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**Report of the 1997 Sheffield Chok Toi Glacier Expedition**

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## **Aims**

To attempt unclimbed peaks on the Chok Toi Glacier.

## **Members**

Richard Garnet  
Oliver Howard  
Dean Grindell  
Mark Harris

## **Approach**

- 30/6/1997 Arrived Islamabad. Met at airport by Himalayan Treks and Tours representative.
- 1/7/1997 Briefing at Ministry of Tourism and began drive up to Skardu.
- 2/7/1997 Arrival in Skardu.
- 3/7/1997 Buy supplies in Skardu.
- 4/7/1997 Drive to Askole and camp there for the night.
- 5/7/1997 Accompanied by 22 porters and Mohammad Ali our guide we leave Askole. Spent night next to the river up from the crossing at Jora.
- 6/7/1997 Camped just short of the snout of the Panmah Glacier.
- 7/7/1997 Camped at the junction of the Chok Toi and the Panmah.
- 8/7/1997 Base Camp reached and porters paid off. Ali (guide) and Razza (cook hand) remain with us.

## **The Climbing**

a) Attempt on the Northern Arete of a superb rock buttress on Latok III.  
Mark Harris and Dean Grindell

11/7/1997 After bivvying at the bottom of the route began to climb at 4.30 am. Fantastic climbing. Rock sound. Pitches of 5b/5c. As the day progresses cloud builds up and at 11am it begins to rain heavily. We decide to descend. At 3.30pm arrive back at BC soaked to the skin.

b) Subsidiary summit of the Biacherai Towers  
All members

14/7/1997 After a couple of days spent wandering up both sides of the mountain looking for a line we discover an easy couloir up the North West side. After bivvying at the foot of the route we set off at midnight and by 7am had reached the summit. The couloir ended around 100 metres below the summit. Easy scrambling led up to the summit. We roped up for only one section - actually getting on to the summit pinnacle. The summit was reached at 7am. and we descended the same day.  
Altitude 5800m.

c) Attempt on the Northern Arete/Face of a superb rock buttress on Latok III.  
Mark Harris and Dean Grindell climbed the arete.  
Oliver Howard and Richard Garnet climbed up the centre of the face.

17/7/1997 Both parties started early and walked across the glacier to the foot of the route. At 5.30 am began to climb.  
The climbing on the arete is superb. Pitch after pitch of solid rock. Few areas of very easy ground, all the way 5a, 5b, 5c. Progress slowed right down beneath the large ledge going across the whole face at mid height. A couple of false lines tried. Some 5c pitches and then an aid pitch to overcome an overhanging crackline. After reaching the ledge at 3pm bivvied.

The climbing up the centre of the face followed a crack and chimney system. Water worn solid rock and some 5a/5b pitches. Bivvied 100m or so higher up the face.

18/7/1997 Begin up the arete but soon both parties are climbing the same route. Much easier climbing as the angle eases as the "summit" is reached. By 12pm the summit is reached. Altitude 5400m. Abseil descent. 7pm reach the bottom of the route and walk back across the glacier.

21/7/1997 - 22/7/1997 Dodgy weather.

d) Hanipur Spur South Reconnaissance  
All Members

23/7/1997 Walk up a gully behind Base Camp to check out a possible line up to Hanipur Spur. Spend the night bivvied just below a glacier which gives access to mixed ground up to the final summit ridge.

24/7/1997 Ascend to the foot of the mixed ground and then go back down to BC. The glacier is at 5300m. Dean is ill.

e) Hanipur South Summit Attempt  
Oliver Howard  
Richard Garnet  
Mark Harris

26/7/1997 Walk up the gully and bivvi on the glacier.

27/7/1997 Up at midnight and climb up a couloir before crossing a pitch of mixed ground to reach a steeper couloir. This leads up to the beginning of the mixed ground.

Scottish grade III/IV for 5 or 6 pitches before reaching a final icy slope which leads up to a snowy saddle at 5900m The saddle is reached at 10am. Bivvy here for the day. Richard and Oliver feeling the altitude quite acutely. The summit is 200 vertical metres or so above. The ground to be covered looks quite hard rock.

28/7/1997 Up early and a decision is taken to descend. Abseil off the saddle until the original couloir is reached. Climb down this to the glacier and gully. Reach BC at 4pm.

1/8/1997 - 4/8/1997 Dodgy weather

5/8/1997 - 7/8/1997 Cragging. Superb routes on crags around Base Camp.

f) Sim La Trip  
Dean Grindell  
Mark Harris

9/8/1997 Walk up glacier to camp under final slopes of Sim LA.

10/8/1997 Dean ill. Mark climbs up Sim La leaving Dean in tent.

11/8/1997 Return to Base Camp.

g) Peak above junction of Chok Toi and Panmah glaciers.  
Oliver Howard  
Richard Garnet

9/8/1997 Walk up gully to bivvy under route.

10/8/1997 The route followed mixed ground to the summit. Descent to the gully.

### **The Return**

12/8/1997 Food is running very low. Dean and Mark set off with Razza to get some porters.

13/8/1997 Reach Thongal and send up 7 porters.

15/8/1997 Porters reach base camp and leave the same day.

17/8/1997 Everyone reunited in Thongal.

18/8/1997 Return by jeep to Skardu.

21/8/1997 Dean flies to Islamabad. No room on the plane for Olly or Richard. Mark remains in Baltistan to do some trekking.

23/8/1997 Richard and Olly fly to Islamabad.

## Accounts

### Outlay

Flights	£2064
Insurance	£820
Tent	£420
Tape	£95
Gas	£80
Maps	£16
Miscellaneous	£200

Trekking Permit and Agency Fee	£380
Labour Costs	£1800
Food and Stores	£550
Hotels, Transport and internal flights	£700

Total £7125

### Income

BMC	£350
MEF	£400
Personal Contributions	£6375

Total £7125

## **Acknowledgements**

Terra Nova for giving us a good deal on their Terra Firma base camp tent which proved to be an excellent place to while away days of bad weather.

Montane for helping us out with cheap equipment. We were all very impressed with all the gear, particularly the saloppettes - the venting zips enable them to be worn in any conditions.

The MEF and BMC for their financial support.

Pete Nightingale for providing more batteries than we could carry.

Pippa Brown for providing us with our medicine cabinet.

Sharewell Ltd for giving Richard time off work.

Nottingham Sign Centre for giving Olly time off work.

AES Engineering Ltd for not giving Mark time off work.

Please contact Mark Harris on 01226 764150 if further information is required.