

British Limi Expedition 2025

Supported by:

**Mount Everest Foundation
Fred Iseman Award
British Mountaineering Council
Alpine Club
Berghaus
Blue Ice**

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Aims of the Expedition

To make the first ascent of Pt 6010m via the West Face and descend via the North side. (Summit co-ordinates are: 30° 09' 18.56 N, 81° 47' 37.97 E)

The Team

Mick Fowler (69) British. Retired.

Regular climber in the greater ranges for over 40 years. Expeditions include Mugu Chuli West Face (2011), Prow of Shiva (2012), Kishtwar Kailash West Face (2013), Hagshu NE Face (2014), Gave Ding North Face (2015), Sersank North Face (2016), Yawash Sar (2024)

Victor Saunders (75) British. Retired.

Regular climber in the greater ranges for over 40 years. Six times to the summit of Everest. Expeditions include Ama Dablam (2011), Everest (2012), Aconcagua (2013), Chamsen (2013), Manaslu (2014), Sersank North Face (2016), Pregar (2021), Yawash Sar (2024)

Expedition Support

Himalayan Guides helped us to arrange all the necessary administration (permits and insurance for staff etc.) in Kathmandu. Usually agents in Kathmandu insist on arranging the full package and this bespoke arrangement was only possible because of the personal relationship between Victor Saunders and Isware Paudel, the owner of Himalayan Guides.

Rinjin Lama is a 'Mr Fixit' in Simikot and he helped us to arrange all services in and beyond Simikot.

Contact details are as follows:

Himalayan Guides <https://himalayanguides.com/about>

Rinjin Lama (Simikot)
Email: rinjinlama31@yahoo.com
Telephone: 00 977 9841607300

Travel

From Kathmandu we flew to Nepalgunj on 19th September. The temperature and mosquitos in Nepalgunj were not to our liking and we were pleased to be able to fly on to Simikot on the 20th. Flights to Nepalgunj are regular and reliable on large planes. Our flight to Simikot was on a

much smaller plane that seated about 20. We were delayed for some hours due to morning cloud and were told this is not at all unusual.

At Simikot we were met at the airport by Rinjin Lama and stayed in his basic but very comfortable accommodation. We met our cook/guide, Asabir, and helper, Torsa, and bought small items such as lighters (which are not allowed on the plane) and boiled sweets. We could not find anywhere to buy decent chocolate bars in Simikot. It is worth noting that, despite its remote location, we were able to withdraw money at ATMs in Simikot. The following day we loaded up a jeep with us, our cook and helper and all our kit and drove for 4 hours to the entrance to the Dakjob Khola at the foot of the Nyula La pass. We were told that it has only been possible to drive along this road since 2024 and it is now possible to drive over the Nyula La all the way to the Chinese border. From Simikot to the turn off into the Salli Khola the road is very reasonable and we were told that Chinese investment is responsible for the impressive stabilisation work and concrete bridges. From the turn off the road up the Salli Khola and Chungsa Khola is a far more basic single track with sections that require a good four wheel drive vehicle. The Nyula La pass is usually impassable due to snow from early November to June and in October it is possible that a heavy snowfall will make the road impassable up to the point where we left the road.

On 22nd September we did a reconnaissance up to c4,950m into the Dakjob Khola to identify the best site for a base camp. As far as we knew we were the first westerners to have visited this valley. Much as there is a possible site on extensive flat ground at 4,937m the site was rather harsh with no grass, the available drinking water appeared to be very silty and we decided it would be better to camp 1.5 hours lower, on a flat grassy area at 4,623m by some shepherds' huts.

On returning to the roadhead our mules had arrived and the next day they walked, carrying all our kit, to our chosen base camp site. We had employed the mules in Simikot expecting there to be no available animals where we left the road and a significantly longer walk-in. In fact there were a couple of herder families with animals camped at the point where we left the road and it would probably have been possible to employ their animals to take our kit to base camp. For future teams this would be a cheaper option but comes with the risk that no herder families will be around in which case mules would have to be ordered from Simikot with a considerable delay. When we walked out the herder families had all gone.

It is worth mentioning that the shepherds' huts at base camp, and those we passed on the walk-in, were all rigged up with illegal snares to catch blue sheep. One sheep had been freshly killed in one of the traps in the shepherds' huts by our base camp. The local people did not come to retrieve it (perhaps because they were nervous about our presence) and our muleteer gutted it and split the meat between us and him. We felt very uncomfortable about this but did enjoy some fine meat dishes at base camp.

Above Base Camp

After a day sorting ourselves out at base camp we walked up beyond the possible base camp site at 4,937m and continued up tediously steep rubble slopes to a lake at 5,150m. This is a good camping place but the water is very silty. The next day we continued to a point where we could get a good view of our intended objective and were shocked to see how different the conditions were to our pre expedition research photographs. The lower section of the fine, mixed face that we had dreamed of was completely devoid of snow and ice, water streaks were visible and rock fall was frequent. It looked extremely dangerous and we both readily came to the conclusion that we were not prepared to risk attempting it.

The mountain itself was clearly the most striking in the area and we were determined to climb it somehow. The most obvious alternative was to attempt it via our intended descent route. This would involve following an easy angled glacier to the low point (5,550m) of the north west ridge. We had expected the glacier to be snow covered but in fact it was pure ice and after a day of easy walking we were able to camp on a fortuitous snow patch below slopes leading up to the col. The next day we reached the col easily. After a short descent on the other side we could see that the north side was a relatively straightforward snow/ice climb but we were shocked to find that the easy descent that google earth had led us to expect was a 200 metre drop with extremely loose rock and significant overhangs in the lower half. We visited the col twice to attempt to find a safe descent but ultimately had to conclude that it was so dangerous that we were not prepared to commit to it. One factor in reaching this decision was that if we were unable to climb back up the only way out would be an extremely long walk down the unknown northern glacier to eventually join up with the road to the north of the Nyula La.

Having decided that the west and north sides of the mountain were not for us we returned to base camp and decided to explore the east side. This involved descending for 30 minutes down our approach route to base camp and following a good path up the next valley. This led to a large area of meadows and then, via untracked terrain, to a magnificent huge lake, the Chhungsa Daha, at 5,000m.

From here the profile of the peak is such that it could readily be called the 'Matterhorn of Limi.' Unfortunately though, like the Swiss Matterhorn in summer, we could see that the south and east sides were almost completely devoid of snow. The east ridge looked an attractive but difficult rock climb with the crux at the top but just to the north of the east ridge we guessed there might be a hidden cirque which would give access to the upper section of the finishing ridge of the north side line. There was no other possibility that we felt was suitable for us so, rather than going up the huge rubble covered glacier for a closer look, we decided to return to base camp, collect our kit and give it a go.

The weather appeared fine and stable but on returning to base camp the forecast was for 2 metres (!) of snow in a single 24 hour period in 3 days time. We expected our proposed climb to take about seven days round trip from base camp and in three days time we would be high on the route. With such a significant weather event forecast we decided it would be foolhardy to attempt the route and the sensible course of action would be to wait in base camp and see what transpired. In fact the period of bad weather was longer than forecast. It snowed for 3.5 days at

base camp and by the time the storm had passed it was difficult to move around base camp, let alone walk to the other side of the mountain and start climbing.

Later we heard that the storm had made the news back home as some trekkers on the Chinese side of Everest had to be helped to safety. Less reported was the fact that nearly 50 people were killed in Nepal as a direct result of the storm.

As soon as it was clear that no climbing was going to be possible we called for our mules. As soon as the weather allowed they made amazingly good time through deep snow and evacuated us from base camp on 10th October.

Back at Simikot we were informed that nearly all available planes were being used in the Everest area (presumably the smooth running of Everest tourism takes preference over what happens in West Nepal) and there was only one scheduled flight out to Nepalgunj that week. Remarkably, through the good services of our agents, we were able to catch this plane and be back in Kathmandu in good time to catch our international flights on 17th October.

Weather

Monsoon rains ended just before the expedition members met in Kathmandu on 18th September. Thereafter the weather was largely good except for the 3.5 day storm which put down a significant amount of snow and completely disrupted our plans.

When we arrived at base camp at 4,623m it was warm with no frost at night. By the time we left it was significantly colder and on clear nights water bottles inside the tents became partially frozen.

Overall we felt that the timing of the expedition was reasonable and we were unlucky to have such a heavy fall of snow at a crucial time. It should be noted that this was an unusual, but not unprecedented, event.

Conclusion

The glaciers in this area appear to be shrinking rapidly, as is the snow cover. Large areas which were once snow and ice covered are now unpleasant scree and moraine. Any slopes which catch the sun are likely to be almost completely devoid of snow and ice up to at least 6,000m and only truly North facing slopes are likely to give good snow/ice/mixed climbing in September/October. The pre monsoon season might be better - or perhaps winter, although that would be significantly colder.

Climbing Objectives on Pt 6010m

Pt 6010m is the most eye catching peak in the area. It is reminiscent of the Matterhorn when viewed from the South and remains an excellent unclimbed objective. The North side of the mountain offers the easiest line of ascent and is approachable from Traktse to the North of the Nyula La pass. If there was more snow and ice our proposed line up the West face would be very fine as would a left slanting couloir leading from the foot of the West face to gain the ridge bounding the left side of the face where it steepens. The East ridge looks to give an excellent rock climb once the initial scree slopes have been overcome. The South ridge is also a possibility but has a long horizontal section and complex looking rock towers in the upper section. Aside from the North side the crux of all other possibilities would appear to be the summit buttresses.

Aside from Pt 6010m the only other peak we thought of interest is unclimbed Pt 6,095m which lies immediately to the East. The South face has pure ice climbing possibilities accessible across a long, moraine covered glacier from the Chhungsa Daha lake. Our research photographs showed these possibilities to be steep snow faces but now the snow has largely gone leaving bare ice.

(For photographs of all these possibilities, and the impact of global warming, see Appendix 3)

Appendix 1 Accounts

Income	£
Mount Everest Foundation (inc. Fred Iseman Award)	4,500
Alpine Club	1,600
British Mountaineering Council	964
Personal Contributions	4897.95
Total	11,961.95

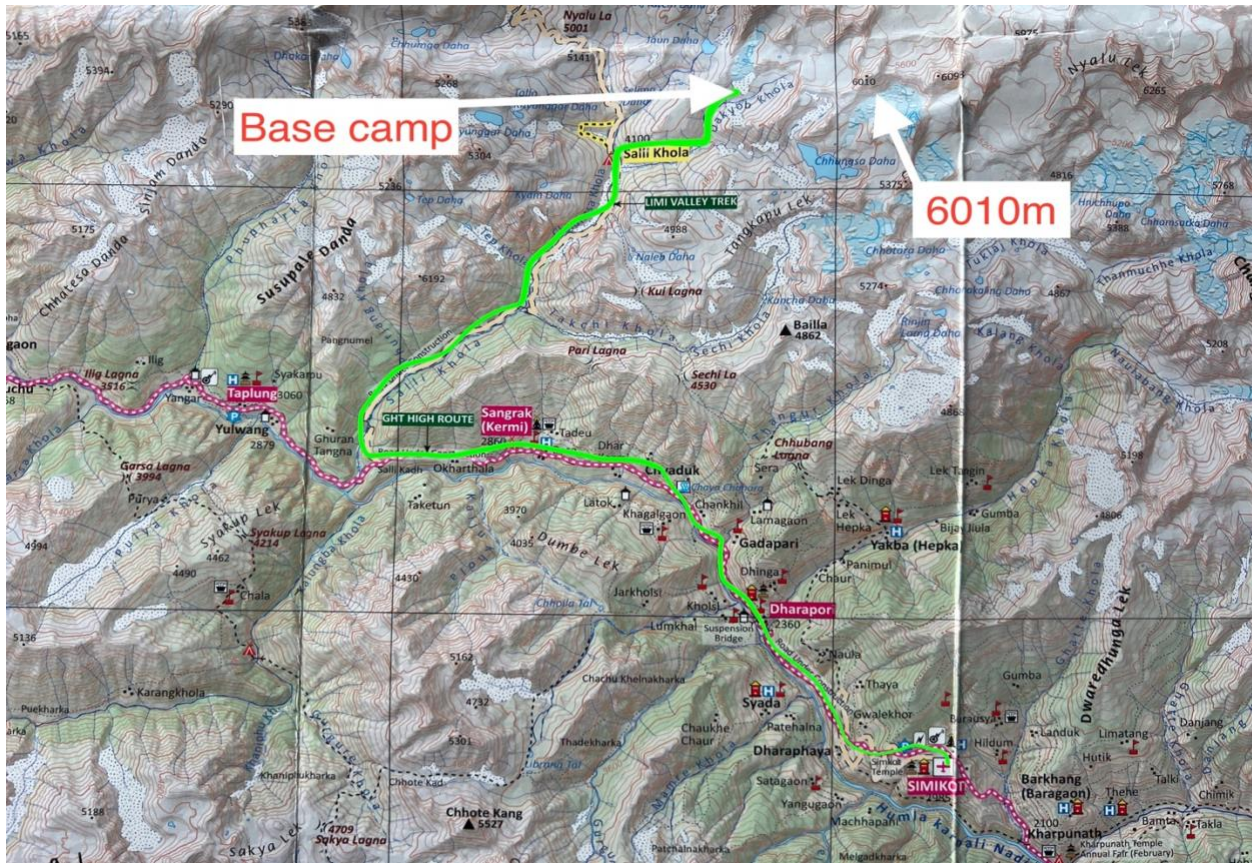
Expenditure

Payment to Simikot agent (See breakdown below)	3,900
Flights (International)	2,416.73
Flights (Nepal) inc. excess baggage	1,240.44
Staff Insurance (For Cook, Kitchen Boy, Mules/Muleteer etc.)	1,240.70
Insurance (Expedition Members)	881.64
Permits/Fees	647.74
Hotels (Kathmandu and Nepalgunj)	258.02
Other Transport Costs	127.15
Mountain Food	238.30
Abseil Tape	65.00
Visas	109.66
Satellite Communication Device	56.71
Misc. (Meals, taxis, misc. items)	393.76
Cook – Tip and portering	98.80
Kitchen Boy – Tip and Portering	72.80
Muleteer tip	20.80
Jeep driver tip	18.20
Carbon Offset Payment to Moors for the Future	175.00
Total	11,961.95

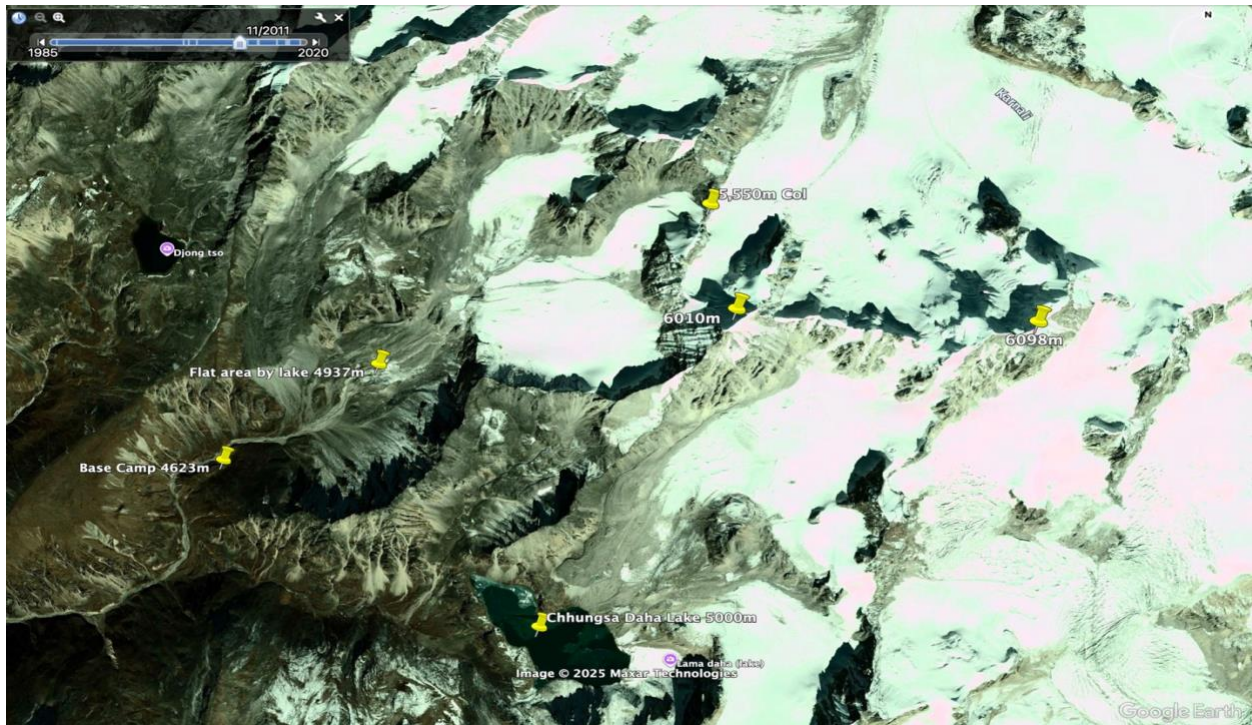
Approximate breakdown of payment to Simikot agent

	£
Jeep	216
Accommodation Simikot	108
Cook	772
Kitchen Boy	555
Mules/Muleteer	806
Food/gas at BC	533
Kitchen and tent hire	398
Mountain Gas Cartridges	160
Agent Fee	352

Appendix 2 Maps



Map showing approach from Simikot to base camp



Google Earth map of the area around Pt 6010m

Appendix 3 – Global Warming and Possible Future Objectives



North side of 6010m showing the easiest looking route to the summit. We were unable to descend to the crevassed glacier and so could not access this face.



West face of Pt 6010m showing the conditions we had expected. Photo Paulo Grobel.



The conditions we found. Water streaks and too much stonefall to make an attempt justifiable.



The conditions we expected. Pt 6010m on the left and Pt 6095m on the R looking from the South. Photo Grégoire Lestienne



The conditions we found. South ridge and East Face of 6010m.



The conditions we found. Telephoto lens shot of the South side of Pt 6,095m from Chhungsa Daha lake at 5,000m.