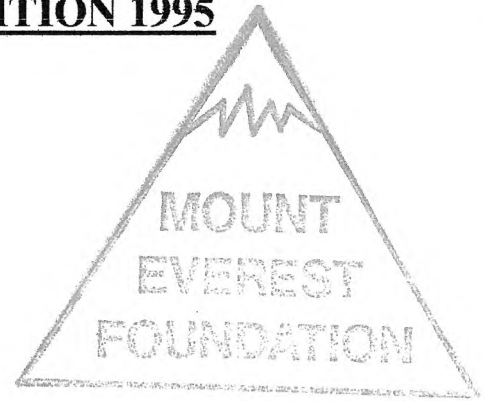


BRITISH GUARISHANKAR EXPEDITION 1995

M.E.F. Reference 95/37

MEMBERS:

Nicholas Harper (Leader)
 Kevin Wilson
 Andrew Forsyth
 Geoffrey Allman
 Jago Trasler
 Richard Harrison
 George Healy



OBJECTIVE: West face of Gaurishankar, Rowaling, Nepal. Autumn 1995

We became aware Gaurishankar was "open" while in Nepal in 1992. We were fortunate to meet Elizabeth Hawley who supported our application for a permit by lobbying the various parties in Kathmandu. Gaurishankar and the Rowaling were deemed to be in a politically sensitive area and no permits had been issued for many years.

We originally intended to mount the expedition in Spring 1993 but were unable to get a team together or raise the finance. H.M. Ministry of Tourism Nepal Mountaineering section allowed a postponement to Autumn 1995 by which time we had firm commitments from seven climbers and adequate finance arranged.

FUND-RAISING:

The majority of the expedition cost was paid by the members (approximately £3,100.00 each).

The expedition received the following grants:

Mount Everest Foundation gave £700.00

British Mountaineering Council gave £700.00

Foundation for Sport and the Arts gave £525.00

In addition the members, by personal connections, raised another £4,365.00 from various sponsors.

We found that a letter, followed up by phone calls was the most effective means of obtaining funds. It was very important to have the name of a person able to sign a cheque at the initial approach.

We had decided early on that since all but two of the members were self employed we would not do a lot of fund-raising by the usual means of slide shows, discos, raffles, etc. but rather work hard in our own game and pay a slightly higher personal contribution.

COSTS:

We had agreed an all inclusive price of \$28,000 US for our requirements in Nepal. This covered everything excluding bonus for the two climbing sherpas and some gear we purchased in Kathmandu.

Our official agent was Ang Jangbu of Himalayan Excursions but his only function was to liaise with the Ministry of Tourism. Everything else was provided by our sirdar Ang Rita Sherpa from Kharikola (this was the fourth trip using his services for Kevin Wilson and myself).

Other costs, see Budget.

PRELIMINARIES, KATHMANDU:

The team arrived in Kathmandu on 14th September 1995, met by Ang Rita and team bus.

Briefing with Ministry of Tourism on 15th September 1995, those present; Nick Harper, Andy Forsyth, Ang Jangbu Sherpa (Agent), Ang Rita Sherpa (Sirdar), Ministry Officers Dinesh Shishtar, Mr Bastrode, Liaison Officer (L.O.) Pita Mungdung.

All the usual questions were fielded: Location, height of base camp and date on which it will be established plus same for subsequent camps. Date of summit attempt!

There is no refuse regime in place in the Rowaling so we were not required to leave a deposit but assurance from myself and Ang Rita was given that no refuse would be left. Anything durable would be brought down to the valley, everything else would be burnt at base camp. This was acceptable to the Ministry but having had a fire on the last day at base camp Ang Rita did receive complaints about the smoke from the people of Bedding.

We felt the Ministry would have liked us to be equipped with two way radios, but settled for cook boy acting as second runner in case of emergency.

I signed the briefing form and accepted the permit. Our Liaison Officer was not suited by his having to deal with Ang Jangbu and Ang Rita for his equipment but this was as agreed.

EXPEDITION:

On 17th September 1995 we left Kathmandu by bus for Dolkha which is just beyond Charikot. Ang Rita followed in another bus with about thirty porters. The walk in commenced next morning, 18th September 1995 and we arrived at Sanigaon on 20th September 1995.

We had received information that the approach to the west face of Gaurishankar would probably take a couple of weeks to hack through as no one had been up there for years. We had decided since we did not have that amount of time available to carry on up the Rowaling valley and try the South West Ridge from above Bedding. We made this request via the L.O. to the Ministry, having started we would continue, assuming their permission would be granted. This was the last we saw of the L.O. until we got back to Kathmandu.

From our next camp Andy Forsyth, myself, Ang Rita and one climbing sherpa prospected up into Tongmarnang, a valley immediately south of Gaurishankar.

Ang Rita had arranged to meet a local man to show us a route into it. We all flogged up through vegetated scree to a notch about 1000 feet above the path. The notch comprised of steep moss covered slabs and a very steep wet corner. Andy led the corner. There was no possibility of taking porters up there so we carried on just to have a look about. It is a very steep sided valley with a gorge in the bottom. Were it easier to get into, it would afford quick access to the South Face of Gaurishankar. We descended by abseil leaving a length of polypropylene rope. We returned to our previous nights camp and next day we carried on to Gyabrug.

Our intention now was to go up to a Base Camp (B.C.) which we knew had been used by Japanese and Australians. This is above Bedding via a valley indicated as Jomol Gul Chku.

Next day, 24th September 1995, we got up to Base Camp at 4900 metres (see map). A lot of ascent at this part of the trip (3600 to 4900 metres). All the porters made it and were paid off. Ang Rita had hired local porters as and when required, the maximum number for any one day being seventy.

Geoff Allman went down the next morning and the cook boy the day after, neither having acclimatised sufficiently. Both returned after 48 hours down in Bedding.

It snowed our first night at Base Camp (about 150mm).

On 25th September 1995 we started prospecting North across broken rock and moraine/scree to find an Advanced Base Camp (A.B.C.). This involved climbing some clean slabs (80m) and very steep scree to a shoulder NE of B.C. We dug out three platforms and established A.B.C. on 30th September 1995 at approximately 5200 metres. Just behind A.B.C. steep ramparts guarded snow ridges which ran up to the summit of Terseringma indicated as 6333 metres on the map. The start of the SE ridge proper.

We spent several days finding a reasonably safe line through the ramparts. This line started where the glacier steepened to vertical at the Eastern limit of the ramparts. The rock was very shattered and all ledges were covered in loose poised blocks. Above the ramparts progress was more straightforward up the West edge of the glacier to an open gully leading up to a very obvious feature of the face, a huge area of steep slabs and walls evenly split by a gully. This feature became known as the Elephant's Arse and the foot of the gully splitting it was first reached on 6th October 1995.

After taking several false lines we climbed the gully on 8th October 1995, it was initially grade IV Scottish then laid back a bit, then grade III Scottish for another two pitches. We now wanted another camp but had to make do with a platform below the buttocks on a mixture of soft snow, ice and dirt. This was at 5600 metres.

Above the buttocks the obvious line went straight up into a steep sided amphitheatre. This and the upper part of the gully were led by Jago and George. Unfortunately the rock in the amphitheatre proved too loose to be safe and so, the climbing sherpas having condemned that section, we climbed

it once more pulling the ropes up as we went. We traversed West at its upper limit. This put us on a spur which ran down to the top of the gully between the buttocks. We set our ropes as we abseiled back down. The rim of the amphitheatre eventually yielded a platform for a second camp which was established on 25th October 1995 by which time our high point was much higher (altitude of camp two 5800 metres).

The line now followed a spur descending from just below the summit. It was steep loose rock interspersed with snow. Evidence of previous ascents in the form of old cable laid rope and some pegs confirmed this was the safest line. We had the line fixed by the 27th October 1995 to the top of the spur which left what turned out to be four pitches to the summit. These last four pitches comprised a very unpleasant traverse East across dirt and rubble, a rising traverse over loose blocks and two pitches of snow.

On the 29th October 1995 Jago and George reached the summit of Terseringma (6333metres). They described the start of the SE ridge as meringue but probably not as stable.

Kevin and Richard were at Camp One ready for their summit attempt but unfortunately midmorning Kevin was struck by a stone while sitting in the tent. He thought he was OK and so set off for Camp Two but passed out on a vertical section of rope. He arrived back at Base Camp late that afternoon, disappointed but resigned to not reaching the summit as he considered the route unsafe.

Andy and I reached the summit on 31st October 1995. No visibility and summit cone unstable. I had decided we would now be best retreating. This turned out to be the consensus of opinion and so we stripped the route and left base camp on 3rd November 1995.

We found the ascent of Terseringma testing. It was steep, there were no good camps and the weather was consistently bad. As temperatures came up a little due to clearer skies, stonefall became a problem. The majority of the route above Camp Two was up a ridge-like feature which where exposed was loose rubble.

To salvage something from the trip we decided to walk out over the Tesi Lapcha pass (5755 metres) into the Khumbu. We got permission for this via the Police radio at Sanigaon and so we went over the pass on the 6th

November 1995, six members and two porters. Jago Trasler went back down the Rowaling as he had to return to work.

Andy and I were up at Tangboche on the 9th October 1995 when the snow started falling which led to so many fatalities. Had we continued along the SE ridge of Gaurishankar we would have been very extended by that date.

We flew back to Kathmandu from Luckla. The debriefing with the Ministry took place on 13th November 1995 and we flew out on 16th November 1995.

BRITISH GAURISANKAR EXPEDITION 1995 FINAL BUDGET

Expenditure

Peak Permit	850.00
Tents	1044.70
Rope and Tape	898.00
Air Freight outbound 216Kg	496.80
Air Freight inbound 115Kg	340.00
Import Duty	333.33
Gas	396.00
Head Torch Batteries	200.00
Fixed Price Costs Nepal	18002.06
Agents Fee	187.50
Ice Screw, pegs	290.00
Flights	3710.00
Excess Baggage outbound	120.00
Medical	115.00
Insurance	1428.00
Van Hire	75.00
Tarps	20.00
Planks	20.00
Compensation	12.50
Tips	27.00

	28568.89

Receipts

Members Contributions 7 × 3134	21938.00
Fundraising Building Society Interest	759.70
MEF	700.00
BMC	700.00
Sponsors	4365.00
Sale of surplus gear Kathmandu	190.00
Foundation for Sport and the Arts	525.00

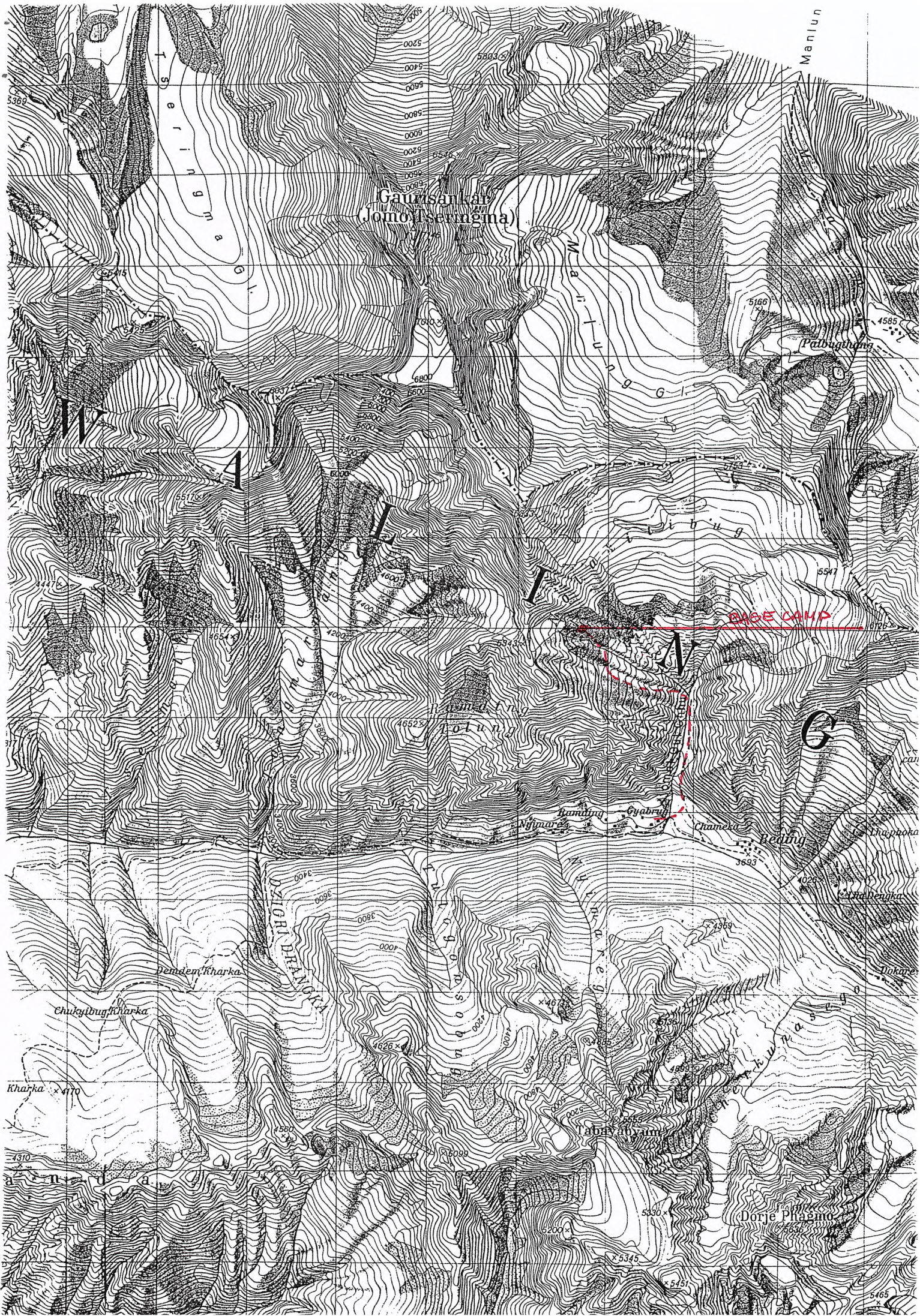
	29177.70

Receipts	£29177.70		
Expenditure	£28568.89		

Surplus	£ 608.81	Actual Cash in Hand	£619.03
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Late invoice for ice line sleepingbags	600.00
Actual surplus	19.03

Surplus to go towards next expedition



Gaursankar
(Jomo Tsawingma)

Manjun

Pabugahara

BASE CAMP

G

Dorje Phagma

5360

5503

5166

4585

5547

4680

4600

4652

3693

4026

4839

5330

5345

5151

5465

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Chukyidug Kharka

Denden Kharka

Kharka

Labrang

Chamek

Beding

Chapora

Chamek

Dokar