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R E P O R T



'A LONG DAY OUT'

The British Thunder Mountain
Expedition 1997

Recipient of the 1997 Wilderness Award

Winners in the 1997 Lyon Equipment Expedition Awards

Supported by Mount Everest Foundation & British
Mountaineering Council Expedition Grants

Sponsored by Montane, Marlow and Fuji

+443

Introduction

The British Thunder Mountain Expedition, though grandly-named, was a decidedly lightweight alpine-style affair consisting of only three climbers - Jim Hall, Nick Lewis and Paul Ramsden. The expedition succeeded in making the first ascent of the South Face of Peak 11,200 and the first ascent of 'Dream Sacrifice' - the Central Couloir on the South Face of Thunder Mountain.

We were supported by grants from the Mount Everest Foundation and the British Mountaineering Council. The expedition won the 1997 Wilderness Award and also received third prize in the 1997 Lyon Equipment Expedition Awards. We received material support from Montane who clothed us all with pertex-pile suits, from Marlow who gave us ropes and from Fuji who supplied us with film.

We are very grateful to all our sponsors and benefactors for their financial and material help; the trip would have been a lot more difficult to organise, and perhaps a lot less successful, without their support.

Aims and Background

The expedition took place from May 3rd - June 7th 1997. The primary aim of the expedition was to make the first ascent of the Central (Lightning) Spur on the South Face of Thunder Mountain in the Central Alaskan Range in Alaska. Our secondary aim was to make the first British ascent of the North Buttress of Mount Hunter.

Thunder Mountain (Peak 10,920') is situated on the south-west side of Mount Hunter in the Central Alaskan Range. It was first attempted by Alan Kearney and Steve Mascioli in the late 70s who reached a high point to the west of, and below, the main summit. In 1992 Geoff Hornby led a team which attempted Peak 10,920' from the north but failed due to bad weather. Hornby returned the following year with Dave Barlow and made the first ascent of Peak 10,920 from the south, climbing a broad open gully on the

western side of the South Face and descending the same way. Ours was to be the next trip into the area since their first ascent.

Note: Discussions with Alan Kearney and Steve Mascioli identified the fact that the name 'Thunder Mountain' was originally applied by them *not* to the highest summit of Peak 10,920 but to the snow dome which constituted the high point of their own attempt. Hornby mistook this name for the highest summit of Peak 10,920 and applied it thereafter to the mountain. We only discovered this anomaly whilst chatting to Kearney and Mascioli in Kahiltna Base Camp after our ascent of Dream Sacrifice. Although Hornby retains the right to name (or re-name?) the summit after his successful first ascent of the high point, we have applied the name 'Thunder Mountain' to Peak 10,920 for the sake of continuity and to avoid confusion.

Tragically, Steve Mascioli was killed on the 6th June 1997 whilst attempting the Moonflower Buttress of Mount Hunter. Our thoughts go out to his family and to Alan Kearney who was with him at the time of the accident. In the short time that we knew him, he impressed us with his friendliness and years of experience and his death is a very sad reminder of the toll that hard alpine climbing sometimes exacts.

Preliminary Details

Six months before going we contacted the Denali Park Rangers in Talkeetna to inform them of our aims and to get additional information on Thunder Mountain and the surrounding area. We registered with the Park Rangers upon arrival in Talkeetna and although there is no formal regulation with other peaks as currently for Denali and Mount Foraker, everyone visiting the area is encouraged to do so for rescue/administrative purposes.

We chose to fly into our base camp below Thunder Mountain with Talkeetna Air Taxi since they have the reputation of being one of the best operators in the area and

the owner Paul Roderick is known for his considerable skill in getting into and, more importantly, out of difficult access areas.

For the area surrounding Thunder Mountain we used photocopied sheets of the main map of the area which we obtained from the Ranger Office in Talkeetna. The beautiful Bradford Washburn map of the area does not cover Thunder but does include the north side of Mount Hunter and the Kahiltna Base Camp (useful if you get lost amongst the hundreds of people there). This can be bought from any of the air operator services in Talkeetna, the Ranger Office or any of the outdoor shops in Anchorage.

Food

We bought the vast majority of our food at Carrs Supermarket in Anchorage which is reasonably priced, has immense choice and is ultra-convenient for when you step off the plane. The only things we took with us from Britain were an almost unending supply of Yorkshire tea for Paul, some of Mrs Lewis' (Nick's Mum) Special Chocolate Fudge Cake (with several hundred calories a slice - you can't go wrong), thirty packets of Hobnobs and some dehydrated beef and curry granules.

Nothing much to add here except that the definite pro of being flown in & out of the range was that we were able to take plenty of 'heavyweight' foods with us - a big plus for morale. This was in stark contrast to those trips where we have carried everything in and out ourselves - a big minus for morale. Favourites for any trip are: fresh salad and vegetables at the beginning of the trip, bacon, sausages, coffee bags, tortillas (good bread substitute), salsa, cheese, jello (like Angel Delight but nicer) and tins of chilli, tuna, peaches, fruit salad etc.

We ate like kings on this trip and the only problems we had were squeezing into our salopettes after several days of lying-up in a storm having consumed huge amounts of sausage, cheese and salsa butties. Eating plenty before the routes meant that we could cut down weight in the sacks,

since on the hill our bodies were running off the calories consumed in the weeks lying-up prior to the routes. Constant carbo-loading was the secret to the fast ascents we sought.

We used the usual MSR's to cook in base and ran them off Coleman fuel purchased in Talkeetna. Several years ago in the Yukon, we heard a rumour that Coleman fuel has an anti-rust agent added to it which impairs performance in extreme cold and at altitude. At the time we used normal white gas bought from a hardware store which gave us no problems at all. On this trip, we used the ubiquitous Coleman fuel and had to clean the MSR's out endlessly (maybe there's a moral here somewhere?). Other forms of white gas might be worth trying in future.

We used propane cartridges in a modified Epigas/Markill Stormy to do our cooking on the hill and still have a plentiful supply cached at a friend's house in Anchorage. We are prepared to supply these to any future Alaskan trips for a very competitive cost, just contact us for the details. An offer not to be missed! (honest, guv...)

Gear

We were generously sponsored by Montane with 3-piece pertex-pile suits and by Marlow with ropes. We used our Lyon Award to purchase Beal ropes, Marmot gloves and Petzl hardware. Troll supplied us with abseil tape, chest harnesses and Grivel picks at trade price.

The Montane clothing worked supremely well and is the subject of a report all of its own. A combination of its warmth, lightness, ventilation and cut meant that we were able to reduce weight to a bare minimum on our ascents of the South Face of Peak 11,200 and on Dream Sacrifice. This, along with the fact that we did not have to bother with stripping or donning extra layers, meant that we moved faster overall. Using the overjackets in conjunction with the smocks and salopettes also meant that we took no down clothing with us and only carried Gore-tex jackets in our sacks for when it

got really nasty in the storms. We have been sponsored by another manufacturer of pertex-pile clothing in the past but found the Montane gear to be superior in every respect - cut, design and warmth. In short, we think we have found the perfect clothing system for technical alpine climbing in cold conditions.

The 60m 10.5mm Marlow ropes handled fine and did not ice up even after several days use in snowstorms. They suffered sheath damage after several days' jumaring over granite edges, however this is typical of any rope and does not reflect upon Marlow's quality.

The Marmot gloves were praised by all and sundry. Along with the Montane clothing, we reckoned that these made a difference in the speed of climbing because they did not have to be removed to place protection whilst climbing technical rock & ice and they were the most waterproof warm gloves any of us have ever used. We rarely, if ever, had to stop to warm cold hands whilst wearing them.

On the Lightning Spur, we slept in the brilliant bivvy-tent built by Paul and Mrs Diane Trease. This was based upon an original design of Alex MacIntyre's which was further developed by Andy Perkins and the late Brendan Murphy for their attempts on Cerro Kishtwar. Thanks to Andy for advice and supplying us with tape for the main load-bearing seams. This wall-tent was made out of Pertex and weighed 4 lbs with the two VE25 poles included. Apart from the usual condensation problems which plague all single-skin tents, the tent performed excellently in the limited time that we used it.

We adopted a semi-big-wall style of climbing for the attempts on the Spur, carrying a big rack with plenty of pins, double sets of RPs, Rocks and Friends (plus a Camalot 5 thrown in for good measure - thanks to Geoff Hornby for the loan), hooks, a couple of ice-screws and loads of slings, draws and tie-offs. With such a huge rack and with such steep free

and aid climbing, climbing with a sack was out of the question. Hence all our gear went into two immense (100 litre) rucksacks which the seconds carried whilst jumaring the two 60m 10.5mm ropes. We used a 6mm zip-line for hauling hardware up to the leader.

We adopted this approach as opposed to taking a haulsack since there was a fair amount of less-than-vertical mixed ground to contend with on the route and sackhauling would have taken an age. Also, rucksacks would have been desirable for the descent. Despite our best efforts at reducing weight on the Lightning Spur, these two rucksacks were never anything less than complete pigs to carry! Maybe mini-haulsacks with good removable carrying harnesses are a possibility for the future?

In complete contrast, the ascents of the South Face of Peak 11,200 in 18 hours and of Dream Sacrifice in 42 hours were carried out in an ultra-lightweight manner. On both routes we each carried day-sacks containing only a belay jacket, a Gore-tex jacket, spare mitts, a litre of Isostar and half a dozen energy bars. The rack was a standard mixed alpine one with Rocks, Friends, pins and 5 screws. We climbed on two 60m 8.5 mil ropes and carried about 50 feet of abseil tape for the descent.

Only with such light sacks could we have done the routes in such times. Due to the 24 hour daylight which exists at these latitudes at this time of year, we were able to climb continuously using movement and minimal extra clothing to keep warm. We were able to melt snow in our water-bottles during the day using a combination of the heat of the sun, our body-heat and shaking. A stove would have been nice but would have meant more weight.

We regarded this style as the quickest and safest way of climbing these two routes, especially considering the brief windows of good weather which existed in Alaska during the Spring of 1997.

Account of the trip

We assembled in Anchorage on 3rd May where we were picked up by our friends, Sue and Drew Field and their daughter Clare, then did our shopping and then sampled some of Anchorage's commendable local beers. The following day Sue, Drew, Clare and Andre Hulet took us on a road-trip up to Talkeetna where we met Paul Roderick and registered with the Rangers.

The following morning began with some intensive carbo-loading in the Road House at breakfast time (mega - don't miss it!) and then a stroll down to the banks of the river from where the top of Thunder Mountain was clearly visible. Strange that it had seen so few ascents and none by its conspicuous south spur. We spent a couple of hours removing unnecessary wrappers from the food supplies and sorting out kit and in time it soon became obvious that we would not be able to get the three of us plus kit in one plane load. We hadn't skimped on hardware for the route or on food for what was potentially going to be a long stay on the glacier, (or indeed on breakfast that morning). In the event the two plane loads that took off on the afternoon of the 5th May were quite full.

As soon as we had set up Base Camp below Thunder we skinned up the glacier to have a careful look at the route. We figured what looked like a line up the impressive granite spur on what then was reasonably snow-free rock. The following morning we kitted up for a first attempt at the route. The bergschrund was crossed without too much difficulty just right of the lowest point of rock. Nick, who was in the lead, looked at the corner just right of the lowest point but decided it was too loose so headed up a flake a bit further right. However, it was not long before he was lowering off, having encountered one of the spur's many areas of totally featureless granite. We were beginning to get a feel for what lay in store... Paul headed up further right to the obvious ramp-line which cut in from the right-hand

side of the spur. Here he found a more amenable looking line to try, so we decided to call it a day, fixed a line over the bergschrund and headed back to the tent for tea and cake.

Once dull weather had cleared away on the morning of the 7th we skinned back up, jugged the ropes and Paul then lead two fine free pitches up a corner and crack system. Another pitch of mixed ground went well, then Paul lead out over mixed ground to the steep wall above us, fixed a line and rapped back down to a ledge where we set up camp. With a bit of work we got a decent sized ledge together with some good anchors, one of which was a $\frac{1}{4}$ " rivet which we removed after use. (This was the first time any of us had placed one - thanks to Jerry Gore for his bolting lesson over the phone the day before we left!). Paul's bivi tent was pitched in anger for the first time and was impressively successful.

It snowed most of the night and was still snowing at 6am the following morning. By eight the sun was breaking through the clouds so we packed up and jugged the fixed line. Jim lead a 55m pitch up a crack system to the right of the steep well using a mixture of free, aid and frigging tactics. There was a very good belay on a narrow exposed ledge, from where Nick lead off up loose blocks and grooves to the right. He took a precarious belay and Paul lead past to investigate the ground above. He found snow alarmingly balanced on a compact sloping ledge in the midst of otherwise totally blank granite walls and decided to make a stealthy retreat before the snow gave way and dispatched him downwards in a less controlled manner. Apparently the way up would be via the thin steep crack directly above the narrow-ledge belay. Tackling what promised to be a big aid pitch would be best left until the following morning so we rapped back down to the previous evening's ledge. It was snowing on the morning of the 9th but we optimistically jugged the 100m or so back up to the narrow ledge in deteriorating weather where we stood around getting cold until deciding that the

weather was not going to improve and that it was time to bail out to base camp.

We spent the 10th-15th May holed up in the tent in heavy snow. Highlights of this period were the perfecting of Jim's honey and oatmeal pancakes, discussion about the new Government back home and several pounds of snow dropping into Nick's sleeping bag...

On 16th May we dug the tent out and again optimistically juggled three pitches of fixed line back up the spur. The rock was plastered in snow and there was no hope of making progress, so once again we rapped back to the glacier. More snow fell on the 17th. Deja vu.

With the south spur of Thunder Mountain still plastered in snow we turned our attention to the striking pyramidal peak to its east which we suspected was unclimbed. The map indicated that the height of this peak was 11,200', 300' higher than Thunder Mountain. We had spotted a line which weaved its way mostly on snow to the right of the centre of the south face facing us. We crossed the bergschrund at about 9pm on the 18th May and moved together most of the way up the face, placing runners in the occasional rock bands. Towards the top at about 3am the weather deteriorated and the visibility became rather poor. We pitched the traverse below a final rock tower and Nick lead up icy slopes towards the summit ridge. Jim lead along the precarious ridge, first on one side and then the other with scant protection. We traversed the disconcertingly corniced summit and down-climbed a brittle ice step to belay with some relief on solid rock. In view of the off-putting nature of the cornices we decided not to traverse the mountain down to its western col (between it and Thunder Mountain) but instead to rap and down-climb the face. Rap anchors were not difficult to find and the down-climbing was straightforward though on some particularly snow-laden slopes. At one point, it looked like the ropes were going to hang up on one of the raps, but luck was with us and a few swift pulls saw us reunited. We made it back to our skis

18 hours after leaving them. A satisfying climb.

At the time of writing, we are still unsure of the virgin status of this peak despite having discussed the matter with the Denali Park Rangers. It has been suggested that the late Jon Waterman may have climbed it from the eastern col which adjoins Hunter whilst en route for his first ascent of the South Ridge of Hunter in 1973 (?). If this is not the case, then we have chosen to name the peak *Mount Providence* on account of the lucky escape with the stuck rope.

More snow fell from the 20th - 23rd May and the winds picked up over the next few days. This was getting boring.

In occasional clearings we carefully looked again at Thunder Mountain and decided that, whilst it was now far too snowed up to climb the rock, the central couloir to the left of the spur would give good, steep climbing. On the evening of the 22nd we made an abortive attempt on the gully, turning back at the bergschrund on account of warm temperatures. The next morning Jim and Nick retrieved the fixed ropes from the spur in cloudy conditions.

Finally a clear cold day arrived on the 24th May. We were joined in the afternoon by two Alaskans who were flown in by Paul Roderick for an attempt on the Waterman Route up the Central Spur on the South-South-East Face of Hunter. We were very grateful for the lovely ham, cheese and salad sandwiches they brought, but were totally baffled by their proposed style of alpinism which involved caching various bits of gear, food and fuel en route to either aid progress or retreat. They did not plan to return to remove any of their caches at a later date... More on this dubious practice later in the environmental section.

In the evening we left our neighbours to it, had a big meal and kitted up for another ultra-light ascent. Having left camp at around 10pm, we moved together over the bergschrund and up 50° snow slopes turning the first serac in the huge gully on

the left. Above, two large icicles hung for 50' from an overhang, forming a half pipe between them. The right hand icicle ended about six feet above the ground. Jim finally surmounted the half pipe by first climbing steeply between the two icicles, then manoeuvring into a back and foot position and finally, when the gap between the two icicles became too narrow to squeeze into, securing a placement on the right icicle, swinging out onto it and climbing it directly to above the overhang. All mightily impressive and frightening stuff for the onlookers and potential stretcher-bearers. Finding a peg belay in a shattered patch of otherwise very compact rock was time consuming, and this proved to be the case with most of the belays on the route. We were by now in magnificent surroundings with huge blank granite walls towering on both sides of the narrow gully.

Paul lead off on the next pitch of enjoyable climbing and we continued moving together, belaying for a steep step and a good Scottish-style mixed section which Nick negotiated. When we emerged onto 60° slopes the sun was beginning to touch the snow and it was time to find somewhere to sit out the sunny part of the day. We cut a small ledge under a rock band and the three of us perched on our packs trying to melt snow. We slurped Isostar and snoozed uncomfortably while the sun slowly traversed the sky.

At about five o'clock our ledge went into the shade so we decided to make a move. Paul traversed the gully and set up a belay below an impressively steep ice smear. (There were a *lot* of impressive things about this route...). The ice was still dripping so Jim was dispatched to attempt the rock to the left of the ice smear but eventually lowered off the bulging granite. It would have to be the ice smear...

The smear gave a full 160' of excellent steep ice climbing protected on good screws. Nick climbed the first short gully section but having used several ice-screws, took a hanging belay and brought Jim up with the full collection, who then climbed the bulging smear above in less time than it took to find the belay! (*A long,*

long time...) A short step above got us to the foot of the next ice smear. This one appeared to be less than vertical but the wild bridging moves between the ice and the adjoining overhanging rock wall which Nick produced towards the top proved that appearances were deceptive. A Yosemite-style hanging belay was taken at 3am below a short and innocuous looking final step. Jim set off confidently but found it to be much steeper than first thought; rotten ice had to be cleared away to allow for hooking and torqueing up the overhanging rock. A real sting in the tail, if ever there was one.

Easy ground now led up towards the summit ridge and we moved together, finally resting in a cave just below one of Thunder's several summits. The highest point seemed to be a part of the corniced summit ridge between two gendarmes situated on the ridge. Needless to say, none of us were keen to tread on that particular point and choosing aesthetics over absolutes, we took the summit block nearest to us. Paul lead over this summit tackling unstable snow in exceptional positions. We had intended to descend the easy broad gully which bound the western side of the south face of Thunder Mountain, but in increasing heat we decided to leave the summit ridge and descend the penultimate steep couloir on the western side of the face. We abseiled all day down the couloir, finding good belays for the majority of the way off spikes, wires and pegs. At about 4.30 in the afternoon, we jumped the bergschrund and stumbled across the avalanche debris back to our skis, 42 hours after leaving them. It had been a long 'day' out...

The following day, the 27th, was fine and our new neighbours having long departed for Hunter, we spent the day eating, drinking and enjoying the solitude. We stamped "OUT" on the glacier and in the afternoon Paul Roderick's plane dipped over the hill, swooped recklessly round the valley and came to a standstill on the glacier next to us. We were thus lifted from our tranquil base camp to the multi-national chaos of Kahiltna base camp. The following day we skied up to the foot

of the North Buttress of Hunter. As we approached, it looked increasingly amenable, having looked formidable in photographs and fairly impressive from base camp. It was, however, very very dry. The team we met who had just bailed out from the Moonflower confirmed our impression, describing hard dry-tooling in terms remote from Stump's published description of the first ascent. There were two teams already on the Moonflower, employing sustained aid and hauling tactics and feeling that we were not equipped for that type of approach we turned our backs on the Moonflower, labelling it as a project for future years when both the route, and us, are in better condition. It was time to go exploring...

On the 29th we skied round to the Kahiltna Spires but were not impressed by the look of the climbing. We skied back to base in deteriorating weather and by the following day a foot and a half of snow had fallen. By the end of the day however, Kahiltna base was buzzing with planes again and Jim was flown back to Talkeetna to head home for pressing academic commitments. On the 2nd June, a chance encounter with that doyen of hard Alaskan climbing, Jim Donini, prompted Nick and Paul to fly to the Ruth Gorge to try and repeat Donini's new route of the previous week - *Shaken Not Stirred* - on the South-West Face of the Moose's Tooth.

We flew over on the morning of the 3rd June and immediately bumped into our irrepressible mentor of bolting Jerry Gore and the irredoubtable Silvo Karo, bound for Mt. Bradley. After an extensive bull-shitting session with Jerry, we packed another pair of light sacks for the Moose's Tooth; however in view of the recent loss of Jim and his accompanying optimism and talent, we decided to compensate by taking a stove.

We spent the afternoon doing our by now boringly familiar carbo-load-and-sleep routine and shooting the breeze with the remainder of Jim Donini's team who'd just retreated off a new route attempt on Barrille. After getting last-minute beta from Greg Crouch who'd been on the

Moose's Tooth with Donini the week before, we set off at about 11.30pm. After wandering around the complicated lower reaches of the ice-fall we dumped the skis and set off on foot. It was uncomfortably warm...

At 2am in the morning, halfway up the icefall and with clear skies above, the temperature was still +7 degrees centigrade (yes, that's a plus) and running water poured down the granite walls all around us. What was happening?!! Thinking that ice-climbing in Alaska in such temperatures could quite easily lead to our premature, and much unwanted, deaths, we turned tail and skedaddled back to base to wait for it to get colder. Well, it never did and on the 5th June, bored of eating chocolate and feeling a bit jaded after 32 days on the ice, we called up Paul the Pilot and baled out back to Talkeetna to start the trip home.

It had been an immensely satisfying and fun trip with two good new routes climbed light and fast. With such long 'days', future possibilities in Alaskan alpinism are boundless.

Environmental Practice

We adhered to the BMC Environmental Guidelines for Expeditions entirely throughout the trip.

All the domestic (i.e. non-human) waste produced during the course of trip was removed to Talkeetna where it was passed into the local waste disposal system. We reduced the amount of potential waste we took into the mountains with us by previously removing as much food packaging as was practical. Again, the benefit of fly-in/fly-out trips is that there is no excuse for an expedition not to remove all its domestic waste from the mountains. We did consider separating the waste to sort that which came from goods bought in Alaska from those in the UK. We could then have brought home the packaging from those goods brought from the UK. Pragmatically however, the amount of packaging produced from the

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foodstuffs we brought from the UK consisted of such a relatively small amount that we felt it unnecessary to do this; especially since many products sold in one country are packaged in or distributed from another. In total we produced 36 pounds of domestic waste during the expedition.

The only stuff we left behind were 60m of 16mm climbing tape and various pegs, nuts and slings on the rap descents off Peak 11,200' and Thunder Mountain. This is an unavoidable practice and it is paradoxical that even the greenest-minded alpinist will have to leave some trace of their passage in a long, rap descent.

As with all snow-based base-camps, we used the time-honoured system of having 'clean' and 'dirty' sides of the camp below Thunder. The 'clean' side is the side of the camp from where snow for drinking water is taken and the 'dirty' side is where toilet duties are performed - under no circumstances is one performed in the other! We dug pits for toilet duties in the Thunder base camp, however, due to heavy snowfall, we had to relocate these several times in the surrounding area. The risk posed by our human waste to any future trips was estimated to be minimal due to the high annual amounts of accumulation and glacial movement in the area.

We also used this 'clean'/'dirty'/toilet pit system on the Ruth Gorge, as did the other expeditions we encountered. However increasing number of visitors to this area suggest that there may be a need for a semi-permanent toilet as in the Ruth Amphitheatre and Kahiltna Base Camps, though no crevasses were readily available in the Gorge area this season for disposal. (The practice of using plastic bags to contain faeces before disposal into crevasses was not used since the plastic can have a potentially harmful impact and thus can only be considered to be of a hygiene value in much visited areas.)

All three of us were alarmed by the type of climbing style we saw employed by the two Alaskans who went onto Hunter. Placing caches with no intention of removing them is clearly ethically unacceptable from a 'green alpinism' point of view - i.e. all gear except anchors left behind on rap descents or retreats should be carried throughout the ascent and descent.

This is by no means a lone event, either: in 1996, during an ascent of a new route on Crosson with a subsequent continuation up the Sultana Ridge, one of us encountered a large cache of ice-gear beneath the summit of Foraker - a brand new ice tool amongst the booty. In 1990, during a 28-day alpine-style traverse of Denali, one of us encountered a cache complete with ropes and Footfangs below the headwall of the South Buttress.

What's baffling is that this is so expensive! (Black Prophets aren't cheap...) And the sad thing is that it's so needless: in 1995, after a dropped boot from a bivouac forced a retreat from 5000m on the Hummingbird Ridge of Mount Logan, we removed all our waste from the attempt despite the subsequent ski of 100 miles out to the Alaska Highway with sacks weighing over 90 pounds (and with only 5 boots between 3 of us).

If caches are to be placed, then they should be removed after the ascent/attempt if not used. In Alaska, this means taking into account the cost of flying back into an area for removal - not a cheap option (which is why they don't get removed, obviously).

Alpinism is all about getting yourself into, and out of, situations with the minimal amount of equipment. Confidence should exist in your head not in the form of caches never to be removed.

Budget

Costs:

Flights to US	£1800
Input flight	£985
Road transport	£75
Food	£400
Equipment	£850 (£500 -
Lyon Equipment Award)	
Insurance	£600
(annual)	
Miscellaneous	<u>£60</u>
	£4770

Income:

Lyon Equipment	£1000 (£500
- presented as gear)	
MEF Grant	£900
BMC Grant	£850
Wilderness Award	£500
Personal Contributions	<u>£1520</u>
	£4770

Acknowledgements

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Thanks to Bill Ruthven and the panel of the Mount Everest Foundation and Andy Macnae and the panel of the British Mountaineering Council for the awards we received. Every year, long hours are put in by these people so that climbers can reap the financial benefits and go off on expeditions.

Cheers to the amazing Julia Laverack at Lyon Equipment for awarding us a prize, then managing to kit us out and ship everything to us despite the very short time-span between being told we'd won and leaving for Alaska.

Dick Willis and Steve Berry thought that our trip showed some promise for the 1997 Wilderness Lecture and so we are very grateful to them for the Wilderness Award and hope that the lecture

impresses them when it's given (March 1997 - don't miss it!).

We are all extremely grateful to Chris Roffe at Montane, James Martin at Marlow and Jonathan Topps at Fuji for their generous sponsorship with equipment. It all worked brilliantly and we hope that the photos were worth it.

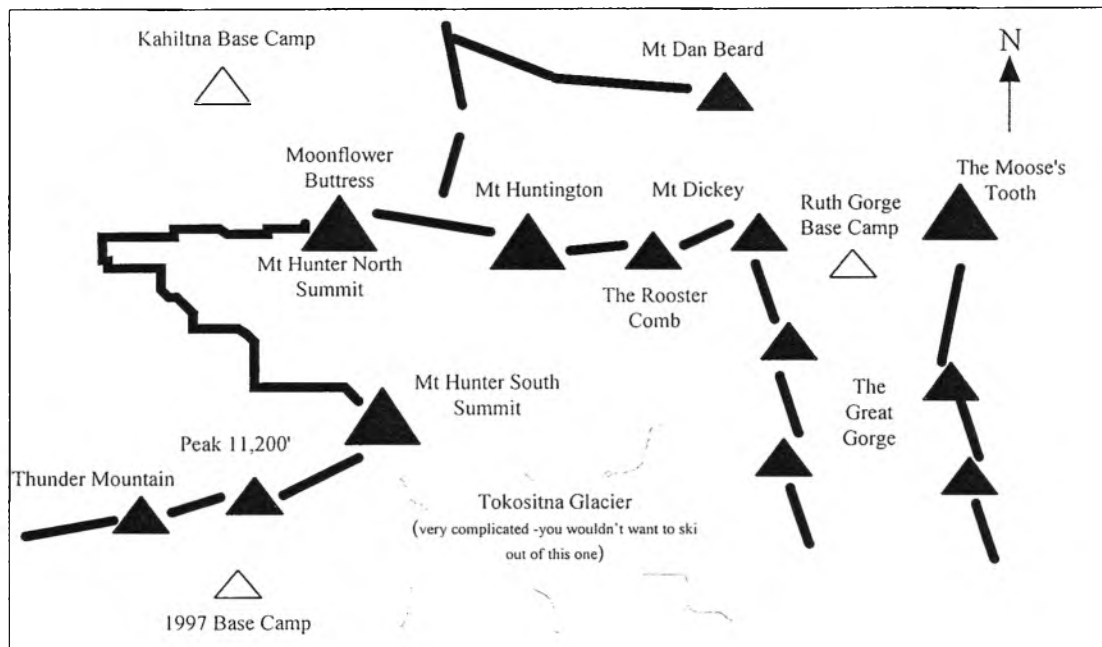
Perseverance Mills generously donated a roll of Pertex fabric with which to build the wall-tent; Andy Perkins at Troll was very helpful with suggestions for its design and provided us with the seam tape and Diane Trease, seamstress *extraordinaire*, gave invaluable advice and assistance in its construction. Many thanks to you all.

A beer to Andre Hulet next time we meet up for helping out on the drive to Talkeetna on his vacation.

Geoff Hornby deserves a big mention for climbing Thunder Mountain in the first place and giving us the photo of the south face. Without that, there probably wouldn't have been a trip at all.

Last and by far no means least, our greatest thanks go to Sue, Drew and Clare Feild who transported us with all our gear wherever we needed to go, allowed us to turn their Anchorage home into an expedition warehouse, fed us and then took us out and got us drunk! Guys what can we say?! Thank you.

A very simplified sketch of the Thunder-Hunter-Ruth area



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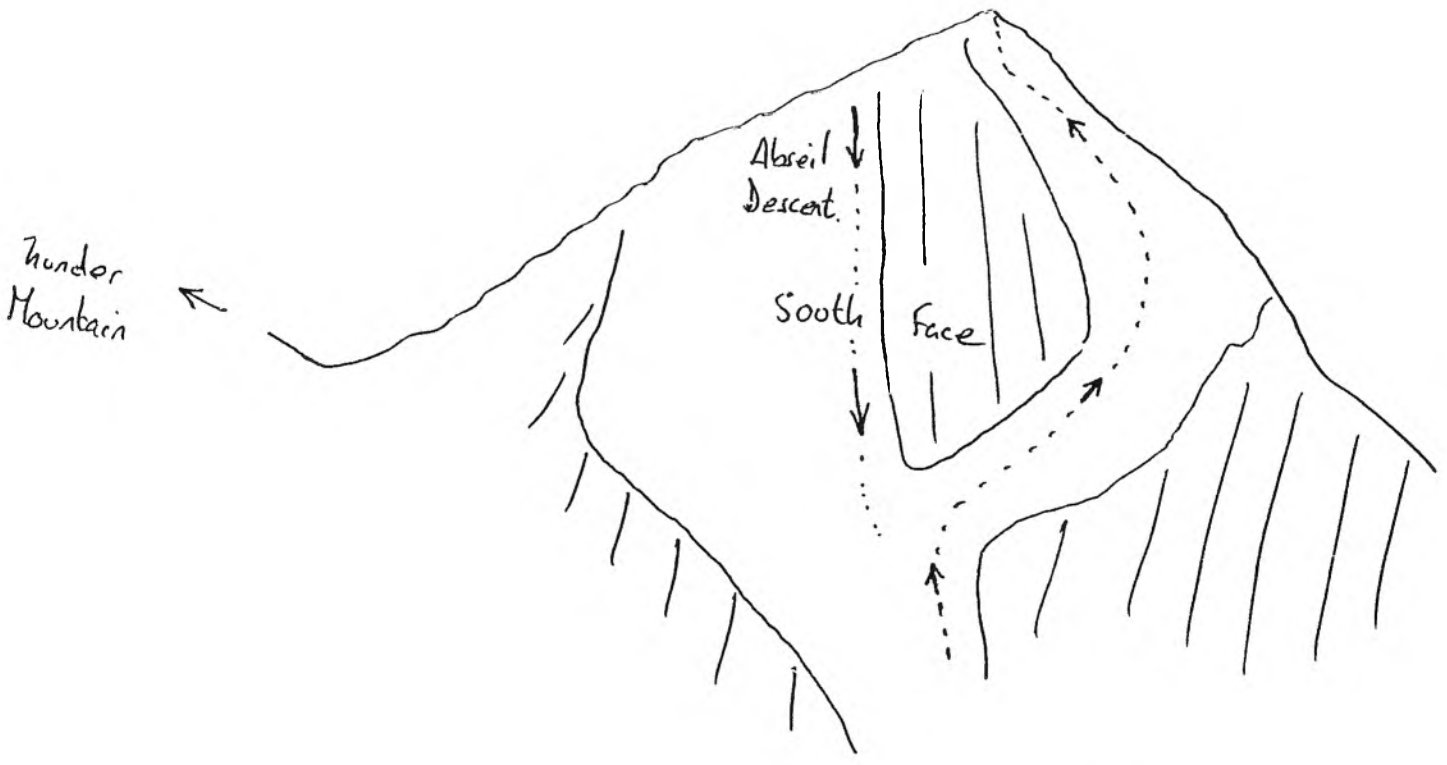
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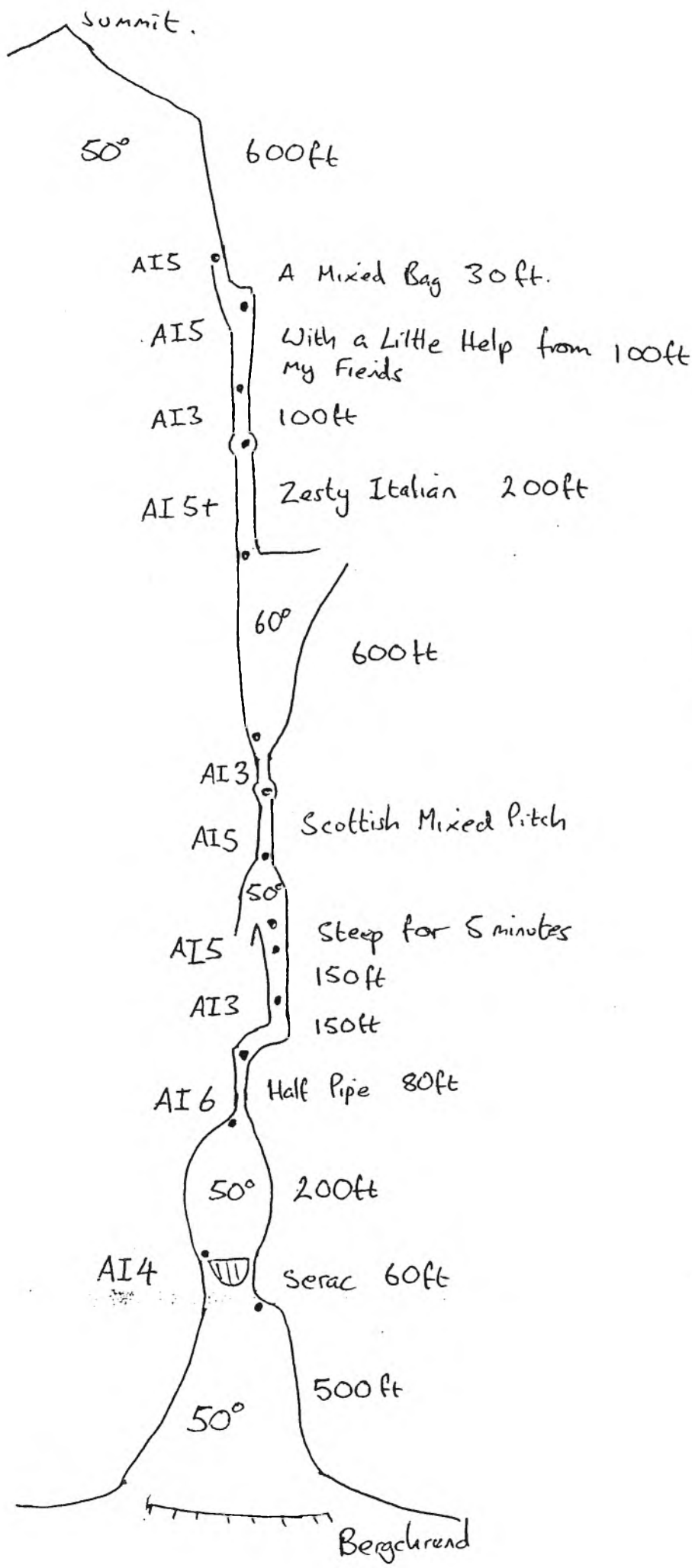
MOUNT PROVIDENCE 11,200 ft.

First Ascent. 20th May 1997

by Paul Ramsden, Nick Lewis, James Hall.

Via the South Face 3600ft A13





DREAM SACRIFICE
3400ft.

25/26 May 1997

On the South Face of
THUNDER MOUNTAIN

- Paul Ramsden
- Nick Lewis
- Jim Hall

AI = Alpine Ice