

## **PUTE TOWERS EXPEDITION 1996**

**MEF REF 96/11**

### **Summary**

We made the first ascent of Pute Tower 3 5860m by the east gully and south ridge.

We made the first ascent of Gutum Talji 5230m by the north face and west ridge.

We attempted the northwest face of Gutum Talji.

We attempted the southeast face of Pute Tower 3.

# PUTE TOWERS EXPEDITION 1996



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## 1996 PUTE TOWERS EXPEDITION

### MEF REF 96/11

**COUNTRY:** Batura Mustagh, (Western Karakorum), Hunza, Pakistan.

**PARTICIPANTS:**

Peter Thompson	-	Climber Expedition Leader.
Tom Goodwin	-	Climber.
Peter Scott	-	Climber.
Sam Stacey	-	Climber.
Sugar Gouws	-	Climber.
Walter Phipps	-	Climber (withdrew due to unforeseen BMG commitments).
Colin Spark	-	Climber (withdrew due to work offer in Hong Kong).

#### **OJECTIVES:**

To attempt the unclimbed Pute Towers and Gutum Talji peaks, and explore further climbing potential in (a) The Yain Hisk cirque & (b) The Muchuhar Glacier.

This particular area was largely unexplored until a Japanese expedition in 1983 succeeded in putting up a bold route up the South East face the North Tower of Hachindar Kish, 7163m.

The valley as a whole has been the focus of a handful of staunch Polish-German and Japanese expeditions since the early Fifties with big peaks such as Batura I having only seen a first ascent in 1976 to a determined German expedition. Sound, feasible objectives such as Batura II 7758m, Pasu Sar 7478m and the South Tower of Hachindar Kish 6700m remain unclimbed.

#### **EXPEDITION DIARY:**

29/06 Depart for Pakistan from Heathrow - PIA.  
30/06 Arrive Islamabad - Pakistan. Collect gas and buy food.

#### **Week 1:**

01/07 Bus from Rawalpindi to Gilgit overnight.  
02/07 Purchase of mountain rations and pack into 22kg porter loads.  
03/07 Continue with packing, take Suzuki to Aliabad. Find and negotiate portage with guide.  
04/07 Rest day, with portage negotiation continuing.  
05/07 Begin walk in on Muchuhar Glacier via irrigation channel. Peter Thompson contracts amoebic dysentery. Tom Goodwin and Peter Scott casevac to Aliabad. Remaining members of expedition consolidate at junction of Hasanabad and Muchuhar Glaciers.  
06/07 Pete and Tom join group at midday and portage continues to south west side of Mandosh Glacier - night-camp established.  
07/07 Continue to Yain Hisk meadows, 3600m. Porters paid, base-camp and ablutions established.

#### **Week 2:**

08/07 Exploration of gullies above base-camp for reconnaissance and acclimatisation. Shelter built to protect food from foraging yaks.  
09/07 Reconnaissance onto Pute Glacier to assess route options from the east. Peter Thompson arrives back at base-camp, fully recovered.



- 10/07 First signs of increased precipitation. Recon into Yain Hisk cirque made by Pete T, Pete S and Sam. Remainder of the group remain at camp resting.
- 11/07 Gear and food carried to col at 5000m on the south side of Pute Tower 3. (7 1/2 hours required to reach this point, snow conditions acceptable but not ideal). Sugar suffering from conjunctivitis - remains at base camp. 2" snow fell at 3600m.
- 12/07 Group returns to base camp. Rest Day.
- 13/07 Rained continuously.
- 14/07 Rained !!!

**Week 3:**

- 15/07 Rain again. Snow line creeping downwards and avalanche conditions prevail.
- 16/07 Rain, snow, sleet, Rain, snow, sleet, Rain, snow, sleet, Rain, snow, sleet, Rain, snow, sleet.
- 17/07 Glorious morning - rain from noon onwards. Morale low.
- 18/07 Desperate need for action and exercise leads to foray up to Oyarmin pastures below Batura I. 40kgs of food deposited for later exploration in the area. Excellent views of Pute Towers gained and potential route on east face ruled out due to sheer faces and corniced seracs.
- 19/07 Climb to Pute Tower col via long east gully from Yain Hisk pastures. Bivvied on col.
- 20/07 Two climbing groups: Tom and Pete S. to do straight alpine-style attempt without bivvie gear on T3.

Sam, Pete T and Sugar to climb with bivvy gear and food to maximise chances of attempting T2 and T3.

**First Ascent of Pute Towers:**

Route followed through snow slopes interspersed with steep mixed rock pitches. Summit of T3, 5800m achieved in 8 hours from col. T3 proved to be second highest and access to T2 barred by difficult terrain. (To attempt T2, abseil required onto narrow corniced ridge where fixed ropes would be necessary, and rock turrets on ridge would need to be surmounted to gain tower summit). No obvious fault lines or cracks were visible on tower and the decision to retreat was made due to lack of fixed line and deteriorating weather conditions. Barring any further difficulties an estimated 2 days would be required to complete an attempt.

*(Tower Numbers are reference Jerzy Wala - Batura Mustagh Map).*

Five members of the team made first ascents of Tower 3 and returned to col, 5000m.

- 21/07 Return to base camp, dried and sorted equipment.

**Week 4:**

- 22/07 Rest day with rain and sleet in the afternoon.
- 23/07 Continuous rain
- 24/07 Torrential rain but decision made to move up to Oyarmin Pasture to begin exploration up and onto Batokshi col to scout route potential for the ascent of Batura II (unclimbed) and also to explore Shendar Glacier and Shendar Cwm for routes onto Pasu Sar, 7478m (unclimbed) and Sangemarmar, 7050m. Appalled by the quantity of debris left by previous expeditions, which although degraded to some extent, remained an eyesore. Decayed food stores also found.
- 25/07 Huge avalanche off north east face of Hachindar Kish during early morning blew a tent into the Shendar Glacier. Valuable time spent retrieving it but no casualties otherwise. Set off for Batokshi col via Batokshi Icefall with intent of alpine-style ascent of Batokshi. Bivvied on icefall at 4800m.
- 26/07 Ascend to Batokshi col via 500m avalanche strewn gully and bivvied at approx. 5300m.
- 27/07 Perfect weather. Set out early to base of diagonal ramp on south face of Batura II to assess the viability of a line across the crescent-shaped icefield and ramp onto the plateau of Batura II.
- 28/07 Traversed across to the western side under the sheer rock and serac wall of Batura II to inspect a possible route from this angle. All agreed that a route could be pushed on both lines inspected but would require a high degree of technical skill at altitude.

### Week 5:

- 29/07 Climbed Batokshi Peak, 6050m in superb weather.  
30/07 Descent to Oyarmin Pasture.  
31/07 Set off to north eastern reaches of Shendar Glacier to look for ibex antelope and satisfy curiosity about other viable routes onto Pasu Sar. Beautiful pastures but no sign of fauna. Bivvied under 'Polish Ridge' at the top of Shendar Cwm.  
01/08 Return to Oyarmin. Precipitation on the increase.  
02/08 Return to Yain Hisk pasture, found that water supply from melt off had dried up, we now had to walk 1500m to closest trickle which was riddled with worms and larvae. Flies had become almost unbearable even though we had closed our ablution pit before departure.  
03/08 Rain.  
04/08 Weather seemed to be improving and we chose to vary our routine by attempting multi-pitch routes directly above base camp but the rock was extremely friable and both teams retreated after five pitches.

### Week 6:

- 05/08 Rain  
06/08 Tom Goodwin suffered a severe bowel obstruction which luckily abated after two hours with no medication administered. Weather improving again, attempted rock route on south eastern side of the large slabby face above camp but rappelled off 180m up after reaching very steep unprotected weathered rock.  
07/08 Gutum Talji seemed an intimidating prospect as the rubble on the steep slopes was no longer bound together with ice, all the same we prepared to launch an assault. The pastures on the north side of Yain Hisk were gained by a fixed rope traverse, we descended into the Yain Hisk Glacier by a precarious 100m abseil, where we left ropes for our return.  
Bivvied on a small pasture at the western end of the YH cirque (Sam and Pete Scott bivvied on the other side of the glacier under the north west face of Gutum Talji at approx. 4000m).  
08/08 Two climbing groups: Sam and Pete Scott attempting the steep north west face.  
Tom, Pete Thompson and Sugar attempting a north face route.

#### **First Ascent of Gutam Talji:**

Sam and Pete attempted the steep north west face, but retreated at one third height in the face of warm conditions and rock fall. Pete Thompson, Tom and Sugar gained the west ridge of GT by the end of the south fork of the YH Glacier via the northern slopes. Ascended a dangerous runnelled gully to attain a good stretch of about 500m 60° water ice which led up onto the west ridge saddle. The west ridge was then climbed on snow and easy angled rock to achieve the two highest summits. Descent via the same route in deteriorating conditions to reach base camp after 14 hours of entertaining climbing.

- 09/08 Returned to YH pasture, jumared up ropes left from our descent into the glacier and removed all pegs and slings. Met up with Sam and Pete Scott at base camp, packing for departure the following day.  
10/08 Sam and Pete Scott leave early as planned. Mountain rations running low limiting further extended forays. Rest day.  
11/08 Reconnoitred line running up a giant face, north of the eastern gully.

### Week 7:

- 12/08 Pete T, Tom and Sugar set off early reaching base of climb at first light. Steep dihedral (800m) marked the line of intended ascent. Rock appeared to be very clean with good protection, the only hazard being the continuous whirring fall of blocks off the summit which littered the slopes below with debris. In view of this, Sugar chose to descend to enable the speedier ascent of the more experienced 2-man team. Six pitches of up to British grade E3 climbed. All members descended to base camp before night fall.  
13/08 Rest day  
14/08 A second concerted effort by Pete T and Tom to continue dihedral route ended with mishap. Tom leading a very difficult 7th pitch, fell 8m to a ledge when gear pulled on a tension traverse. A decision was made to descend as Tom was suffering from concussion, with lacerations and severe

bruising to his back and left thigh. This line still holds fantastic potential - approx. 25 pitches still remain unclimbed.

15/08 Rest day.

16/08 Sugar and Pete T climbed 4 pitches on rock band leading up to Pute Glacier before being forced to retreat by a violent electrical storm and hail.

17/08 Stormy conditions with continuous hail, sleet and rain. Four porters arrived in the evening to carry equipment and refuse out to Aliabad.

18/08 Departed at first light for 10 hour descent to Aliabad via Muchahar Glacier.

**Week 8:**

19/08 Cleaned and sorted equipment, paid off porters - end of expedition.

***Footnote:***

We returned to Islamabad by road via Gilgit. Pete T prepared for travels in China, Tom Goodwin and Pete Scott set off for New Zealand for another 6 weeks climbing. Sugar and Sam returned to England.

**FINANCIAL DETAILS:**

Grant from MEF	£1,200.00
Grant from BMC	£ 700.00

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,900.00</b>
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**EXPEDITION EXPENSES:****England**

Promotion Brochure	£ 48.00
Medical kit	£115.84
Food	£ 131.00
Markhill stove	£ 43.75
Gas	£ 198.00
Sundry equipment	£ 21.06

<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>£557.65</b>
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**Pakistan** (all costs in Pakistan converted from Rupees @ exchange Rt of Rs57.5=£1)

Food	£324.17
Equipment	£112.07
Transport & Accommodation	£161.57
Porters & Guide	£725.21
Emergency evacuation	£125.00

<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>£1448.02</b>
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2005.67</b>
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**Personal expenses**

Airfare Lon.Islb.Lon.	£517.00
Airport Tax	£ 14.00
Insurance	£116.50 (optional)
Depreciation of equip.	£175.00 (We estimate this fig. to be approx. 7%)
Vaccinations & Immunisation	£ 5.00 (Hepatitis A).

<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>£827.50</b>
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£647.50</b>
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following companies, people and organisations for enabling us to achieve our goals and sponsoring us with reliable equipment we would otherwise have been unable to afford.

MEF	£1200 grant
BMC	£ 700 grant
Berghaus <i>Carol Mc Dermot</i>	Providing FOC Alpine Extrem mountaineering packs, Goretex salopettes, jacket and Yeti extrem gaiters.
Mountain Equipment <i>Wendy.</i>	Providing Iceline sleeping bags, ultra fleece, aqua fleece and Anapurna duvet jackets at trade -10%
The North Face <i>Mr Papin</i>	Providing an assault 22 single skin tent at trade -10%.

## USEFUL ADDRESSES

Expedition Advisory Centre  
Royal Geographical Society  
1 Kensington Gore  
London SW7 2AR  
TEL: 0171 581 2057

British Mountaineering Council  
177-179 Burton Road  
West Didsbury  
Manchester M20 2BB  
TEL: 0161 445 4747

Sports Council  
16 Upper Woburn Place  
London WC1H 0QP  
TEL: 0171 388 1277

### EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS

Cotswold The Outdoor People have stores nationwide and a mail order service. They produce a free, comprehensive colour catalogue. Most of the shops organise lecture programmes, many of which feature expeditions to mountain and trekking areas.

London 0181 743 2976  
Mail Order 01286 643434

Alpine Club of Great Britain  
55 Charlotte Road  
London EC2A 3QT  
TEL: 0171 613 0755

Commonwealth & Foreign Office  
Travel Advice unit (Consular section)  
Clive House  
Petty France  
London SW1H 9HD  
TEL: 0171 270 4129

Medical Advisory Service for Foreign Travellers Abroad  
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine  
Keppel Street  
London WC1E 7HT  
TEL: 0171 631 4408

Edward Stanford Ltd  
Lonacre  
London  
TEL: 0171 836 1321  
(suppliers of foreign maps)





Pute Tower 3 5860m.

Lat/long 36.42994N 74.46587E

First ascent route up the south ridge and attempt on the south east face.



Gutum Talji 5230m.

Lat/long 36.39641N 74.47244E

First ascent route up the north face and west ridge.



## 1998 on the Batura Glacier

In July 1998 Pete Thompson set up a base camp at Lupdor on the Batura Glacier. He made the first ascent of Point 6315m by the northeast spur, climbing solo. From here an attempt up the northwest ridge of Beka Brakai Chok 6882m didn't get far due to difficulties on the knife-edge ridge.



First ascent of Point 6315m.  
Lat/lon 36.5634N 74.4124E



Unclimbed northwest ridge of Beka Brakai Chhok.



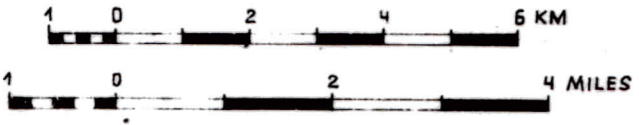
ELABORATION: JER;  
PRINCIPAL SOURCE:  
Cryopedology and Desi  
No 1 (Batura) T. Miyar  
Photos and literature.





# TOPOGRAPHICAL SKETCH MAP OF THE BATURA WALL - PASU SAR - SHISPARE SAR

WALA, 31 - 452 KRAKOW, ul. Pawła Włodkowica 4/57, POLAND, CONSULTANT: ANDERS BOLINDER - THE HIMALAYAN CLUB - SWITZERLAND  
 atical Pilotage Chart TPC G-7A, 1: 500 000, Edition 1ACIC-US AIR Force 1968, The Map of Batura Glacier 1: 60 000 compiled by institute of Glaciology,  
 Research, Academia Sinica Lanchow China 1978, Kammerverlaufskizze der Deutschen Himalaya - Karakorum Exp. 1954/59, Map of Karakorum 1: 200 000,  
 IWA TO YUKI No 51/1976, J. Kurczab: Shispare, M. Piątkowski TATERNIK 1/1975, Sketch map: Rejon Batura - Jerzy Wala, Andrzej Paulo TATERNIK 1/1984.



**LEGEND:**

- Summit, ridge, col, pass, elevation point, + 2524
- S, N, W, E, M, MD
- glacier, ice fault, cliff, moraine, cwm-cirque.
- habitation, hut-ayiq, path, road (hard surface), river and lake, vegetation, intermittent water course.
- place of base camp, contour line and altitude.

EDITION 2 1988

to Khaibar and China 74° 50' TUPODAN 6318 m

74° 40' (Gulpi Gl.) Ahmad Aūd Gl. [Hil - means pasture] 74° 50' to Karimābād and Gilgit

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