

no

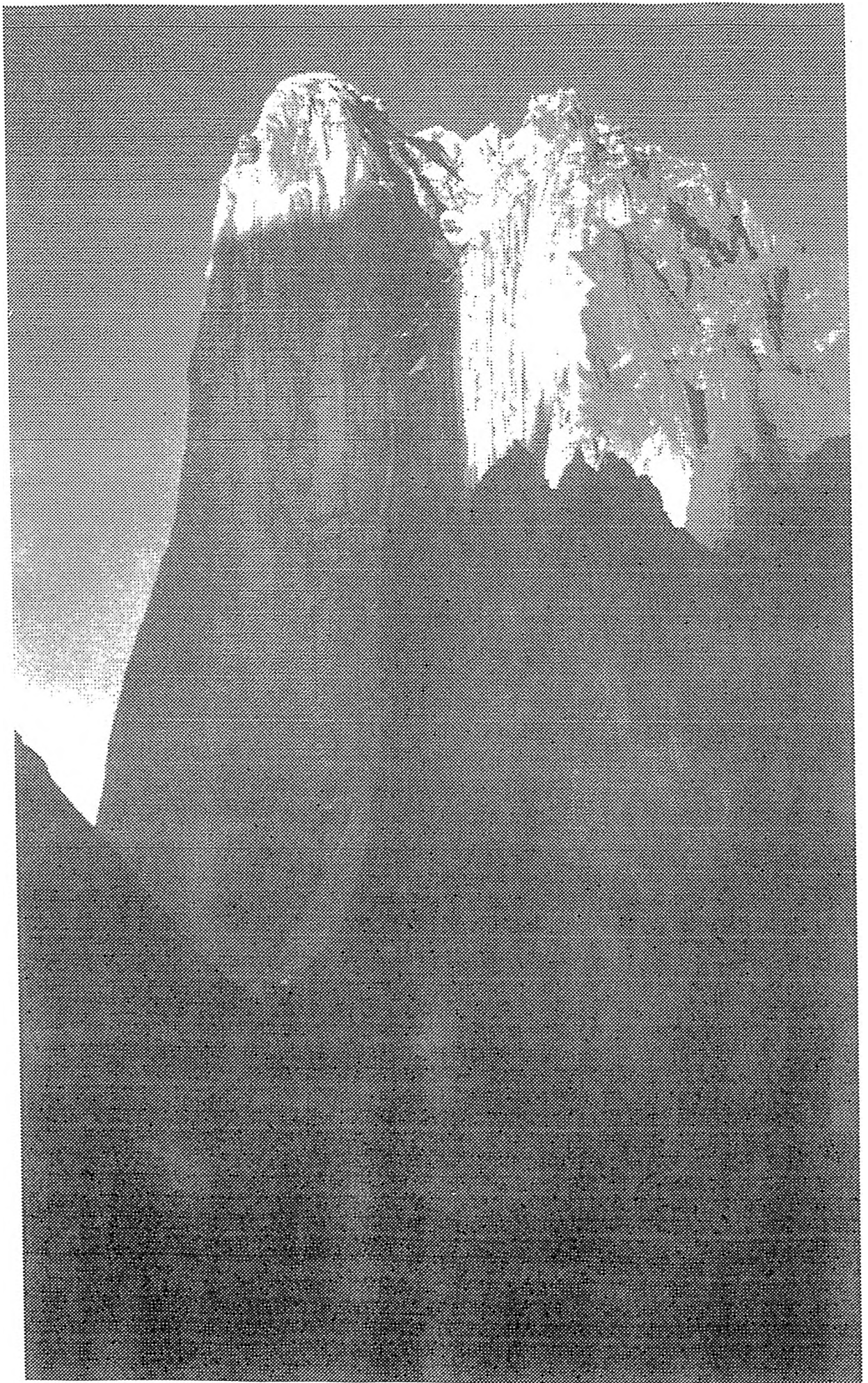
98/30

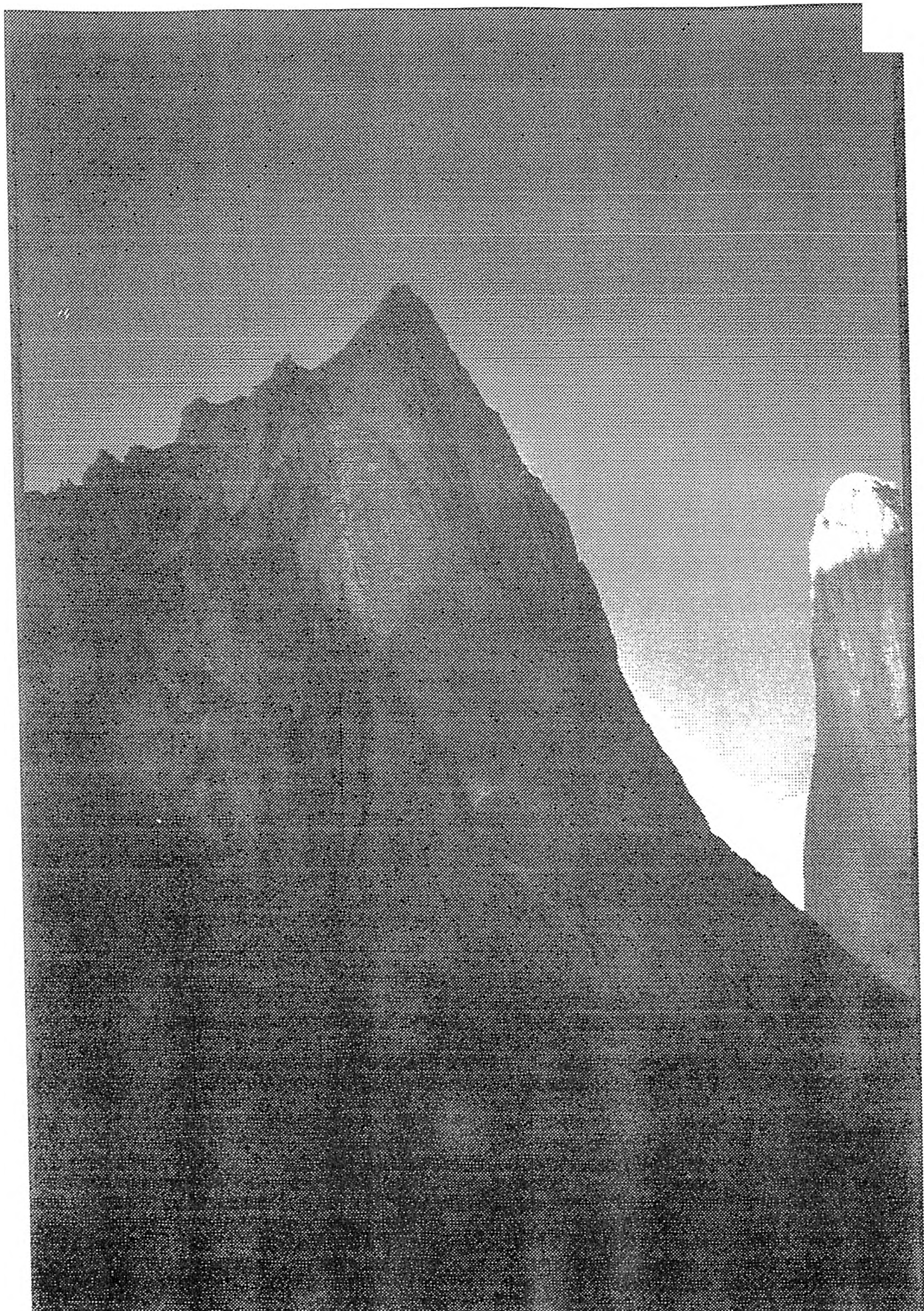
all 27387

**NORTH WALES
EXPEDITION TO
PAKISTAN'S
NANGMA
VALLEY
1998**



+623





**NORTH WALES EXPEDITION TO NANGMA
VALLEY 1998-10-12**

INDEX

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES STEVE

TEAMS

SPONSORS

THE ROUTES

TOPOS

TRANSPORT

ACCOMMODATION

FOOD

INSURANCE

GEAR

COOK/GUIDE

AGENT

PORTERS

CAMP

ENVIRONMENT

MEDICAL

COST

MAPS

POTENTIAL

PUBLICITY

Objectives

The aim is for a team of climbers from N Wales to visit The Nangma Valley in the Karakoram for 5 weeks during July / August '98. Four of the team members took part in the '97 expedition to Pakistan which made two independent ascents of the unclimbed 700m face of Beatrice.

The Nangma Valley was recced at the end of the Beatrice trip and the unclimbed Sutulpa Peak (5,800m) and Amin Peak (5,900m) were discovered. With the knowledge gained last year in terms of transport, porters and the approach walk it is hoped to maximise our time at base camp to give plenty of time for these two very impressive objectives. As on the Beatrice trip the men and womens teams will share transport and organisational costs but then climb independently. Depending on conditions it is expected to climb Alpine or big wall style.

Date of trip: 25th July - 30th August 1998

SPONSORS

We have to thank to an awful lot of people without whose support and help the expedition would not have been such a great success. Firstly we must thank our employers who let us take the time out of our busy jobs. Iain and Martin at Plas-y-Brenin for allowing Twid and Louise to miss all those ML camps. Jill at the Beacon for allowing Steve the time off from one of their busiest summers due to the bad weather. The National Trust for allowing Elfin the time away from Ogwen tea shack. Rhona for allowing Dai away from the biggest building project this millennium.

Financial Sponsors

THE MOUNT EVEREST FOUNDATION

The MEF kindly sponsored the expedition. Our special thanks must go to Bill Ruthven for his continuing help and support.

The WELSH SPORTS COUNCIL for their grant.

The CAPTAIN SCOTT SOCIETY for their generous grant and donation to the Kande village appeal. Steve who attended the traditional dinner, in honour of Captain Scot, down in Cardiff would especially like to thank the Society for their hospitality and sore head the next day!

Equipment Sponsors

BERGHAUS

Being one Britons best dressed mountaineering expeditions was due to the great help from Berghaus, who provided all our needs for hard wearing and technical clothing.

AJUNGILAK

We would like to thank Ajungilak for donating 6 excellent Tyin Ultraloft sleeping bags which gave us warm and dry nights on and off the hill. Especially Steven Booth for setting up the sponsorship and Chris at the UK head office for the support.

BOREAL

We would like to thank Andy Bowman for his help in providing climbing and static rope. The Mammut ropes were hard wearing and performed well.

TROLL

Thanks to Andy Perkins for the fine reference about the trip and for the webbing, which was used for tat.

WRESTLERS

Without the boil in the bag meals at the end of each hard day on the wall, life is not worth living. It was hard keeping the recipe for the Balti chicken a secret from our cook. Thanks Caroline again the meals were great.

DMM

Thanks to Paul for the hardware and great deal.

REFEREES

Iain Peter, John Cousins and Andy Perkins all supplied bolstering references, which helped in securing great funding.

Amin Brakk - The lads route.

Base Camp was established quickly on a wonderful tranquil "alp" below the Sutul glacier surrounded by granite peaks. Advance Base was almost two miles away, at first a laborious trek up vertical moraine and across a boulder strewn glacier, which hardly got better as we acclimatised. ABC was constructed using rocks off the glacier surface to build a low wall and covered with a "United Nations refugee" tarpaulin - which at times seemed quite appropriate.

Initially Twid and Dai started forcing a route up the left side of the imposing flank of the main buttress of Amin Brakk, following an easy snow gully for some 300m followed by 300m of loose slabs, to gain a snow patch at the base of the smooth bulging wall. (This was all new climbing well to the left of a line previously attempted by a Spanish Party). Due to the looseness of the climbing it was felt that this line was potentially too dangerous. This was proved right as two weeks later the bottom 300m of the face fell down.

A much more feasible line was seen further right, up a huge crack seamed wall, which led to a secondary summit - Nowaz Brakk.

The lower slabs were forced fairly quickly - initial climbing was by Twid and Steve, including pitches of 6a climbing with the odd aid move. The middle section eased slightly and gave pleasant climbing for Dai and Chang up overlapping slabs on a slightly leftward trending line. The main

worry here was that during the afternoon the top of the mountain was catching the sun and this caused any loose rock on top of the mountain some 1000m above to fall onto those climbing or hauling below.

The weather at this time (as always throughout the trip) was very frustrating - with only occasional sunny days but with lots of rain. Even on the sunny days we tended to get wet as meltwater from the halfway snowledge poured down the route drenching all the ropes and those on them.

After 600m of climbing (with fixed ropes) the snowledge was reached Twid led across this and a portaledge camp established below a stunning 600m overhanging corner system.

Again Steve and Twid led up the initial superb pitches with a mixture of hard free (E36a) and aid climbing. Dai had by this time returned to the UK, leaving only three of us on the wall. We soon got into a routine of taking turns for days off but this was inevitably interrupted by bad weather.

We would frequently find ourselves waking up on the portaledges to stare out at thick mist and a cover of snow. This almost always resulted in enforced rest days back at Base camp, followed by the physically and mentally exhausting 2000ft-jumar back to the high point.

The higher we got the harder the climbing got - the free climbing became more and more difficult as the corner steepend towards the top. We often ended up resorting to more and scarier aid climbing on expanding flakes with pegs falling out in increasingly colder weather - this upper part of the corner was north facing and while the late afternoon sun hit the face above us, drenching us with ice cold melt water, we never had any of the benefits in our gloomy corner.

The rock quality remained excellent throughout on this upper part, although we did have a couple of major scare while on the wall. The first was when an ice boss melted on top of the corner and all the snow behind it avalanched on to us. Thankfully because of the steepnes of the wall we were only hit by fragments of ice and a 1ft coating of snow while the slabs below which we had already climbed were transformed into a huge temporary snow field. The other major scare was when a massive section of exfoliated slab some 300m X 100m gave way in the middle of the morning with no warning whatsoever - completely wiping out the lower part of the initial line we had started on.

Eventually the end was in sight - a final pitch of very overhanging corner remained but after four continuous days on the portaledge we al felt utterly

wasted and after a night of intermittent snow showers none of us felt like jummaring up the 2000ft of frozen ropes to struggle with yet another hard aid pitch. So a team retreat to the comforts of Base Camp to be refuelled by Imran's chips and chappatis allowed a rest day to be had before the final effort.

With one day left we jummaried back up to the portaledge and early the following morning, despite dense freezing mist we jummaried the remaining 200ft to our high point only one pitch below the top of the wall. Twid was suffering considerably from a combination of altitude and probably a bug but still managed to lead the hard aid pitch into the bright sunshine on top of the wall.

Stripping the ropes and gear proved to be very hard work and it was well into the night that we ended up back on the glacier festooned with hundreds of metres of tangled ropes, ledges, sleeping bags and a myriad of other bits. Base camp and a welcoming cup of tea from our cook however was a welcome ending to a hard but ultimately very rewarding experience.

THE ROUTES

LOUISE THOMAS AND LIBBY PETER

OBJECTIVE: TO CLIMB NEW ROUTES AS TWO TEAMS ON THE THOUGHT TO BE UNCLIMBED PEAKS OF SOTAL PA PEAK AND AMIN PEAK. (AMIN BRAKK)

AREA: NANGMA VALLEY, NEAR HUSHE IN THE KARAKORAM.

LIBBY PETER AND LOUISE THOMAS CLIMBED A NEW ROUTE ON THE UNCLIMBED SOUTH FACE AND ARETE OF SOTAL PA PEAK. BASE CAMP WAS SITUATED AN EASY 15 MINUTES WALK AWAY. THIS ENABLED THE TEAM TO SNATCH CLIMBING OPPORTUNITIES DURING A SUMMER OF UNSETTLED WEATHER.

THE ROUTE FOLLOWS AN ALMOST CONTINUOUS LINE OF CRACKS AND CHIMNEYS THAT MOVE ON TO THE ATMOSPHERIC SOUTH ARETE.

LIBBY AND LOUISE CLIMBED THE ROUTE OVER 14 DAYS. THEIR FIRST ATTEMPT TO REACH THE SUMMIT FAILED WHEN AFTER A PRE DAWN START A SINGLE PITCH TOOK ABOUT FOUR HOURS! EVENTUALLY THEY COMPLETED THE ROUTE ON THE 14TH AUGUST. THE ROUTE HOWEVER FINISHES AT THE TOP

OF THE CRACKS ON A PILLAR AT A 10M VERTICAL, SMOOTH, GRANITE WALL JUST BELOW THE SUMMIT. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION THEY CONCLUDED THAT THIS WAS THE END OF WHAT HAD BEEN A VERY FINE LINE, THAT THIS WAS THE CLIMBS HONEST CONCLUSION. OVER 2 DAYS THEY CLEARED THE LINE LEAVING ONLY 10 M OF JAMMED ROPE.

2 DAYS LATER THEY STOOD ON THE SUMMIT BY AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE: THE NORTH RIDGE. THIS GIVES AN EXCELLENT DAY ROUTE WHICH IS AKIN TO A SHORT ALPINE ROCKY RIDGE AT ABOUT A STANDARD OF AD.

LOUISE AND LIBBY ALSO CLIMBED ANOTHER SMALL PEAK; DENBOR PEAK 4700M BY WHAT THEY NAMED 'THE GENTIAN TRAVERSE' 500M PD.

WITH THEIR REMAINING DAYS THEY EXPLORED THE GLACIER BELOW AMIN PEAK AND DRIFFICA. AIMING TO REACH A COL BENEATH DRIFFICA AT THE FURTHEST EXTENT OF THE CWM. THEY REACHED THE COL APPROX. 5600M IN 3 SHORT DAYS. DUE TO THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE GLACIER AND SNOW SLOPES THEY REACHED THE COL AT 4.30AM. IN THE DARKNESS THEY COULD SEE THE OUTLINE OF THE PEAKS OF THE CHARAKUSA AND THEN THE BIGGER PEAKS BEYOND.

SOTAL PA PEAK 4800M

NEW ROUTE; SOUTH ARETE, RAM CHI KOR; 19 PITCHES ED1 (E3 5C A2).

1ST BRITISH ASCENT NORTH RIDGE SOTAL PA PEAK AD.

(DESPITE BEING ASSURED THAT THE PEAK HAD NOT BEEN PREVIOUSLY CLIMBED WE FIND THIS IMPOSSIBLE TO BELIEVE, THE NORTH RIDGE BEING SO ACCESSIBLE, WE ALSO FOUND A CAIRN NOT ON THE RIDGE BUT APPROACHING IT. ON THE STEEP WALLS WE COULD SEE NO EVIDENCE OF CLIMBING WHICH THERE WOULD CERTAINLY BE DUE TO THE DIFFICULT OF THE CLIMBING AND THE NEED TO CLEAN CRACKS.)

1ST ASCENT DENBOR PEAK 4700M THE GENTIAN TRAVERSE PD.

DRIFFICA COL 5600M GLACIER AND SNOW.

TRANSPORT UK - PAKISTAN

Not long after our application for MEF funding was made Marian, from the PIA office in Bristol. She wrote to us offering a good price and help with excess luggage. The cost of flying with PIA direct to Islamabad from Manchester was ironically the same price. As the extra luggage allowance was available PIA was the obvious choice. The flights cost £550 (including air tax) and the luggage allowance was 27kg + an extra 20kg going out. On the way back our luggage allowance was 27kg + an extra 10kg. Marian had done us proud for the Manchester end of the journey. The team booked in quickly and there was no problem with our luggage although we were well over the extra weight allowance. On the way back the lads travelling separately from Louise and Libby, got stung for an extra £200 for excess luggage. This was very annoying considering the lads were well within their weight allowance and the scales did not work. The checking staff seemed to be charging some passengers and not others. Such is travelling in Pakistan. The lads could not make too much of a fuss, as the PIA staff knew westerners were worried about the political situation and wanted out! PIA flights are fairly basic, compared to other operators, and don't serve alcohol. The team took some celebratory booze on the plane and didn't find any problems. It is illegal to take in alcohol into Pakistan. The authorities do not permit it but some Westerners do stash it in their luggage. Beware of X ray machines on arrival

On the return flight from Islamabad to Britain Louise and Libby flew a day earlier to London and had a pleasant flight back to the UK. The lads on the other hand had a bit of a nightmare. After arriving at 2am they had to wait until 4pm to fly due to mechanical problems with the plane. The passengers were left in the 35-degree heat, crammed on the plane for 4 hours. Eventually the authorities decided to disembark the passengers and take them back to the lounge. At 4pm the plane took off for Karachi and after a further 2 hours on the runway flew back to the UK. Apparently there is a certain time when the big planes have to take off before, otherwise the heat gets too great and effects the take off. Time was made up on the return flight and the lads were only 12hours late arriving at Manchester!

ISLAMABAD-SKARDU

We had faxed Himalaya Treks and Tours to book us onto the next days PIA flight to Skardu. To allow them to book the flights they needed a

photocopy of everybody's passport. It is much cheaper for them to pay for the tickets in Pakistan than in the UK.

The problem with flying to Skardu is that if the previous days flight had been cancelled, due to bad weather then there is a knock on effect and you have to wait for the next day to fly (less chance in first class mind!). If this had been the case we would have gone by road to Skardu, a full 24hours drive. The weather was good and we were able to fly the next day. You are allowed 23kg baggage allowance flying to Skardu but the excess luggage is relatively cheap and so is not worth worrying about. It only cost an extra £50 on the way out and similar on our return.

On both flights the views were breath taking. There are particularly great views of Nanga Parbat. If you can be on the left of the plane on the way out and on the right of the plane on the way back you will get some amazing views of K2 and the Gasherbrums. Be quick once you have taken off to get fantastic views from the cockpit. It is obvious why they need good visibility for flying!

As usual it is essential to confirm your International return flight 72 hours before departure. Our agent kept our tickets and made sure this happened.

SKARDU – KANDE (HUSHE)

Travelling to and from Kande we used 3 jeeps. One jeep for people. 6 was a cram and Dai chose to travel on the roof of one of the luggage jeeps and did mention the choking dust was a luxury. Two jeeps were needed for all our supplies and kit. In fact we suspect that 2 jeeps would have been fine but we seemed to be carrying supplies for the village. It is also not uncommon to also have a few hitchhikers hanging on the back of one of the jeeps. This was not a problem; we have all hitch hiked in the past. Three jeeps cost £90 each way, and we gave the drivers a tip of 1500rps each.

The journey takes about 5 hours and is best done in the cool of the morning. Expect to be rattled to death. The journey follows the Shyok River up to the Hushe River after the town of Kapalu. Following the river valleys is beautiful with ever changing scenery. You pass through some small villages with teahouses. It is advisable to be careful with what you eat and drink here! We only drank coke and green tea. We also bought lots of bottles of drink in Skardu for the journey.

At Kapalu you have to sign in at the Police station so that they can keep tracks on the whereabouts of travellers. This is a good place to see if anybody you know is in the area. Kapalu is the regional Centre and has some shops, restaurants and hotels. While we were there the Government

had finished a new large tourist hotel, which looked OK but most places looked pretty grotty compared to Skardu.

Kande is the village at the end of the existing road and the start of our walk in. Our equipment was unloaded and stored in a safe lockup room in the k7 Hotel. The K7 Hotel sells good food, especially fine chips once they have dug up the potatoes and more importantly cold cokes and soft drinks. It has minimal toilet facilities and you would rather camp out than stay but it is good to eat there at some point.

ACCOMMODATION

One night was spent in Islamabad on the way in and two on the way out. There is a huge variety in the quality and price of accommodation available. On the way in we stay at the Holiday Inn, not the famous one! , Which was fine. The rooms cost 1500rps and were clean and had ensuite bathrooms, but no air conditioning other than a fan, which sounded, like a hovering Helicopter. They did offer a free Taxi service to and from the Airport. The best thing about this hotel is that it is relatively close to the Pearl Continental Hotel. The PC, as it is refereed to, is the best place to hang out in the heat of the day; it also has a swimming pool! The food at the PC is "safe" to eat if you have a delicate stomach. The self-service is legendary and most Expeditions eat there which can make it quite sociable. It is about £8 for all you can eat, do remember your shrunken stomach on the way out! They also have other restaurants and the BA office is there. In Skardu we stayed in the Sadpara Hotel which was very handy for the main street and the shopping. The food was basic and the bedrooms clean and cool. The rooms had locks; security was not a problem as the staff was very helpful and trustworthy. The Hotel had a lock up where you could leave kit while on the hill.

Nisar is the boss and he is a bit of a star. He is also a journalist of some sort. As a result news of our expedition travelled and on returning to in Islamabad Libby had to give a contact of his an interview for a national paper; The Nation. There was plenty of journalistic license however it seemed a good thing to do for public relations. Nisar also has good relations with the PIA manager in Skardu. It was through his intervention that Louise and Libby were able to fly early and avoid a troubled road. The rooms were only 500rps to stay in. The concrete quadrangle was an excellent place to sort out gear before loading onto the jeeps.

HOTEL SADPARA
COLLEGE RD

We had hired a large tent from Chengazi. It is not essential to have one but it makes the time at base more relaxing, and keeps the cook happy. It also provided storage for excess gear and for food. The overall cost of the tent came to £75 this was well worth the extra outlay. During the stay at base Zakir and Imran made the eating area more and more comfortable. This was much to the envy of all the visiting expeditions who came up to say hello.

A latrine was dug and surrounded by stones. At the end the contents were burnt and then covered over. Rubbish that could be burnt was in a deep pit. Rubbish that couldn't was kept in a bag. As the camp was in high pastures we had to be careful with cows and goats wandering around and eating our food as well as making a mess. We took water from a spring, but the cook tended to collect water from a closer stream that the cattle used and dried up. Therefore we had to take care with the water used for cooking. At times the quality of the water was dubious and we thought at times this caused stomach upsets at camp.

The kitchen was used from the previous year, which Imran had kept safe for us in KHANE. A large Chinese petrol lamp was purchased in Skardu and was well worth it, it hardly used any fuel. The cook used a petrol burner to cook on. This stove ate the fuel, we used two full big containers and still we had to send out for more fuel. This was the same as last year and was an excuse for the guide to go down the valley and get some more. The cost of the extra fuel being more obviously. Good quality petrol containers were needed for the walk in so not to soak the porter.

GEAR

As we did not want to freight gear from the UK we were restricted to only 47kg going out and 27kg coming home. So the gear we took had to be the right kit and there was not much room for many luxuries. Our total weight going out was 350kg for 6 people. This was thanks to PIA and the agency that we booked our flights with in the UK. Thanks Marian.

It should be mentioned that there was no problem with our excess baggage flying from the UK. However the Pakistan Authorities stung us heavily on our return.

Ajungilak

Sleeping Bag Report

Many thanks must go to Steven Booth and Chris at Ajungilak for supplying sleeping bags for the team. The Tyin bags proved just the job for the changing climate and cold conditions on the wall. We approached **Ajungilak** for help as their bags had proved their worth on many other

SKARDU
PH / FAX 0575-2951 BALTISTAN
General manager NISAR ABBAS NISAR

On returning to Islamabad there was much unrest due to Muslim Fundamentalism and American bombings. We were advised to not wander about the streets. Therefore we chose to stay in the Pearl Continental which was comfortable enough not to feel the need to wander. Libby and I arrived in the city alone. The staff of the PC looked after us really well. We felt very safe and unharassed.

PEARL CONTINENTAL HOTEL
THE MALL
RAWALPINDI
Tel 051 563 927

KHANE

After arriving in the Hushe valley we were guests of our cook Imran. His home is in the village of Khane, which is right on the banks of the Hushe River. One month earlier a landslide blocked the river causing the river to sweep away the only bridge to the village. Now to get to the village everybody has to take it in turns to cross in a basket while being pulled by a team on the opposite bank. Although this is exciting it does pose a problem for the village bring across supplies.

The village has magical feel about it. Everybody is happy and smiling. All the houses are huddled together surrounded by colourful fields of wheat and vegetables. Here we were treated to excellent hospitality and food. Most of the men work as cooks in the major cities during the winters so the food is of the highest quality. Chinese, Indian, Balti and some of the best chips I have tasted. Everybody helps out and there is no short of inquisitive children to talk to. It is very pleasant to see all the porters, who were now our friends, with their families. Dai thought of marrying off his two daughters as to his solution of holidays in Pakistan!

We slept on the roof of a Balti house and woke early to the fascinating sounds and smells.

It was also worth mentioning that both the girls were very well welcomed by the woman of the village and were keen to talk with them and share their company. We had not experienced this else where.

BASE CAMP

Base camp is 2 days walk (1 long day) from the Kande.

We set up camp on a high pasture beneath the walls of Sotul Pa Peak

expeditions. The team had used them previously in Patagonia, Greenland, Yosemite, Colorado, and Mali as well as in the British summer and winter.

What the team was looking for was a warm pit that was well made and constructed from a material that would quickly dry out if it got wet. This is the best formula for a Big Wall sleeping bag, particularly if you intend spending many nights on a mountain face in a ledge, at altitude. Previously the Kompakt range had been used but after advice from Steven the Tyin Winter sleeping bag was chosen.

The sleeping bag consisted of a nylon and Micro Lite-Tex bag with a Ultraloft filling. The weight was 2450 grams and it came in two sizes 200 and 180 cm, the smaller for the girls. It was a green colour and had a full-length zip. The sleeping bag was designed to be comfortable in a range of +10 to -20(-30). So how did it perform?

The sleeping bag was more than warm enough for all eventualities. Our first night, using these pits, was spent sleeping on top of our cook's house in the small village of Khane. Khane is nestled next to the Hushe River. It was a cool night with a slight breeze; all of us had to open the sleeping bags up to cool down. We all slept well.

At base camp, at a height of 4200m, the sleeping bags were always warm enough. The temperatures, in times of storm, hovered around freezing but most of the time it was more like 5 degrees at night. The main problem at base was damp as it rained a lot. The bags proved no problem as they would remain warm when damp and dried out with body heat over night.

On the wall the lads found the bags fantastic, even with the very cold nights. It would take about 5 minutes to warm up to a very respectable sleeping temp. Over the 3 weeks on the wall the lads experienced many storms consisting mostly of snow and some rain. The temperatures would go well below freezing; water would freeze solid in water bottles. (Maybe minus 10)

The big problem with prolonged life on a portaledge is that it is impossible keeping your sleeping bag dry for any length of time. To help keep the bag dry a Gore-Tex bivi bag was always used. If when you got in your bag it was wet, it would always be dry by the morning. This is the great advantage with materials such as Ultraloft. Down bags would get wetter and wetter and lose their thermal properties.

The weight of the bags in a Big Wall situation is not so important as in an alpine style climb. The lads made good use of the bags on the wall and were not bothered by their weight (2450grams). At base camp they were luxurious. But for the glacial journey which Louise and Libby made they proved a bit heavy to carry. This was to be expected. The excellent stuff

bag did allow the pit to be carried in an average alpine size rucksack (65L) with still plenty of room for the rest of gear.

The colour of green was felt to be OK for blending in, but a little drab when trying to get promotional shots. Because the **Ajungilak** label was stitched along the bag it was difficult to take pictures of the bag in use, with the name the right way round. The stuff bag gave the best promotional shots because of its brightness. Some sticky labels would have remedied this.

Report results of TYIN WINTER **Ajungilak** sleeping bag.

WARMTH?

Excellent high on the mountain 5000m+

Excellent in the comfort of base camp 4200m

A bit on the warm side for valley use, but with the zip open fine.

DID IT DRY OUT?

Yes, from being very wet it dried over one night.

BEST SUITED FOR?

Excellent Big Wall pit for all environments. Not so good for alpine style approach due to weight.

DURABILITY

There was no problem with sleeping bags, nothing failed.

REPORT ON BERGHAUS GEAR by Libby Peter

We were supplied the following gear

Gore-Tex – Simplex Range

Activent smock

Powerstretch pants

Thermals

Micro fleece

Activity jacket

Aqtash smock

Hats, socks

Alpine extreme rucksack

The team was delighted with the gear supplied very kindly by Berghaus. It all functioned well throughout the trip in conditions, which ranged from warm and sunny to cold and windy with either rain or snow.

The items that impressed the team the most were;

AQTASH SMOCK: Ideal weight for mid- altitude climbing in wet or snowy conditions. They remained water repellent even in heavy showers

and were far preferable to down. Good as a belay jacket but also low bulk to make it comfortable to jumar and climb in when necessary.

ACTIVENT SMOCK: Perfect wind proof and shower proof jacket Very light yet hard wearing. They survived 600m of thrutchy cracks and chimneys pretty well unscathed)

MICRO FLEECE: Great light weight climbing fleece, comfortable and non restrictive

AC

PERSONAL KIT LIST

Thermals 2

Thin fleece

Thick fleece

Duvet jacket

T- shirt 2

Power stretch trousers

Fleece trousers

Cotton trousers

Shorts

Socks 4

Gore-Tex top

Gore-Tex bottoms

Activent top

Gloves 2 thin, 2 thick, 1 leather

Boots leather which took crampons

Sandals/ trainers

Walkman

Books 2

Suncream

Glasses/spare

Camera

Duct tape 2 rolls each

CLIMBING PERSONAL

Helmet

Harness and chest harness

Jumars 2

Etriers 2

Daisy chains 2

Belay plate (not ATC type as they kink the rope bad when abseiling)

Prusik and ropeman

Screwgates 10
Snaps 40
Knife
Rockboots (comfortable with socks)
Crampons
Ice axe and hammer
Peg hammer
Slings 10
1 set of friends 00-4
2 set of nuts
Maillons
Ice screw 2
Headtorch (we used 4 batteries each max)
Haulbag 1 large
Gaiters

GROUP CLIMBING GEAR

LADS

Pegs 12 blades, 25 lost arrows (5 of each size), 16 angles (4 of each size),
30 mashies, and 12 rurps.
Wall hauler 2
Beaks 4
Skyhooks 6
Bolt driver 25 bolts used on belays
Tat 50m
Static 9mm 400m
Single ropes 2
Half ropes 2
Portaledges 2 (doubles)
Markill stormy hanging stoves 2
Spare gas stove
Big mugs / spoons

Girls KIT

300m 9mm static rope (mammut)
60m 10mm dynamic (mammut)
60m 9mm dynamic (mammut)
Pegs (selection)
Petzl system bolt kit
Portaledge (not used)
Epigas alpine stove

BATTERIES

Duracell kindly sponsored the trip with batteries for our radios, headtorches and Walkman. All batteries were carried out from base camp.

Repair kit

30 plastic cable ties, wire, leatherman, duct tape 6, a few rivets, long strap, screwdriver.

MUSIC

We all took Walkmans, which were great for those long carries and jumars. In Skardu we bought Imran a good music box and enough batteries so that we didn't go insane with his Balti music (which actually isn't that bad!).

Chang took welsh music, Steve took love songs! Libby took soul, Louise took folk, Dai took Mamas and Papas and Twid took rock. Balti music could be bought in Skardu for 30-50 rps, for a tape. The locals would also burst into impromptu singing and dancing

INSURANCE

We all took out BMC insurance, which seemed the best cover and the best bet in a real emergency. This gave you annual cover for almost everything! But it is best to check your policy that you will be covered for new climbs as well as height of mountains. £270 per person, this is a major expense often overseen.

INSURANCE

PORTER

This was organised through our agent to give our porters protection while carrying loads to and from base camp. It pays their families if they are killed. This was very unlikely on our approach, as it was objectively safe and no glaciers were to be crossed. But it is well worth the little money it costs as we heard of at least 3 porter deaths while we were there.

AGENT

Although not strictly needed we chose to use an agent on both our trips to Pakistan

The agent we used was Himalayan Treks and Tours.

The agent offers a contact in Pakistan, which makes organising a trip from the UK more efficient.

The agent will book hotels (at a discounted rate), organise travel including internal flights, confirming international flights, booking jeeps and

coaches, airport transfers. It is also the agent who will organise in advance a guide and cook, porter insurance, storage of equipment. Chengazi who is very well respected owns Himalaya Treks and Tours. On our return from the mountains it was the agency that made us aware of the political unrest. This is probably the biggest advantage in using an agency. They are a great back up and will help when things go wrong.

HIMALAYAN TREKS AND TOURS

112 Rahim Plaza,

Murree Road,

Rawalpindi – Pakistan

Tel: 0092 51 515371, Fax: 00 92-51-56 30121 and 584566 ATTN: 265

Head Office:

College Road,

Skardu – Pakistan

Tel: 0575-2528

COOK AND GUIDE

Through our successful trip to Beatrice in 97 we made good connections for a cook and guide. Our Guide, Zakir Hussein, met the team in Islamabad. There he helped organise travel, accommodation as well as any shopping that needed doing in Islamabad. In Skardu he helped in taking us to the appropriate shops and giving us a guide to average prices. On the approach he also assisted in organising the jeeps and porters. At base camp he helped in the day to day chores of cooking and cleaning. At the end he also made several carries from advanced base camp. It is also useful having a guide to represent you when you have to sign in with the Police at Kapalu. It gives the Expedition more credence. In retrospect a Guide/ cook would have been fine, but it was handy having those extra hands around when things went wrong. This was particularly useful when some of the food didn't turn up at base camp and Zakir had to return back to Kapalu to buy more food.

Our Cook again was Imran Jangjungpa from the village of Khane, in the Hushe valley. Imran was a great bloke who made amazing and imaginary meals. Meal times were always the highlight of the day while in base camp. He also played a major part in our organisation. He was greatly respected by the villagers and this was a great asset to the trip. Imran lots of experience of expeditions, as both a cook and as a guide. Both he and Zakir spoke excellent English and, more importantly, had a great sense of humour. They both gave us nicknames, which brought them much hilarity.

In response they were called Bill and Ted, after the comedy American duo. They certainly lightened up life. At base camp we had many visitors. It was amazing how many uncles and aunts the lads had. It seemed that the Hushe valley was one big happy family. We would whole heartily recommend both guide and cook for future expeditions. It was not necessary to kit them out with equipment, as with a liason officer. But it always advisable to do so as they may not have clothing capable of coping with the bad weather and altitude. We provided a tent each for them, fleece's, waterproof top (Gore-Tex), thermal top, T-shirts, cotton trousers, gloves, hat, rucksack (the bigger the better) and obviously fed them for the expedition. The lads were always invited to eat with us when we were in a town or city. In return they were excellent.

COOK/GUIDE: Imran Hussein Jangjungpa

Village KHANE

PO Box THANGAS DISTRICT GANGCHI TEHSIEL MASHERBRUM, SKARDU, BALTISTAN.

He has worked with British, Spanish, Japanese, American, French, Korean expeditions. Many trips to Gasherbrum base camp, to K2, Trango and was on the first expedition to cross the Gondo Gora pass.

During the winter he looks after he family and works as a cook in a Chinese restaurant.

GUIDE; Zakir Hussein

Village KHANE

Address as above.

He works full time for Himalaya Treks and Tours. In the summer running expeditions and during the winter works some of the time in the Islamabad office.

PORTERS

The porters of the Hushe valley are generally kind, hard working, non complaining and trustworthy. In Pakistan this valley must be one of the easiest places to visit. Since the popular Gondergora pass was opened many expeditions coming back from the Gasherbrums base camps have enjoyed the friendliness of this valley. This valuable source of income provided by portering has brought relative wealth to the villagers. This year there was less work as up to 70 trips and expeditions had cancelled due to the war with India.

Our trip brought valuable work. To make things fair in the valley our Guides had organised porters from each of the 5 main villages in the area. This kept all the villagers happy

Each porter would carry up to 25kg and then all his own equipment and food. They usually tie the kit onto their backs with about 10m of rope. This often brought much hilarity when expensive haulbags and rucksacks were strapped onto backs with bits of rope, without the straps being used. It was worth having lots of big bags and plastic drums.

It was very important to have a 25kg+ scale available to help weigh the loads. This is best bought in the UK and taken to Pakistan. Without a balance would leave you at the mercy of the porters.

Each time we have travelled with porters we have used a Sirdar. He is usually a more experienced porter and a well respected by the other porters. He helps with the weighing of the loads and the organising of the porters. He does not carry a load but would help out others if they had a problem.

The Sirdar would get paid extra for this responsibility, an extra 500rps.

On the way into base camp we had a problem with our Sirdar, who happened to be the brother of our guide. It was made clear that this was unacceptable and that his services would not be required on the way down!

We needed 41 porters on the way up and 22 on the way down. The porters were paid per stage and for food and equipment. 250 rps per stage and 200 for equipment. We also gave a tip 50-rps.

To enable us to get some equipment up near the base of the wall we used some porters to carry up to our advanced base camp. These porters we fed and paid 400rps a stage.

EXPENSES

Insurance	£1500
Porter	
Insurance	£60
Travel	
UK	£80

Flights International	6 @ £540	£3240
Internal	6 @ £30	£180
Return		£180
Total		£3500
Excess Baggage International		£200
Internal		£100
Jeeps		
Transfer		£15
Skardu- Kande		£90
Return		£90
Taxi		£30
Total		£225
Agency		
		£300
Cook		£200
Guide		£250
Tent		£75
Tape player		£25
Total		£850
Hotels		
		£280
Food (hotels)		£200
Food (from UK)		£40
Pakistan		£900
Total		£1420
Equipment		
Ropes		£730
Gas		£150
Other		£350
Total		£1230
Home		
Phone/fax/post/paper etc		£100
TOTAL		£9265
INCOME		

MOUNT EVEREST FOUNDATION	£800
SPORTS COUNCIL FOR WALES	£1750
CAPTAIN SCOTT AWARD	£1000
TOTAL	£3550

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS £5715

Environmental

All expeditions will have some form of impact on the environment through which it passes to a certain degree. The actual impact left at the end of the day depends on several factors - not least the size of the expedition. Being a relatively small group we all felt that our impact on the environment which we climbed in was minimal, although as always lessons were learnt and some aspects of the trip could be improved on.

As the approach walk is a frequently used path by local villagers using high summer pastures for grazing, the impact of a small group with some 40 porters simply walking was negligible in terms of erosion. Nonetheless minimising the overall numbers of porters use is good practice (and makes for a cheaper trip!)

There were a number of issues which we felt needed particular attention.

*** Fires**

Although we did not have any open fires at Base camp or above (except to burning rubbish in a specially prepared pit) we were initially horrified on the approach camp to see porters apparently hacking live trees to obtain fire wood. Further investigation showed that they were in fact only using dead branches. As this is a rarely frequented valley this should prove sustainable, as there is plentiful natural regeneration in the upper Nangma valley. However if the valley becomes very popular with trekkers or climbers then expeditions will have to be more vigilant over the practice of campfires by porters.

*** Waste**

The best approach is to have minimal waste from the start - this includes disposing of all unnecessary wrappings and packaging

materials before approaching the mountain - this also saves weight and *ergo* saves on porters, which as already mentioned also minimises the impact.

Unfortunately by buying our food etc at Skardu we had no option but to buy items in many small containers including glass and some canned items. The glass containers were actually saved and reused as glasses (unfortunately not for alcoholic drinks) and after the trip were in great demand by the local villagers! The cans were crushed and carried out at the end of the trip to be disposed of away from the mountain.

All burnable waste was burnt in a pit some 2 ft deep - as we did not have a spade a greater depth was not possible. The turf from the pit was removed and kept to be replaced at the end of the trip.

*** Human Waste**

It was not feasible to carry out human waste so latrines were used. A pit was dug some 150 m from base camp, surrounded by a low wall built of moraine debris. At the end of the trip Steve had the unenviable but essential task of burning the waste which was achieved with the aid of surplus petrol (its well worth while keeping some spare at the very end). At Advanced Base Camp glacial slots were utilised while on the wall itself the camp was on a 100 metre wide snow field, behind which was a deep bergshrund. Safety lines were used to access a part of the snowfield well away from any possible source of pollution and was felt to be the best option in the circumstances - certainly preferable to the previous teams as evidence in the form of plastic toilet bags was unfortunately too apparent.

POTENTIAL IN THE AREA

Libby and I finished our route with several days to spare. We decided to explore the valley to see what other potential there might be.

Sotul Pa peak still has lines on the East wall and South West face. Several teams attempted quick routes. I think the routes are longer and harder than first impressions indicate. The rock is generally very good quality granite however the narrower cracks do need cleaning but then offer fine climbing. Our route would go free.

Denbor peak lies across the river at same altitude as Sotul Pa Peak. From base camp it appears as a fine triple peak ridge. The west face would offer steep climbs up to 300/400m in length. The ridge looks very fine but on the East Side the peak is far less distinct. Libby and I found an easy route up the back of the North peak, which is the highest. The Gentician traverse PD. Amin peak. This is definitely the prize of the valley. The peak consists of a large blank looking pillar with a huge crack seamed wall right of the pillar. The lads intended to attempt the Pillar but fortunately due to time and weather moved on to the wall. When the lads were high on the wall a huge area of the wall fell down obliterating the approach to the pillar. This area continued to shower huge slabs down. The pillar has been attempted by the Spanish. Any future teams should be aware of the danger in approaching the base. Other than the area the lads approached the wall from there did seem to be quite a lot of rock fall.

There are other lines on the face and the summit of the peak, which is snowy, has not yet been reached.

This peak is not indicated as over 6000m how ever considering how much rope the lads fixed and how far they climbed it would seem reasonable to assume that the summit of Amin may be much higher than thought.

Beyond Amin Brakk there is a ridge and a rocky pinnacle however a shale band appears above the snow line making any approach hideous.

At the back of the cwm there are some smaller but steep snowy peaks to the right of Driffika. The faces of these peaks face south and therefore receive a lot of sun. We climbed in the dark to a col beneath Driffika. It may be possible to approach this peak from here. From the col we could see down into another valley which appeared to connect with the Charakusa. The descent from the col on this side appeared very steep and not easily negotiable.

The Southeast face of Driffika is approachable from the glacier but is very dangerous as it receives a lot of sun.

It is a snow/ice face with no where to hide!

To the left of Driffika the ground becomes rocky and more broken. There appears to be a dip to a col then complicated ground extending to ridges and peaks that link with the back of Sotul Pa peak. The ground looks complicated and the quality of the rock variable.

On the other side beyond Denbor peak there is a grassy ramp that goes all the way to K6 base camp. Above this ramp there are rock walls and pillars but nothing that stands out as an individual peak. At the far end of the ramp an Australian team had climbed 2 new routes on a tower.

The valley then curls round in towards more glacier and K6. Across the way to the south the valley drops steeply to the Nangma River. Our walk in began along side the river before cutting up along side a waterfall. If one continued on a lower line beside the river it would take you under two fine looking rocky faces. These looked excellent but the face close to north and due to their low altitude may be very dirty. Around these peaks are some unstable glaciers (not effecting these rocky towers) these led back to some rather inaccessible peaks. Moving back down the Nangma retracing our walk in, the sides of the valley just extend up to steep rocky walls. There may be some cragging potential. However I would imagine that much of it is of dubious quality and requires cleaning. There is one peak that looks of interest that rises from the main valley. It was almost opposite our base camp but beginning from the main valley. It looks like a series of towers and would perhaps be a super Alpine ridge.

FOOD

As we had decided not to freight the only food we took from the UK was Hydrated Boil in the bag meals. We have used these on several trips. They are excellent on the wall and go a long way to ensure that one eats a meal each day when climbing. We were fortunate enough to be given 24 meals from WESTLERS FOODS AMOTHERBY MALTON, NORTH YORKSHIRE.

Many thanks to Caroline Dickinson.

The remainder we purchased at a good rate through Plas y Brenin.

The only other food we took was a large bag of tropical mix.

In 1997 we bought most of our food in Islamabad this year we did all our shopping in Skardu (apart from tarps). It is slightly more expensive in Skardu but less than transporting it from Islamabad. The main differences are; less choice, smaller containers, and glass containers instead of plastic. However it is perfectly possible to buy all your supplies in Skardu.

When shopping we found it useful to let our cook decide on quantities of staples such as flour, rice, vegetables, pulses, and fuel. We took decisions on hill food, snacks, condiments, drinks and luxuries.

The format is generally to go to one store and then work through a long list. It is advisable to calculate hill days and base camp days then plan a little over.

Our list;

Green tea; 5pkts, Black tea; loose 250g 5pkt, bags 5pkts

Coffee 1000g
Sugar 2kg
Hot Chocolate 250g 5 jars.
Tang 500g 5 jars
Soup 48 pkt (too many)
Oats 15 pkt
Corn flakes 7 pkts (not used)
Jam 8 jars
Peanut butter 2 jars
Honey 10 jars
Pickle 2 jars
Tomato ketchup 1 large
Mayonnaise 8 small jars
Oil 3lts
Vinegar 1 bottle
Soya sauce 2 bottles
Chilli
Olives 1 tin
Salt and pepper, herbs and spices.
Tinned tomatoes 8
Tomato paste 16 tins
Pasta 8pkt
Tuna fish 5tins
Tinned meat 5 tins
Tinned beans 2tins
Cheese tins 10, slices 10, triangles 10.
Tinned fruits 12
Custard 5pkt
Biscuits 100 pkts variety
Hill food
Noodles 100pkt
Dried fruit and peanuts not recommended we found maggots
Bombay mix 20 pkt
Boiled sweets
Throat sweets
Chocolate 10 boxes of 24 bars; bounty, mars lion bars, fruit and nut, kitkat,
other small bars. Chocolate is not of same quality and we had a lot left over
although at the start there was concern that we would not have enough We
preferred biscuits and made flap jack with honey and oats.
All veg, dahl, flour, and rice quantities bought by our cook.

This is the cheapest way to eat. At the start the cook purchased a chicken and later at base camp a goat (800rps)

Toilet paper, kitchen paper, towels, sponge, steel wool, soaps, vim, matches, lighters

Fuel

Kitchen; We did not need to purchase a kitchen as our cook had kept our equipment and stove from the previous year. We did need to purchase lamps and a few items that had broken.

MEDICAL

Fortunately we encountered no major health problems or injuries
Teeth. Prior to the trip we had dental check ups. We carried oil of cloves for toothache.

Immunisations

Highly recommended: Hepatitis A, Polio and Tetanus, Typhoid and Meningococcal.

Worth considering: Hepatitis B and Rabies

Diarrhoea

A degree of traveller's diarrhoea is to be expected. It is also easy to acquire more serious problems such as Giardias or Dysentery. We were very concerned about our water supply being contaminated by cattle. We waited 24 hrs if diarrhoea struck, drinking only treated water and no food. If the symptoms continued we used Ciprofloxacin as a one off dose if the symptoms still continued then a course was taken.

We carried Metronidazole to treat giardia but it was not needed on this trip. Rehydration is important so we carried an electrolyte Diaorolyte for this. To stop sickness and diarrhoea and stomach cramps we had Imodium but tried not to use this unless essential.

Infections; We carried some anti biotics for infections and anti fungal cream for athletes foot

Eye problems

We had Chloromycetin ointment for conjunctivitis and Tropicamide for snow blindness.

Skin

We carried anti-histamine and a mild steroid cream for rashes and stings.

First aid Kit

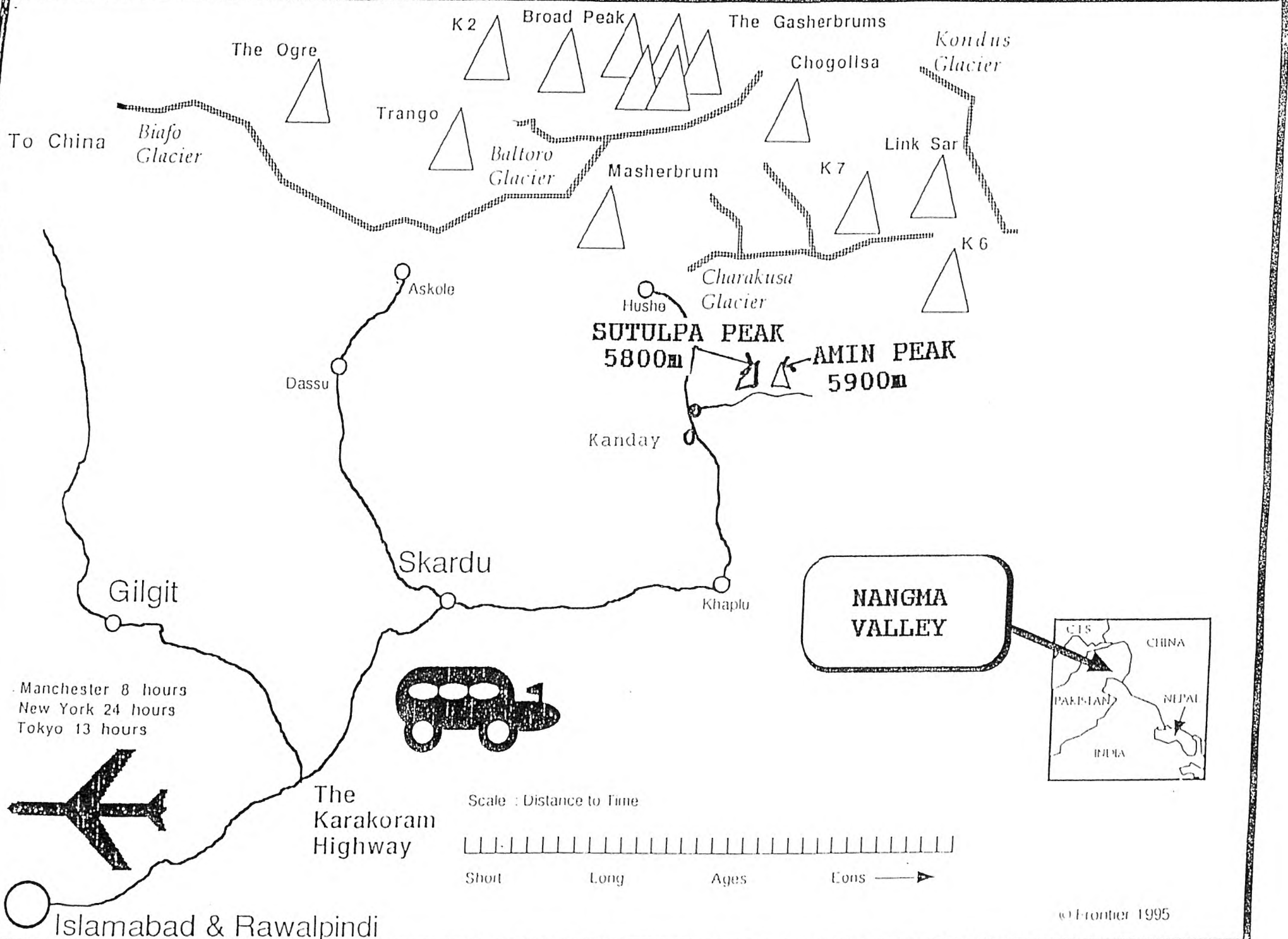
Our first aid kits consisted of the above medications plus a variety of pain killers, sutures, plasters, bandages, dressings, karrimat, alcohol wipes and lots of tape

PUBLICITY

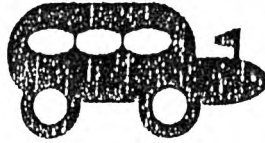
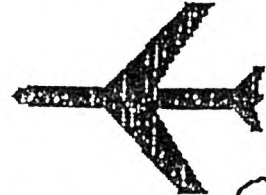
Initial to gain some publicity and to help gain sponsorship a small brochure for the expedition was produced. This explained exactly who we were and what the trip was about. This was felt to be quite useful.

A small news item was done for both local TV and radio, by Elfin giving a Welsh perspective. Also a piece was in the local paper and a piece in the Daily Post. The article in the Daily Post had an angle on what people ate on walls and particularly about hydrated meals.

On returning to Islamabad the Nation, a national Pakistan paper did an article about our success. In the UK articles for magazines and journals will be written and many slide shows shown. Photos of the expedition will hopefully appear in many manufactures brochures for next year. When ever possible all sponsors will get a mention in articles and slide shows.

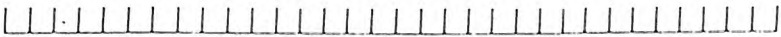


Manchester 8 hours
 New York 24 hours
 Tokyo 13 hours



The Karakoram Highway

Scale : Distance to Time

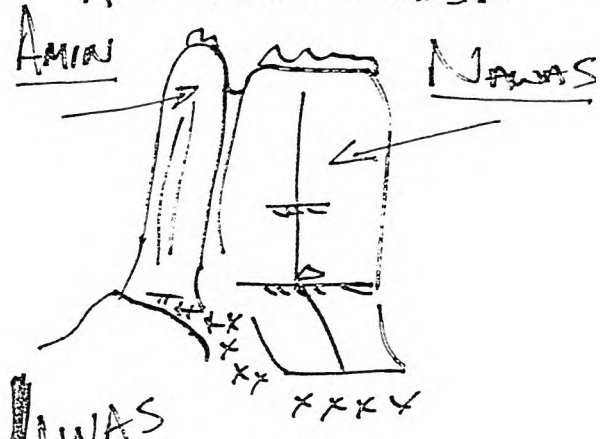


Short Long Ages Eons →

Islamabad & Rawalpindi

300M TO TOP
HIGH POINT TOP OF WALL

AMIN BRAKK MASSIF 5600



NAWAS

1100M

32 pitches

VI E3 6a A3

TWO TURNER
STEVE MAYERS
ELLYN JONES

WET STREAK

The great corner

huge block

Big wet corner

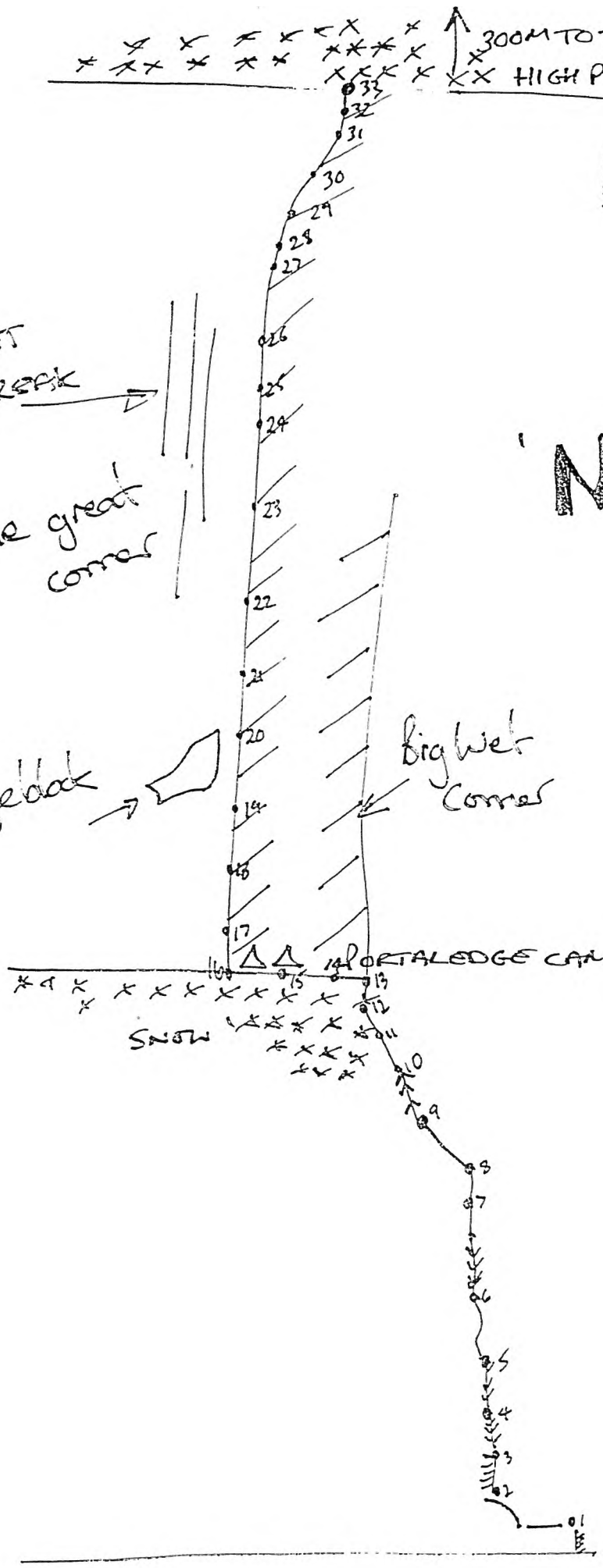


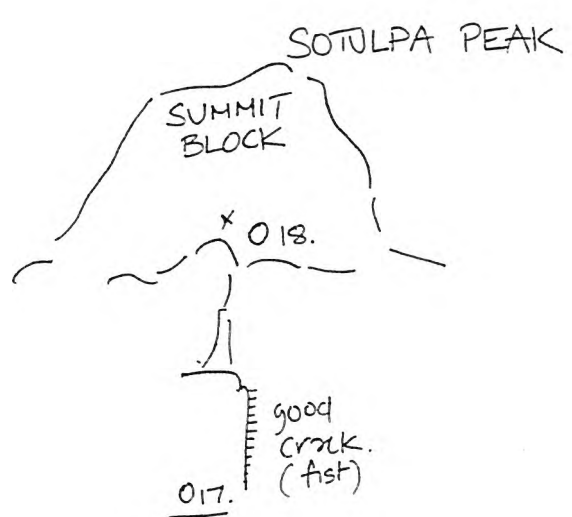
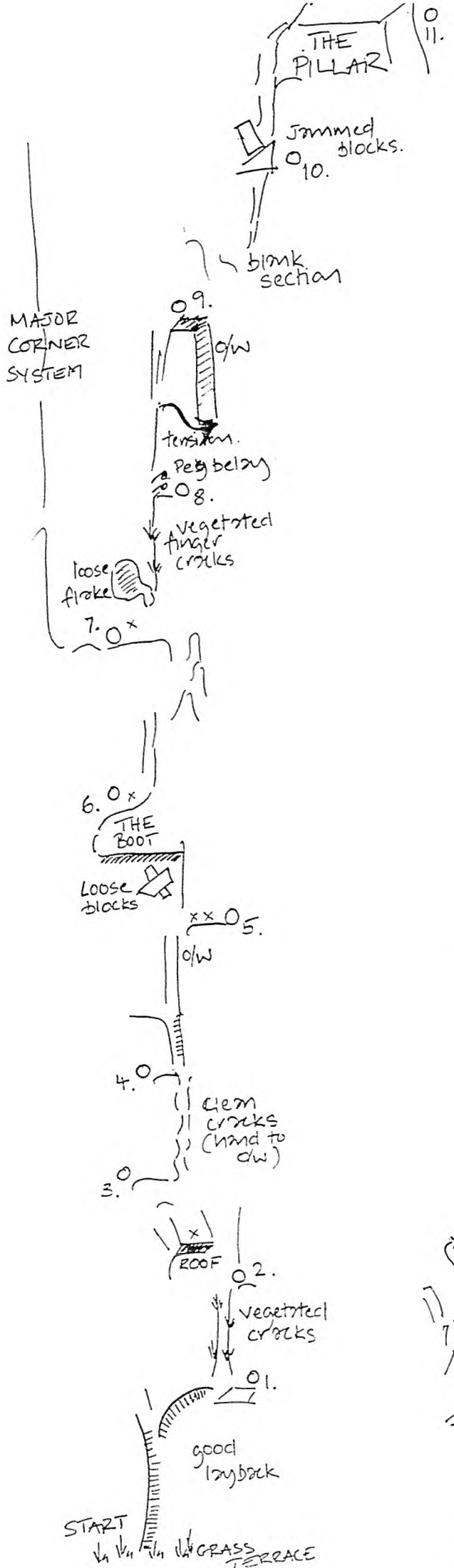
PORTAL EDGE CAMP

SNOW

advanced base camp
5 MIN

SNOW





ROUTE: "RAMICHEKOR"
 ON SOTULPA PEAK
 GOOM
 E2 / A1

