauce
5 lb	Porridge Oats	1	Bovril (large tub)
5 lb	Ready Brek	24	Sardines (tinned)
10 lb	Deluxe Muesli	3 lb	Dried veg
2 lb	Dried onion	11 lb	Breakfast Orange
2 lb	Freeze dried coffee	12	Beef paste
2 lb	Coffee granules	24	Assorted pastes
2 lb	Coffee powder	12	Fish paste
1500	Tea bag	8 box	Herbal Teas
14 kg	Dried Fruit	1 kg	Dehydrated Minced Beef
8 box	Mixed fruit tea	36	Instant Whips
4 lb	Drinking chocolate	3 lb	Madeira cake mix
2 kg	Oxtail soup	3 lb	Chocolate cake mix
2 kg	Tomato soup	3 lb	Ginger cake mix
2 kg	Golden Veg soup	6 lb	Scone mix
24	Tomato cup a soup	3 lb	Cheese scone mix
24	Pea and Ham	2 lb	Choc chip cookie mix
24	Chicken noodle	4 kg	Bombay mix
24	Chicken and leak	2 kg	Banana chips
144	Tins of Baxters soup	2 kg	Dried apple
24	Custard (pkt)	18 kg	Short cut Macaroni
36	Super noodles (pkt)	1 kg	Dehydrated Chilli
1 kg	Dehydrated Chicken Supreme	2 kg	Tortellini
2 kg	Tortellini with cheese	5 kg	Bolognese sauce
1 kg	Pesto sauce	4 ltr	Salsa al Funghi
2 ltr	Teriyaki sauce	3 kg	Tomato ketchup
100	Brown sauce portions	100	Salad cream portions

Chapter 13 - RELIGION

Nepal boasts a population of 19 million, with 50 distinct languages and dialects, and over 36 recognised different ethnic groups each with their own cultural identity. Officially Nepal is a Hindu country, but in practice the religion is a strange blend of Hindu and Buddhist beliefs. Hinduism and Buddhism are mingled into a complex blend which is often impossible to separate. The Buddha's was actually born in Nepal, but the Buddhist religion first arrived in the country around 250 BC introduced so it is said by the great Indian Buddhist Emperor Ashoka. Later Buddhism gave way to Hinduism, but from around the 8th century the Tantric form of Buddhism practised in Tibet also began to make it's way across the Himalayas into Nepal. Today Buddhism is mainly practised by the people of the high Himalaya, like the Sherpas and Tamags, and by the Tibetan refugees who have settled in Nepal.

Hinduism

Hinduism is one of the oldest extent religions with firm roots extending back to beyond 1000 BC.

Hinduism today has a number of holy books, the most important being "The Four Vedas" or "Divine Knowledge" which are the foundation of Hindu philosophy. Hinduism postulates that we will all go through a series of rebirths or reincarnations, that eventually lead to "moksha", the spiritual salvation which frees one from the cycle of rebirths. With each rebirth you can move closer to or further from eventual moksha; the deciding factor is your karma, which is literally a law of cause and effect. Bad actions during your life result in bad karma which ends in a lower reincarnation. Conversely, if your deeds and actions have been good you will reincarnate on a higher level, and be a step closer to eventual freedom from rebirth.

Westerners have trouble understanding Hinduism principally because of its vast pantheon of gods. In fact you can look upon all these different gods simply as pictorial representations of the many attributes of a god. The one omni present god usually has three physical representations: Brahma is the creator, Vishnu is the preserver and Shiva is the destroyer and reproducer. All three gods are usually shown with four arms, but Brahma has the added advantage of four heads.

Each god has an associated animal known as the "vehicle" on which they ride, as well as a consort with certain attributes and abilities. Generally each god also holds symbols. You can often pick out which god is represented by identifying either the vehicle or the symbols.

Most temples are dedicated to one or other of the gods, but most Hindus profess to be either followers of Vishnu or Shiva. The cow is, of course, the holy animal of Hinduism.

You cannot be converted to the Hindu religion, you are either born a Hindu or you are not. Similarly, once you are a Hindu you cannot change your caste - you are born into it and stuck with it for the rest of that lifetime.

Buddhism

Strictly speaking, Buddhism is not a religion, since it is not centred on a god, but a system of philosophy and a code of morality. Buddhism was founded in Northern India around 500 BC, when Siddhartha Gautama, born a Prince, achieved enlightenment. According to some, Gautama Buddha was not the first Buddha but the fourth, and neither is he expected to be the last “enlightened one”. Buddhists believe that the achievement of enlightenment is the goal of every being so eventually we will all reach Buddhahood.

The Buddha never wrote down his dharma or teachings, and a schism later developed so that today there are two major Buddhist schools. The Theravada or Hinayana, “doctrine of the elders” or “small vehicle” holds that the path to nirvana, the eventual aim of all Buddhists, is an individual pursuit. In contrast, the Mahayana or “large vehicle” school holds that the combined belief of its followers will eventually be great enough to encompass all of humanity and bear it to salvation. There are other, sometimes more esoteric, divisions of Buddhism including the Hindu - Tantric Buddhism of Tibet which is the version found in the Himalayan regions of Nepal.

The Buddha renounced his material life to search for enlightenment but, unlike other prophets, found that starvation did not lead to discovery. Therefore he developed his rule of the “middle way”, moderation in everything. The Buddha taught that all life is suffering, but that suffering comes from our sensual desires and the illusion that they are important. By following the “eight - fold path” these desires will be extinguished and a state of nirvana, where they are extinct and we are free from their delusions, will be reached. Following this process requires going through a series of rebirths until the goal is eventually reached and no more rebirths into the world of suffering are necessary. The path that takes you through this cycle of births is karma, but this is not simply fate. Karma is a law of cause and effect; your actions in one life determine the role you will play and what you will have to go through in your next life.

Buddhism is more tolerant of outsiders than is Hinduism; you will be welcome at most Buddhist temples and ceremonies. In Kathmandu and in the hills there are Buddhist monasteries which are willing to provide spiritual training and advice to Westerners. Buddhism prohibits any form of killing, a contrast to Hinduism which requires animal sacrifices to appease the goddess Kali.

FESTIVALS

Nepal's colourful holidays and festivals occur virtually year round and a visit to Nepal is almost certain to coincide with at least one, particularly in the Kathmandu valley. Certain times of the year, particularly towards the end of the monsoon, are packed with festivals. They go a long way towards compensating for the less - than - ideal weather at that time of the year.

Chapter 14 - EXPEDITION STATISTICS

TREKKING STATISTICS

DATE	FROM	TO	RUNNING	TOTAL
TREK DAY	DISTANCE	ASCENT	KILOMETRE S	METRES
1. 15 Sep	Sisuwa 8	Tarbas 200	8	200
2. 16 Sep	Tarbas 12	Shyauli Bazar 300	20	500
3. 17 Sep	Shyuali Bazar 6	Naime 675	26	1175
4. 18 Sep	Naime 5	Baglung Pani 600	31	1775
5. 19 Sep	Baglung Pani 9	Bhule 50	40	1825
6. 20 Sep	Bhule Bhule 14	Syange 485	54	2310
7. 21 Sep	Syange 14	Tal 700	68	3010
8. 22 Sep	Tal 16.5	Kodo 900	84.5	3910
9. 23 Sep	Kodo 15	Pisang 600	99.5	4510
10. 24 Sep	Rest day Kit sort	Pisang Village	99.5	4510
11. 25 Sep	Pisang 2.5	ABC 1200	102	5710
12. 26 Sep	ABC 1.5	Ridge cache 800	103.5	6510
13. 27 Sep	ABC 2.0	High Camp 900	105.5	7410

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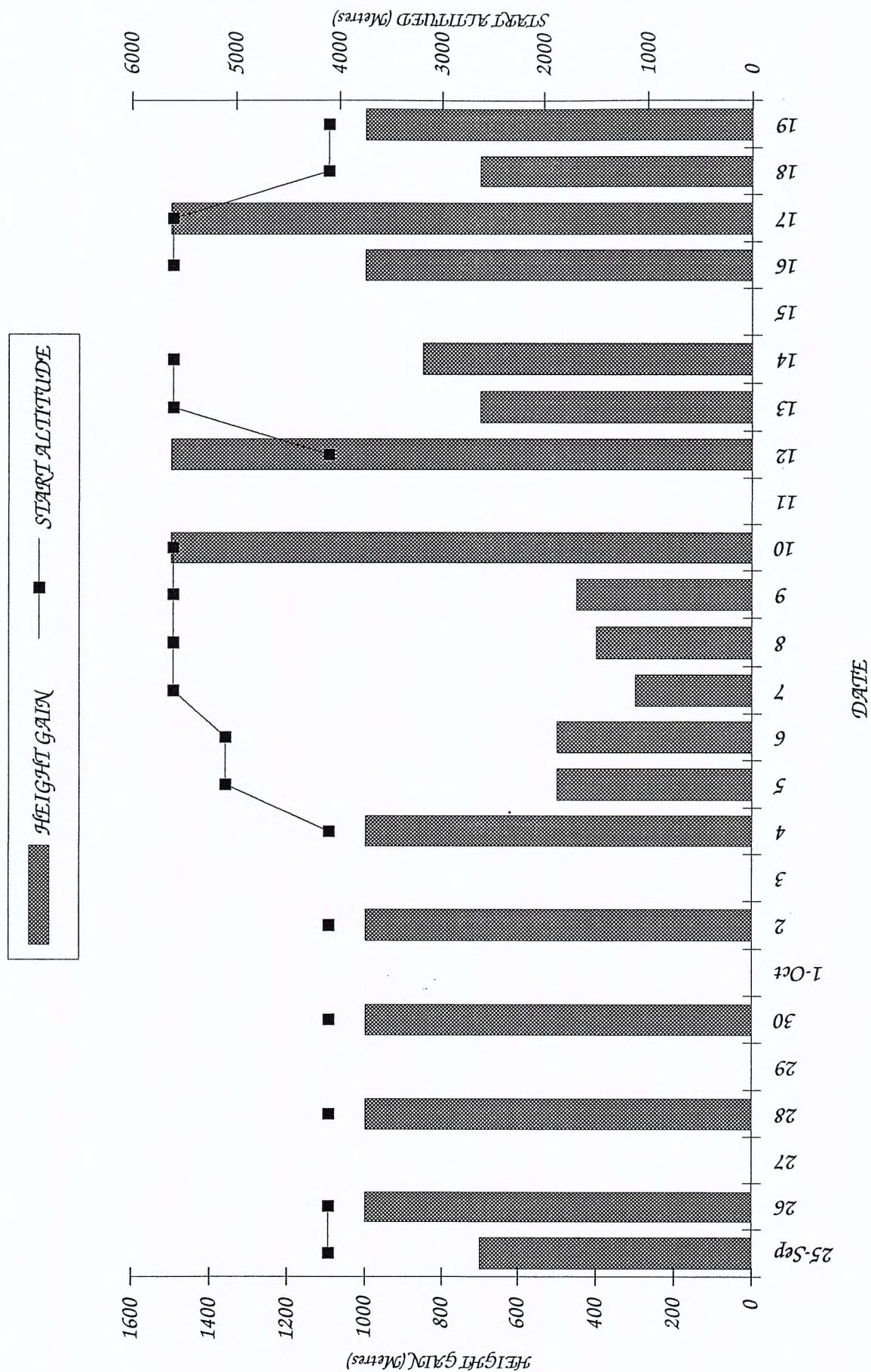
14. 28 Sep	High Camp 4	Pisang Peak 760	107	8170
15. 29 Sep	High Camp 4	Pisang Village 0	111	8170
16. 30 Sep	Rest Day Kit sort	Pisang Village	111	8170
17. 01 Oct	Pisang 13	Manang 335	124	8505
18. 02 Oct	Manang 10	Letdar 665	134	9170
19. 03 Oct	Letdar 5	Thorung Pedi 230	139	9400
20. 04 Oct	Thorung Pedi 12	Mukintath 1000	151	10400
21. 05 Oct	Mukintath 15	Jomsom 0	161	10400
22. 06 Oct	Rest Day	Jomsom	161	10400
23. 07 Oct	Jomsom 23	Lete Khola 150	184	10540
24. 08 Oct	Lete Khola 6.5	Tulobugin Ridge 1100	190.5	11640
25. 09 Oct	Tulobugin Ridge 6	Hum Khola 900	196.5	12540
26. 10 Oct	Hum Khola 10	Tilicho Base 900	206.5	13440
27. 11 Oct	At Tilicho Base	Local recce	-	-
28. 12 Oct	At Tilicho Base	Local recce	-	-

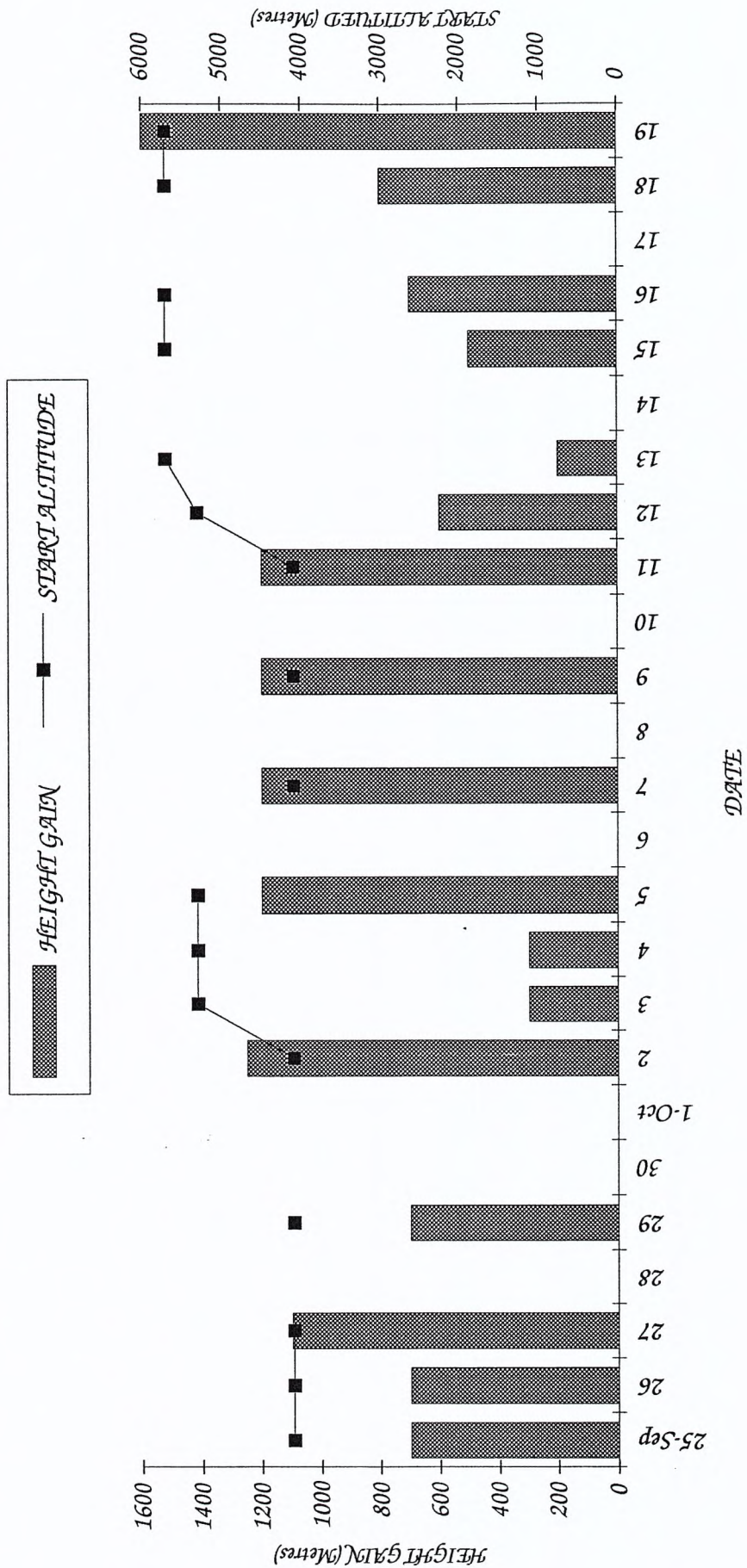
The team flew back to the UK on 4 November 1994, arriving safely at Gatwick late afternoon. Himalayan Venture 94 was over and we were each left to reflect on what had been,

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HIMALAYAN VENTURE 94 Science Project - Daily Record - Climbers

NAME : BARBOUR	25-Sep-95	26-Sep-95	27-Sep-95	28-Sep-95	29-Sep-95	30-Sep-95	1-Oct-95
DAILY START ALTITUDE (Metres)	4100	4100		4100		4100	
DAILY HEIGHT GAIN (Metres)	700	1000		1000		1000	
DAILY DISTANCE (Km)	3	5		5		5	
TIME TAKEN (Hrs:Mins)	3.00	10.00		7.30		7.30	
MAJOR RESTS (Min)	NIL	1		0.3		0.3	
FLUID INTAKE (Ltr)	1	1		1		1	
PHYSICAL CONDITION	GOOD	POOR	REST DAY	GOOD	REST DAY	GOOD	REST DAY
	2-Oct-95	3-Oct-95	4-Oct-95	5-Oct-95	6-Oct-95	7-Oct-95	8-Oct-95
DAILY START ALTITUDE (Metres)	4100		4100	5100	5100	5600	5600
DAILY HEIGHT GAIN (Metres)	1000		1000	500	500	300	400
DAILY DISTANCE (Km)	5		5	2	2	2	2
TIME TAKEN (Hrs:Mins)	8.30		6.00	4.00	2.00	6.00	7.00
MAJOR RESTS (Min)	1		NIL	1	NIL	NIL	NIL
FLUID INTAKE (Ltr)	1		2	3+	3+	1	1
PHYSICAL CONDITION	GOOD	REST DAY	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD
	9-Oct-95	10-Oct-95	11-Oct-95	12-Oct-95	13-Oct-95	14-Oct-95	15-Oct-95
DAILY START ALTITUDE (Metres)	5600	5600		4100	5600	5600	
DAILY HEIGHT GAIN (Metres)	450	1500		1500	700	850	
DAILY DISTANCE (Km)	2	7		7	3	3.5	
TIME TAKEN (Hrs:Mins)	7.00	3.30		9.00	8.00	9.00	
MAJOR RESTS (Min)	0.3	0.3		1	1.3	NIL	
FLUID INTAKE (Ltr)	1	1		1	1	1	
PHYSICAL CONDITION	GOOD	GOOD	REST DAY	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	REST DAY
	16-Oct-95	17-Oct-95	18-Oct-95	19-Oct-95			
DAILY START ALTITUDE (Metres)	5600	5600	4100	4100			
DAILY HEIGHT GAIN (Metres)	1000	-1500	700	1000			
DAILY DISTANCE (Km)	4	7	3	5			
TIME TAKEN (Hrs:Mins)	13	3	3	3			
MAJOR RESTS (Min)	1	NIL	1	0.3			
FLUID INTAKE (Ltr)	1	1	1	1			
PHYSICAL CONDITION	POOR	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD			





RAFMA-Himalayan Venture 94

without doubt, a huge adventure. As leader of the expedition I was, along with all the other climbers, immensely disappointed that we had failed to reach the summit of Tilicho. However, despite this, I consider Himalayan Venture 94 to have been a resounding success in so many ways.

Many planned expeditions never get to leave the country and many of those that do are plagued with problems on reaching their destination. In contrast our expedition encountered only small problems, none of which were insurmountable. Both the trekkers and the climbers reached their respective start points in a good state of health and with all the personal and team equipment intact. All members of the trekking team completed the Annapurna circuit, with 7 of the team reaching the summit of Pisang. The climbing team enjoyed equal success, with 8 of the team reaching new personal heights and the team establishing a new route to within 600m of the summit and maintaining the logistical support of the climb throughout.

Throughout the expedition all team members had pushed themselves to new limits and had drawn on previously untapped energy supplies. They had worked as part of a team, both in the lead and support roles, and in pursuit of a common goal. Himalayan Venture 94 was an incredibly rewarding experience for all participants. The sights and sounds of Kathmandu coupled with the majestic beauty of the Himalayas will not be forgotten.

ALL MEMBERS OF HIMALAYAN VENTURE 94 WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS THEIR THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO THOSE MEMBERS OF BOTH SERVICE AND CIVILIAN ORGANISATIONS WHOSE HELP AND DONATIONS ENSURED THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT.

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