

ACL 26238



THE BRITISH HUB-SEW EXPEDITION 1995

MEF Reference 95/14

EXPEDITION REPORT

**A mountaineering expedition to the Icefield Ranges of the Kluane
National Park, Yukon, Canada.**

29th April to 6th June 1995

**Supported by : The Mount Everest Foundation
The British Mountaineering Council**

Sponsored by : Polartec Performance Challenge

+417



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Introduction

This expedition did not go as planned. The expedition leader is argueably one of Britains most experienced Alaskan climbers and his intention was to put together a team of climbers who had all been successful on big Alaskan peaks before and to then lay down a program of ascents that would prove to be a challenge to all concerned. The expedition did not necessarily go as planned. Mark Sinclair, a primary founder of the above concept, was killed in an accident on Lochnagar five weeks before the departure of the team. With Mark, and also killed, was Neil Main who was always going to be a first reserve for the team subject to his current financial situation. These two together with Geoff Hornby, David Barlow and Chris Schiller, had been the first British ascentionists of Mount Hunters South West Ridge.

The expedition leader, Geoff Hornby, had to give a lot of thought as to whether the team could continue and if it could where would we find a fourth member. A British climber living in Canada, Andrew Brash, had expressed a desire to join the team and an offer was sent. However, he received the offer after disappearing to plant trees in the wilderness for 8 weeks and so could not attend. At the eleventh hour Simon Hall, a special forces officer, withdrew suddenly due to an immediate call up committment. His services to mankind in Bosnia were I'm sure more relevant than those on a mountain in the Yukon.

Then there were two. In searching out two more candidates we looked for Alaskan experience and chose first, Tom Nonis an American living in Boston who had been with Geoff Hornby to Alaska twice and the Himalaya twice and then to Dean Freeman, a Brit living and working with Tom at the time.

My hand goes out to people who can both drop everything to travel at a moments notice, but also to those who can mentally prepare for the rigours of extreme alpinism without time to collect their thoughts. I really appreciate their availability for this expedition.

The expedition named its new route on Wood Peak the 'Sinclair Spur' in memory of Mark Sinclair, and this report of the expedition he had helped to organise is dedicated to Mark's memory.

Acknowledgements

Our sincere thanks go to all the individuals, companies and organisations that helped us.

Our thanks to the following Companies and Organisations that supported us :

Malden Mills
The Mount Everest Foundation
The British Mountaineering Council
Close Brothers Investment Ltd
Cotswold Camping
Gulf Air Taxi
Handmade Flapjack Company
Northern Lights
Snow and Rock
Terra Nova

Our thanks to the following individuals who provided equipment, information or valuable support and guidance :

Dr Eleanor Barnes
Peter Bishop
Julia Carpenter
Joe Carter
Paul Deegan
James and Verity Dennison
Tracy Freeman
Kurt Goyer
Susie Sammut
Carolyn Le Poidevin
Richard Masters
Craig Reader
Nell Holt-Wilson
Libby Sinclair
Peter Stewart

Objectives and summary achievements

Objectives :

Hubsew Peak (3570m) 1st ascent

McArthur Peak (4308m) South Face new route

King Peak (5173m) South West face 1st ascent

Subsidiary objectives - Hubsew ridge 2nd ascent

Summary achievements in order :

Wood Peak (3609m) new route to summit ridge up the Central Spur on the West face. Summit not reached due to bad weather. GH & SJ & TN & DF.

McArthur Peak, north ridge climbed to junction with summit plateau. Stephen Jones suffered head injury on the last pitch out of the couloir forcing the team to descend. SJ & TN & DF.

Wood Peak, the new route repeated and pushed through all the way to the summit. We had some doubts as to whether the summit had ever been reached before, so it became very important to reach it. It subsequently turned out that the Canadians had in fact reached the true summit on their ascent previously. SJ & TN & DF.

Mount Logan East Ridge, climbed to 14,500 feet where a severe storm necessitated a retreat. SJ & TN.

Team

GEOFF HORNBY - 36 years old, Engineer, 125 alpine routes and big walls. Ascents of the Walker Spur, the Matterhorn North Face, Supercouloir Direct in Winter, the Nose and Zodiac on El Capitan, Half Dome's NW face in a day, Mt Watkins South Face, SW ridge on Mt Hunter, 1st ascent of Thunder Mountain, 1st ascent of Laspa Dhura in India, Diamond Couloir Direct - 2nd winter ascent, Ice Window route 1st winter solo.

The Coach House, Wingfield Hall, Manor Road, South wingfield, Derbyshire, DE55 7NH. Tel 01773 831915

STEPHEN JONES - 28 years old, Banker, two ascents of Denali, 3 trips to the Karakoram, a winter ascent of Mt Elbrus, leader of a 4 man unsupported crossing of Greenland.

Somewhere in Zimbabwe, c/o Keepers Cottage, Chase End Street, Bromsberrow, Ledbury HR8 1SE.

TOM NONIS - 38 years old, Builder, south spur on the Ogre to summit pyramid, Shivling West ridge solo, six routes on El Capitan including Nose, Zodiac, Salathe, Tangerine Trip and Triple Direct, Half Dome NW face in a day, Supercouloir Direct in winter, Shea Jackson on the Droites, Alpamayo SW face..

500 Summer Street, Arlington, Mass 02174 USA

DEAN FREEMAN - 35 years old, singer songwriter, ex armed robber, retailer of radioactive waste, Droites North face, Route Major, Diamond Couloir, Alpamayo SW face, Denali West Rib, Triple Direct, Cassin route on the Badile.

Selling songs in Nashville somewhere c/o Geoff Hornby (as above).

DIARY

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
1	29.04.	GH, SAJ fly London to Seattle British Airways BA83 Meet TN. Buy food.
2	30.04.	GH, SAJ, TN fly Seattle to Yakutat, Alaskan Airlines AS61 departs 07.40 arrives 10.36. DF flies from Anchorage to Yakutat.
3	01.05.	Fly Gulf Air Taxi to Mount Logan massif crossing border into Canada; Kluane National Park. Set up base camp (BC) on Hubbard Glacier and move towards McArthur Pass.
4	02.05	Move to McArthur Pass.
5	03.05	Attempt Wood Peak (3,609m).
6	04.05	Descend to BC for more food, return to McArthur Pass.
7	05.05	GH resolves to leave, SAJ, GH & TN descend to BC. GH flies out to Yakutat. SAJ, TN return to McArthur Pass.
8	06.05	Descend Logan glacier to North Ridge of Mt. McArthur. Start climbing North ridge.
9	07.05	Stormbound.
10	08.05	Stormbound.
11	09.05	Climb to summit plateau. Accident; SAJ cut head & concussion. Descend to camp.
12	10.05	Descend to Logan glacier and return to McArthur Pass.
13	11.05	Climb new route on Wood Peak (3,609m)
14	12.05	Return to BC. Feast.
15	13.05	Rest at BC
16	14.05	Reconnaissance Hubsew Peak north face.
17	15.05	Planned reconnaissance Hubsew south face aborted. Bad weather.
18	16.05	Bad weather, stuck at BC.
19	17.05	Bad weather, stuck at BC.
20	18.05	Bad weather continues. Gulf Air manage to fly in, DF flies out.
21	19.05	Carry loads to Hubsew Peak north face.
22	20.05	3.00am departure for Hubsew Peak. Avalanche conditions on route, descend. Vancouver team return to BC.
23	21.05	More bad weather, at BC.
24	22.05	Decide on East ridge Mount Logan (ER). Pack 10 days food; climb to foot of route.
25	23.05	Day 1 on ER. Climb to camp 3 at 3,555m.
26	24.05	Day 2 on ER. Climb to camp 4 at 3,915m Meet Montana & Calgary teams.
27	25.05	Day 3 on ER. Stormbound, tent buried: oh dear.
28	26.05	Day 4 on ER. Clear in morning; dry kit then climb to 14,500ft. Calgary team descend.
29	27.05	Day 5 on ER. Desperate storm, dig snowhole, stuck at 14,500.
30	28.05	Day 6 on ER. Storm continues, stuck at 14,500.
31	29.05	Day 7 on ER. Storm continues, stuck at 14,500.
32	30.05	Day 8 on ER. Break in weather, descend to 11,600.
33	31.05	Day 8 on ER. More bad weather, stuck at 11,600.

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Diary continued

- 34 01.06 Day 9 on ER. Break in weather at 10pm descend all night.
- 35 02.06 Day 10 on ER. Get off ridge and return to BC at 3pm after 17 hrs on go
- 36 03.06 At BC
- 37 04.06 SAJ & TH fly out to Yakutat, Alaska.
- 38 05.06 Fly to Seattle AS066. TN flies to Boston.
- 39 06.06 SAJ flies to London. BA82 departs Seattle 18.15, arrives London
07.06.95 at 11.25.
- 40 07.06 Arrive London Heathrow Terminal 4 at 11.25.

Accidents and injuries

The members of the team were involved in four minor accidents during this expedition. Unfortunately, three of them occurred to the expedition leader which ultimately led to his leaving for medical treatment.

Geoff Hornby -

Injured his back whilst packing equipment in the aircraft hangar at Yakutat. The injury is believed to have occurred due to standing and bending down for long periods whilst filling haul bags and mule bags. The muscular injury was a result of poor posture and manual handling. The injury could have been avoided by kneeling next to the equipment and by moving the body to the load rather than stretching and tugging at things. Whilst a mild back strain may not be a major inconvenience in normal home life, it can be a very awkward injury in confined tent space and when trying to pull on double boots and fit crampons etc. Two months of care and consideration led to an almost complete heal, however, some sensitivity is still apparent.

Stretched the tendons on the inside of his right heel. This injury occurred sometime during the ascent of Wood peak. The growing tiredness that occurs on a long ascent can help disguise the symptoms of an injury and it was not until the next day that the injury and its pain became apparent. The injury was not treatable in the field and although easy movement was possible although painful in double boots, the concern was the inability to diagnose the injury. On return to the UK, the injury was treated by a Sports Physiotherapist who was able to diagnose the exact problem after a series of exercises pin pointing the location of the pain. Treatment with Ultrasonics led to a full recovery in 8 weeks.

A broken bone in the right little finger. The major bone between the primary knuckle and the palm joint was cleanly fractured. It is believed to have happened during the ascent of Wood peak and was probably due to the energetic placement of an ice tool that caused the finger to be driven hard against a boss of water ice. The injury was not recognised at the time due to the extreme cold which must have suppressed the pain. The injury was treated by strapping it fully to the third finger of the same hand without any splinting.

On return to the UK, the finger was X rayed and found to be healing satisfactorily, although the piano playing has been as poor as ever.

Stephen Jones -

Stephen Jones was hit by a piece of water ice, dislodged by an ice tool placement, whilst climbing the exit couloir onto the plateau of McArthur's North ridge. The injury appeared to be worse than it really was as the blood from the forehead cut got into Stephens eyes impairing his vision. The treatment was to cover the wound to suppress the bleeding and then to descend to the glacier. The injury settled very quickly and did not result in any restriction on activity thereafter. Whilst it caused the team to abandon its ascent of McArthur from very near the summit, it was retrospectively probably unnecessary. However, at the time and with a head injury it seemed prudent.

The three injuries suffered by Geoff Hornby were sufficient to cause him to leave the glacier after the first foray up Wood peak. It was the culmination of a succession of bad luck situations to affect this trip.

ACCESS AND TRAVEL

MOUNTAINEERING PERMIT

Permission to climb in the Kluane National Park is required before flying in to the mountains. Write to the Park rangers for the information sheet and application forms. A \$10 entry fee has been introduced and we simply paid this to our pilot who would remit the money to the Park at a later date. On arrival at Yakutat we spoke to the rangers by telephone and sent final forms to them by fax from Gulf Air's office.

Mountaineering Warden, Kluane National Park Reserve, Box 5495, Haines Junction, Yukon, Canada, Y0B 1L0

tel 00 1 403 634 2251 (time difference GMT - 8 hours)

fax 00 1 403 634 2686

AIRCRAFT ACCESS

There are two mountain air transport companies flying into Mount Logan and the St Elias mountains: Gulf Air in Yakutat, Alaska and Andy Williams in Haines Junction, Canada. Travelling from Britain I would suggest that it is better to fly from Yakutat. There are a good number of flights to Seattle from Britain. Seattle is an excellent jumping off point in the United States. Car hire is cheap and readily available at the airport, supermarkets for food supplies and there are outdoor equipment retailers such as REI and Patagonia in Seattle.

Alaskan Airlines has daily flights to Yakutat. The staff at Gulf Air are well organised and very helpful. They will supply Coleman fuel, plastic sleds and marker wands as well as a hangar for sorting and packing. Free camping is available. They hire radio telephones for calling up Gulf Air or for accessing the cellular telephone network in Yakutat. We set up a daily radio call at 8.00pm to keep in touch with other parties and two teams that flew in from Haines brought programmable radios to join the net.

Gulf Air have a number of aircraft and pilots but use a ski equipped turbocharged Cessna 185 Skywagon to fly into the mountains. This has four seats but realistically seats the pilot and two passengers plus their equipment.

The alternative is to fly with Andy Williams from Haines Junction in Canada. This is the natural choice for Canadian climbers who can arrive by car and pay in Canadian dollars. He flies a Heliocourier that has slightly less capacity than the Cessna. He does not operate on the marine band radio frequency that seems to be universal in Yakutat but uses a single side band system that is fit for a museum. From observation of his clients I thought we received a significantly more professional service with better radio communications and faster pick-ups once a plane had been requested.

The Canadian Park Rangers who administer climbing in the range are extremely helpful in providing Gulf Air with their briefing video and are quite happy for teams to access the Kluane National Park from Alaska.

Gulf Air Taxi, Inc., P.O. Box 367, Yakutat, Alaska 99689. Tel 00 1 907 784 3240
(time difference GMT - 10 hours)

GETTING THERE

We flew by British Airways to Seattle which as mentioned above is a convenient entry point for onward flight connections and for obtaining supplies.

SEATTLE

We hired a car at the airport (Alamo \$39.11 for 1 day including insurance) and stayed at one of many motels on the Pacific Highway which is just outside the airport. Mini-Rate Motel 'Seattle's quality budget motel' 20620 Pacific Highway South, Seattle, Washington 98188. Telephone (206) 824 6930.

We bought food at a Safeway supermarket at Burien Plaza.

If you want to go gear shopping then REI is situated at 1525 11th Avenue, Seattle, 98122 telephone 323 8333. Feathered Friends have a shop and down equipment outlet opposite REI. The Patagonia shop is at 2100 First Avenue, Seattle, 98121.

Time in Seattle GMT - 8 hours

British Airways in Seattle: telephone 800 247 9297, offices at Seattle Tacoma airport and on 4th Avenue.

YAKUTAT

The smallest community (700 people) in the United States which is serviced by a daily jet service. No access by road or rail, limited access by sea. Alaskan Airlines fly from Seattle to Anchorage via Juneau, Yakutat and Cordova. The airport is a former USAF base built during the second world war and is several miles from the town. Located at the airport are Gulf Air and the Yakutat Lodge. Do not plan to buy anything in Yakutat except meals and drinks whilst you are there.

The Yakutat Lodge is the base for Ken and Jill Fanning's Alaska Guide Service, fishing and hunting trip organisers. The Lodge has a bar, restaurant for breakfast, lunch and dinner and has a variety of accomodation available. Showers are available for campers at \$7.00. Warm welcome.

The Yakutat Lodge, Box 287, Yakutat, Alaska, 99689. Telephone (907) 784 3232, fax (907) 784 3452.

We thought that the Glacier Bear Lodge which is located a couple of miles down the road, the only road, towards town was a better place to eat. It also has a bar. Owned by our pilot Kurt Gloyer's ex-mother in law and he still eats there. Glacier Bear Lodge PO Box 303 Yakutat, Alaska, 99689; telephone (907) 784 3202.

Informal camping is allowed behind Gulf Air's hangar and equipment can be stored and sorted in their hangar. They have a safe for valuables. Do not take your travel documents or money with you into the mountains, after severe storms parties have literally lost their base camps under meters of new snow.

Other Information:

The weather forecast can be obtained by telephoning 784 3322.

telephone code for UK from USA & Canada: 011 44 +

LOGISTICS

MAPS, PHOTOS AND RESEARCH

The following maps were taken:

1 Mount Logan, a map of exploration, ascent routes and research sites. scale 1:75000. This may be ordered from The University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2N 1N4, attention Gerald Holdsworth.

2 Mount St Elias 115B & 115 C 3rd edition. 1:250,000. Produced by the Canada centre for mapping, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Copies may be obtained from The Canada Map Office, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Ottawa. We ordered maps from Map Town Ltd telephone (403) 266 2241, fax (403) 266 2356. 1:50,000 sheets of the area are available.

Photographs from the Washburn collection are available from the University of Alaska - Fairbanks. Contact: Sylvie D Savage, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E Rasmuson Library, P.O. Box 756808, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99775-6808. Telephone (907) 474 7261, fax (907) 474 6841. They will send a copy of the relevant pages from the catalogue and ordering information. Specific queries can be addressed directly to Bradford Washburn at Museum of Science, Science Park, Boston, MA 02114-1099. Telephone (617) 589 0100, fax (617) 589 0454.

Route research was undertaken at the Alpine Club library, 55 Charlotte Road, London, EC2A 3QT, telephone 0171 613 0755. The Canadian Alpine journal contains summary annual information for climbing done in the range under the heading Reports from the North.

INSURANCE

Insurance for Geoff & Stephen from British Mountaineering Council 0161 445 4747, fax 0161 445 4500 contact: Robert Bond.

MARINE BAND RADIO

Radio channels

- 1 Yakutat cellular phone access. Access code *75492
- 2 GST cellular phone access
- 3 weather report
- 4 70 marine
- 5 10 marine
- 6 6 marine
- 7 68 marine
- 8 22A marine
- 9 9 marine
- 10 16 marine

EQUIPMENT

The following set of equipment was the basic set used by each of the four climbers :

CLOTHING

Polartec thermals
Polartec fleece jacket
Helly Hansen fleece salopettes
A lightweight down duvet
Heavyweight full weather protected down jacket
A single or two piece Gore Tex shell
Vapour barrier socks
Wild Country toaster socks
Scarpa Vega boots with normal inner and alveolite inner
Supergaitors
Fleece balaclava
Down booties
Inner gloves
Wool gloves for technical climbing
Pile lined overmitts

SLEEPING

Serious Goretex covered 5 season sleeping bag.
3 sleeping mats, either Foam or Thermorests.
Top of the range Wild Country tents.

COOKING

White gas MSR's with kettle and stainless steel pan sets.
I have a home made kitchen platform that is excellent in the snow.
A thermos is essential for keeping liquid overnight and simplifies brews on the glacier or on routes.
Lots of kitchen role to remove melt water inside tent.

CLIMBING

Clip on crampons. Normal technical ice tools.
Troll Expedition Whillans harnesses.
3 ice screws, 3 snargs, 3 snow stakes per person.
100 metre 8.5 millimetre ropes, one per pair.
Slings and tape.
Scottish mixed rack for harder climbing.
Snow saws and snow shovels, one shovel should be lightweight.

FOOD

Standard food, nothing fancy or clever, all bought or buyable at a Safeways in Seattle.

EXPENSES

Travel	£4800
Food and Stores	£1200
Equipment	£1850
Insurance	£ 750
Miscellaneous and contingency	£1000
TOTAL	£9600

This trip was financially supported by significant contributions from :

The Mount Everest Foundation
The British Mountaineering Council
Polartec Performance Challenge

to whom we are eternally grateful.

CONCLUSION

Shortly before we left for the Yukon, I lost my Grandfather 'Doug Yendole' who was possibly the most influential person on my life to date. Combined with both the death of Mark Sinclair and my subsequent injury during the trip, this must go down as the most intense period of life to date.

Ultimately, I am pleased with the guys who pulled it together and I am pleased with the new route that was climbed and named in the memory of Mark as the 'Sinclair Spur'.

We went, we climbed a new route, we climbed it twice to make sure the summit was reached, and we all came home and are planning again. In Alaska and the Yukon that is considered to be good going!!!

Anyone requiring further information on this expedition, or on how to mount an expedition such as this, or would like to discuss some objectives in this range are very welcome to contact Geoff Hornby as follows :

THE COACH HOUSE, WINGFIELD HALL, MANOR ROAD, SOUTH
WINGFIELD, DERBYSHIRE DE55 7NH.
PHONE 01773 831915, FAX 01773 833151.