

AC

acc 25855

94/36

BRITISH HISPAN EXPEDITION 1994

Expedition report

INTRODUCTION

In the Pakistani Karakoram, it is only necessary to go through the formalities of permit, peak fee, and liaison officer for mountains of 6000 metres and above. For peaks below this height and in the "open areas" (away from the national borders), no such formalities are required. At least, this was the case until 1993. But during the spring of 1994, strong rumours were circulating about a change in these rules, requiring the employment of a local "guide" (at considerable expense). At the last minute, the Pakistani Government withdrew this proposed change, but the matter has not been dropped, and the change, or a variation of it, may be introduced for 1995. This matter is currently being debated.

During the summer of 1990, Dave Wilkinson was in the Barpu glacier region. From a small peak in this area he noticed a number of attractive peaks to the east, particularly a rocky tower on the ridge between the Yengutz and Garumbar glaciers. The 1994 Hispar expedition was planned with these objectives. The other members of the party were Tony Park, Bill Church, and Brian Davison.

TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

We flew to Pakistan with PIA . The tickets were booked through the Keswick - based trekking company "Karakoram Experience" who act as an agent for PIA. They also arranged a generous baggage allowance for the outward flight.

All arrangements for travel within Pakistan were done on the spot. Parky went out to the bazaar in Rawalpindi and negotiated a private bus which took us direct to Hunza. Jeeps to the roadhead were hired locally, and the return journey Gilgit to Pindi was done on the NATCO public bus, except for Parky who managed to get a flight. Porters also were hired on the spot.

SUPPLIES

Epigas, for mountain cooking, is not allowed on passenger planes. We collected ours from the offices of "Baltistan Tours" in Islamabad. This had been arranged and prepaid in the UK with Dai & Rhona Lampard.

Paraffin, for base-camp cooking, was bought in Aliabad (Hunza).

Food : mashed potato powder and instant soup are not available in Pakistan so we brought our own from Britain. We also brought about half our needs of bars of goodies - good quality chocolate can be bought in Pakistan, but only in limited brands. All other mountain food, and all base-camp food was bought by Dave in Pindi and Islamabad.

Leader: David Wilkinson
67 Pinner Lane, Pinner
Birmingham B42 2NR

THE JOURNEY

Parky & Dave flew from Manchester on 7th July, arrived in Rawalpindi on 8th, and spent 3 days organising supplies and onward transport. Bill & Brian arrived on 11th, and the party left by private bus late the same evening, arriving at Hunza early the following afternoon. Two jeeps were hired at Ganesh (Hunza). One of these took Brian and the baggage to Huru, a tiny settlement half way from Nagar to Hispar. The jeep road does continue to Hispar, but was not passable by jeep beyond Huru, due to land slips. The other jeep took Dave, Bill and Parky to Nagar where Porters were organised to carry from Huru to Hispar. The Nagar men have long had a bad reputation as porters. They do not seem to have improved much in recent years. Before the jeep road went beyond Nagar, the Nagar men used to charge a rather excessive three days portage from Nagar to Hispar, and at a higher daily rate than the supposedly fixed government rate. This year, they charged us an even more excessive two days from Huru to Hispar, and that for walking along a jeep road, but at least they didn't charge more than the official daily rate. We also had to hire two jeeps to ferry the 13 porters from Nagar to Huru. However, they did actually do the journey Huru to Hispar in one day. An alternative possibility would have been for one of us to walk to Hispar and send porters back to carry from Huru. This might have been better.

In Hispar, we put up at the rest house (now fallen into disrepair) with Ali Shah, who also helped us organise porters for the next stage to our base camp. The following day Parky and Brian reconnoitred the Yengutz glacier while Bill and Dave did likewise on the Garumbar glacier - the two possible approaches to our main objective. Both were inconclusive as far as actual routes were concerned on *that* peak, but the Garumbar seemed better for alternative/acclimatisation peaks, being a more extensive glacier. A good base camp site was found at an altitude of about 3700 m, in an ablation valley above the Garumbar glacier snout, and to its right (looking up the valley), a place Ali Shah later told us was locally called "Kalelwelum".

The Hispar men used to drive their animals up the Garumbar valley for grazing, but this seems to have stopped since a major land slide a few years ago destroyed the path and left behind a steep slope of rubble. In fact, the Hispar men, who are generally a bit more amenable than the Nagaris, were reluctant to even carry this way, suggesting a more circuitous route via the Hispar glacier and far side of the Garumbar. This may well have been a ploy to get more pay. In the end they did agree to the shorter route provided we gave them two days' pay. But they settled for 300 rupees per day all inclusive (i.e. including food allowance, kit and return), which was less than the official rate. They actually worked very well, did the journey in a single day, and were totally friendly, with no extra demands at pay-time. The walk did include some quite dangerous rubble traversing, followed by plenty of uphill. Perhaps a day and a half at official rates of pay would have been fair. This would have been about the same as we actually paid them - two days at a lower daily rate, so both sides were content.

IN THE MOUNTAINS

The first full day at base camp was occupied by two different activities. Brian and Parky climbed a 300 metre rock route on a granite wall above base camp (E1/E2). Dave and Bill did a reconnaissance walk up the glacier, but could see no easy low peak which would have been ideal for acclimatisation. We decided to try an unnamed peak of approx. 5900 metres, situated some 2 km. NNE of Spantik.

After a rest day, the whole party moved up the glacier to a beautiful ablation valley at about 4000 metres, "Uyumrung", with lush green grass, abundant wild flowers and lakes reflecting Trivor and Momhil Sar from beyond the Hispar glacier. Next morning we continued up to a camp site at c. 4800 m. on the east ridge of our peak ("Uyumrung Sar"). The same afternoon we continued unloaded to a height of around 5000 m where the ridge steepened, and back to spend the night at 4800 m., where we left tents and gear, then back to base camp the next day.

A few days of worse weather came at the right time for a good rest. Then back to the 4800 m. camp for our attempt.

Our ridge had a rotten-looking rock section above 5000 m. which we decided to avoid on its left by a snow/ice couloir. In the prevailing clear mild weather, this had potentially serious problems of stonefall and poor snow conditions, especially with its east facing attitude. We climbed this section before dawn. Unroped seemed safest to ensure completion before sun-up. We continued up the crest to another camp site at c. 5700 m. where we sweated the day out in our sun-baked Gemini tents. Another night start saw Brian and Parky ahead by an hour. Seracs on the crest were avoided by another couloir on the left. Returning to the ridge, they found the summit barred by an impenetrable serac barrier. They retreated disconsolately to meet Bill and Dave fresh from their later start. The latter (& later) pair then took over the route-finding, and made a long traverse to the south ridge; this led easily to the top, which was reached an hour after dawn. We descended to the 5700 m. camp, but spent the day there rather than brave the couloir below during the heat of day. The couloir was descended early next morning. The oldest and fattest member of the team got down well ahead of the others. Fittest as well as fattest? No, but perhaps wisest - this person was the only one to take a second axe, which proved very useful in the icy conditions prevailing after all that hot sun. Guilty of under-estimating their route, the others had to partake of some gripping single-axe unroped down-climbing on brittle ice. The party were relieved to get safely down this section before the stonefall started, and continued more relaxedly but with increasing fatigue back to base camp later the same day.

The Garumbar glacier is hemmed in by mountains. There are few amenable side-ridges and side-glaciers. Most of the side-ridges are rocky spurs of rotten rock or infested with gendarmes. Cols between the peaks are accessible by couloirs, mostly prone to stonefall. The summer of 1994 was abnormally hot, making the stonefall risk especially serious. Safe objectives were few. From Uyumrung Sar we saw, directly across the glacier, a west-facing snow/ice couloir, which looked safer than most. From the coll at its top, an easy ridge led to the flat top of a peak of about 5,800 m., proposed name "Trapezium".

Bill and Dave were thinking of this as their next route. Parky and Brian were thinking about trying an impressive looking peak of about 6,000 m. a bit lower down the glacier "Garumbar Matterhorn". This would have been quite a major undertaking. But Brian was now ill with a persistent stomach bug, and decided to rest for a few more days, so Parky joined Dave and Bill.

These three walked up to a camp near the glacier head. From here, they climbed their couloir, negotiating some fine flutings, to camp on the col at about 5,400 m. Next morning the lower part of the "easy" ridge proved unexpectedly tricky with some unfrozen snow and sublimated honeycomb-eroded ice which gave a few nervous moments. The upper part of the ridge *was* easier and the top of Trapezium was reached and the col regained the same morning. The descent of the couloir was left till the cool of the following morning, and base camp regained that afternoon.

We now turned our attention to the rock peak which was our main objective. This was not easy to identify from close up, amid the forest of granite spires hereabouts. One of the two likely peaks had a couloir leading up to its southern col which did not appear too stonefall prone. We set off for this, but while we were on the scree below the couloir, a huge rockfall crashed down from one of the side rock-walls; had we started an hour earlier, we would have all been annihilated. Duly chastened, we returned to base camp with our tails down. In the continuing hot weather, nothing else in the whole glacier seemed remotely safe, and we decided to leave forthwith; Bill and Parky for home, Brian and Dave, who had a bit more time to play with, for a different valley.

Three days later, we were all in Gilgit. Bill and Parky returned rapidly to Britain, Brian and Dave went lightweight to the Naltar Valley to attempt the apparently unclimbed peaks of Charikand (c 5800 m.) or Khaitar (c 5600 m.). But the weather now worsened, and three days were wasted at Naltar lake. When it finally cleared, the lower objective was selected because of the limited remaining food and time, and the apparently simpler approach. From the lake, a side valley appeared to lead northwards to Khaitar. A long day with big sacks led to a camp on the glacier, from where there was some doubt about which of several peaks actually *was* Khaitar. The most likely looking ridge of the most likely looking peak was selected. A big icefall complicated the approach, the ridge was gained more easily and followed for some distance, but became more tricky as we traversed previously hidden towers on less than perfect granite. We finally turned back well short of the summit confronting a difficult and complex bit of pinnacle with limited rock gear and no bivouac equipment. Next evening, we were back in Naltar. On the walk back, with better visibility, we saw that we had been on the wrong mountain, and even in the wrong side valley. The Leoman map (my spell-checker suggests "Lemon map"!) which we were using had the Naltar lake marked in the wrong place completely, and we had actually been attempting the south ridge of the South Twin. Later inspection of the Jerzy Walla/Swiss map showed the lake in the correct place - if only we had had *that* map!

Diary of the Trip

Thu 7 July Dave & Parky fly from Manchester
 Fri 8 arrive Rawalpindi
 Sun 10 Brian & Bill Fly from Manchester
 Mon 11 arrive Rawalpindi
 ditto late evening whole party leaves by bus
 Tue 12 arrive Hunza
 Wed 13 jeep to Huru
 Thu 14 walk to Hispar
 Fri 15 reconnaissance
 Sat 16 walk to Kalelwelum (base camp)
 Wed 20 up glacier to Uyumrung
 Thu 21 up to c. 5000 m. on Uyumrung Sar
 Fri 22 down to Kalelwelum
 Tue 26 back to camp 1 at c. 4800 m. on Uyumrung Sar
 Wed 27 up to camp 2 at c. 5700 m.
 Thu 28 to top of Uyumrung Sar and back to camp 2
 Fri 29 back to Kalelwelum
 Mon 1 Aug up glacier to camp 1 on glacier below couloir for Trapezium
 Tue 2 up couloir to camp 2 on col
 Wed 3 up north ridge to top of Trapezium and back to camp 2
 Thur 4 back to Kalelwelum
 Mon 8 repulsed by stonefall from couloir leading to un-named rock peak
 Tue 9 Bill to Hispar to send porters
 Wed 10 others to Hispar
 Thu 11 to Huru. Brian continues to Hunza to send jeep
 Fri 12 Jeep to Hunza and bus to Gilgit. Bill catches night bus to 'Pindi.
 Sun 14 Parky flies to 'Pindi.
 Mon 15 Brian & Dave by jeep to Naltar
 Tue 16 walk to Naltar lake
 Sat 20 up to camp below South side of Twins (in mistake for Khaitar)
 Sun 21 attempt on south ridge of South Twin
 Mon 22 walk back to Naltar
 Tue 23 jeep to Gilgit. Return home a few days later.

Conclusions

The other mountains around the main glacier visited, the Garumbar, could only be recommended for cooler weather or a bolder party.

The trip was generally successful, but the future of such lightweight expeditions is in doubt pending the Pakistani government's decision on their future regulations.

Accounts

All tents, stoves and climbing equipment were loaned to the expedition by the members, so do not appear in these accounts.

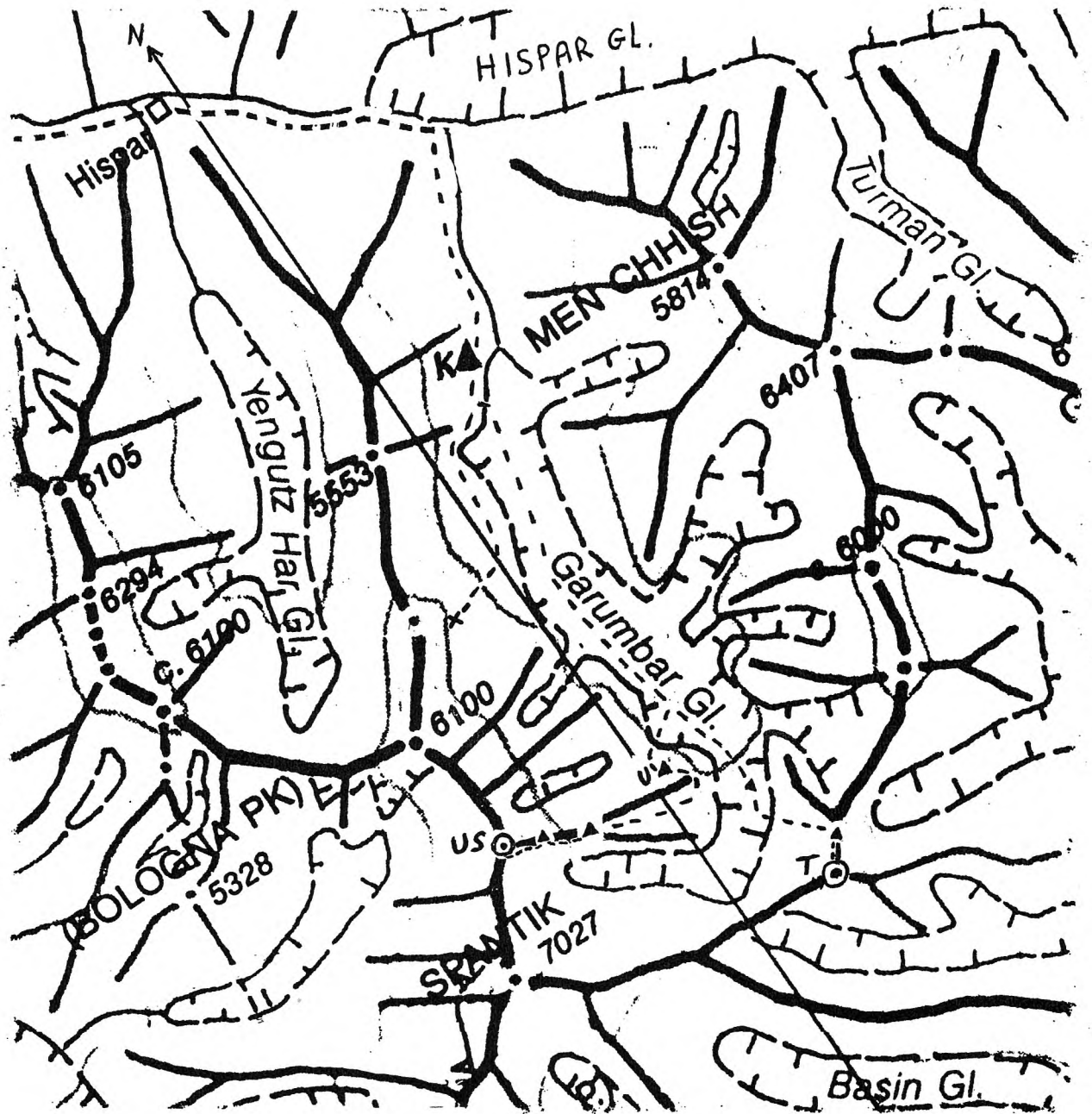
Income	£	Expenditure	£
Grant from MEF	600	Travel & transport	
Grant from BMC	600	4 air fares @ £539	2156
Grant from FSA	600	Airport tax in Pakistan	17.21
Members' contributions	2654.66	Buses etc.'Pindi-Hunza	210.36
	<u>4454.66</u>	Buses & taxis in 'Pindi	19.75
		Jeeps	<u>127.98</u>
			2531.30
		Porters Wages	493.12
		Insurance	<u>14.71</u>
			507.83
		Food & Supplies	
		Food & drink in cafes etc.	97.63
		Exped. food bought in Pak.	353.75
		in UK	52.00
		Epigas	120.00
		Other non-edible consumables bought in Pak.	<u>32.18</u>
			658.56
		Hotels, etc.	196.28
		Members' insurance	528
		Loss on money re-exchange	10.69
		Sundry expenses in UK	22.00
			<u>4454.66</u>

Acknowledgements

We received financial assistance in the form of grants from the Mount Everest Foundation, the British Mountaineering Council (money provided by the Sports Council), and the Foundation for Sport and the Arts.

We would like to record our thanks to these bodies.

MAP 1 GARUMBAR GLACIER

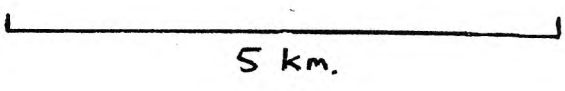


--- APPROACHES & ROUTES OF ASCENT / ATTEMPT.

- ▲ CAMP SITES
- K "KALELWELUM" (BASE CAMP)
- U "UYUMRUNG"

- ⊙ PEAKS CLIMBED BY THE EXPEDITION
- US "UYUMRUNG SAR" c. 5900 m.
- T "TRAPEZIUM" c. 5800 m.

- OTHER PEAKS
- x HIGH POINT OF ATTEMPT ON UNNAMED ROCK PEAK



APPROX. SCALE

MAP 2 NALTAR VALLEY



+ APPROX. POSITION OF HIGH POINT ON ATTEMPT ON SOUTH RIDGE OF SOUTH TWIN, THOUGHT AT THE TIME TO BE KHAITAR.

⊕ INCORRECT POSITION OF NALTAR LAKE, AS SHOWN ON LEOMAN MAP. THIS CAUSED MISLOCATION OF KHAITAR.

