

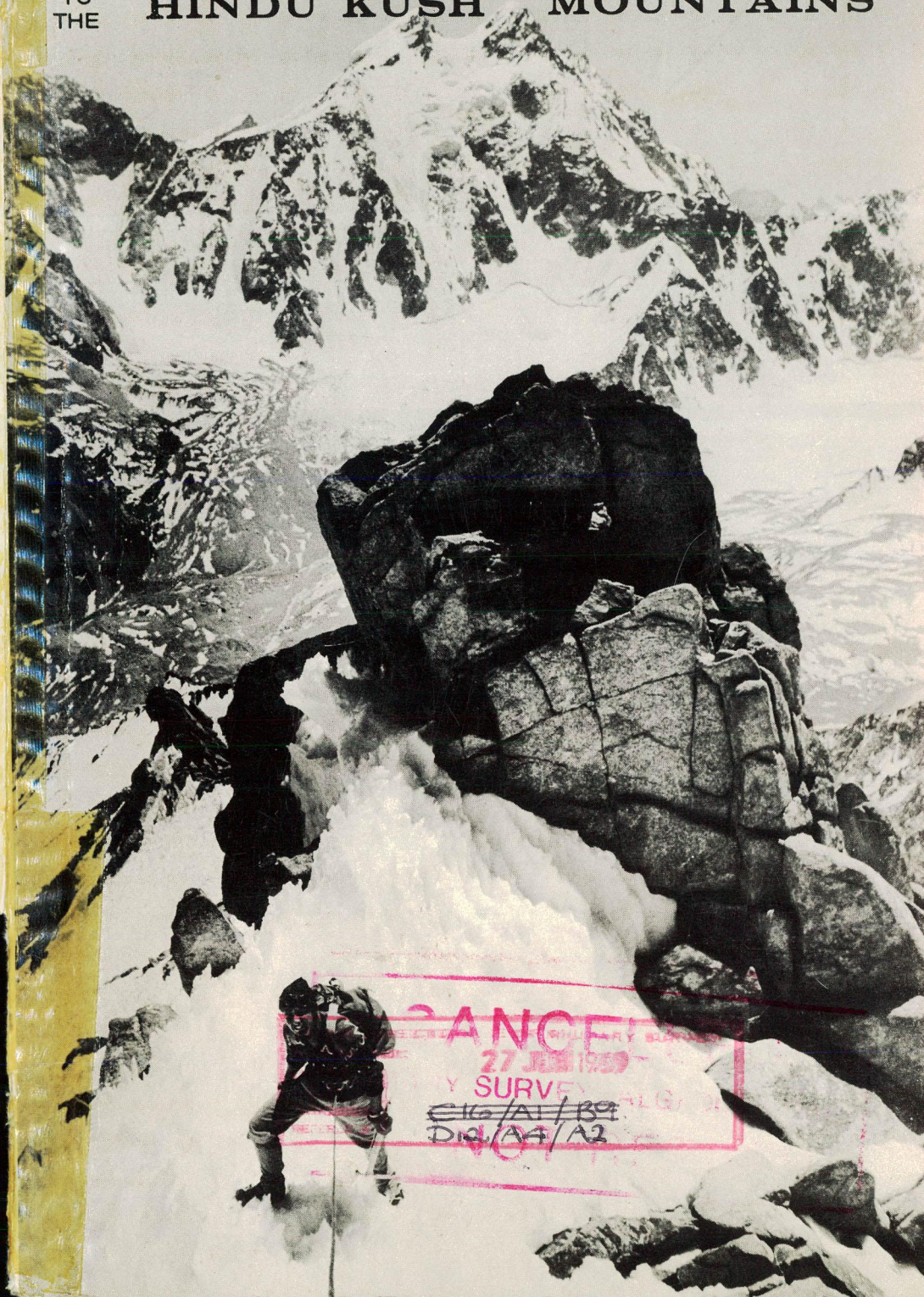
MIDLANDS' EXPEDITION

'67

TO
THE

HINDU KUSH MOUNTAINS

64
Duplicate



REPORT

N.C.C.

THE
MIDLANDS HINDU KUSH EXPEDITION
1967
REPORT

PATRONS - RT. REV. R. R. WILLIAMS, BISHOP OF LEICESTER
RT. WORSHIPFUL THE LORD MAYOR OF NOTTINGHAM
J. L. LONGLAND, Esq.

WRITTEN BY

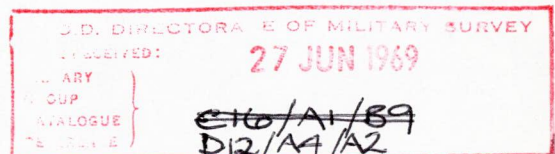
D. K. SCOTT. &
W. CHEVERST (MIR SAMIR SECTION)

TO

JOHN FLEMING

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Photographs approximately opposite page of text.

All photographs were taken by D. K. Scott and B. Palmer (on Mir Samir)

About the Report

This report is intended to provide the expedition members with a permanent record of the activities they pursued in the Hindu Kush mountains during the Summer of 1967.

It has also been produced for distribution to the many sponsors and friends of the expedition who helped make it succeed.

We hope that other expeditions going to this area will find the information contained in the text and in the appendices of use to them.

The quality of presentation and the large number of photographs and maps has resulted in an expensive publication. We think we owe it to our helpers, ourselves and others travelling out to the Hindu Kush to provide an enjoyable and accurate account. We have speculated to some extent, hoping that the additional copies will be purchased in large numbers to help cover the costs of the report.

The twelve members of the expedition split into two groups at Kabul. Bill Cheverst gives an account of the terrible tragedy that befell the Southern Group and the decision they faced afterwards. He presents their problem and shows how they courageously returned to climb Mir Samir by its steep West Face.

The Northern Group were fortunate to have no such problems. My account tries to show, however, the sheer physical problems we faced and the enjoyment and satisfaction we gained from our experience on Bandaka and in the Sharan Valley.

D. K. Scott.

January 1968.

List of Members

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Bill Cheverst
Age 27 years. | - Deputy Leader.
School teacher at Buxton College, Derbyshire. |
| John Fleming
Age 22 years. | - Assistant Equipment Officer.
Engineer, Nottingham. |
| Ray Gillies
Age 27 years. | - Expedition Mechanic.
G.P.O. Engineer, Nottingham. |
| Bob Holmes
Age 24 years | - Geographer.
Town Planner, Notts. |
| George Jones
Age 27 years. | - Assistant Mechanic.
Welder, Nottingham. |
| Guy Lee
Age 22 years. | - Equipment Officer.
Fitter, Nottingham. |
| Brian Palmer
Age 20 years. | - Turner at Rolls Royce, Derbyshire. |
| Doug Scott
Age 26 years. | - Expedition Leader.
School teacher, Nottingham. |
| Dick Stroud
Age 25 years. | - Medical Officer.
Salesman, Nottingham. |
| Mick Terry
Age 26 years | - Assistant Mechanic.
Engineer, Nottingham. |
| Ken Vickers
Age 26 years. | - Assisted with food and equipment.
Architect, Leicester. |
| Tony Watts
Age 24 years. | - Food Officer.
Carpenter, Nottingham. |
| Home Agents | - R. Turner.
P. Thompson. |



Members of the Expedition line-up outside the British Embassy in Kabul.

Left to Right Standing -

Tony Watts, Bill Cheverst, Dick Stroud, Brian Palmer, Doug Scott, Ray Gillies, Ken Vickers, Bob Holmes, George Jones.

Sitting - Guy Lee, John Fleming, Mick Terry.

The Two Lorries - Zebedy and Dougal.

The Central Hindu Kush

The Himalayas give way to the Hindu Kush where 1,000 miles of peaks and passes forms the divide between the Oxus, in the North, and the Indus, to the South, before it is lost amongst low hills in Western Afghanistan.

Draw a line North West-South East through the Dorah Pass (on the Pakistan/Afghanistan frontier, South East of the Munjan Pass) and another through the Khavak Pass then that which lies between is the Central Hindu Kush, as far as this article is concerned.

There is no nice, easily definable east-west ridge, but rather a tortuous twisting watershed with massive off-shoots running north towards Russia (Bandaka and Khwaja Mohammad groups) and south into Nuristan (Mir Samir).

There are approximately 20 mountains over 6000m and only one over 22,000 ft., namely Koh-i-Bandaka (22,250 ft. ca.)

The major valleys are the Panjshir, Alingar, Pech and Bashgal to the South; the Munjan and the Anjuman meet to form the mighty Kokcha in the North, with the Warduj draining the North Eastern portion.

The climate is dry, as any school atlas will show, for the area is too far north to be affected by oceanic rain bearing winds. Monsoon influences stop short in the Chitral area only 200 miles East of the Munjan. Whilst the Indian sub continent can be largely blanketed in cloud, almost continuous blue skies characterise the Central Hindu Kush massif. The rather arid climate has, of course, affected the vegetation and so the human response to the mountain environment. The mountain sides tend to be bare, boulder strewn slopes with jutting crags and deep defiles carving into them. This contrasts amazingly with the sparkling glaciers and snow fields above the 15,000 feet mark, and the green cultivated fields in the valleys and terraced lower slopes. Where the valleys are more severe on the traveller, and the sides drop vertically down, the turquoise blue river water threads its way like a gleaming snake to see, but like so many thunder claps to hear, as pounding rocks smash and crash echoing between the walls of the gorge, as they tumble along in the turbulence.

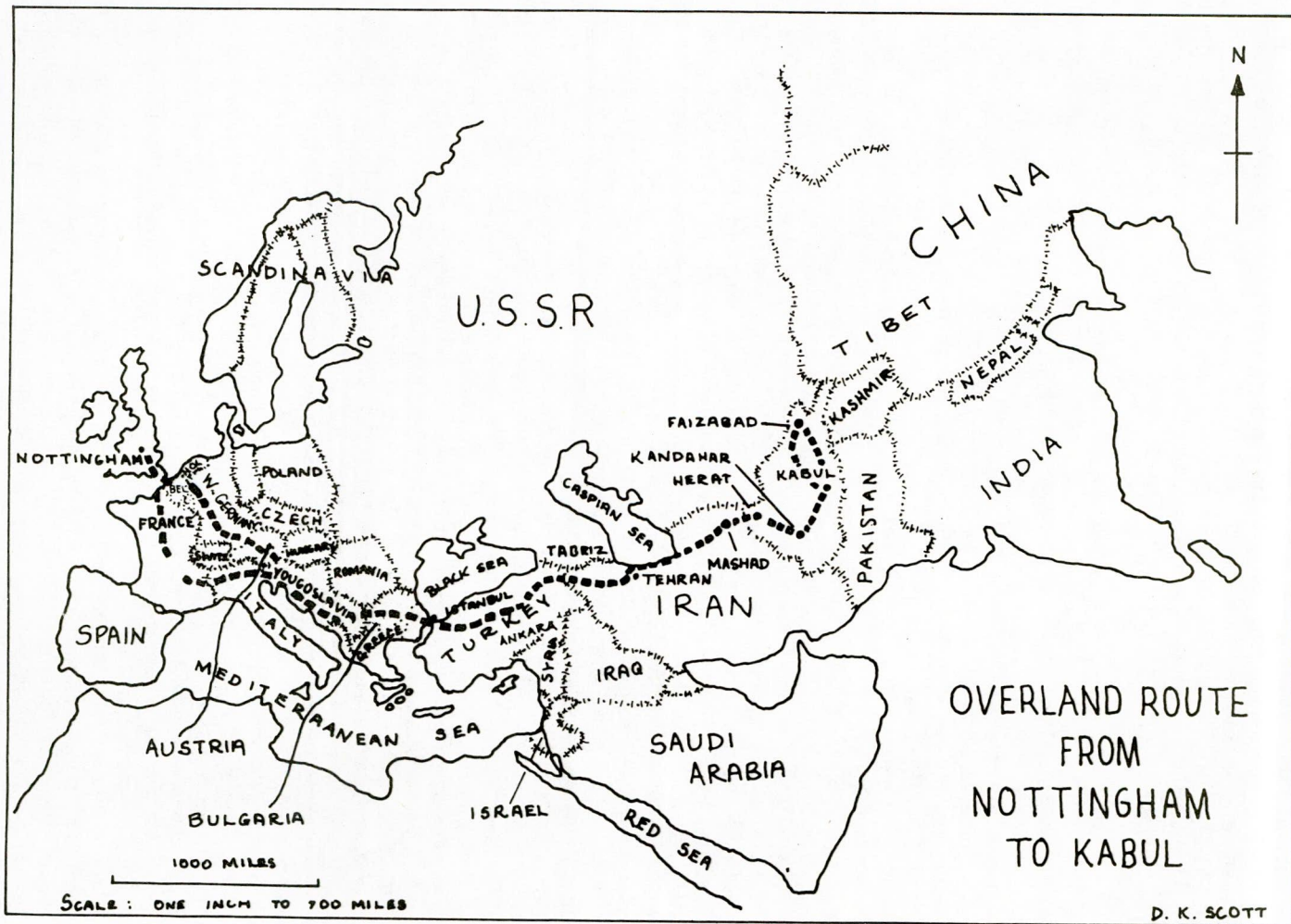
From times of old, the waters have been partly controlled to irrigate fields and to drive the village mill as well as to provide a good drinking supply. But the picturesque villages and green fields nestling between the bare mountain sides, may be swept away as plans, already being drawn up, are put into operation, to provide the rest of Afghanistan with water power and irrigation water for the scrublands further South and East.

Communications are the key factor in the development of any poor country, and in Afghanistan existing roads improve out of all recognition and new ones go where once only sure footed donkeys could travel. Afghanistan is soon crossed, from the Persian frontier, by way of the Russian and American highways nearing completion. Touristry in the south of the mountains, prompted the rough road being extended to Dasht-t-Rewat along the Panjshir. In the North, the rough motorable track has now past Hazarat-i-Sayet in order to fetch the Lapis Lazuli from the Sarisang mine.

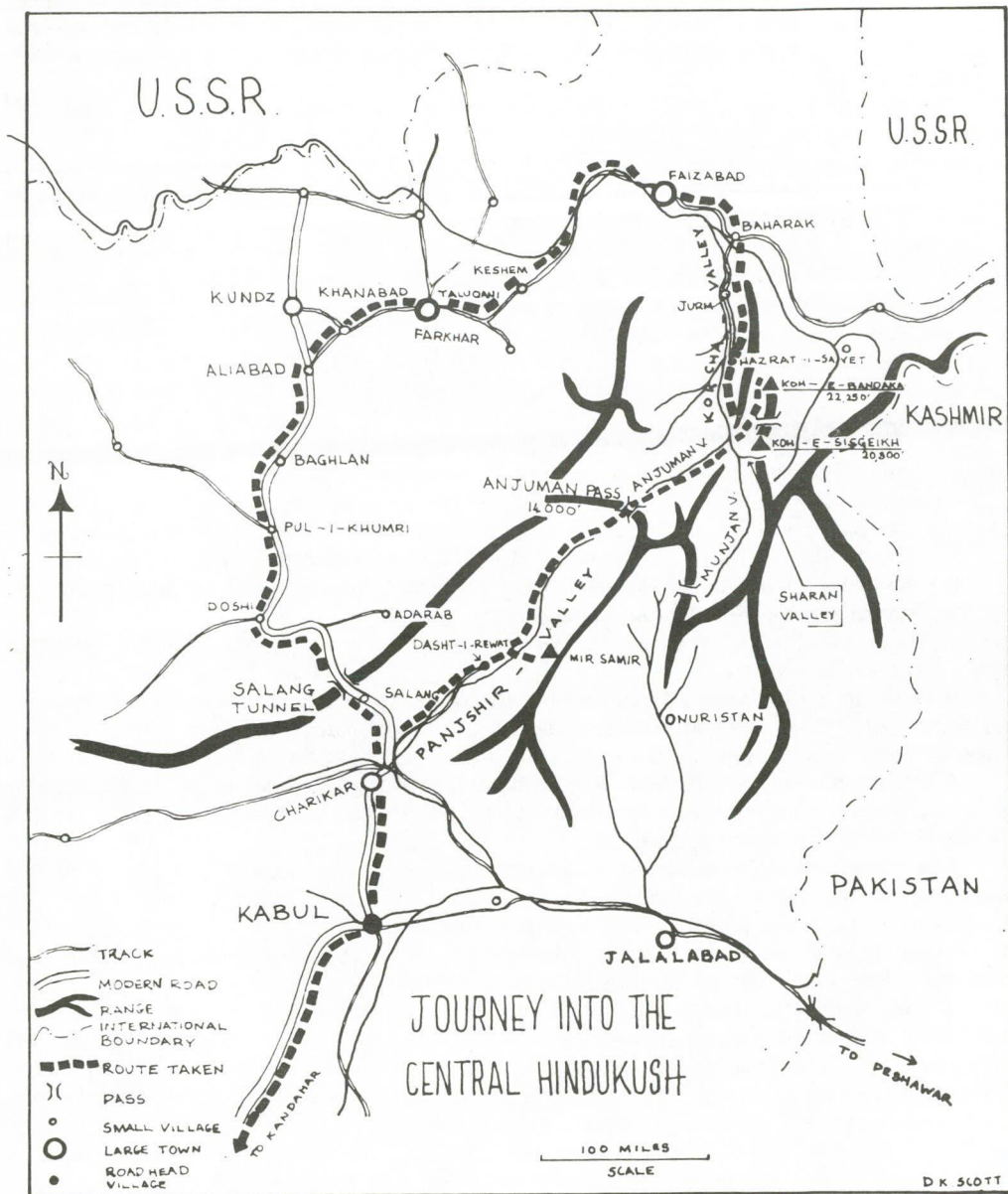
The only contact from the Munjan and Anjuman valleys by telephone is from the Alakadoree at (Keran) the junction of these two rivers. The wires go north along the Kokcha, past the mine to Jurm and finally to Faizabad and Kabul. Mail is impossible to send with any speed or reliability. In fact letters posted home from Keran are still arriving - three months later!

Faizabad is now a small air terminal and plans are afoot to open one at Keran, according to local information. Perhaps air transport will beat the arrival of cars and buses - Swagman Tours etc! However, it will be a close race, as roads inch their way up the valleys. It cannot be many years before some foreign power is persuaded to drive a road over (or under) the divide at the Anjuman Pass. It would be hardly surprising to find that the Germans take it on in view of the vested interest they seem to have in these mountains!

8



Map II



Accessibility and Mountaineering in the Central Hindu Kush

It is strange that such a beautiful and rewarding range, with comparatively easy access from Europe, should have to wait so long for the deluge of Expeditions and tourists to arrive. Well they have arrived now, as will be indicated over, but first a comment on the climbing position.

The British pulled out of British India over 20 years ago and access to the Himalayas has become increasingly difficult.

fortunately encouraged tourism, in a fashion all their own, but nevertheless no serious problem can stop a European entering all parts of the Central Hindu Kush, providing he is patient and willing to spend up to one week in Kabul touring grotty offices and clinically clean, towering, Ministry buildings in search of the key permit, which opens the gate to the valleys.

The procedure recommended here, is to explain the Expedition's objectives to:-

- (a) The British Embassy in Kabul.
- (b) Simultaneously contact the Foreign Office in London.
- (c) Contact the Royal Afghan Tourist Organisation in London and Kabul for general information.
- (d) Contact the Royal Afghan Embassy in London.

Three-four weeks before the departure date, entry visas are received.

On arrival in Kabul:-

- (a) Contact the British Embassy and the letter of introduction to the Ministry of the Interior will be of value, that the Secretary should provide.
- (b) Ministry of the Interior, the Foreign Ministry, and the Police should then be contacted for Residence Visas.
- (c) The Ministry of the Interior will issue permits for access to the mountain valleys.

It is worth while to be orientally patient and polite and immaculately presentable. To be confused with the present British Beat population of Kabul, will not improve the chances of obtaining these permits - especially to the Northern areas i.e. from Faizabad.

A similar routine is followed on arrival back in Kabul in order to leave the country. It is always worth finding the latest information on Afghan visa documentation, as the procedure does occasionally change..

The comparatively reasonable access by road, and through the hands of the bureaucrats, to the valleys and then the nearness of the road head to base camp, has given rise to an important development in high mountain climbing.

Climbers can now visit substantial peaks on a shoestring budget, which was impossible a few years ago (excepting, of course, Shipton and his few adherents). Then, heroes of the climbing world had to be sought and co-opted to give the expedition "standing"; a Lord or two persuaded into lending his name to an expedition, would add "respectability", and then there were years of hard saving and the launching of money making schemes and appeals to provide the three, four sometimes six thousand pounds deemed necessary for the ascent of some far flung giant.

Now, German parties in particular, can hop into V.W.'s at Munchen and with little more than good alpine equipment, equipment and a few tins and boxes of foodstuffs, reach the Hindu Kush in fourteen days and return a few weeks later, having stood on several virgin peaks and perhaps climbed several hard faces in glorious weather. When this sort of news "leaked" out on the climbing world, no wonder development has been so thick and fast. It is common knowledge that many of the world's highest mountains have been ascended by comparative novices. Everest itself, was climbed by good all round mountaineers with wide experience, but none of that team required North Wall experts, nor for that matter, much else than supreme fitness. So it is possible for groups to reach the mountains easily and to climb high peaks in them.

Most of the expeditions to this area have not contained in their ranks "notables" mountaineers yet this does not suppose that it is an easy area. The challenge of weather change is largely absent but peaks exist that are technically as hard as any and faces abound as high as most, e.g. East Face of Bandaka (8,000 ft.).

Now to see just what has been accomplished up to August 1967.

Exploration and Peaks Climbed in the Central Hindu Kush

(See Alpine Journal 1966 313) Pages 199 - 214

The Greeks were the first Europeans into the area. It is thought that they crossed the Khavak Pass in 328 B.C. as a means of access to Panjshir and lands to the South. After Alexander had conquered the area Hellenic culture was preserved for many years. It is thought today that the Nuristanis, who resemble Europeans to a remarkable degree, are the direct descendants of Alexander's army. It is of interest to note that Alexander used mechanical climbing aids in an attempt to reach a mountain top. On the peak stood the castle of a powerful prince known as Oxyartes. By using iron pegs driven into the rock and rope ladders they reached the top and overwhelmed the castle. The Greeks immediately became well established when Alexander married Oxyartes' daughter, Rosana.

Marco Polo wandered through the Wakhan on his way to China in 1273.

Modern exploration started with the expansive aims of the British who, from the 1830's until the 1930's, attempted to map the buffer state of Afghanistan and the adjacent territories. The surveyors often worked under fire from the warlike Afghans. A typical report from the Survey of India for 1878-79 reads "Captain Woodthorpe had a narrow escape when a volley was fired at him and his sketch book was considerably damaged" and "Captain Leach's work was cut short by a severe wound received in action against the Shinwaris in which his gallantry won him the V.C." etc.

With the Afghan wars, surveying was checked, but gradually the higher peaks were fixed.

In 1957-58 the Afghan Ministry of Mining and Industry made a contract with the American Fairchild's Company and Soviet Technoexport to take aerial photographs for them to make maps of a scale 1:500,000 and 1:50,000. The Russians covered the Wakhan area and the remainder of the mountains fell to the Fairchild's Company. It is possible, for expeditions that have made prior arrangements and have their own paper, to copy these photographs at the Ministry in Kabul.

A Chronological Account of Exploration and Climbing in the Central Hindu Kush (Please relate to Map III)

1956

1. **Mir Samir.** Eric Newby and Hugh Carless were the first mountaineers into the area. During their "short walk in the Hindu Kush" they very nearly climbed Mir Samir. They were not too well equipped for the mountain which is 5809 m. high and five days march from the road head. Their actual climbing experiences were limited to an odd weekend's climbing in the Llanberis Pass prior to their departure!

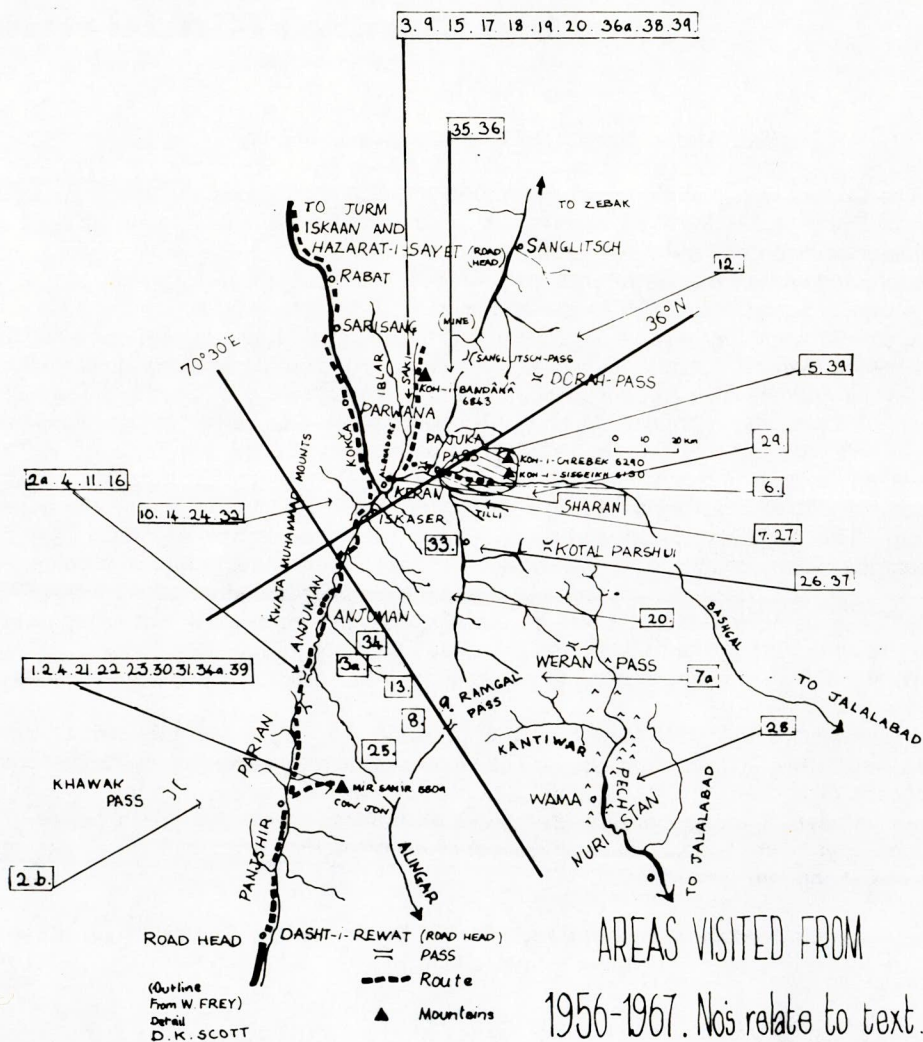
The book Newby wrote provides a marvellously real and humorous introduction to the Panjshir and Southern Hindu Kush.

See "Short Walk in the Hindu Kush"

By Eric Newby (Secker & Warbury 1958)

Also Alpine Journal 1961 538.

Map III



1959

2. **Nurnberger Hindu Kush Expedition.** Leader - Harald Biller - with his wife Bobby and two companions, Theo Stockinger and Hans Vogel, have the notable distinction of being the first Europeans to ascend a peak in this area. In fact they climbed two peaks near the Khawak Pass (North West of Panjshir), Dasht Ribat (c. 5,300) and Galamaston (c. 5,400).

On July 24th they climbed Mir Samir via its North East ridge - Grade V pitches on weathered granite were negotiated before they conquered this fabulous mountain.

Later they moved north to the Anjuman Pass and climbed three more un-named peaks in its vicinity.

1960

3. **German (Berlin) Hindu Kush Expedition.** W. von Hansemann, D. Haase, S. Heine and H. Winkler climbed the West ridge of Bandaka (6,843 m.) on September 22nd. This remarkable achievement was accomplished after snow falls, 20° of cold, frost bite, and a problem that was to plague most expeditions to these mountains-trouble with their porters. Thus, early in the explorations of the Central Hindu Kush the range's highest peak was climbed. Their ascent was all the more remarkable when it is realised that the peak was then unknown, unmarked on the maps, and over ten days from the road head. Only a Swiss geologist had seen the peak before. It was he that informed the Berliners of its existence whilst they were in Kabul. Presumably the Nurnbergers had not seen Bandaka from the Anjuman Pass because it was hidden by cloud or mist. It can usually be seen from the 14,000 ft. pass when its snow fields and glaciers stand out above the blue haze of lesser peaks surrounding it.

Pagar Valley. They also visited a side valley of the Anjuman, climbing six peaks over 5,000 m. at the head of Pagar Valley.

See Der Bergkamerad, Munchen

1959-60 715-16, 824; 1961-62, 161.

4. **Abinger Afghanistan Expedition 1960.** Joyce Dunsheath and Eleanor Baillie, members of the Ladies Alpine Club, made an attempt on Mir Samir early in September. Heavy falls of snow and unwilling porters helped to cause their retreat after reaching only 16,500 ft. on the South East ridge. Nevertheless it was a gallant effort.

They later visited the Anjuman pass climbing a peak previously climbed by the Nurnbergers, and attempting another un-named peak before returning by public transport to England.

See Alpine Journal No. 302, 139/140.

"Afghan Quest" by Eleanor Baillie and Joyce Dunsheath (Harrop 1961).

1961

5. **Bremer Hindu Kush Kundfahrt** was led by J. Ruf and included also Trude Heyser, O. Lavdi, J. Heyser, B. Lentge, and T. Hoffmann. They climbed four peaks near the Munjan Pass, including Koh-i-Khrebek (6,290 m.) 17th August. They entered the Khrebek Valley and Darrah-i-Rees via the Anjuman Pass and Borisch River to make their ascents.

See Alpen. Q. 1962 168-79.

Berg Kamerad 1961/62, 100. 1962/63, 388, 449.

6. **Traunsteiner H. K. Kundfahrt** - K. Brenner, F. Wagnerberger, K. Winkler, O. Huber and D. Dobeneck. They also visited the Munjan area climbing in two side valleys of the Munjan. From Darrah-i-Deh Ambi they climbed seven new peaks between 5,500 m. and 5,800 m.

Obviously fit and well acclimatized, they moved North into the Sharan Valley where they climbed Koh-i-Marchen at 6,400 and Shak-i-Kabud 6,190 m. They also climbed five other peaks over 5,000 m.

See Berg K. 1961/62, 274-76. 1962/63, 388-89.

Thus, in the first three seasons of Hindu Kush "peak bagging", 31 peaks had been conquered in an area where the highest and most prominent peak had only been discovered during the second season.

1962

7. **Bamberger Hindu Kush Kundfahrt.** Leader S. Ziegler, with H. Vogel, O. Reus, R. Frust, K. Gross, W. Patzelt. They again climbed from a side valley up the Munjan River - Darrah-i-Chaur. They ascended 18 peaks the most important being Koh-i-Mondi (6,249 m.) and Koh-i-Jumi (6,020 m.).

They later climbed in the vicinity of the Weran Pass where they conquered four peaks between 4,740 m. and 5,140 m.

Berg Kamerad 1962/63, 448-52.

8. **Rosenheimer Hindu Kush Kundfahrt.** W. Kaesweber, B. Scunesbichler and A. Stadler. They climbed at the head of the Anjuman Valley South East of the Anjuman Pass. Between the Anjuman and the Ramgal Pass they climbed 13 5,000 m. peaks, the highest being point 5,953 m.

Berg Kamerad 1962/63, 424-30.

Thus, five German expeditions.

1963

9. **Garmisch-Partenkirchen.** Hindu Kush Kundfahrt - Thornas and Iris Trubswetter, Dr. V. Gazerit, K. Hold, C. Speer. This expedition made the first entry, so far, from the North and down the Kokcha River from Jurm. They climbed in the Bandaka area making the second ascent of Bandaka and climbing for the first time Bandaka North (ca. 6,400) and Bandaka Sakhi (6,200 m.). Before this and by way of acclimatization they also climbed 12 peaks in the Iblar Valley North East of Bandaka.

They returned in two groups by way of the Anjuman and Munjan. The Munjan party climbed one further peak (5,200 m.) from the Ramgal Pass. It should be noted that local donkey/horsemen are very difficult to engage in the Upper Munjan Valley owing to local hostilities.

See Alpine Journal 1964 No. 309, 249-52.

O.A.Z. 1963, 180. 1964, 72 and 76-79.

10. **Munchen Hindu Kush Kundfahrt.** Led by A. Von Hillebrand, this expedition first penetrated the Khwaja-Mohammed range, climbing 38 summits over 5,000 m. The highest peak in the range was climbed, Koh-i-Piv (5,796 m.).

See O.A.Z. 1963, 149 and 180.

11. **Stuttgart Hindu Kush Expedition.** Leader R. Reiser. They climbed in the Bologron Valley and Kalautscha group - 22 summits.

See O.A.Z. 1964, 77-79.

1963 had seen three more expeditions by the enterprising Germans and this simply led to three more the following year, but the Japanese and British were to make their debut - in a small way - with more to come.

1964

12. **North German (Bremen) Hindu Kush Expedition.** Leader J. Ruf. They climbed in the area East of Bandaka and North of Koh-i-Khrebek (Ruff 1961). After reaching the Sanglichtal they went East to the Rosdaratal near the Pakistan frontier and climbed 13 peaks (8 over 5,000 m.). Other ascents were made from Machtal and Agramtal.

See Alpinismus 12/64, 37.

Alpine Journal 1965, 121 (No. 310).

13. **German (Kempten-Munchen) Hindu Kush Expedition.** Leader B. Diepolder. They climbed several peaks around 5,000 m. in the Ramgal saddle, i.e. Upper Pagar,

southern-most part of the Munjan. They also crossed the Kantiva Pass (4,500 m.) into the Pech Valley in Nuristan.

See Alpine Journal No. 310, 121.

14. **German (Munche) Hindu Kush Expedition** (Reconnaissance) Leader E. Hasse. 17 peaks from Rakhay and Ushnu Valleys in the Khwaja Mohammed. They climbed 14 peaks over 5,000 m. Two members whilst on reconnaissance in the Seyab Valley - E. Rinkel and W. Strauss - were murdered by their porters.

See Berg Kamerad 25 J.G. 566-931.

Alpine Journal No. 310, 121.

15. **Japanese (Nagoya University) Expedition.** Leader, Professor Matsui. They made the ascent of one minor peak in the Bandaka Group.

16. **British (Visit).** A. Allen, with "a colleague", visited the Anjuman Pass with a view to reconnoitre future possibilities. They climbed one peak at the pass.

1964 had seen the three year German monopoly broken with the arrival of the Japanese and the British. It was a tentative start perhaps but at least the attraction of Hindu Kush mountaineering was drawing in others. 1965 saw the deluge.

1965

17. **German (Eisenerzer) Hindu Kush Expedition.** Leader J. Seitar with Loder, Haber and Woger made the third ascent of Koh-e-Bandaka and also climbed Bandaka Tawika (6,100 m.) 12th July, Bandaka Uris (6,000 m.) 20th July and Koh-i-Akher Sakhi (5,170 m.).

18. **Italian (Torino) Expedition.** They climbed Bandaka from the North and reached the top of Koh-e-ka Safed (5,950 m.). It appears they changed the name on this second ascent to Panta Torino. (This information may be wrong as the source was not wholly reliable).

19. **U.S.A.** S. Jervis, S. Merrihue, climbed Koh-e-ka Safed 12th August. Third ascent.

20. **British (Northern Afghanistan) Expedition.** Leader, A. Allen, attempted the South face of Bandaka. One man was killed when he fell into a crevasse at 19,000 ft. on the Bandaka South Glacier. The attempt was abandoned. They also climbed on the West side of the Munjan and reached the summit of a 5,000 m. peak in the Wihgi Valley. They attempted another on the East side of the Munjan near the village of Nau but failed. (Report being prepared).

21. **Japanese (Hitotsubashi) Hindu Kush Expedition.** Leader, J. Amari, with H. Marako and Y. Sato, reached the summit of Mir Samir on 26th August. 2nd ascent. They climbed it by way of the South East couloir after crossing the West, S. West and South ridges to get there.

22. **British (Newcastle on Tyne University) Hindu Kush Expedition.** They attempted Mir Samir but failed.

23. **Japanese (Tokio Gakuin University).** Failed on Mir Samir.

24. **German (Munche) Expedition.** They made ascents in the Southern area of the Khawaja Mohammed.

25. **German (Rosenheim) Expedition.** Climbed in the Mir Samir area.

26. **German (Naturfreunde) Hindu Kush Expedition.** Leader, M. Keierleber, with Wolfgang Frey and a large team, climbed 17 peaks in the Darrah-i-Parshui, a major tributary of the Upper Munjan. The main peaks climbed were Koh-i-Parshui (6,010 m.) 10.7.65 Koh-i-Tundy (6,121 m.) 16.7.65.

See Zwischen Munjan and Bachgal by W. Frey (1967).

27. **Japanese (Oita University) Hindu Kush Expedition.** Y. Eto, M. Nishi and H. Umeki, made the second ascents of Koh-i-Mondi (3.7.65) and Koh-i-Jumi (3.7.65).

28. **U.S.A. (Des Sierra Club, California) with D. Burge, J. Nichols, E. Schurmacher, J. Holloway, J. Nevius, J. Thornton, G. Stephenson (Leader), E. Sardiña and G. Barnes.** They climbed eight peaks in the Pech Valley of Nuristan. Highest point reached 5,987m.

29. **British (Scottish) Hindu Kush Expedition.** J. Wedderburn, W. Fraser, G. Johnstone and P. Tranter. They climbed 10 peaks at the head of the Bashgal Valley, Shoshgal and Suigal Valleys. Their main achievements were the unique approach along the Bashgal, the second and third ascent of Koh-i-Chrebek, 6,290 m. 23rd/24th August, first ascent of Koh-i-Sisgeik, 6,130 m., 30th August, and of Koh-i-Morusq, 6,435 m., 31st August.

See "Moraisq" (Morusq) P. Tranter in "Scottish Field" Feb. 1966

"Sheasgaich" (Sisgeik) P. Tranter "Climbers Ap. 1966

And also a very competent report with fairly accurate maps.

1965 had been a bumper year with thirteen known expeditions and peaks falling like flies. Only three peaks remained over the 6,000 m. mark. The other 17 had all been ascended some two or three times. However, peaks and valleys quite unvisited remained to lure in expeditions during 1966.

1966

30. **German (Allgaeuer) Hindu Kush Expedition** to Mir Samir. H. Schmid with H. Pritschet and P. Albrecht, climbed Mir Samir on the North East side possibly by the Billier route 19.6.66. Thus making the third ascent.

34. **British (Munjan) Expedition.** Four members, consisting of Les Parsons, D. Draper, E. Hammond and R. White, attempted Mir Samir, but failed. They also attempted an unclimbed 6,000 peak in the Pagar Valley, but were beaten back from the summit ridge by blizzards when only 200 ft. from the top.

31. **Japanese (Chiba University) Hindu Kush Expedition.** J. Chuma, leader, with S. Joni, J. Chiba and N. Togashi. They made the fourth ascent of Mir Samir via the South East Couloir as before by the Japanese, but cutting out the West ridge crossing.

32. **German (Karntner) Hindu Kush Expedition.** They visited the Northern section of the Khwaja Mohammed, climbing 8 peaks at the head of the Kesern Valley (all but one over 5,000 m.).

33. **British (Cambridge) Hindu Kush Expedition.** Henry Edmundson, John Ashburner and Paul Newby. They climbed at the head of the Darrah-i-Abi an unvisited valley which joins the Anjuman at Iskaser. They climbed four peaks including Rast Darrah 19,800 ft. and crossed numerous passes on a journey into Nuristan.

See Alpine Journal 1967, No. 314, 65-75.

See also competent expedition report.

35. **British (Manchester) Hindu Kush Expedition.** Cliff Meredith led the expedition with J. Bell, P. Boothe, B. Crosby, S. Crowther and W. Rowntree. They climbed 13 previously unclimbed peaks between 16,500 ft. and 19,000 ft. in the area East of Bandaka and North West of the Munjan Pass.

See Alpine Journal 1967, No. 314, 122.

See also competent report with excellent maps produced by the expedition.

36. **Japanese (Rocco Climbing Club II) H.K. Exp.** Leader, Shigeo Yasukawa. They climbed 6 new peaks on the opposite (South East) side of the Munjan Pass from the Manchester expedition. They also attempted the East Face of Bandaka, without success.

36a. **Japanese (? ?) Hindu Kush Expedition.** Reported to have climbed Bandaka by way of the Sakhi Valley, thus making the third ascent.

37. **German (Bayrischen Naturfreunde) Hindu Kush Expedition** with H. Ziegenhardt, E. Otto, E. Bardoff, H. Altheimar, L. Rehm. They completed the survey of the Parshui Valley begun in 1965. They climbed 18 peaks between 4,970 m. and 5,760 m.

See Oesterreichische Alpenzeitung

Article by W. Frey

January/February 1967 (1351)

1966 had seen a quieter year than the year before but with three Japanese and three British teams evening up the score, along with the three German teams.

The "scientific" programmes had increased in scope and competing with accurate mapping of the Abi, Munjan Pass and Parshui taking place and with a strong botanical party also in Parshui, expeditions began to report the arrival of "tourists", i.e. walkers reaching the Anjuman Pass, now a well known Afghan beauty spot!

1967 (June, July and August only).

38. **Japanese (Chuo University).** The amiable 50 year old Professor Itakura was the leader, with H. Katagomo the climbing leader, accompanied by K. Tchikowa, Y. Hiroto, Y. Kotani and Y. Tsobe. They climbed Bandaka by the "Route Normale" - West ridge on 7th July, thus making the fifth ascent. They later climbed Koh-i-Safed (5,950 m.) before departing for Kabul.

39. **British (Midlands Hindu Kush Expedition).** Leader, D. Scott, with M. Terry, R. Gillies, G. Lee, K. Vickers and T. Watts in the Northern Group. The Southern Group was led by Deputy Leader Bill Cheverst, with G. Jones, B. Palmer, R. Stroud, J. Fleming and R. Holmes.

Northern Group - Koh-i-Bandaka, 6th ascent. It was climbed by the steep South face (3,500 ft.) (4,000 ft. of climbing). Scott and Gillies reached the summit on 10th July and traversed down the West ridge.

Koh-i-Safed, 7th July, by Ken Vickers solo. The last 60 ft. to the summit were not taken owing to dangerous wind slab snow conditions.

G. Lee and D. Scott also climbed point 5,300 m. 13th July.

Sharan Valley. Seven peaks were climbed between the height of 5,475 m. and 6,110 m., all thought to be first ascents.

Southern Group. Their attempts to climb the 6,000 m. peak in the Pagar Valley ended when J. Fleming was drowned in the Panjshir River.

Palmer, Stroud, Jones and Cheverst returned from Kabul after two weeks wandering through Ministerial offices sorting out the formalities over the tragic accident.

They ascended Mir Samir by the West face.

As this expedition prepared to depart the Central Hindu Kush, Italian and German teams were heading up the valleys.

It is worth noting that over 20 individuals walked in the foothills or just visited the Anjuman to fish for its trout.

Thus the Central Hindu Kush mountains, after years of surprising neglect, have in the space of ten years been well and truly explored.

But there are still valleys to go into that have not felt the tread of vibram and there are still many peaks to climb in the 5,000 m. range that have not had ice axe point or piton prodded into them.

Maps accompany this report to assist other expeditions decide where they wish to climb and also a list of useful addresses are enclosed to assist with more specific queries than this short report can answer. Kindly note that the number by each expedition corresponds to those on the map of the area.

	Date/Time	Mountain	Height	Std.	Route Up	Route Down	Climbers
1.	23.7.67 8.30 a.m.	Berast Sharan	ca.5,541 m.	P.D.	N.W. Ice Couloir 45°-55°	N.W. Ice Couloir 45°-55°	D.K. Scott T. Watts
2.	23.7.67. 11.00 a.m.	Koh-i-Kard	ca.5,619 m.	P.D.	East Face Couloir 35° (70° at top)	East Face Ice Couloir	R. Gillies K. Vickers
2A.	23.7.67. 11.30 a.m.	Koh-i-Kard	ca.5,619 m.	P.D.	N.E. Ridge	East Face Ice Couloir	G. Lee M. Terry
3.	24.7.67 10.30 a.m.	Koh-i-Quarch	ca.5,612 m.	D.	South Couloir onto E. Ridge	East Ridge S. Couloir	D.K. Scott T. Watts
4.	24.7.67 10.00 a.m.	Koh-i-Ab	ca.5,500 m.	D.	S.E. Ridge Pitch of V	S.E. Ridge	G. Lee M. Terry
5.	27.7.67 11.30 a.m.	Bechap Sharan Kuh	ca.6,110 m.	D.	S.S.E. Couloir 70° ice off Suigal Glacier (After crossing col from Sharan side)	S.S.E. Couloir	D.K. Scott T. Watts
6.	27.7.67 10.45 a.m.	Sharan Kuh	ca.5,850 m.	A.D.	West rib onto N.N.W. Ridge	N.N.W. Ridge down West Rib	G. Lee M. Terry
7.	29.7.67. 9.00 a.m.	Koh-i-Rah	ca.5,475 m.	P.D.	North snow slope onto West Ridge. N.B. From summit easy way down Toghw Valley	W. Ridge N. snow slope	T. Watts D.K. Scott

Travel with Horse and Donkeys

Kokcha Valley

At the administrative centre of Jurm we made our first tentative enquiries into hiring donkeys or horses at reasonable prices. We spoke to the police commissioner, who spoke excellent English after a long visit to New York. We hoped that, through one of his constables, he would persuade the village headman at the road head of Hazrat-i-Sayet to provide transport at a good price without a lot of haggling.

Three hours after leaving Jurm, the atrocious mining road brought us into Hazrat. We left the lorry and engaged 16 donkeys and 15 men, who insisted on accompanying their animals. We bargained for six hours and fixed the rate at 80 Afs. per day - about 8/-d. - after several telephone calls up valley to the commissioner. The accompanying constable certainly seemed to be taking our side. They had hoped we would pay 120 Afs., especially as a Japanese expedition had already moved on up the valley with horses costing 200 Afs. apiece per day.

We tried to establish a payment by results scheme which would entail the donkey men reaching a fixed point each day. Any half days would mean half pay. This may all seem a little mean but we thought we were paying quite enough when we expected to engage them for ten days or more, which could add up to over £60. This was big money for the villagers who would ordinarily be sitting around drinking Chay in between irrigating their fields.

We also thought that we owed it to future trips to try and keep prices down.

Timing

First Day - Hazrat-i-Sayet (road head) - Rabat (half day).

Second Day - Rabat - Sarisang Mine (¾ day).

Third Day - Sarisang - Parwana.

Fourth Day - Parwana - Iskaser (½ day).

Iskaser - Sakhi Base Camp

At Iskaser we paid the Hazrat men their dues after a sometimes vicious argument. They had not been very good. Loads would fall off the donkeys just after starting out each day. They fought each other for the lightest loads which also consumed many hours. We would arrive at streams in full spate mid-way through the afternoon after they may well have had three hours off for dinner. This meant a stop until the day's snow melt dried to a trickle the following morning. But this craftiness was met with bland indifference to their demands. In fact we had now clearly established the principle of pay by the hour which evidently took some getting used to.

We eventually shook hands as they left for Hazrat under pressure from the Iskaser men who wanted our custom.

After some re-packing we had reduced the need for donkeys to 14. Each donkey carried approximately 200 lbs. in two very large kit bags strapped to their sides.

Fourth Day - (second half) - Iskaser - village opposite Keran.

Fifth Day - Village - Via Bridge crossing - to Alakadoree Keran - Top Sakhi Hamlet. Paid off half the men at Keran.

Sixth Day - Sakhi Hamlet - Base Camp.

The Iskaser men worked well enough and after they recovered from half their number departing at Keran (where we left half the gear for Sharan Valley) they accepted our rates without too much fuss. The Alakadoree, or police post, is about two miles from the actual entrance to the Sakhi Valley. The building stands by the Munjan River where, with horses, a crossing can be made zig-zagging from shoal banks across the half mile stretch of turbulent river. A professional river wader is available.

Alakadoree - Sharan

This takes about five hours, walking hard with keen donkey men. Unless someone of the calibre of Bojohn of Keran is hired this will mean promising "baksheesh" for a fast time. Another eight hours will enable a good fast walking team to arrive at our advanced

base camp up the Sharan Valley. It is of interest to note that Ray and Mick on the return journey to Hazrat-i-Sayet recorded the following times. They were travelling light with two donkeys and two men who they left behind on the final leg of the journey.

First Day - Base Camp (Sharan) - Alakadoree.

Second Day - Alakadoree - Sarisang Mine.

Third Day - Sarisang - Hazrat-i-Sayet.

They were both shattered after this quite remarkable trek of well over 100 miles.

Anjuman - Panjshir Valleys

Whereas Ray and Mick had returned to the Northern road head to take the lorry round to Kabul (3 days) the rest of the Northern group returned along the Anjuman and Panjshir Valleys to the village of Cow Jon to await the arrival of the Southern group from Mir Samir Valley.

We hired five horses from Keran for the whole journey and they were accompanied by four men.

We intended to ride horses to Cow Jon as we were in a desperate hurry to contact the lads in the South. The fifth horse was for the carriage of our personal gear - all that we had. It should be stressed that we were travelling light, in a hurry, and wise to the horsemen's dodges to delay the journey.

First Day - (5 hours) - Keran - Munjan River - Iskaser.

Second Day - Iskaser - Anjuman Village.

Third Day - Anjuman Village - Anjuman Pass.

Fourth Day - (5 hours) - Anjuman Pass - Cow Jon.

Fifth Day - One party required one day and another, with loads, one and a half days to reach the road head at Dasht-i-Rewat.

Dasht-i-Rewat. The Southern group had found the locals at this road head familiar with tourists and mountaineers requirements for travel. Horses and donkeys could easily be obtained but at a price of 200 Afs. per horse per day. On the approach the horsemen took 2 days to reach Cow Jon.



For half a mile, the road took to the Kokcha River.



A puncture is repaired and oil levels and water checked in temperature of 120°F on the new Russian Road from Herat to Randahar.



The driver refused to be photographed in the centre of the bridge!



With promises of Baksheesh, we took a short cut by the Kokcha River!



A dawn start under supervision from Mick and Tony.



Koh-i-Bandaka (6,843 m). Photograph from the boulder strewn former lake bed showing the South Face and West Ridge.

The Sakhi Valley

Koh-i-Bandaka (CA. 22,500 ft.) - See Map IV and Diagram

The four tents of base camp were hurriedly erected in the failing light and six donkey men stumbled over the moraine clutching "baksheesh" on their way back to Iskaser. They had left two of their number to help carry loads further into the mountains.

The grassy site, by an intermittent lake, had been used previously by an expedition from Britain in 1965. It was their party that had left the grim memorial cairn to a climber who still lay frozen into a crevasse on Bandaka's South Glacier. As we went about our various base camp chores preparing to climb Bandaka it was a constant reminder not to over-reach ourselves so far from help.

The West Ridge of Bandaka was hidden by a dense shroud of mist when we awoke next morning. Madison and Crazy Horse were huddled around a crackling Juniper wood fire, their tattered garments damp with a night spent in the open.

The mist turned out to be thick cloud and was not the weather conditions we were expecting. Other visitors to the Central Hindu Kush had reported cloudless blue skies during the long Summer months. They had put this down to the distance between the mountains and the Indian Ocean. Rain bearing winds, we were told, stopped short at the Chitral. Mountains, as every English climber should know, always make their own weather and so we had come prepared for all varieties of climatic conditions.

During the morning we set off up the moraine spewing down into the valley from the South Glacier. Food boxes were heaped onto the broad back of Crazy Horse and that of the unwilling Madison and with the six Sahibs following on behind we all disappeared into the cloud, intending to set up Camp I. The cloud began to disperse as gusts of wind blew snow into our red and perspiring faces. Carrying 75 lbs. each we stumbled about the loose moraine boulders, now covered with a slippery layer of snow and on gritty ice that creaked ominously from far below.

After four hours' toil we were lying flat out in a state of deep breathing recovery! The long approach march had not been so effective as we had hoped in acclimatizing our bodies to the thin atmosphere. We were now only at 17,000 ft. and Bandaka's summit was still well over 5,000 ft. above!

Surprisingly the two porters were not at home amongst the swirling snow and as we left moraine heaps behind and the glacier identified itself with green blue ice they became more agitated. In fact they refused to go any further. They began to tremble, not so much from the cold but from a real fear of the icy world ahead. They whined out chants from the Koran, big wide eyes stared glazed ahead. Soon they were haring off down slope, back to base and presumably to their village now about 17 miles away.

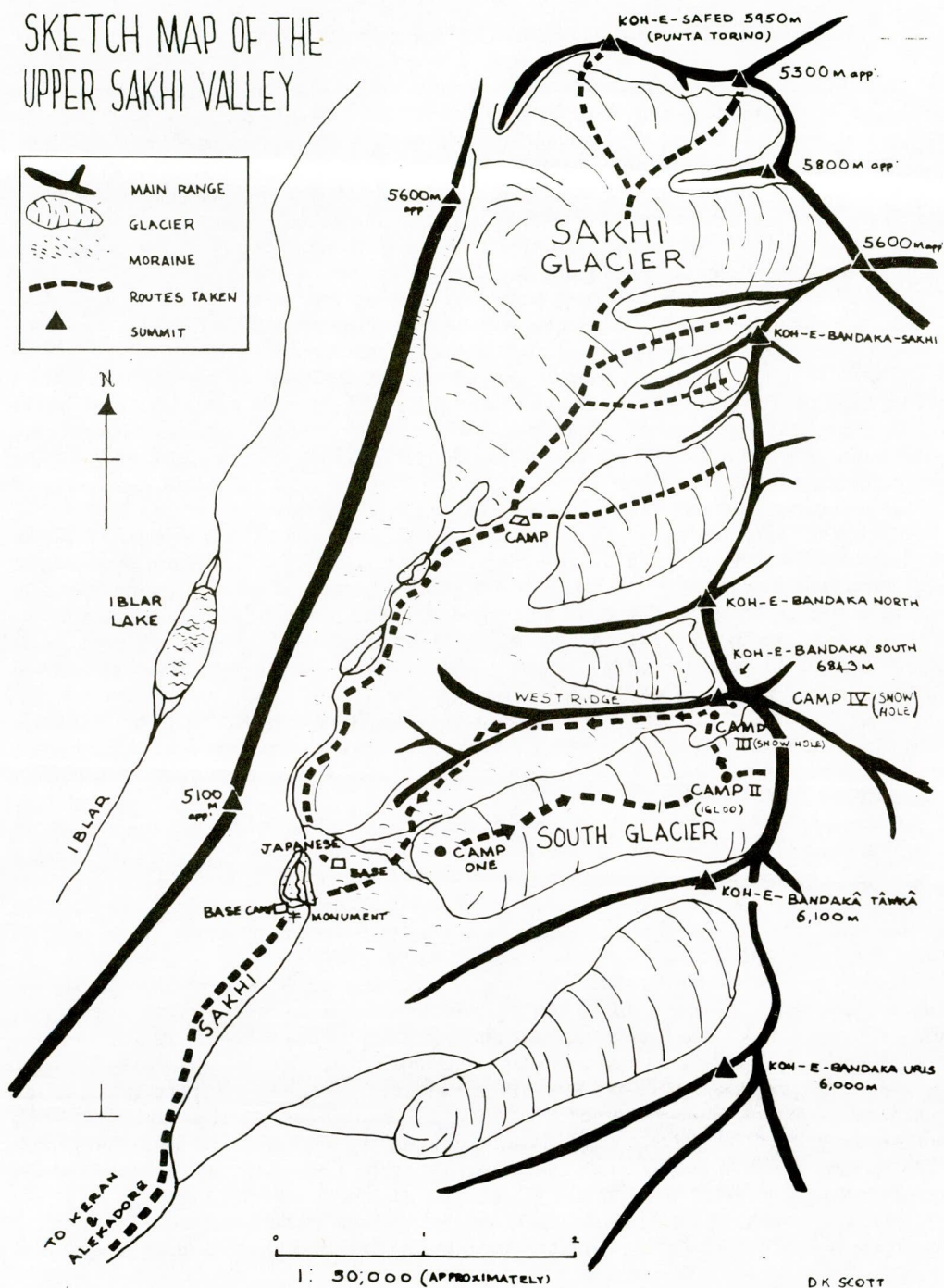
Camp I was where they dumped the food boxes. Ken and Mick went down to pay off the porters and also to await the arrival of another more experienced porter, known as Shearn. Ken and Mick were then to set up another camp at the head of the Sakhi Valley and try a number of smaller peaks to the North of Bandaka.

We hoped to have sufficient strength in the four remaining members to establish another camp below the South Face and then climb the South Face "Alpine Style" carrying all our gear and food for a continuous assault without the necessity for more build-ups. The advantages are that food is not consumed during build-up days and porters can be dispensed with. The disadvantages are of course that in bad weather there is no retreat to well stocked camps. To assist us in this we decided not to carry tents any further but to save their weight for food and extra down clothing by building igloos and digging snow caves.

We set up camp on the moraine where it flattened out on the surface of the glacier. Ray and myself reconnoitered the approaches to the West ridge the next day. We hoped to traverse Bandaka after climbing the South Face. The West ridge terminated in cliffs of dolomitic proportions but fortunately we were able to find ledges, scree slopes and gullies

Map IV

SKETCH MAP OF THE UPPER SAKHI VALLEY



that would later give us access from the West Ridge down to the moraine should we be successful on the South Face. We left cairns marking the route and returned to find Guy and Tony arriving from below with more food boxes. The next day we carted all the equipment and food about one mile up the glacier to 18,000 ft. and left it for the following day.

We were pleased to be spending time at this height to acclimatize more effectively for none of us had slept well. It is a pity that the tissues of the brain are the first to suffer the effects of altitude for we had the most terrible migraine throbbing under our skulls.

The following day dawned bright and so clear that the peaks of the Kwaja Mohammed Mountains could easily be identified over 20 miles away. We left Camp I hoping that our adaptation to the thin air had improved. We roped up on the snow covered glacier in case of hidden crevasses and soon came to the dump made the day before. We loaded the pack frames to 80 lbs. each and passed on up the glacier beneath a line of seracs and perched blocks which fortunately stayed in position.

The angle eased considerably and we were able to proceed in between gasps for air. Fortunately we all had cameras and used them frequently which was a good excuse to keep stopping. I had two cameras and if colour requirements were not a good excuse for an extended halt then monochrome photographs were - for then you can always suggest to the rest of the team that they can have copies of themselves afterwards.

We proceeded in a leisurely fashion until we came to shallow linear depressions in the snow indicating crevasses. We crossed them in safety but stopped to take up stances on encountering the crevasse which cuts right across the glacier from the South Face to the North Face of Tawiki. Down the depths of this savage slit lay the body of Robert Wilson. Being un-roped he had plummeted down un-checked. We crossed, one at a time, by way of a flimsy snow bridge and continued to force aching lungs to gulp at the cold air and push our unwilling bodies over two more hummocks on the undulating glacier before finding a site away from possible avalanches, that could easily tumble down the containing walls of our icy chasm.

As the sun was setting over the Kwaja Mohammed group we began to stamp down a large area of snow and cut out several big blocks with the bivouac shovel that had last been used to dig lorries from soft Saharan sand in temperatures of 120°F. Now we were stamping about not so much to harden the snow but to keep warm. With the loss of the sun's heat the valley winds were changing direction and we hurried to get our igloo built. It soon took shape and as the sun sank in a final array of violet light we squirmed up the tunnel entrance to find a place in the new round world of ice blocks.

Brewing was a simple matter of scraping snow from the inside which had the useful purpose of making our quarters that much wider. As brew followed brew the walls became dangerously thin and some patching up had to be performed by those that ventured out into the cold starry night, unable to savour until morning the sweet refreshing mugs of tea!

Because of the altitude sleep was again a problem and every irregularity in the cold floor of the igloo was to become a menace. After attempting to sleep for over 10 hours we left for a further reconnoiter and also to bring up supplies from the dump above Camp I. Guy and Tony again accomplished the latter taking the crevasses in their stride. Ray and myself went up to the col between Bandaka and Tawiki to look down on the peaks around the Munjan Pass and across at the Chitral covered in a blanket of black cloud but mainly to study the S.S.E. Ridge of Bandaka. It did not look particularly difficult from a technical aspect but with altitude and high winds it would not be a walk. We had told our sponsors that we were to attempt a steep face so we made a thorough search for a way up the South Face and picked out a reasonable line.

We returned and began levelling the igloo floor by chipping at the hard ice with peg hammers. We then began another forced drinking campaign to prevent dehydration of our already emaciated bodies. Sleep ended with a late start to our day - the penalty of making the bivouac too comfortable! We left the igloo at 18,800 ft. and traversed back down the glacier to the huge South Face couloir. We stood together under a large boulder at the foot of the face, adjusted our gear and prepared ourselves for the real climbing.

The clouds billowed in and spin drift was whipped up by the wind. We put on

wind-proof Aquascutum suits over duvets and the sweaty odour of unwashed flesh wafted up through the neck opening and steamed up snow goggles. Rests were frequent even at the start because the packs were too heavy, containing snow stakes, pitons, extra rope, food and bivouac bags, but also because we were feeling our way up this huge face. Not only were we feeling our way up the various rock ribs and snow couloirs but also exploring our own limitations. None of us had been higher than the height of Camp I before and now we were at 19,000 ft. and there was a further 3,500 ft. to go. We were already struggling! The snow was a hindrance as we sank into it up to our waists, but not for long. This snow had slithered down from the ice fields above which were too steep to hold it and the fierce winds assisted the snows fall.

We climbed roped together, each pair taking a turn in the lead up shallow couloirs and over rocky exits glad of sharp crampon points to give purchase on the verglas covered rocks.

After a thousand feet Tony and Guy were feeling the effects of the altitude to such an extent that every step they took was followed by gasps for air and their headaches became more severe accompanied with pangs of nausea. We had to make the terrible decision there on that icy wind-swept face at 20,000 ft. whether to retreat en mass and return as before, building up supplies to the igloo, or for Ray and myself to continue alone. The main point in favour of the first was that Tony and Guy would later be in a better position, after further acclimatization to rejoin the attempt and fulfil our intention to get all the team on top. On the other hand this would have meant an extra week back packing and so a week less in other regions.

Guy and Tony made the decision for us and gallantly offered to take down surplus gear and evacuate the igloo and tents, thus giving up their chance of reaching the summit.

Ray and myself would then continue carrying all the necessary food for three days and the minimum amount of equipment, and try to traverse down the West Ridge.

We hacked out a ledge and re-sorted our loads with numb hands and moved up clutching North wall hammers and coils, whilst Guy and Tony set off down yelling their good wishes into the wind.

We envied them their descent to lower altitudes but hoped that the nagging pains in our own heads would diminish the next day. Carrying now about 60 lbs. we concentrated on the slope in front of us, neither looking to left nor to the right but on the steep patch ahead. There was not a deal to see for the cloud clung to the mountain and the higher we climbed the thicker it became.

Route finding was now difficult and the South Face couloir narrowed, became steeper and finally terminated in the first rock step. It was 4.00 p.m. and we were shattered having climbed from 18,800 ft. to 21,500 ft. with loads that aggravated severely our poor acclimatization. We had not the strength to negotiate the rocks ahead in safety so we threw the sacs onto the icy snow, pegged them down, and began to dig a snowhole for the night.

We chipped through the crust and dug out softer snow with the shovel. Progress stopped after 4 ft. at hard black water ice which we could not chip in the confined space without lying on our backs giving short jabs with the North walls. However this was to be preferred to stamping about outside with frozen boots, feeling dizzy and in some danger of tumbling off back to the South Glacier.

The grey sky darkened as the interior took shape and we could both find a place to lie. We pushed sacs and a length of sponge under our hips, kicked loose ice chips into the entrance and snuggled into our sleeping bags. A brew of tea and a tin of ravioli later, we were asleep and in fact slept for 8 hours until woken by spin drift inching its way into sleeping bags and chilling our necks.

As Ray had prepared the evening meal it was my turn to prepare breakfast. I felt shattered even trying to sit up and my befuddled brain required some prompting to discover the gas stove and produce hot sweet tea. That was all we could manage without spewing.

At 8.30 a.m. we had fixed frozen boots and crampons and left the snow hole. We wanted to get up and off quickly. Not relishing the thought of another night on the mountain we made a determined effort, gave each other a pep talk, made a long traverse to the



Home for two days. Guy wriggles through the narrow entrance whilst Ray awaits his turn at the igloo on Bandaka's South Glacier.



"Which Way"? on Bandaka South Face Snow Couldir.



Belaying under the first rock step on
Bandaka South Face.



Doug Scott negotiating the first rock step
on Bandaka South Face.



Ray Gillies coming up the steep second rock step.



Ray belays on the second rock step in sub zero temperatures. Below lies the ice field leading up to a hanging glacier.



Ray prepares to depart from the first snow hole after a comfortable night at 21,500 ft.

right, and tried to talk ourselves out of going down; we were already gasping collapsed over axes! Above us a possible way through the rock step only ended in overhanging ice that looked dangerously insecure so we traversed diagonally up to the left over rock and ice to see what lay beyond a huge rock buttress. Turning the buttress a rock gully was seen filled with vertical snow that led for a 100 ft. to a cornice. Ray belayed as I knocked in a piton at the base of the buttress, conscious of the effect at nearly 22,000 ft. After several minutes fight for oxygen I continued alongside the rock buttress using a crack to jam my hands and a foot, whilst the other foot pressed against the vertical wall of snow. I placed another runner with fumbling movements and removed my gloves to complete the operation. For some unaccountable reason I kept them in my anorak pocket and took to the snow digging my hands in deep and banging my frozen boots, now like wooden clogs, into large bucket steps.

Ray patiently payed out the rope not knowing what I was doing, being out of sight and hearing. The problem brought new vigour to my muscles and it was with some surprise that I found my head up against the overhanging cornice and looked down at a neat set of steps dropping away and round the corner to Ray. I must have made them as if in a trance for I had no recollection of them and Ray reckoned I had taken over an hour before I tackled the cornice.

Large lumps of snow yielded to my pick as a way was cut through the moderate overhang, with the shaft embedded well back on top I wriggled and mantleshelfed on the axe. I looked around to find we were happily above the first rock step and that I was in fact sprawled at the foot of a long ice field leading to another rock step. I braced myself against a rock frozen into the ice and took in the rope through my now frozen fingers. I lay back groaning with the life returning to all my extremities.

Ray made short work of that gully that had taken me nearly 2 hours to labour over.

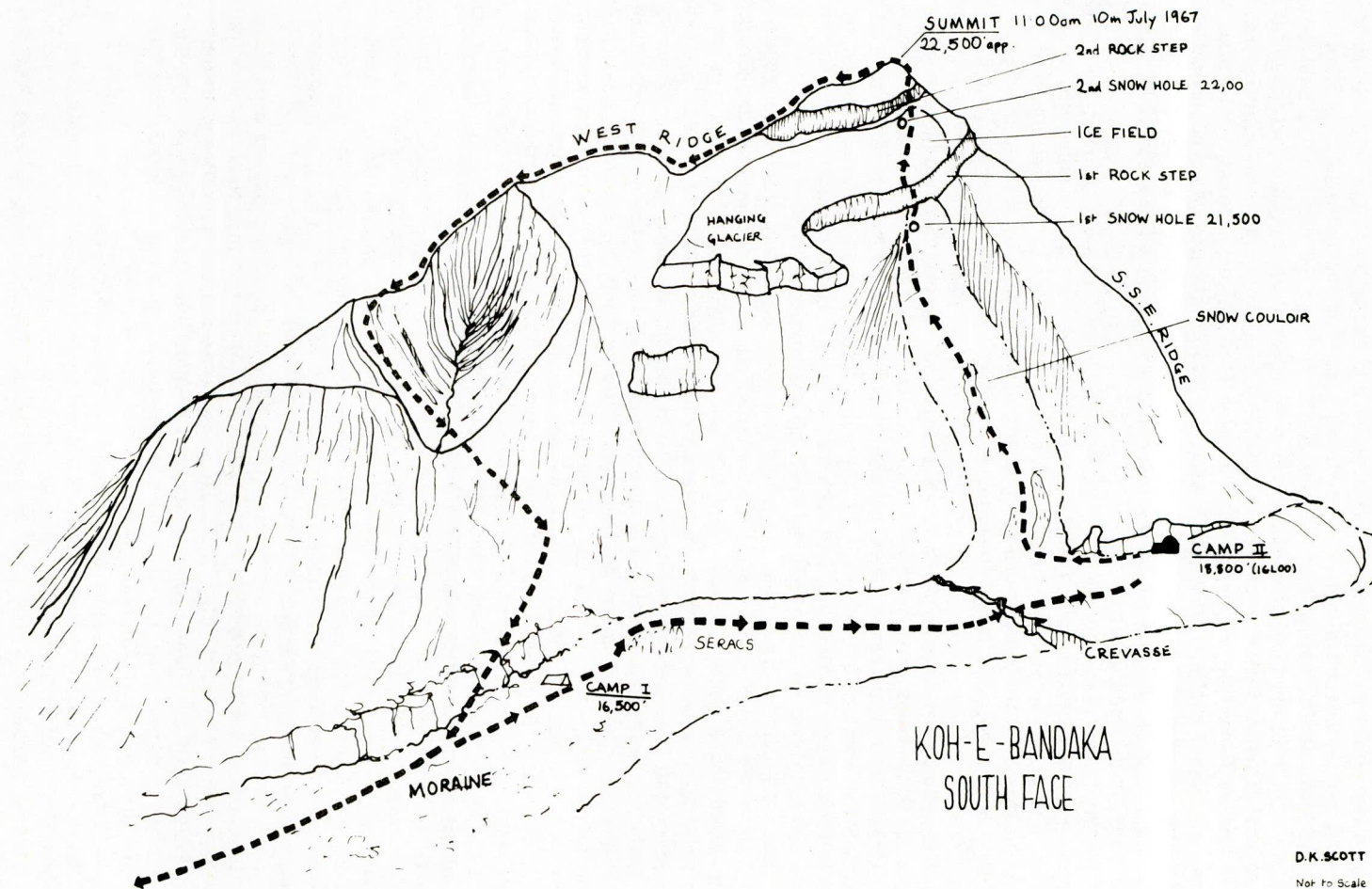
The slope ahead looked easy but it turned out to be deceptively dangerous and took an agonising 3 hours to cross. It was wind scoured ice lying at 40° but at each buffet from the wind we were sent off balance which took minutes to correct and resume our plodding gait. We set our sights about 10 ft. ahead, we dare not hope for more. We would then flop down pathetically and after some five minutes the other would take the lead. There was no real place to rest apart from assuming a crouched position over crampon points and pick. It was not pleasant to think of retreat; the rock step had put paid to that and we had already discarded our snow stakes in an effort to lesson the weight in our sacs. So if we could not abseil down vertical snow we certainly did not like to contemplate climbing down in our exhausted conditions and with the weather worsening. We kept on across the icy desert tilted now to 50 degrees as the second rock band loomed up out of the cloud, snow flakes and spin drift.

At only 3.00 p.m. we had not the strength to continue any further. We laid hands on the rock and traversed left down a trench in the drifting snow to a small stance under the overhanging rocks where we could dig another cave. This was the first reasonably flat stance we had found since leaving the first cave and in fact since starting on what then appeared to be an endless, shapeless, jumble of rock and ice for ever going upwards. We had not covered much more than 500 ft. and yet we had difficulty in rising to begin the cave's construction and ensure a safe night from the wind's exhaustive energies.

Again hard ice stopped the tunnel after a few feet and this time we were obliged to dig to the right sideways below the crust of the snow slope. We managed to find a slot for our bodies, take off frozen double boots, and snuggle into sleeping bags. Having taken off the chill we forced down ravioli and ovaltine before drawing the cords tight over our heads and retiring for fourteen hours rest.

We were now convinced that our decision to take a shovel rather than a tent had been a wise one. Apart from the weight factor we would have still had to do a lot of digging for a tent platform and snow holes do not blow away, they only fill with spin drift!

Having turned in at 5.00 p.m. we could hardly justify laying in past 7.00 a.m. so we reluctantly emerged to find everything covered in a fine powder of snow but so intensely cold had the temperature been, that even under our bags and duvets, no layer of damp caused discomfiture. I took hold of the gas stove only to feel my hand stick to it. With a



yelp I pulled it off only for it to stick to my other hand. Eventually, having cuddled it between my crutch, it was sufficiently warm to be handled and producing tea. We were now suffering from dehydration having had less than two pints of liquid over the last two days so we set about drinking three cups of sickly sweet ovaltine.

We broke open the seal to our slot and stepped out into, again, swirling snow, but fortunately the wind had dropped slightly. It was not until 10.00 a.m. that we had sorted out Ray's Crampon straps that had gradually broken up on the ascent and now consisted of leather thongs, nylon cord and tape, but still they refused to stay on his boot. After using spare laces we had them fixed in a makeshift manner. We waded through mounds of fresh wind-driven snow and gained the rocks. A vertical rock pitch which would have been pleasantly severe at lower levels, was here, covered in ice, with hands frozen and toes without much feeling either, extremely difficult and immediately tapped the few reserves we had built up over the long night and left us shattered wrecks at the top. The rock step was finally passed after five short strenuous pitches. The cloud layer would now only allow us to peer a few yards ahead.

Now we turned left (West) and trudged over soft snow passing rocks standing ghostlike in the seething mist and then there was nowhere higher to go for we were on top.

We were not rewarded by fine views because on 10th July, 1967 there were only misty glimpses of snow slopes to see, like the ones seen on Nevis or in the Cairngorms in Winter.

Our reward was not to be apparent for several more hours because we were both quite shattered and knew that the West Ridge was long and presented problems. Food was low and we had sufficient Gaz for one more hot drink.

We both shook hands knowing full well that it was an empty gesture because we had yet to receive all the mountain could offer.

It was 12.00 noon when we left the rocky cairn below the snow summit and headed into the teeth of the West wind biting and stinging our nose and cheeks. The angle of the summit dome steepened and through a fortunate gap in the cloud we found that we were now on the West Ridge. Through the window we could dimly discern the dark depths descending to the South Glacier on our left some 5,000 ft. below at that point. On our right the North West Glacier of Bandaka presented itself in the form of a four mile long steep ice slope to end 6,000 ft. below amongst a chaos of boulders. The window in the mist slammed shut with a vigorous roar of wind. There was now no excuse to stand and stare so with dwindling strength to let one foot jolt down in front of the other, we continued down.

The snow gave way to bare bluish ice as the new snow slid away to the void on both sides.

Suddenly Ray's crampon slipped off his boot. His legs shot out from under him. Down he went sliding on his back at a frantic rate, desperately trying to turn over onto his ice pick. I stood horrified waiting for the rope to tighten and pluck me off the 50° ice slope. But the pull never came, for Ray had stopped on a pile of boulders protruding from the ice some 40 ft. below.

I cramponed down to find Ray cursing his straps. We both shuddered at what might have happened and as if to add emphasis we had another view of the North West Glacier of Bandaka and the ugly moraine piled up at its snout. So we proceeded with greater caution in case either one of us made another false move.

The wind dropped to allow fluffy flakes of snow to fall. We spent most of the next few hours resting. Our thoughts turned more and more to drinking, so parched were our throats, but all the water was frozen in our bottles and we could not even force the remains of chocolate down our dried gullets. Sitting and walking ten paces, sitting and walking ten paces, was all we could manage along the now undulating ridge. We kept an eye open for cornices and in fact kept well to the right to avoid them. Gradually by 4.00 p.m. we were below the cloud ceiling and could see that the undulating ridge now held no more cornices of importance and there were only minor humps to laboriously climb over and slither down.

Our spirits rose as we lurched down on our heels digging into softer snow. The

way was obvious and safe; now we felt some of the elation one should feel on a summit! In fact as the route was not unlike the Rockefeller Ridge above Courmayeur we were actually enjoying ourselves. Breathing became noticeably easier as we rested on a flat topped gendarme commenting on our elation and the possibility of reaching the end of the ridge before dark.

We slung on our sacs and mine nearly reached the bottom on its own steam as a strap had ripped off. Only a fortunate lunge saved it and I was able to keep it on the platform.

The descent was now rapid but not always controlled, because snow fences sometimes 3 ft. deep broke up and left the boots stuck in a soft mire. These snow fences are a characteristic of the Central Hindu Kush due to the intense heat of the sun although at the time we had not seen much sunlight to say the least.

At last we reached our cairns and just as we were in total darkness stepped off the rock ledges back onto the moraine we had left five days before. We decided to sleep amongst the boulders. Sore hands, painfully frost-bitten toes, and a light snowfall did not interrupt our sleep. We left our open bivouac in that chaos of broken rock after spending some hours fastening my boot laces and packing my sac. I was now paying the penalty of climbing steep crystalline snow in bare hands at 21,500 ft. and would suffer for the next week with open sores and cut nails.

The moraine was wet and slippery and took a terrible toll on my hands and also Ray's back and bottom which were becoming increasingly blue with severe bruising.

We strode along the little vales at the bottom of the moraine where flowers struggled for a place in the rocky morainic world and then we slowly trudged across the muddy lake bed to the tents of base camp.

The others were stirring from their slumbers. Shearn, the camp "boy", was pumping life into the primus stove in an effort to give us tea. We drank a gallon of liquid each, over the next few hours trying to assuage a raging thirst. A goat was slaughtered and gobbled down whilst we made plans for the future and talked over the past week.

Ken with Mick had made an ascent of Koh-e-Safed and told of the wide gentle sakhi glaciers and beautiful peaks at the head of it.

Guy and Tony had fully recovered from the altitude sickness and had fetched most of the gear down off the mountain. They left the Camp I tent as a safety precaution for Ray and myself in view of the poor weather conditions. Guy and Mick retrieved it the same day.

The mountain was clear apart from the odd piece of sponge or discarded "Vesta" packets and we were all set to try our luck elsewhere. But during that first day back at base, eating Tony's home baked bread and Mick's chocolate cake, we had time to contemplate our first peak.

A longer period of acclimatization would have been preferable and would have helped to have made the climb more enjoyable. It would also have allowed more of us to have reached the summit. But then we had worked extremely well as a team from the initial six man carry to Camp I, to the four man build-up at the igloo, and finally Tony and Guy carrying a good way up the face.

The personal reward for Ray and myself was on the face of it small. We had had no fabulous view from the top, we had lacerated fingers and aching frost bitten toes that made sleep difficult at base camp. Yet we felt immensely satisfied that we had slept out and survived three bivouacs on the mountain in comfort and had managed to combat the altitude problem that so nearly turned us back. We thought the face had given us over 4,000 ft. of climbing. It was not as steep as the infamous North walls of the Alps but more on the lines of the Grand Paradiso, yet we were pleased that we could negotiate difficult snow and ice at that altitude. It seemed that our horizons had widened that much more through surviving the 22,500 ft. environment of rock, snow and ice.

The Upper Sakhi Valley

The Sakhi River appeared from behind jutting spurs that hid the head waters from view. We decided to have a look before departing the area so that we could complete a sketch map we were hoping to produce of the Bandaka massif, but also simply to satisfy our curiosity to have a look round those corners and over the moraine heaps that tantalisingly hid the glacial system and peaks that Ken and Mick had spoken of.



Ray traversing the West Ridge of Bandaka.



Point 5,300 m.at the head of the Saki Glacier.



Sharan Village on the Munjan River.



"Punta Torino".

Ray stayed back at base to supervise packing and to let his sore back recover. The rest of us packed up for a few days and set off in the afternoon to establish a bivouac on the terminal moraine of the Sakhi Glacier.

We crossed the lake bed and went through a steep defile of totty rocks that had crashed down from the buttresses of the West Ridge the night before. We hurried through hoping that no more boulders would be arriving and continued stumbling along until we came to another former lake bed and left by another rock strewn defile, alive with stones and boulders slipping down. Gradually it became apparent that we were on moraine covering ice. We then experienced the startling spectacle of "moraine bubble" as we called it. Melt water would build up in the ice under the grit and boulder cover, and suddenly burst out washing boulders down slope amidst a fury of foaming brown water, only to die away to a trickle after a few minutes.

After a steep climb we found the camp site that Mick and Ken had made earlier and we began to build up a wind break to protect the five of us from the icy blasts from off the glacier. Tony was soon handing out soup, Vesta meals and coffee as we settled down for the night.

The next day dawned bright and clear and we left in two groups to approach the peaks glittering from the early morning sun. They looked quite alpine, like the peaks surrounding the Upper Geant Glacier.

Ken and Tony went up towards Koh-e-Bandaka Sakhi but they retreated as Ken was unwell. They had found a way up the glacier on the South West side and also noted a reasonable route to its summit.

Guy, and myself attempted a small peak East of Koh-e-Safed. We climbed it by its E.S.E. side which consisted of a narrow steep snow arete before it merged with a wide couloir topped by a cornice. Beyond that an easy scramble up soft snow on the main ridge brought us to the top only three hours from the glacier.

All the peaks had been previously climbed but we thought the visit well worthwhile. By 3.30 p.m. we were at the bivouac. By 6.30 p.m. we were eating Ray's stew and drinking tea without sugar or milk. It was obviously time to go!

Early next morning, we departed for pastures new - Sharan Valley, some 45 miles away to the South East via the Alkadoree at Keran.

The Sharan Valley

To Sharon Valley

On the 15th July we departed base camp. Shearn, and a new arrival called Bojohn, arrived with two horses to carry down the tents and climbing equipment.

We looked round for the last time satisfied that we had managed to look into most of the corries, tread most of the glaciers and climb the highest peak and two others that stood at the head of the Sakhi Valley.

We stayed the first night at the first Sakhi Hamlet. Bojohn went on down for bread whilst we cooked the last of our food - rice and tomato soup. Next morning the villagers caught trout on Ken's line and also provided goat's milk, warm with hairs floating in the sweet liquid.

Our obvious lack of food and poverty must have created quite an impression for on the way down a youth rushed out of a small shepherd's hut with six round cakes of carrute. This turned out to be very palatable dried yoghurt. As the valley dropped down to the Munjan we became increasingly uncomfortable as the heat and humidity became more intense. Rounding a final spur we had a view directly onto the Munjan plane and the river itself, now a placid turquoise thread amongst the barren dry hills surrounding. Ken became quite excited about the good prospects of fishing the river; only two weeks before it had been brown and turbulent with snow melt, now presumably most of the Winter snows had gone.

The Sakhi Valley gradually merged with the plains ahead. At the junction stood the village of Keran and we stopped to admire its pleasant aspect and the planned landscape garden effect of its green irrigated fields, willows hanging over the streams and channels and stately poplars rising from the fields of corn and meadow grass.

We wound our way through the mud walled village to the Alakadoree where we again unshouldered our burdens. The equipment and food had been well looked after and we had a pleasant conversation with the newly appointed Assistant Police Chief. As he spoke good English, many of our queries relating to the family structure, habits and customs of the people, were answered. We were surprised to hear that snow never settled on that part of the Munjan even in winter; perhaps that accounted for the poor showing of Madison and Crazy Horse on the South Glacier.

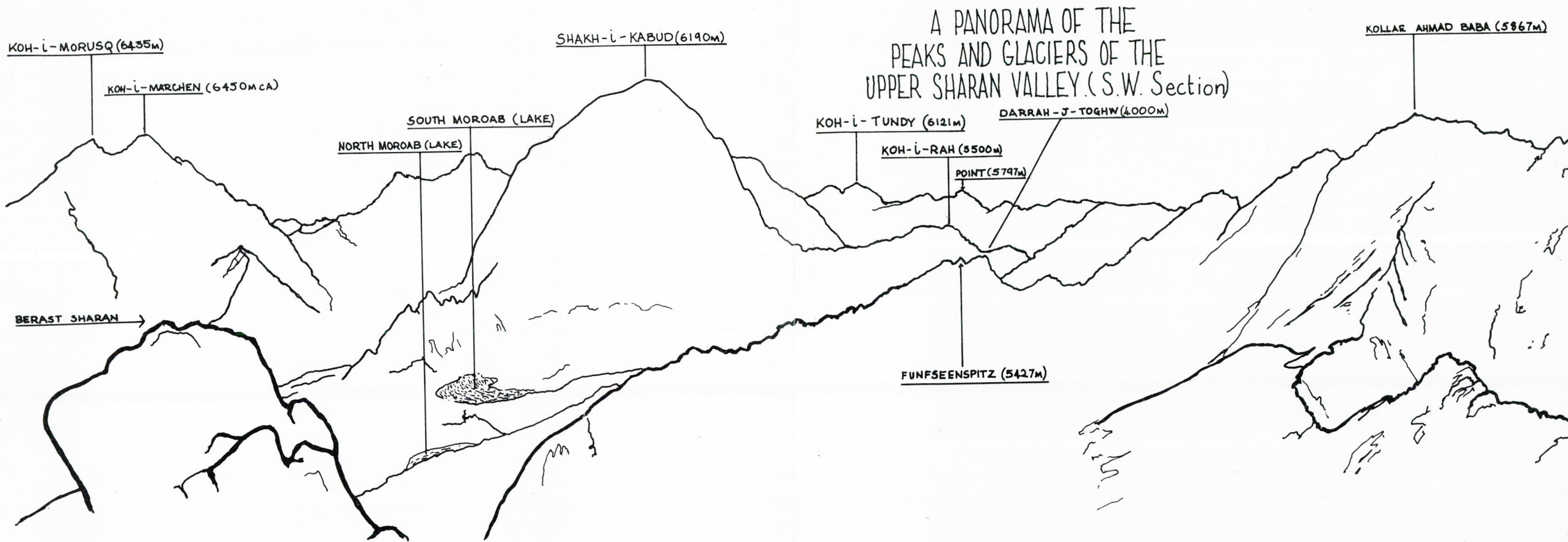
We stayed at the Police Post for two days washing and feasting on chickens, goat and chappatts. On the second day the Chief and his Constable appeared from the mud walled Station building wearing pressed suits and shiny black shoes that would not have been out of place in the City. They were to have their instant "polaroid" photographs taken! They were delighted with the results and carefully put them away in their wallets, the gifts of past expeditions to the mountains.

On the 18th July we packed two weeks' food and equipment onto Bojohn's horse and four donkeys. The plan was to visit the Sharan Valley and return to the Alakadoree from there. Ray and Mick would go down the Kokcha to the lorry and drive it round to Kabul. Guy, Tony, Ken and myself would go down the Anjuman to visit the other half of the expedition at Cow Jon after they had climbed Mir Samir.

We crossed the Pajuka Pass and descended into the Borish Valley. We crossed the Borish River just above its confluence with the Munjan and towards evening entered the village of Sharan after a hard five hour walk from the Alakadoree.

Most of what we knew of the Sharan Valley was indicated on a very accurate sketch map drawn up from a mass of data by Wolfgang Frey, over in Germany.

His map marked down several valleys that had not, apparently, been visited previously by Europeans. They all seemed accessible from the Munjan River. In this area the Munjan takes a course from the South due North until it sweeps West at its confluence with the Borish. It finally merges with the Anjuman to form the Kokcha at Keran. Between Sharan and the village of Nau, six large valleys and seven smaller ones spew out their glacial waters into the Munjan from its Eastern watershed. All but one of the peaks over

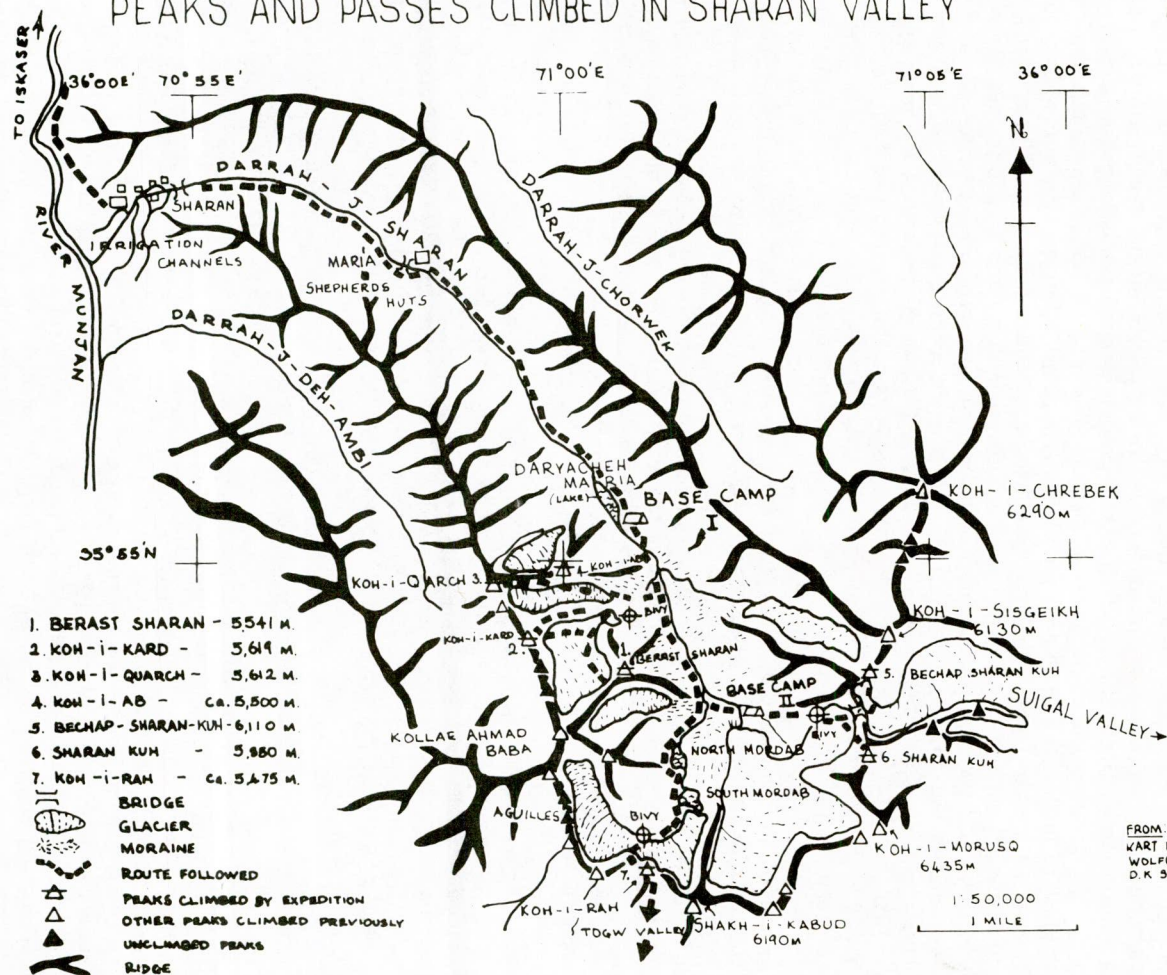


D. K. SCOTT



PEAKS AND PASSES CLIMBED IN SHARAN VALLEY

Map V



6,000 m. had been climbed according to the map, yet several valleys had not even been explored.

We had time for only one valley and it was an awkward decision to decide whether we explored a "new" valley or went up the Sharan Valley, which had been visited previously in 1961, and tackle the last 6,000 m. peak and a number of lesser peaks that remained. We settled for the latter and hoped that time might permit a quick visit to the adjacent unexplored Toghwa valley to the South.

After writing to over twenty groups that had been to the Hindu Kush previously, only Wolfgang Frey was able to give any information, and that was all contained in his little book accompanying the map. The expedition of 1961 was from Traunstein and they first climbed in the Ambi Valley claiming seven peaks between 5,500 m. and 5,900 m. After this "warm up" they crossed the divide into the Sharan Valley and climbed seven more peaks including two fine 6,000 m. peaks, Koh-i-Marchen ca. 6,400 m. and Shak-i-Kabud 6,100 m. The Scottish expedition of 1965 climbed Koh-i-Sisgeach (6,130 m.) and Koh-i-Morusq (6,435 m.) from the Saigal or Eastern side of the range. They also climbed other peaks off the Sharan divide.

Neither they nor the Germans had anything to say about the valley, the people, nor very much about the nature of the climbing.

Sharan Village

The villagers came in relays to squat on stone walls and gawk at our equipment, ourselves and our peculiar eating habits. We were now settled in a small field in which grew giant willow trees. We ordered goats, chicken and eggs. As they could be purchased at 25/-, 2/- and 2d. respectively, we thought them a good buy and they made a welcome change from dehydrated foods and trout. Before spending our first night in Sharan Village, we cooked the chicken and fed the goat. We slept in the open, still surrounded by some of the villagers.

Next morning, we were awakened by the clank of their shovels as they went about tending irrigation channels; damming some, allowing water through along others. We were already under observation at 6.00 a.m. as a score of children and old men stared intently whilst we emerged one by one half clothed from our sleeping bags. Some of them were to stay on that wall throughout the day staring open-mouthed at the six foreigners in their midst.

We were in no hurry to leave the pleasant village but unfortunately Bojohn and the donkey men had to return, under pressure from the local men, who wanted our custom in providing us with donkeys themselves.

Bojohn was the most reliable and cheerful horseman we had hired in the mountains and it was a shame to lose him. He departed with 100 Afs and the four donkey men with 80 Afs apiece. We spent the day in the village.

The trees were the most endearing feature of Sharan Village, offering shade from the hot sun that was nearly overhead at Midday. As travellers entered the village they rode between an avenue of willows and there were so many trees in the village itself that they provided almost continuous cover wherever one cared to visit. Stone walls marked off the field boundaries and a casual glance across them was reminiscent of a view across limestone Derbyshire. The white dry stone walls were not here of limestone, but of granite. We hoped that the rock had originated from the peaks we intended to climb later.

The Darrah-i-Sharan has no well marked course to the Munjan because the villagers have, from ancient times, led its waters by irrigation channels to every one of the hundred or more fields that surrounded the village. The waters sparkle and gurgle along and add to the pleasant prospect of a stay in Sharan.

The houses are cluttered together and often appear to be built one on the other. They are constructed with stone, and pats of mud mixed with straw are used as a cement between each layer of hewn rock. The roofs are of mud covered reeds and branches; a hole is left to allow the smoke from charcoal fires to escape from the interior. Most roofs are used to dry corn, fruit and tobacco or to store firewood and domestic utensils. The women tend the goats and chickens as well as numerous urchin children that all roam free along the labyrinth of narrow lanes and on the flat topped houses as well.



Tony glances back to Sisgeikh, Bechap, Sharan and Sharan Kuh from Berast Sharan.



Camp under Berast Sharan.



Tony looks out from North Mardab Lake. From left to right the peaks are Chrebek, Sisgeikh and Bechap Sharan.



Cutting through a cornice on Berast Sharan.

The women, as in the rest of the Muslim world, do most of the work. Towards evening we watched them milking cows and goats, grinding corn and preparing meals on charcoal fires. We followed them into the mill and watched them hand over grain to the miller who emptied it into a wicker basket. It was then funnelled through a hole in the granite millstone revolving, under water power, on a solid block below. The white flour was scooped up by the women and payment was made to the miller either in kind or in cash.

Some of us had seen exactly the same method used on a visit to the Cilo Dag mountains 4,000 miles away in Kurdistan. Even more remarkable was that this water mill was identical to those seen in the Atlas Mountains at the other end of the vast Muslim world, over 10,000 miles away. There were also similarities in the ordinary tasks the inhabitants of all three mountain groups performed about the villages; in the way they dressed and in their general customs and manner of treating strangers hospitably (albeit at a cost)!

This striking resemblance of property, products and people over the length of the Muslim world must surely be attributable to a basically similar mountain environment, strong all-embracing religion, and springing from the same ethnic group.

Approach March

The early morning start, next day, became a noon start when haggling was over and we set off with three donkeys, one horse and four porters up the Darrah-i-Sharan during the hottest part of the day. We reluctantly left the shade of the trees, passed the last straggling fields of beans and tobacco as we entered the valley.

Our dealings with the inhabitants were by no means at an end. An old man called across from the last field and asked Guy to accompany him up valley to see his "honhiem" and he also asked that I should go up as well, calling me "Doktah". We had all taken a turn at treating minor complaints amongst the villagers and had been flattered to be hailed as Doctors. The old man had seen our last operation, which I happened to perform, on a rotting carbuncle, giving antibiotics and applying smart dressings. No one was more surprised than us when it began to heal and in fact completely healed before we left the region!

We knew a smattering of the language and that "honhiem" meant wife. So we rushed along fancying ourselves as great white medicine-men!

After many stops and starts allowing the old man to rest we had covered over seven miles and arrived at a collection of caves and stone built hovels on the opposite side of the river. Several of the donkey men were with us as we crossed a narrow bridge and climbed onto a flat terrace above the river. We sat on our gear when an age battered face, gnarled and brown, covered in tattered multi coloured rags, shuffled across from the hovels with a wooden bowl of pure white yoghurt. The old woman retired to watch the yoghurt disappear as it was scooped up with lumps of chapattis by Guy, myself and the donkey men.

Behind were snowy peaks and rocky ridges that bore no names that the natives knew and in fact they were quite disenchanted with them. We turned to the hovels hoping that the old man's wife was in better health or at least sufficiently recovered as not to expect complicated medical treatment. But the old man had no intention of producing his wife but beckoned us into a growing circle of young shepherdesses and their children. He indicated that we could satisfy all our manly desires with them for a small sum! So much for our errand of mercy! Obviously "honhiem" had a double meaning. They were not a particularly attractive bunch especially as they had a mixture of charcoal and goats fat smeared over their faces to prevent the violent rays of the sun from burning their skin. The donkey men had waited patiently in the background but moved in where saints feared to tread and did not emerge from the hovels for several hours! By then we were all together again and ready to move off up valley.

The valley was etched out of granite; there was no mistaking the bold solid buttresses above the scree and scrub slopes of the valley floor. The Darrah-i-Sharan tumbled noisily over white speckled granite boulders that rumbled along forever making their way down slope to the Munjan and beyond.

The juniper trees were left behind, which meant another job for someone carting up

wood for the fires. The path was good for the locals had made good use of the isolated meadows amongst the boulders to pasture sheep, goats and occasionally cows and horses as well. Our pace quickened as the sun dropped below the serrated horizon but quite suddenly the roar of the river stopped as we hurried over a short step to arrive at the long Maria Lake. It was a silent streak of turquoise water mirroring the crag and snow, now red and pink, in its calm surface.

We walked along by the lapping waters and arrived at a flat grassy meadow covered in Eidelweiss at the inlet to the lake. We yelled the donkey men to hurry for the violet sky had gone a shade darker and the orange glow beyond the end of the lake grew dim. Distant ranges stood out in silhouette like cardboard cut-outs inserted one behind the other.

The donkey men and porters huddled round their bracken fires cooking chaya in evil black kettles. We erected three tents and retired for our first night at base camp.

The Upper Sharan Valley

Our first task was to survey the valley ahead and try to orientate the peaks with our map.

All around were unclimbed peaks of sparkling snow and rust weathered granite. We hurried across moraine and along turbid streams through patches of lush grass and up to the glaciers. Each twist in the valley brought its rewards as they were turned. A distant view of a slope grew into a snow peak or rock spire, hidden peaks emerged from behind shoulders of lower ground and glaciers were seen clinging to their faces and winding away before them. Such was our curiosity to see into all the hidden corries at the head of the valley that the setting sun went unnoticed until once again the peaks turned orange, red and finally pink. The long shadows enabled us to pick out buttresses and elegant ribs from what at first appeared to be blank rock walls.

We hurried back to camp stumbling in the half light of dusk and continued talking late into the night. The valley was superb for we could see over a dozen virgin peaks worth climbing, including one of over 20,000 ft. The donkey men had been paid off and only Silton remained to help carry further into the mountains.

Our second day opened with the gory job of slaughtering the goat. We were becoming increasingly affectionate to it and there was some danger that it would escape its fate through our sentimental attachments. Silton slit its throat, to the clicking of cameras, and only minutes after the poor goat had been romping about the grassy site, heart, liver and kidney were all being fried. Silton had the brains, lungs and intestines which he considered a great delicacy. Later we cut up the meat to take to an advanced camp.

That afternoon we headed off up steep moraine to a hidden corrie South West of base camp. Silton gamely carried a wicker basket full of gear up the atrocious moraine and onto the glacier in his thin leather boots. We paid him off at our chosen camp site, and made arrangements for him to bring bread up from Sharan for our return to base.

Ray had already cleared a spot for the single mountain tent and a place in front to sleep out. As we settled down for sleep, three in the tent and three outside on sponges, the nearly full moon came up from behind Koh-i-Morusq and illuminated the peaks we hoped to climb the following day.

Tony and myself set off first light and climbed a rather beautiful, isolated peak by its North Western couloir. We named it Berast Sharan and noted its height was over 18,000. We soon discovered that late starts were not on as the sun was so intensely hot around mid-day. Tony and I had, early on, cramponed up firm crusty snow, but on our way down the couloir, often 55° and over 1,000 ft. long became slush on green water ice. Pebbles then boulders began to slither down as we left it!

Ray and Ken had a successful day climbing Koh-i-Kard by the East face couloir. It was generally 35° but near the top it steepened to 70°. They were prevented from reaching another peak further along the ridge because of soft snow into which they were sinking up to their chests.

Guy and Mick climbed this peak by its N.E. ridge and descended with Ken and Ray down the couloir which was in a very sloppy condition by noon.

All three routes had been technically only P.D. but then they were all new ones

and had been excellent training climbs.

We had been so emaciated from the lack of acclimatization on Bandaka at 22,500 ft. the week before that we had eaten huge quantities of food and generally festered away our time. So this short sharp training stint was particularly welcome. Also, we were able to complete the orientation of peaks to map and make further plans to climb them.

The next day, Ray, who was suffering from his bruised back after the fall on Bandaka, and Ken, who was still groggy from flu and altitude sickness, evacuated the tents and hurriedly departed for base camp and the luxury of fresh bread.

Guy and Mick again teamed up for an isolated rock peak overlooking the Lake. Tony and myself set out for a 19,000 ft. peak due West from the rock peak.

Tony reached a col between the two peaks and belayed, continued along a rotten ridge until we could enter onto a snow ramp that led for 1,200 ft. to the top. Moving together we were on the summit after 6 hours out from camp. We named the peak Koh-i-Quarch.

Guy and Mick found the hot granite slabs pleasant to handle but were sorry to find the rough rock had chewed into their expensive double boots. Turning overhangs and jamming up cracks they reached the top and named the peak Koh-i-Ab. As both teams raced back down the scree a "moraine bubble" burst open over to the right. Gallons of stored water forced open the scree with a roar that echoed about the crags above. Boulder stones and mud hurtled into the air and avalanched downhill.

Back at base the main Sharan River, normally crystal clear, was chocolate coloured and remained so for several hours, whilst the deluge drained to a trickle.

We were now reasonably fit, well acclimatized and in a good psychological mood to climb higher peaks, through having enjoyed climbing the lower ones. Time was pressing so we left base camp with a loaded horse which Silton had "borrowed" from its pasture down valley. The horse did not make the second advanced camp site but by the time we had the tents up, Silton had carried over 220 lbs. from the horse over three miles of loose boulder to the camp in relays - a quite remarkable feat.

After a night spent wrapped up in old sweaters and donkey bags he left for Sharan to collect bread, eggs and fish if possible.

We split up to survey the area more thoroughly and to climb the 20,000 ft. peak and one adjoining it at over 19,000 ft.

We left the new camp at noon. Ray and Ken, still suffering, decided to remain behind. Ray helped carry up a large load towards our intended bivouac site but did his back no good despite a stout effort. Good timing allowed us to fashion a bivouac in the last hour of daylight below the col separating the two peaks. The plan was for Guy and Mick to tackle the 19,000 ft. peak by way of a steep rock buttress above the bivouac to reach the snow ridge above the col. Half a mile along the ridge would bring them to the summit.

Tony and myself were to attempt the 20,000 ft. peak by climbing the steep couloir to the col. At the col we would decide whether to ascend a ridge dotted with gendarmes to the summit or whether to drop down the other side onto the Upper Suigal Glacier and try a route that might lead directly to the top. We slept in sleeping bags on flat flags of granite cushioned with empty ruc sacs. Avalanches cracked down all round like frothy foam but none came anywhere near the moraine ridge upon which we were sleeping.

The corrie was not all rock and ice. Flowers, red, blue and sometimes yellow were growing up to 16,000 ft., struggling perhaps but wherever there was flat ground, surviving. The granite soon weathered into soil although the ice was not long gone; erratic boulders were left perched on the bare vacated slabs of rock and the ice continued to retreat as Winter snow could not quite compete with the Summer melt. The rocks were coloured fresh grey, aretes were sharp and soils thin because the frozen mantle had not long disappeared.

Lower down the valley the landscape had mellowed, for the granite had weathered brown, aretes were rounding into solid ridges and soils were deeper. Trees gave way to bushes and grass lower down, all gradually creeping up the valley, supporting marmots and domestic animals. Not far behind was the human population.

Now we were at the head of the valley with nothing but the dead world of ice and rock bathed in moonlight to keep us company. We were intruders beyond the frontiers of nature re-establishing itself.

Sleep came slowly and intermittently with thoughts turning over again and again the problems of the morrow.

Tony was awake first and woke us with a hot tin of ravioli and a billy of strong steaming coffee for both teams. We left sleeping bags at the bivouac covered in polythene and walked together off the moraine, onto the glacier and up it towards the couloir. Mick and Guy turned for the buttress on our right.

Tony and myself plodded up over innumerable snow fences at the lower part of the couloir. We roped up as the angle became almost vertical and we were now over 1,000 ft. above the glacier. The natural steps provided by the solid snow fences were now giving out to ice and so we cut zig-zag steps up until we could reach the rocks on the left that appeared of easier angle than those directly below the col. The rocks needed handling with care for extremes of heat and cold had quite shattered them.

We scrambled up to the col and looked down onto the Suigal Glacier. It swept away behind the flank of our mountain. The 19,000 ft. peak descended steeply in smooth snow fields and with a lower peak, further East, contained the glacier. Beyond the two unclimbed peaks, other fine mountains could be seen including the stupendous West face of a peak, named Ashival by the Scottish lads in 1965.

We decided that our objective could best be tackled from the glacier and up a gully system on its West face. At 5.30 a.m. we left the col just as the sun was touching the highest peaks and descended steeply onto the glacier. We crunched across the frozen ripples of fresh snow covering the ice underneath. An immense feeling of solitude swept over us and we sat on a boulder as the sun skimmed the glacier surface bringing life and sparkle to the scene and adding depth to the mountains above the misty valleys still in darkness. The glacier merged with the gullies and we cramponed across to them now back in the cold shade.

We were both fit, acclimatized and confident as we moved along rapidly, carrying coils of rope up the first 800 ft. of easy angled snow. The easiest line veered left but even that consisted of green incondescent ice, angled in sections, to a fearful 70°. We proceeded with more caution on crampon, axe and dagger points but this, we soon realised, was permissible in ascent but descent would be quite another problem, so we began to cut large steps in the ice belaying each other from ice screws. We were both conscious that a false move here would bring dire results. It would take over five days to reach Sharan with a severely injured person and weeks to the road head and Kabul. I paid the rope out as ice chips rained down from above and tinkled by, filling the steps that disappeared in the twisting gully below. Tony, more at home on steep Dolomitic walls, was now perfectly happy chipping at the steep ice. He cut through it with neat blows of the pick and reached a steep buttress on the left. He belayed at the bottom and I led up the warm red rock, rough to touch and safe to pull up on. Like most granite buttresses it was split by wide jamming cracks, solid corners and in between lay sweeping slabs lying on top of each other like boiler plates. It required considerable time and effort in bulky duvets and screeching crampons to climb. Beyond this buttress a narrow snow arete linked it to another steeper buttress and with several pitches of IV and V. At nearly 20,000 ft. we were both quite shattered by the time we had negotiated it. Gulping in the thin air we stopped to photograph each other and also Mick and Guy, who could be seen as two black dots making their way along the half mile snow ridge of the 19,000 ft. peak opposite. We were also now in sight of our summit ridge for beyond the stance a final steep wall of crenellated snow led up to a small cornice on the ridge.

Tony led this last section of steep climbing, broke through the cornice and belayed on the ridge. I could look down between my body and the snow to the Suigal Glacier about 3,000 ft. below, thankful for the rope as I climbed up to his stance. We plodded up the steep ridge falling away on both sides, heads lowered to the task and quite suddenly we were on the top, for the ridge had become a peak, now dropping away on all sides to other glaciers previously unseen.

We squatted down with difficulty on the steep cone of snow and gasped life back into our lungs, and rested aching muscles.

A wonderful panorama of peaks and glaciers were arranged before us. The Chitral,



Cramponing across steep ice above the Suigal Glacier. To the right lies Sharan Valley.



Solitude amongst peaks surrounding the upper Suigal Glacier. The peak on the left remains unclimbed.



Cutting steps after leaving the 70° ice pitches.



A belay on Berast Sharan.



Negotiating a rough granite buttress between ice couloirs on Bechap Sharan.



After leaving the 70° ice slope, we took to the rock and snow ribs leading to the top of Bechap Sharan Kuh.



On the summit of Bechap Sharan Kuh.



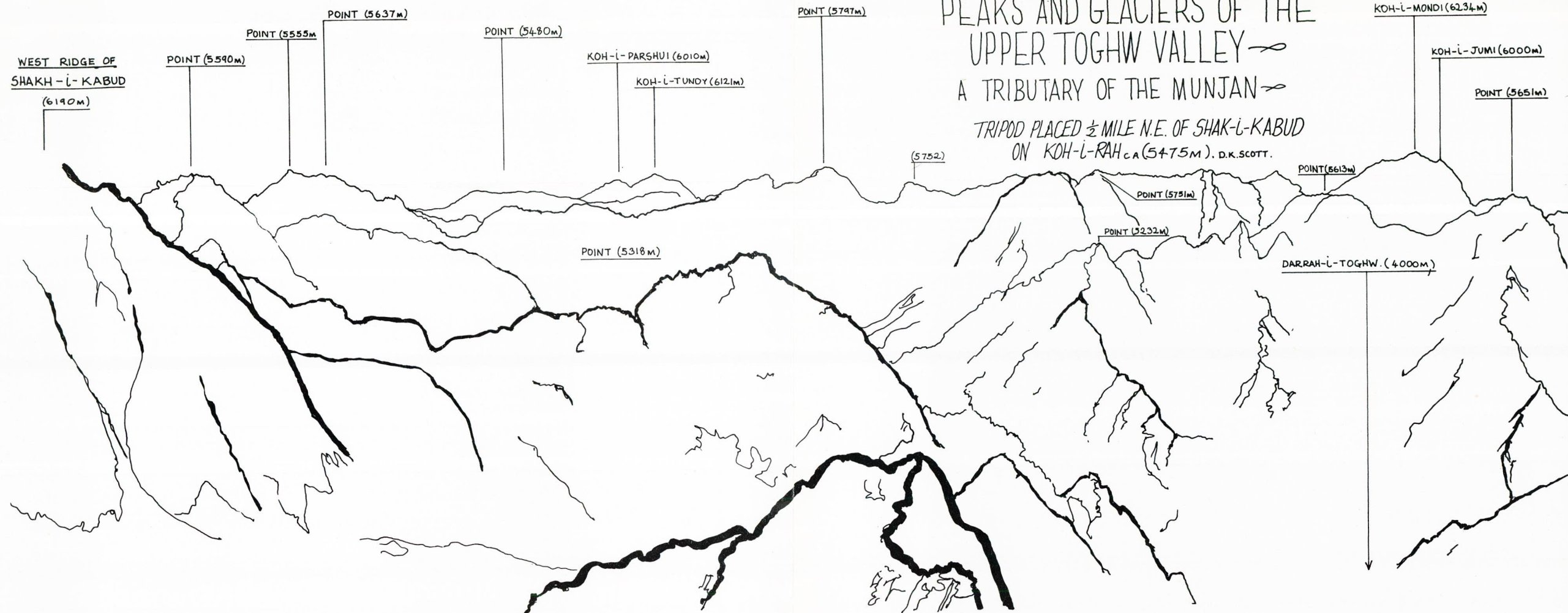
Approaching the summit of the virgin 20,000 ft. Bechap Sharan.



In the foreground Mick and Guy have just ascended the ridge to Sharan Kuh. Behind stands Koh-i-Morusq. Photograph from Bechap Sharan.



Returning to Kabul via the Anjuman.



however, was still covered in its blanket of cloud but to the North we could see the Russian Pamirs and the peaks of Noshagu and Tirich Mir in the Wakhan. Only Poles, Czechs and Germans had been granted permits to visit the Wakhan - perhaps the British will be allowed to snatch the few remaining peaks left there in the coming years. We had tried, without success, to persuade the authorities to grant permission this year.

Only a narrow shadow protected the gully from the rising sun and so we departed rapidly from the summit. We roped down the buttresses and the 70° ice pitches grateful for the commodious steps, and moved together down the lower section of the couloir. By the time we reached the Suigal Glacier we were fighting soft snow fences, often up to our waists.

We pulled over the col at 5.30 p.m. and roped down the steep rock and ice at the top before un-roping to glissade the lower section wherever the snow fences ran parallel.

At 6.30 p.m. we were back at the bivouac with Guy and Mick. They had climbed their peak with no undue mishap and in fact they were quite excited about the climbing and route finding involved on the buttress and the fine airy summit ridge. They called it Sharan Kuh and we named ours Bechap Sharan Kuh.

It was 7.30 p.m. and time to go. By dark we were down at the tents contented at having crossed for the first time a col on the main divide and climbed two of its peaks.

We had agreed to return to Kabul by 10th August where we would meet the other team. As it was now the 28th July, there was just time for a fleeting visit to the last corrie of the valley and possibly a crossing could be made into the Toghwh Valley that would make an interesting way back to Sharan.

Ray and Mick set off down with all the equipment not now needed. They were short of time as they had to return to the Alakadoree, cross the Munjan and take all the gear to the road head in the North. On the approach the whole journey had taken about ten days, but Ray and Mick hoped, by suitable encouragement, to move the gear and the donkey men a good deal faster than previously. Guy joined them to help carry the gear to the Alakadoree. He intended to wait there for Ken, Tony and myself before all four of us would continue by another route over the Anjuman Pass and back to Kabul via the South.

We climbed a small peak in the corrie and from its summit saw an easy way down to the Toghwh Valley. We also had a complete view of all the peaks and corries surrounding the valley. None of them had been even attempted, yet there was more scope in that one valley and the mountains surrounding, than all the peaks and passes of the Mount Blanc Massif put together.

It was interesting to speculate whether the hillmen of Sharan and the other villages would ever become guides and hoteliers as the Chamounarders of old had turned from farming, gathering crystals, and chamois hunting to guiding in the French Alps.

It had been difficult to find even porters, never mind villagers, willing to climb, but money can change many old customs and although the men of Sharan may seem more at home tending their fields, improved communications could bring a deluge of climbers and tourists willing to engage them at a good fee. They would not shy away indefinitely.

We took several panoramic photographs from a tripod, named the peak Koh-i-Rah and unfortunately had to return by the way up as Ken was ill with flu and altitude sickness below the col. It would have been a fine climax to the expedition to have wandered down Toghwh Valley and would have provided Wolfgang Frey and his archives with useful information on the peaks and also the botany of the valley. Ken had already collected some 200 flower specimens from the other valleys we had been in.

As always at this stage on our expedition we vowed to return but no doubt many factors would prevent that from happening for a long time to come.

It had been a memorable mountaineering visit, unfettered by any demands other than a time limit and the demands and discipline of our craft.

Mir Samir - West Face

There she was at last! As we staggered round a sharp bend in the ravine, Mir Samir appeared abruptly and uncompromisingly at the head of the valley. It looked impossibly remote, very high and quite unclimbable. There was far more snow than we expected. We hesitated, took some photographs, and then eagerly went on. The first sight of most major mountains is daunting, but we were impatient to get to grips with our main objective, after so many official delays and frustrations in Kabul.

We had left the permanent but extremely primitive and poor dwelling places of the mountain people behind us during the morning, but beneath Mir Samir on the wide grass plateaux, by the three lakes which hold the snow melt from the glaciers, we knew we should meet big herds of sheep and goats, with their hardy shepherds, some horses sent up to rest while the pasture was good, and also, perhaps, some hunters out with their incredibly old guns after the now rare ibex. We passed the last black nomad's tent among the stones, and then we were up in the interminable scree before the levelling out at the lakes.

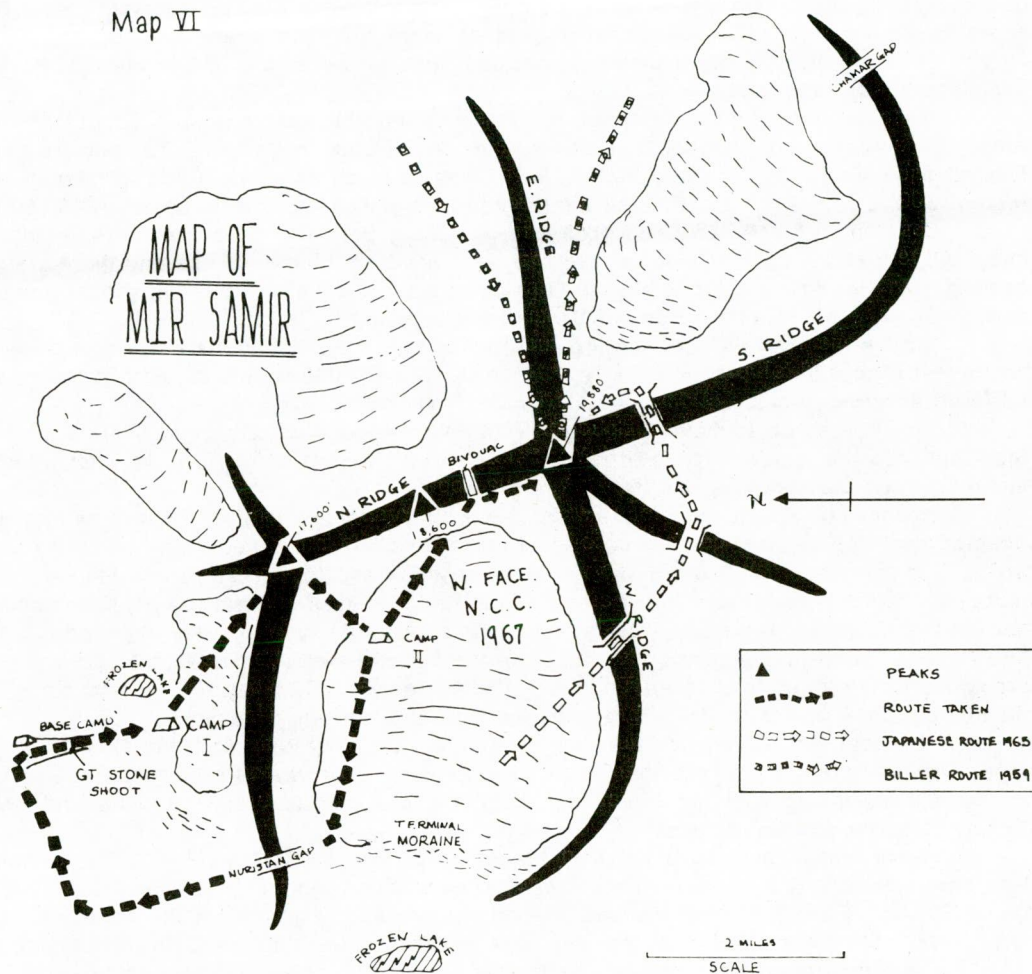
We reached Base Camp at 4.0 p.m. on the 15th July, after a fairly leisurely day's walk up this extremely beautiful valley, full of wild flowers, especially the yellow dog rose, up to 15,000 ft. It was a tremendous feeling to get the tents up at last, and start making plans for the ascent. There were only four of us in the team, so we decided to use our horsemen as porters for a day to get our gear up to Camp I at 16,000 ft., near the foot of the North glacier. After this, we would be on our own. During the evening there was a full moon and the six horsemen broke into wild chants and began dancing to the rhythm of a hand-beaten paraffin can.

We realised the difficulties of our attempt on Mir Samir before we started. We were a very small team. We would all have to climb and porter, and co-operate to the utmost to achieve success. We were still about four miles and 5,000 ft. under the summit, and as far as we could see from Base Camp, the rock was very compact. We did not know what lay beyond the top of the 2,000 ft. snow and ice gully which led up to the final ridge, a point attained by last year's British Expedition, but from which they failed to make any further progress to the summit. That we succeeded was due, in very large measure, to our team-work, which secured rapid progress and continual optimism, but we were also aided by a very fine spell of good weather. In fact, during the 21 days we were on the mountain, we were only prevented from carrying out our plans on one day, and this was because of high winds.

Brian (Henry) Palmer at 20, was the youngest member of the team, but he more than made up for his tender years with his wide experience, his supreme common-sense, and his superlative rock-climbing ability. We might very well have failed on the climb, or at least taken a great deal longer, if it hadn't been for Henry's lead of a magnificent HVS rock pitch at 18,500 ft. He had already had two seasons in the Alps, and last year was making first ascents in the Cilo Dag as a climbing leader with the Nottingham Boys Club Expedition to Kurdistan. Henry also showed remarkable skill in dealing with the natives; to him Frenchmen, Afghan tribesmen and English south of the Trent, are much the same, and it was his skilful bargaining with the horsemen that saved us many delays and a lot of money. He revealed an extremely equable temperament under stress, notably when short of cigarettes during the last week of the climb!

George Jones (Yoff) at 26, was the most widely travelled of our team. Extremely self-reliant, and very capable, he had hitch-hiked in previous years out to Persia and climbed Demadvend, and down to the Atlas to climb Toubkal. He had seen many Alpine seasons and was widely experienced. Yoff's selfless attitude to the needs of the Expedition was an example to the rest of us. If there was a big load to carry or an extra journey to make, Yoff always volunteered, and he was always the first to make a brew for everybody at the beginning or end of the day. He was a great chap to climb with, and we couldn't have had a better all-rounder in the team. He shared Henry's liking for the

Map VI



SCHEMATIC SKETCH

FROM JAPANESE REPORT

BY B. WILLIAM CHUEREST

D.K. SCOTT

occasional fog and it was a moment of shared ecstasy for them when they found a packet of 20 cigarettes that the Japanese Expedition had left on the summit in 1966. Needless to say, they were speedily removed.

"Doctor" Dick Stroud at 24, was the fourth member of our team. Dick had been with Henry in the Expedition to Kurdistan, and was a widely experienced climber and traveller. Although much of the snow and ice climbing was a new experience for him, he adapted himself remarkably quickly to the fresh techniques. Dick showed himself to be very inventive, and had periods of intense practicability. There were unforgettable moments at base camp when he produced a ginger pudding and a steak and kidney pie out of a makeshift oven. Dick carried very large loads without a hint of complaint, over the Nuristan gap, and he was always willing to do more than his share. It was thanks to Dick's efficient ministering of pills and potions, that we were able to become uninhibited hypochondriacs for a whole three weeks!

After a good night's sleep at the Base Camp, the next day was spent carrying loads up a great stone shoot and up some small snowfields to Camp I. The porters made two trips carrying loads of up to 80 lbs, but it was as much as we could do to take up one load of 50 lbs apiece. We estimated the height of our new camp site to be about 16,000 ft.

On Monday, 17th July, we took our remaining personal gear and tents, loads of about 60 lbs each, up to Camp I. We had said goodbye to the porters and the distance seemed twice as far as Sunday's had. The camp was in a small cwm, fairly near running water. We were about a mile from the start of the climbing.

Across the valley, the morning sun picked out sharply hundreds of snow-covered peaks, all higher than Mont Blanc. We had come up to 16,000 ft. too quickly and were all suffering in turns from migraine, breathlessness, and irascibility.

This forced us to make Tuesday a rest day, although we did carry some essential loads up onto the upper reaches of the North Glacier. We noticed with alarm, how slushy and dangerous the snow became in the afternoon sun.

Wednesday was a remarkable day. We actually went climbing! Henry and myself crossed over the bergschrund, and climbed up an excessively steep slope of really hard brittle ice covered with mushy snow. It was necessary to cut steps all the way, but extremely difficult to prevent the ice from fracturing. We used several ice pegs for runners and belays, and found the new Charlet ice screws particularly good. We abseiled down a 150 ft. rope which just reached over the bergschrund, and met Yoff and Dick, who had just brought up their third load to near the top of the glacier. That day for the first time, we all felt the thrill of achievement and knew the first glimmerings of success.

This set the pattern for the next few days. On Thursday Yoff and Dick took the rope a little higher up the face, but failed to make much progress up the steep, loose rock. Henry and myself carried the loads and made a cache just under the bergschrund. On Friday came the moment of truth.

Henry and myself went right up the rocks to the top of the ridge. The climbing was hard severe to VS and very loose. We arrived at the ridge and estimated our height to be 17,500 ft. From the crest we had a wonderful view, and saw Bandaka clearly for the first time. We could even see the way that we should have taken to the West Glacier!

Our wrong approach had been caused by two things. The first was sheer laziness. We had not read all our letters from people who had been there before thoroughly, and so worked out our position. Secondly, we had been given some very misleading information connected with one very good photograph we had of the North Glacier, and so we had ignored the obvious solution of slogging through the Nuristan Gap.

This was quite clearly visible from the ridge. We could also see the steep 300 ft. drop down onto the West Glacier. We had mistakenly assumed that the terrain levelled out at the top of the ridge and that there would be easy ground cutting across to the big 2,000 ft. couloir splitting the West face and going right up to the final ridge.

Henry and myself left another fixed rope in place, and abseiled down to the bergschrund. Back at camp we had a big discussion. This was disturbed by two Afghan tribesmen who came up from Koljohn for the day hunting ibex, but also came to bring us



Bill Cheverst negotiates the bergshrend below Mir Samir



Camp II under the smooth granite of Mir Samir West Face.

eight fresh eggs and collect some medicine in exchange.

Our problem was that most of the gear was already at the foot of the steep ice-slope, ready to be hauled over the ridge. We couldn't afford to annul our efforts by bringing it all back to take through the Nuristan Gap.

We established Camp II on the West glacier at about 17,000 ft., in two days. The next day, Dick went through the Nuristan Gap with a big load in 2½ hours and levelled out a camp site. Yoff, Henry and myself got all the gear up to the ridge after an epic knacker day of hauling 100 lbs. kitbags up ice and loose rock. Then on Monday, Henry and I repeated the climb removing all the ropes and pegs, lowering the gear down the other side and then abseiling down ourselves. Meanwhile, Yoff and Dick had walked round with the remaining gear, and we were re-united after a massive day's effort at Camp II, ready for the assault proper.

Looking on the bright side, the climbing had been good training and made the ascent more interesting. But we had wasted three days by not going through the Nuristan Gap in the first instance.

It was very hot on the glacier, a sort of windless vacuum which caught all the heat and reflected it back in a white glare. Yoff and Dick made yet another trip back to Camp I, while Henry and myself collected some stray gear at the foot of yesterday's ridge, and then sorted out all the climbing equipment for the next day's start at 5 a.m. When the sun went down at about 5.30 p.m., it was colder than we had experienced so far, and our new Aquascutum gear was very welcome. We had a good rest during the evening and retired early from a brilliant display of stars.

It was a good climb up the gully, never hard or dangerous, but very long, pleasantly steep, and narrowing to an impressive ten feet between huge vertical walls of rock. Dick and myself reached the top of the gully in four hours, with Yoff and Henry immediately behind. We rarely had to cut steps and there were good peg belays in the containing rock walls. We left fixed ropes on the top 450 ft. where the angle steepened, and this helped us to save a lot of time on our next ascents.

Towards the top, we found some rusty sardine tins belonging to last year's Expedition and one peg, probably witness to a dramatic abseil.

We had expected to find an easy way from the top of the gully to the final ridge; instead, there was a vertical wall of about 200 ft., which obviously led onto a steep ice field. It was immediately obvious that we would have to bivouac at the top of the gully because the climbing time from Camp II was far too great. The situation was not rosy. We were in a steep and narrow ice gully at 18,500 ft. and any shelter from overhanging rock was out of the question. Down the other side, we saw a flat boulder about 3 ft. square, lodged in the ice, about 200 ft. below the crest. We decided to dig out two shelves near this spot the next day, and then prepare ourselves for the summit assault.

It took a ridiculously short time to get back to the tents, after jettisoning most of our loads at the top of the gully and securing them to last year's peg. We all felt ill when we got down, and it was obvious that we were pushing ourselves too hard. But with the time factor ever closing in and the difficulties that lay ahead, we couldn't afford to relax.

We were at the top of the gully very early on Thursday, and it was a joy to watch Henry climb across and up the bad section in his relaxed and effortless way. Only in following his line, did one realise that the climb was easily up to HVS standard, especially one nerve-wrecking pendule. He had put in the minimum of pegs on the 150ft. pitch, which ended on a small ledge near the icefield, which obviously led to the summit ridge. Meanwhile, Yoff and Dick had levelled out two fairly good bivvy ledges and we all felt we had done a good day's work. By now, we were getting acclimatised and easily beat the previous day's record back down the gully to ovaltine and stew.

At this stage of the climb, it was impossible to rush things. The next day was spent taking nearly all our personal gear, bivvy sacs, gas stoves, and food for two days, up to the bivvy and this time it seemed a long 2,000 ft. up the gulley, even with 480 ft. of fixed rope to pull up on. Yoff and myself prussiked up the previous day's rock pitch and then climbed up steep ice and castor sugar snow and deep brittle snow fences until we

were stopped by a complete runout just 3 ft. short of the ridge. We put pegs in and left another 300 ft. of fixed rope for the morrow. It had been a thrilling moment for Yoff and myself to be virtually up on the ridge, above 19,000 ft. and above all, except the really big peaks in the Central Hindu Kush. We wondered how our friends had fared on Koh-i-Bandaka, shining clearly and looking vast, although far away.

At this critical time, the weather changed. We were ready to go up from Camp II at 5 a.m. the next morning to bivvy, but 'there was a roaring in the wind' all night and big clouds were scudding in over the Chitral. We chewed our nails in impatience for a day - there was little else to chew - most of our food was up at 19,000 ft.

On the morning of 1st August, the weather had settled and it was obviously going to be another calm and scorching day - at least down on the glacier. In the gully at 6 a.m. it was still bitterly cold and with all our remaining gear, progress seemed desperately slow.

The bivvy was a marvellous experience for all of us. Dick and myself were in one sac, with our legs dangling over 3,000 ft. of space, and Yoff and Henry were just above on a slightly more commodious stance. At least, getting ice to melt for water wasn't going to be one of our problems. It froze hard during the night, but we were warm enough in our excellent bivvy gear; the Ronicol tablets probably helped. We brewed almost continuously.

Dawn over the Central Hindu Kush was a sight out of this world. First a very slight lightening of the sky and fading of the stars, then bitter cold, then the grey silhouette of Bandaka and the lesser peaks, then pale green, then yellow, and then intense gold as the sun slipped into the new day and we were revitalised.

We were up at 5 a.m. and breakfasted on porridge and coffee. Dick and myself had a hair-raising time prussiking up the fixed ropes, frozen after the night's cold and we were on the ridge for 8 a.m. Yoff and Henry were immediately behind us.

From here we met with lots of bad snow cornices and made detours onto shattered rock ramps, but also enjoyed some delightful ridge walking reminiscent of the Forbes Arete. Just before the summit snowfield, we climbed a short, nasty VS chimney which saved a lot of detouring.

To our dismay, we first of all encountered a beautiful false summit which would have been, aesthetically, the best place to end the climb, but the real summit was only an easy 500 ft. away. There was a rock cairn at 19,800 ft. and a snow summit about 50 ft. higher.

We were united on the summit at 12.15 a.m. For a few minutes, we were too shattered to feel much apart from relief. But then the beauty of the scene, and the uplifting of our spirits in the conquering of all the obstacles that had stood between us and our present triumph, revived us all. We shook hands in speechless joy and true union.

We found notes from parties who had ascended by the normal route, and one from the Japanese who had forced the East Ridge in 1966, and we were proud to add our piece of paper to those tattered mementoes of human effort and courage.

After almost an hour of drinking in the peace and vastness of the scene, and getting most of it on photographs, we began the descent.

It took us about ten hair-raising abseils to get back to the bivouac site and by then it was 5 p.m., so it was too late to get down to Camp II. This had been our original intention. Yoff and Henry stayed on the face a little longer to remove the fixed ropes, while Dick and myself prepared a brew. We had very little food for this second bivouac, but the night soon passed, and the dawn was, if anything, more inspiring than on the previous night.

We were off early in the morning, but it was nearly midday before we got to the Camp. Everything went wrong! When we got down, we were very dehydrated and brewed for hours. It was great to lie flat and most of us slept for about fourteen hours.

On 3rd August, we took all the climbing gear back to near the first camp, in preparation for a really big day taking the tents and all the other equipment back to the base camp by the third lake of Mir Samir. Most of us carried 60 to 70 lbs loads on these descents.

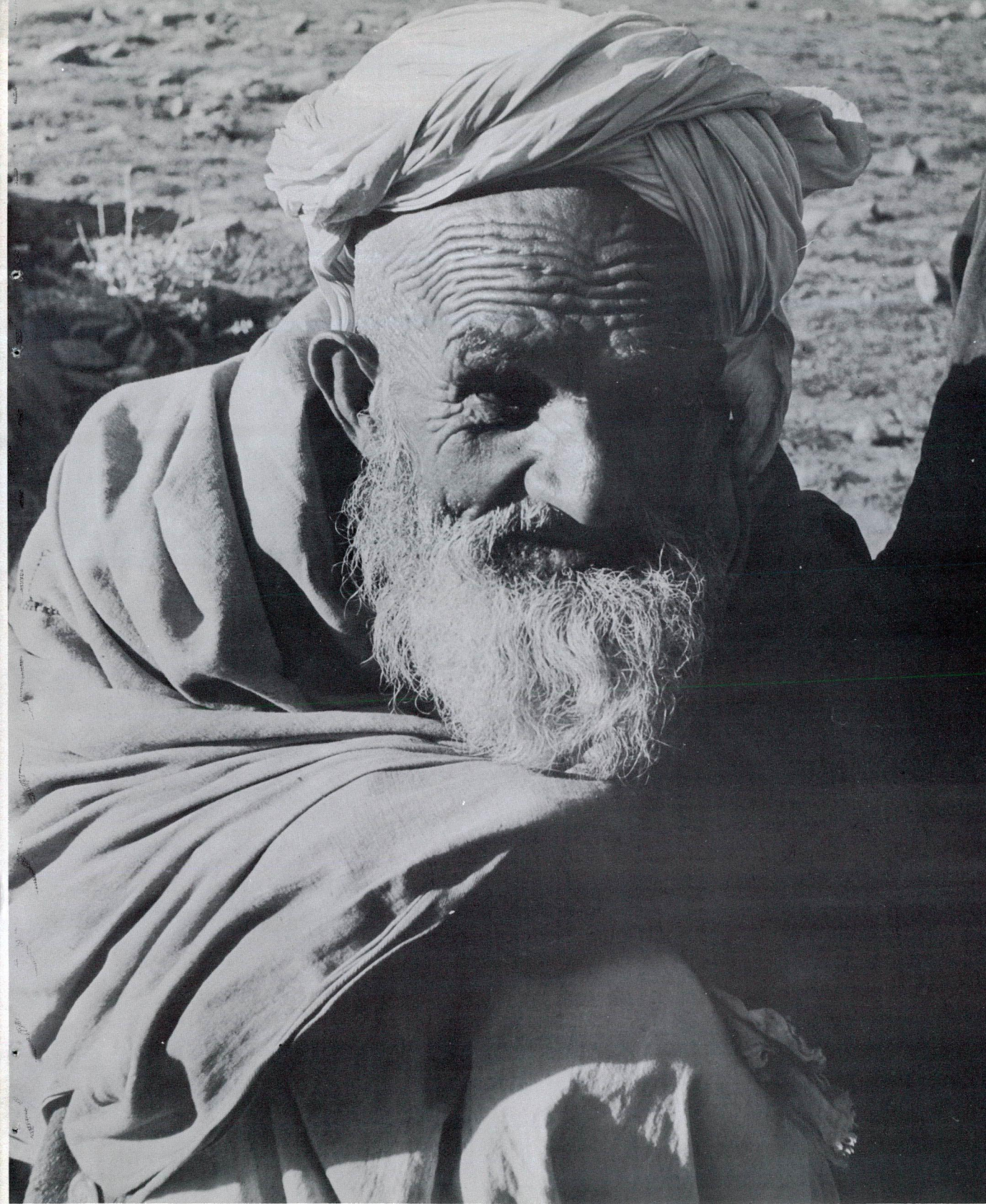
The first view of blue and yellow wild flowers after a fortnight of barren glare and



Koh Jon Village.



Nomadic shepherds encamped at the Anjuman Pass.



An old man's face lined with character from life led in the Parion Valley.



A nomadic shepherd girl.



Mr. Mullha Som with his two children.



Bread making at Koh Jon in the House of Mr. Mullha Som.



Weaving cloth at Koh Jon.



A rifle dance at Koh Jon.

frost was wonderful beyond words.

On our final departure from Camp II, we met two tribesmen from Kowjohn who came up to carry for us. Apparently a nomad settlement facing the East side, had seen our lights during both nights of our bivouacs and the word had spread with remarkable speed that we were on the way down. These two carried all the climbing gear we had dropped during the previous day, about 120 lbs each, down another 2,000 ft. to the base camp, for 5/- each, while we staggered on with 70 lbs. each.

Down at Base Camp at last, among meadows and running water, we all felt very relaxed and happy. Suddenly we saw two figures, stumbling down the Great Stone Shoot with vast loads. Two more of our horsemen friends had come up of their own accord and helped us out; they are superstitious people and were glad to see us come safely out of 'the evil place'.

It would have been silly to look a gift horse in the mouth, so the next day all four porters went up to Camp I and brought the whole lot back. This allowed us one complete and, we felt, well deserved rest day at base camp. During the day, we were asked for some shoe laces by a very poor shepherd. We replied with the usual 'Ne baksheesh' at which he brought a goat over and offered us a big billy full of milk in exchange; an interesting comment on the scarcity value of western products!

Our last evening at base camp was beautiful and most serene. We were once again at the small mountain lake, surrounded by smooth green turf, and reflecting the rock and snow ridges which descended steeply to it on all sides except the west. The sun had set but it was not cold. A tribesman had just returned with his 1870 Enfield after attempting, without success, to shoot an ibex. The horses were drinking peacefully at the water's edge. Risk was past and achievement gained, and I think we all felt sorry to have to leave this idyllic spot for the complications of Kabul, the journey home, and all the trivialities and inhibitions of our lives in over-crowded, rain-drenched England.

Route Description

From the North glacier, climb over the bergschrund at its easiest point and cut steps for 150 ft. up the steep ice slope above (T.D.) From the first boulders in the corner a fixed rope of 150 ft. just reaches to below the bergschrund. Above this point climb up loose rock for about 300 ft. to the crest of the ridge (S to MVS). Abseil down the other side for 300 ft. to the west glacier. Alternatively walk round the Nuristan Gap!

From the camp on the West glacier climb up the long snow and ice gully which joins the summit ridge between the lower peak of Mir Samir II and the summit proper. The bergschrund is easy to cross (but may vary from year to year). Towards the top the gully steepens and becomes hard ice. General standard A.D., but care needed on brittle water ice in ascent and mushy snow in descent. Pegs may be used freely in the containing walls for belays and abseil points.

From the top of the gully climb down steep snow on the other side for 100 ft. The real difficulties begin here. Climb across for about 30 ft. to the bottom of an open groove. This involves a difficult pendule. Climb up the groove for about 50 ft. and then traverse left to the foot of a steep ice-field. This pitch is about 150 ft. HVS and was led free by Brian Palmer.

From the small ledge at the end of this pitch, descend to the ice, and climb up for 150 ft. and then bear right for about 150 ft. to the crest of the final ridge. This section is about T.D.

The crest of the ridge is followed, often on bad snow, and sometimes making detours onto rock ramps bordering the ridge. After about 1,000 ft. of interesting and mixed climbing of about P.D. standard the final snowfield is gained which leads one very pleasantly and quite dramatically up to the summit.

W.V.C.

The History of Climbing on Mir Samir

1. 27.7.59 Harald Biller (leader) Bobby Biller (his wife) Theo Stoeckinger, Hans Vogel. NUERNBERGER KINDUKUSCH KUNDFAHRT 1959.
(a German expedition) (N.E. RIDGE)
2. 26.8.65 Jiro Amari (leader) Hiroyuki Maruko, Yukitoshi Sato.
HITOTSUBASCHI HINDU KISH EXPEDITION 1965
(W. RIDGE & S. FACE)
3. 19.6.66 Hans Pritschet, Philipp Albrecht, Hubert Schmid (leader)
ALLGAEUER HINDUKUSCH KUNDFAHRT 1966.
(a German expedition) (N.E. RIDGE)
4. 8.8.66 Shuichi Tani, Junichi Chiba, Nobuki Togashi, Toshitaka Chuma
(leader) CHIBA UNIVERSITH HINDU KUSH EXPEDITION 1966.
(N.E. RIDGE)

Attempts:

- 1958 Carless and Newby failed on Biller Route (see map)
A French attempt was also made around this time.
- 1965 University of Newcastle Expedition (route up West Face)
Tohoku Gakuin University Expedition (Japan).

John Fleming's Disappearance

Four days after leaving Dasht-t-Rewat our party arrived at the final camp before the crossing of the Anjuman Pass (**Tuesday, 27th June**). We unloaded the horses about 1.0 p.m. and rested for an hour or two. It was intended to start at 2.0 a.m. next day in order to get the horses over the Anjuman Pass whilst the snow was still frozen hard.

About 3.0 p.m. John Fleming decided to go for a walk in order to take photographs. He indicated that he was going on a nearby ridge, which was clearly visible from the camp site. He had been walking extremely well on the approach march and was probably keen to get fit by taking more exercise and becoming acclimatised. John was well-clad and in his rucksack he was carrying a duvet, a camera, a balaclava, a tin of fruit, some maps, a tube of Uvestat (glacier cream) and an altimeter. He was also wearing a reliable wrist-watch.

During the afternoon, we nearly all went short walks and felt little anxiety about John's decision. D. Stroud and myself went up to the snowline near the ridge which John had marked out as his intended destination, but we were not surprised to find no trace of him because the area was so vast and there were several alternative ways down. B. Palmer also went a short walk to break in his double boots, whilst G. Jones and B. Holmes stayed at the camp to prepare a meal.

At 5.30 p.m. we had a meal, expecting John any minute. At 6.30 p.m. he had not returned and we began to be seriously worried. The sun set at 7.0 p.m. and it was dark by 7.30 p.m. Moreover, it gets cold very rapidly after sunset. The horsemen went off on their horses to look for John, and D. Stroud took a torch over towards the Anjuman Pass, but he did not get as far as the river. The rest kept lights going at the camp and shouted frequently.

John did not return nor did anyone discover any trace of him. During the evening several possibilities occurred to us:-

1. He had gone a very long walk and failed to return before nightfall. Therefore, he was bivouacing somewhere and would appear in the morning, cold and hungry, but otherwise well.
2. John was lost. We thought that he had decided to look at the Anjuman Pass but had taken the wrong valley and gone further than he intended - probably in the hope of reaching the top before returning.

3. He had gone up the ridge pointed out to us, had an accident, and was unable to return, e.g. had fallen in a crevasse.
4. John might have gone right over the Anjuman Pass to the Anjuman Lake and was waiting for us there.
5. John had been waylaid and robbed by nomads.

Next morning, we were up at first light and a big search was organised on the following lines:-

1. D. Stroud, B. Holmes and two horsemen went up the ridge that was John's stated objective. There was no trace of him. During the search, the team were only partly in touch with the other search parties.
2. Mohammed John, the leader of the horsemen, took horses up the Anjuman Pass while the snow was still frozen in order to bring John back if he was injured, or on his way. He returned about 10.0 a.m. with no luck and joined party 1.
3. B. Palmer, G. Jones and myself went up a valley to the East of the Anjuman Pass, which we called "The false Anjuman Pass". Two horsemen went with us. Again there was no trace.
4. About 3.0 p.m., Mohammed John and D. Stroud decided to go over the Anjuman on foot. D. Stroud sent back a message with a shepherd saying that he thought he had seen John's footprints on the way up the Pass.

In view of this, the team decided to leave at 2.0 a.m. the next morning, with all the gear and search this area thoroughly. At this stage, we were reasonably hopeful that John was still alive, though perhaps injured, somewhere between the camp and the Anjuman Lake.

On Thursday morning, the 29th June, the remainder of the team set off very early, but from the start things went badly. To begin with D. Stroud and Mohammed John sent back a message which was received at 4.30 that there was no trace of John over the other side of the Pass. The horses returned to base camp. G. Jones, B. Palmer and myself continued walking up the Pass, where we came upon a very good imprint of John's boots, about three-quarters of the way up which showed that at this point he had **turned round** and started off back. Soon after this, word was received that D. Stroud was ill, so B. Holmes and a horseman carried on over the Pass and we returned to camp.

A new possibility now occurred to us with frightening force, one which seemed to fit all the facts.

John had crossed the Anjuman stream during the early afternoon while it was relatively shallow and easy to ford. An examination of the few footprints available, showed that he had crossed it below the very rudimentary stepping-stones which we had used, and which were in fact very easy to overlook. On returning quite late (after going as far as the Anjuman Pass) the river was in spate with snow melt, and we deduced that he had been swept away attempting to recross the river and underestimating its true force.

On the way back, G. Jones and myself searched the river, and the horsemen searched the main river below the camp. We returned to the camp, and after a discussion split into new groups to search the river.

Early in the p.m. G. Jones and a horseman discovered John's sac in a side stream of the Anjuman river. It was lodged under a boulder and still contained his camera, duvet and other small items. Further searches up and down from this spot produced nothing.

At this discovery, John was presumed drowned and further searches were made of the river.

Next morning, Friday 30th June, two horsemen went off to collect Mohammed John, D. Stroud and B. Holmes, whilst the remainder of the party re-searched the main river, without result. When D. Stroud and the others returned about 11 p.m., they brought with them a tube of glacier cream and some maps, found about 50 yards above the original location of the sac.

Grief-stricken and feeling helpless, we broke camp at 2.30 after building a cairn, placing a cross, inscribing John's name and holding prayers.

During the return march and later whilst we were delayed in Kabul, we had plenty of time to wonder how this dreadful accident had come about, and whether it could have

been prevented. The burning question was whether it was right of us to allow John to go off alone. We are now sure that we could not possibly have foreseen what happened. John was adult and extremely sensible and we were not in the sort of harsh mountaineering country where to go off on one's own was obviously inviting danger. We were still on the way to our climbing objectives. And then, of course, during his walk John changed his mind about his destination and had he not gone beyond the river, this would never have happened. It was very difficult for us, at this early stage, to realise the tremendous amount these rivers rise in the late afternoon when the June sun is rapidly melting away the lower snowfields. If we had known, we would have had a local guide show us the safest crossing of the river as we had done on every river on the way up the valley.

At this stage, I think it is only fair to criticise the newspapers, who suggested that John had gone swimming, when in fact they had full access to all the information printed here. It is also meant to quell any misguided rumours that John was robbed and killed by bandits. Except in extremely rare cases, in the very wildest areas, these figures are a western myth. These rumour-mongers should remember that all John's valuables were found intact.

After this tragedy, we very nearly abandoned our part in the Expedition. But after we had informed the local authorities and the British Embassy in Kabul, we began to see things in a different light. We felt we owed it to the expedition and to John's sincere and lasting love of the mountains to go back and attempt Mir Samir. And when we finally reached the summit, he was in all our thoughts.

W. Cheverst.

A Poem Dedicated to John Fleming

The water is a lustful lover,
spurning thanks and spewing stones;
she brings life to the wastes
spirit to the wilderness;
cross her, and she spits retribution,
however gentle your eyes;
wordlessly cruel, she grinds boulders
in a finely suspended torment
as they churn and tumble headlong,
rolling in her insatiable bed.
Even so, soundlessly and silently
he was married to the torrent.

He lived seasons; in youthful spate
he strove to go that little beyond;
and so he was welcomed to the void.
He lived deep; walking in a surge
of striding zest and smiling love;
and so he found the enduring springs.
He lived fully; but nothing passed
the thrill of riskful fingers on the holdless rock;
and so he fell into the light of grace.

He had danced lightly too long
to the lure of the oldest song
and now only a white rush of tears
and leaping broken stars
sprays the rocks with melody
to commemorate his silent wrong.

We who waited singly by the black tents
cannot visualise the final choking moment
with the violent struggling panic, the
violent haze in the mind, the cruel laughing
chuckle of the current ending in the reeds.
The worst we know is the jerking nightmare
that wakes to a vivid scream and the
curtains flapping in the breeze, or perhaps
the dentist's gag before we choke into oblivion.

We need a clear image to distill the grief.
We have the peace of horses in the evening
drinking at the water's edge while the sun
still shines on Mir Samir;
we have the yellow edge of the moon biting
sharply through the smoky tracery of a jet's
hurtling path to a labyrinth of stars;
we have the spring primula discreetly nudging
the dirty brown snout of the restless glacier;
we have the simplicity of excessive thirst
and we all have shared the comradeship
of the sac, the rope, the primus, and a ragged
dream we wear to patch the night together.
We know also a twilight world of yawning shadowy
crevasses, numbing cold, and the untrodden summit
that waits for us clear of the morning mists.
We know in the sharpness of the sunlight and the arete
the strange chiascuro of fate, the falling stone
or the tottering serac, those letters of chance
that spell chaos out of changeless beauty.

But we cannot know.
All we know is loss, the graven image,
the half-completed thought, the compelling cliché,
the soft footstep and the clutching hand.

A silver sliver of a darting trout
has spread ripples in this brooding lake.
The plough is out of joint, and a faint
circle nibbles at the waning edge of the moon.
Each receding ripple is a word in this poem
confusing the inexpressible sadness
and subtly betraying the truth of the saying
that to men who really know the unsaid speaks louder
than all the crashing cataracts of Lodore.

W. V. Cheverst.

APPENDIX

G. LEE. **Equipment Report**

1. 'Willan's Alpinist' Rucksac & Alpine zip gaiters. Karrimor Weathertight Products Ltd., Bell Street, Haslingden, Rossendale, Lancs.

We had fourteen gaiters and Rucksacs. Only one sac survived the expedition without the straps breaking. The general design of this is very poor. Too many gadgets and not enough thought put into carrying capacity. (The majority of members took a Millet bivouac model as a spare - most of which were years old and still going strong).

Fourteen pairs of zip-up 'Alpine Gaiters' were also taken. Three zips were broken overall, but these are definitely a good idea - certainly if a stronger zip was fitted.

2. 'Harlin-Leroux' Double Boots. Manufacturer Brun Badon. Supplied by Graham Tiso, 44, Rodney Street, Edinburgh 7.

We were fitted out with eleven pairs. These boots took quite a hammering, being principally a snow and ice boot. For a double boot, they were very light and warm; also very good to climb in, being close welted. One member who was unable to get 'Harlins' wore 'Joe Brown' boots. These proved to be excellent and stout, probably one of the best single boots on the market. They did let in water near the bottom of the lace flap, but this fault should soon be rectified. On the 'Harlin's', two pairs of inners ripped and one boot had a seam come unstitched.

3. Stubia, North Wall Hammers, Ice Daggers and Crampons. Stubia Werkzeugindustrie r.Gen.m.b.H. Fulmes, Tyrol, Austria.

All Stubia equipment stood the test, as always. The newly designed North Wall Hammers certainly proved their worth.

4. Windproof Anoraks and Trousers by Aquascutum, London.

Ten pairs of these were provided. All that can be said is they were "superb" in everyway.

5. 'Clog' Pitons. Clogwyn Climbing Gear, Denny Moorhouse, High Street, Diniolen, Caernarvonshire, N. Wales.

These are made for climbers by climbers. These pitons are new to the market, are very strong and well within B.S. Standards.

6. American Pitons, Roger Turner, Mountain Sports, Canning Circus, Nottingham.

We had fifty of these pitons and, as always, stood the test.

7. Nylon Sheeting, Peter Storm Waterproofs Ltd., 14, High Pavement, Nottingham.

This heavy gauge nylon was used to make our four bivouac bags.

8. Aluminium Channel, Carr's, Nottingham.

This was used as belay stakes and markers on snow and also for general camp use.

9. Paint. 'Mebon', Blackwell Road, Huthwaite, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts.

Used on lorries and markers.

10. Jumar Clamps. From Brighams (No discount)

A great asset and safe.

11. Edelwiese Ropes and General Equipment. Sporthause Witting, Innsbruck, Austria.

We had eight ropes. A nice rope to climb on, but rather stiff when wet.

12. Foam Mattress, Aeropreen Ltd., Lindsay Avenue, High Wycombe, Bucks.

Really comfortable. A must for camping and high altitude bivouacs. These saved lots of backache in the lorries and on the mountains, in snow holes.

13. 'Summit' Sleeping Bags, Blacks Duvets, Tents, Anoraks and General Camping and Climbing Equipment. Mr. Richmond, Nottingham Camp & Sports.

'Summit' sleeping bags were used more or less exclusively by nearly everyone.

We are still wondering what its like to be cold at high altitudes - What more can be said. They were excellent as were the duvets. Blacks tents again stood the test and came off best. Two Everest Ventile Anoraks were used. (Comparable with the Aquascutum).

We also used pack frames supplied by Blacks. These were indispensable for the large amount of load carrying we were doing. (Name of frame - 'Cruiser'.)

Travel Report

K. VICKERS.

A network of modern roads forming the new Asian Highway to India, is gradually being developed. Usually the new main roads are broad, well designed and have good foundation. Gravel and earth surfaces are still common and vary in quality. Pot-holes may appear on otherwise good, fast roads, and beware of changing surface levels at bridges etc. In wet weather, motoring may be difficult, when swollen rivers and streams tend to wash the surface away. Sometimes a water course may break across the road making further progress impossible, until it subsides. Also, dust can be very troublesome and it is wise to prepare for this. Some mountain roads are often snow bound during the winter months.

The following is a summary of road conditions as we found them in June and August, but they could vary considerably with the time of year, especially in the spring due to the melting of winter snows in the mountains. The best time for motoring is during the Autumn when the roads have been remade, and it is not so hot.

Istanbul - Izmit - Bolu - Ankara 295 miles

Generally a fast, well surfaced, modern road - in places dual carriageway.

Ankara - Kirsehir - Kayseri - Sivas - Zara - Susehri - Erzincan - Erzurum 710 miles

A wide, fast gravel road to Sivas, with sections of tar surface. Sivas to Erzincan, some sections are newly constructed gravel roads, others over low mountain passes, are narrow, winding and poor. Erzincan to Erzurum, good tarmac in places with reconstruction work in progress.

Erzurum - Agri - Iranian Frontier (Bazorgan) 205 miles

A tarmac road to Tahir followed by good gravel, reconstruction work in progress - not difficult.

Iranian Frontier - Tabriz 192 miles

Customs closed at night, it is advisable to cross in the late afternoon if possible, as there could be delays first thing in the morning.

Mostly a poor gravel surface and corrugations, often winding, narrow and hilly. Many stretches are liable to flooding, but reconstruction work is being carried out at a fast pace. The approaches to Tabriz are good tarmac.

Tabriz - Karadj - Tehran 406 miles

Generally a gravel and bitumen road, passing through hilly country - reconstruction work in progress. Take the Guduk Pass road at Karadj 28 miles before Tehran.

Tehran - (Karadj) - Caspian Sea - Gorgan - Meshed 642 miles

Good surfaced road to Gorgan via the Guduk Pass 6,620 ft. over the Elburz Mountains and down to the Caspian Sea. A welcome change from the desert. A long, easy climb up and down from the pass - to avoid overheating, it might be best to take it at night. Gorgan to Meshed - winding gravel road, until one leaves the mountains the good gravel with sections of tarmac. The approaches to Meshed are good tarmac highway. Inadvisable in winter.

Meshed - Taxebat - Afghanistan Frontier 152 miles

A good tarmac road to the turn off near Sangbarst, then sand and gravel with corrugations, concealed gullies - a slow road, slowly deteriorating towards the frontier. Iranian customs etc. in Taxebat, Afghan customs 12 miles on through no mans land at Islam Quala. Do not pass through Taxebat until cleared by Customs, Police, and Immigration - control closed at night.

Islam Quala - Herat 83 miles

A poor road at first, then wide gravel. A new surfaced road built by the Americans will be finished by 1968.

Herat - Kandahar 350 miles

Toll road payable near Dilaram (cheap). A good newly constructed road with Russian assistance. Kandahar is very hot during the summer months and it would be best to cover the last section at night.

Kandahar - Ghazni - Kabul

318 miles

Toll road. A good newly constructed road, with American assistance. A climb up to 9,000 ft. after Ghazni, then a gradual descent to Kabul.

Kabul - Charikar - Salang Tunnel - Kunduz

217 miles

Good new road to Kunduz through the Salang Tunnel. Could be difficult in spring.

Kunduz - Faizabad

150 miles

Rough gravel with a number of difficult fords - not recommended for vehicles without four wheel drive. Possibly impossible before the end of June, due to the level of the Kokcha river. A road could not get much worse than this, it could be improved in the future. Beware you do not run out of petrol due to the heavy going and few petrol stations. Petrol only available at Faizabad from 40 gallon barrels.

Faizabad - Jurm - Hasrat. Road Head.

approx. 60 miles.

A narrow winding track following the river, steep in places but no worse than the Kunduz - Faizabad section. It seems possible that the track may be made to take vehicles some way further up the valley to the Lapis mine at Sarisang. No petrol at Jurm and Hazrat, so allow for the return journey when taking on petrol at Faizabad. Very slow going.

Food Report

A. WATTS.

An expedition such as ours, would be a sad one indeed without the correct supply of foodstuffs. This was one of the major problems to be faced as well as actually obtaining it, for it would be impossible to buy the required amount from Wholesalers as the cost would be crippling to the limited funds an expedition usually has to run on.

The main problems are to obtain food which is both light in weight and is not too bulky. Also, one must take into consideration morale, which of course must be kept high. This can be helped a great deal by variety, whilst maintaining a high food value.

I first set about these problems by working out exactly how much food would be needed per man per day, both en route to Afghanistan, and in the mountains. I then endeavoured to find the best way to pack it. The journey out and back is not too great a problem for packing, but a lot of thought is necessary for rendering food conveniently portable on donkeys.

To solve this problem, I used high altitude packs which were a great success in the mountains. These packs were designed to give us as much variety and as much good food value as was possible. These also had to be light enough and small enough to carry in or on a rucksack or rucksack frame. With the object of making them easy to carry to a high camp or to a bivouac, the size of the boxes were 15" x 10" x 6" made of cardboard, which was not the ideal material. They would probably have been better in a thin wood or aluminium. This, of course would prove very expensive.

The contents of one High Altitude Pack is as follows:-

Weight per pack 12½ lbs.

Meat	8oz.	Egg Powder	4oz.
Beans	4oz.	Potato Powder	6oz.
Biscuits	1 Packet (½ lb.)	Vesta Meats	(1 serves 2 Pack)
Dehydrated Veg.	2oz.	Porridge	8oz.
Soup	3 Packets	Chocolate or Fudge	½ lb.
Sugar	1½ lbs.	Boiled Sweets	8oz.
Jam, Marmalade or Honey	½ lb.	Candles	1
Coffee	2oz.	Kleenex Tissues	½ large pack
Ovaltine	2oz.	Lemonade Powder	4oz.
Salt	1oz.	Glucose Sugar	4oz.
		Dehydrated Peas	1 Packet

Each individual item was wrapped in a polythene bag and sealed, which is an essential precaution against damp and dust.

These packs numbered 120 in all and making them up was a very tedious job, but well worth the trouble later. Packing the boxes themselves proved a very simple matter, as they served for a very good "levelled" floor for the lorries, on which the lads could sleep whilst travelling.

All the food to be consumed on the journey was kept either loose in the back of the lorries, in the well, or in tea chests. When we arrived at the road heads, however, we packed all the High Altitude packs into large donkey bags and loaded the donkeys with a bag on each side. I am still amazed at the way the poor little beasts managed with such a load (about 220 lbs.)

It was a great relief when we met up once more with the Mir Samir team to find they were not reduced to a shadow through malnutrition.

There were, of course, a few criticisms - a lot of them unprintable. We often seemed to end up at a high camp with too much egg powder and dehydrated vegetable. Dehydrated food proved a bit of a problem at high altitude as it was often very difficult to cook. Perhaps 2lbs. instead of 1½lbs. of Sugar ought to have been put into the packs.

Comments

The popularity of the various Vesta meals was debatable, but the Chow Mein seemed the most popular.

Biscuits did not last long especially the Plant Milk variety, which were excellent. We had little plastic bottles of 'Gales' honey, none of these survived the donkey journey, but in all fairness they were perhaps not designed for such a rigorous trip.

Coffee - 'Ismail' - the best coffee by far of all the brands we took. Maxwell House and Nescafe were, of course, up to their usual good standard, being also very practical.

Egg Powder - 'Londeg' - supplied by S. Behr and Mathew, was very well liked and after a little experience of cooking it, found it to be an excellent breakfast meal.

Potato Powder - 'Yeomans' - very good even at high altitude.

Chocolate and Fudge - 'Planmil' - this chocolate was very popular though it did not keep very well. The fudge was highly coveted by one and all.

Lemonade Powder - superbly refreshing, but not enough.

Surprise Dehydrated Peas - very good, but not easy to cook at high altitude.

Symington Soups - not very popular, but a popular entree to the evening - often with the gluttonous delight called stew.

Acknowledgments

Societies

The Mount Everest Foundation
Royal Geographical Society
Automobile Association
Royal Insurance Company
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Westminster Bank, Thurland Street
Trustees Savings Bank, Trinity Square
1st Nottm. Boy Scouts Association
Nottingham Climbers' Club

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S. Bowes, Esq.
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Photographic

A.E.I. Lamp and Lighting Co. Ltd.
Atlas Lighting Ltd.
Boots the Chemist (Manager Mr. Walker)
(black & white film)

Kodak Ltd. (all colour film)
Mayfair Photographic Ltd.
Polaroid (U.K.) Ltd.

General Equipment

Anglo Continental Clock Co. Ltd.
Aquascutum Ltd.
B.D.B. Engineers (Luton) Ltd.
B.X.L. Cascelloid Division
Bahco Condrup Ltd.
Bairnswear Ltd.
British Visqueen Ltd.
Bryant & May Ltd.
Carr & Co.
E. K. Cole Ltd.
Cooper & Roe Ltd.
Christopher Day Ltd.
Dunlop Footwear Ltd.
Ekco Plastics Ltd.
Enterprise Plastics Ltd.
Hall & Son Ltd.
George Hart Advertising Ltd.
Helly Hansen U.K. Ltd.

Wm. Hollins & Co. Ltd.
Wm. H. Hooton & Co. Ltd.
Ingersol Ltd.
Kimberley Clark Ltd.
Kiwi Polish Co. Ltd.
Knitted Products Ltd.
Lacrinoid Products Ltd.
J. Langdon & Sons Ltd.
Marathon Knitwear Ltd.
J. John Masters & Co. Ltd.
Meridian Ltd.
The Metal Box Co. Ltd.
Graham Miller & Co. Ltd.
Pan Books Ltd.
Primus Trading
Procter & Gamble Ltd.
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General Equipment (Continued)

J. J. Silber Ltd.
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The Star Knitting Co. Ltd.
Sternol Limited
Thermos Ltd.
Tilley Lamp Co. Ltd.
Towles Ltd.
Tupperware Co. Ltd.

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Vidor Ltd.
Wilmot Breedon Ltd.
Wolsey Ltd.
Wood Harris & Co. Ltd.
F. W. Woolworth & Co. Ltd.

Food Firms

The following firms gave the expedition over £800 worth of food. Without this help, we would not have been able to make the Hindu Kush. To them we offer our sincere thanks.

George Aylwin & Son
Batchelors Catering Supplies Ltd.
British Cocoa Mills (Hull) Ltd.
British Egg Marketing Board
British Sugar Corporation Ltd.
Thomas Bell & Son Ltd.
A. Bellamy & Co. Ltd.
S. Behr & Mathew (Sales) Ltd.
Bowyers (Wiltshire) Ltd.
Cavenham Foods Ltd.
Coca-Cola Northern Bottlers Ltd.
Nottingham Co-operative Society Ltd.
Cravens of York
Carr's of Carlisle Ltd.
Donald Cook & Son Ltd.
Cerebos Foods Ltd.
Crown Yeast Company Ltd.
The Coca-Cola Export Co.
Clayton Bros.
Dekama Foods Ltd.
Dornay Foods
Elkes Biscuits Ltd.
Louis C. Edwards & Sons (Mfg.) Ltd.
Jos. Farrow & Co. Ltd.
Fisons Foods Ltd.
Fletchers Sauce Co. Ltd.
A. C. Fincken & Co. Ltd.
Gold Seal Confectionery Co. Ltd.
H. J. Green & Co. Ltd.
Glenville's Ltd.
C. & T. Harris (Calne) Ltd.
H.P. Sauce Ltd.
Harrisons (London) Ltd.
H. J. Heinz Co. Ltd.
Hickling Lang & Co.
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Kavli Ltd.
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Howard Lloyd & Co. Ltd.
Long Clawson Dairy Ltd.
Marela Ltd.
Wm. Moorhouse & Sons
Morning Foods Ltd.
Mapletons Foods Ltd.
Norfolk Canners Ltd.
Oxo Ltd.
Pearce Duff & Co. Ltd.
S. Parkinson & Son (Doncaster) Ltd.
Plantmilk Ltd.
Potato Marketing Board
L. L. Pritchitt & Co. Ltd.
Quaker Oats Ltd.
Suchard Chocolate Ltd.
Sutherlands Foods
A. L. Simpkin & Co. Ltd.
C. Shippam Ltd.
Savoy Health Food Stores
Symingtons of Edinburgh
Turner & Son Ltd.
Tetley Tea Co. Ltd.
Tate & Lyle Refiners Ltd.
J. W. Thornton Ltd.
Wm. Teacher & Sons Ltd.
Trufood Ltd.
Tanqueray Gordon Co. Ltd.
The United Yeast Co. Ltd.
Unilever Export Ltd.
Unigate Ltd.
Vitamins Ltd.
A. Wander Ltd.
Welch & Sons Ltd.
The Wrigley Co. Ltd.
Walkers Crisps Ltd.
Whitbread & Co. Ltd.

Medical

We are very grateful to Dr. A. W. S. Webster for his assistance with the choice of drugs for the medical chests and his guidance with other matters concerned with the health

of the expedition. We are also indebted to Dr. J. B. Foote for his assistance with vaccination, and Dr. Hamish Nicol for his help with a variety of drugs.

We record our thanks also to the firms listed below, that gave the expedition all the drugs and equipment required to treat all complaints, ranging from frost bite to sunburn, constipation to dysentery, and numerous others.

Abbot Laboratories Ltd.
The Bayer Products Co.
Evans Medical Ltd.
I.C.I. Pharmaceuticals Division
Johnson & Johnson (G.B.) Ltd.
Maws Pharmacy Supplies Limited

Parke Davis & Co.
The Pfizer Group
Roche Products Ltd.
Smith Kline & French Laboratories Ltd.
Ward Blenkinsop & Co. Ltd.

Brief Medical Report

General: Through the generosity of the drug firms, it is possible to have too much medical equipment. By experience this can and should be pruned down to the bare essentials unless the expedition is to be made unwieldy.

On the other hand, certain items could be usefully included for treatment of the donkey men, porters and villagers. It is a sure way of being received hospitably by the village people. One should not, however, spend so much time on handing out aspirins and throat lozenges and neglect the expedition members, who have so much further to travel and are the least resistant to local stomach infection etc.

On the question of stomach upsets, particularly the virulent dysentery bugs, it is essential that the relevant pills are taken regularly; that all members of the party show a sense of responsibility in personal cleanliness etc., and the M.O. sees that this is done. Dysentery causes a terrible weakness to envelop the sufferer, and some help and sympathy is always welcome.

Accessibility to the medical chest is of prime importance. A small container - biscuit tin - with all the antibiotic ointments for scalds, insect bites, sunburn, tablets for throat, stomach, travel sickness and diarrhoea should always be available and so should the tin of pills to prevent the dysentery.

These are a few very general points that stand out and are all common sense anyway. A detailed account and a first class reference to all problems likely to be met on an expedition of this kind, can be found in "Exploration Medicine" by O. G. Edholm and A. L. Bacharak published by John Wright & Sons Ltd.

Financial Position

The expedition members thank the following trusts, firms and individuals for their generous donations towards the costs of the expedition.

A complete financial statement will be sent to them all, separately from this report, as certain monies have yet to be collected and paid.

Mount Everest Foundation	£600	0	0
Ashworth Kirk Ltd.	£5	0	0
Rubery Owen	£7	7	0
Sir Stuart Goodwin	£35	0	0
Chromo Works Ltd.	£2	2	0
John Player & Sons	£20	0	0
Vic Hallam	£10	10	0
Basford Dyers	£2	2	0
Becorit (G.B.) Ltd.	£5	0	0
Bartons	£2	2	0
Cupal Ltd.	£3	3	0
Meadow Foundry Co. Ltd.	£2	2	0
Harris & Sheldon	£5	5	0
Southwell Scouts	£1	0	0
Others	£4	2	0
Charnos Ltd.	£5	0	0
Jones and Shipman Ltd.	£15	0	0
L. Tort, Esq.	£1	1	0
Bowline Climbing Club	£5	0	0
R. C. Bellamy, Esq.	£1	0	0
H. T. H. Peck, Esq.	£5	5	0
Leicester Ass. of Mountaineers	£5	5	0
Rediffusion Ltd.	£4	0	0
Cave and Crag C.C.	£5	5	0
K. V. Bryant, Esq.	£3	3	0
C. R. Keene, Esq.	£10	0	0
H. P. Follows, Esq.	£1	1	0
R. A. St. Martin	£2	2	0
Reading University M/C	£5	0	0
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W. H. Smith Ltd.	£10	0	0
G. Tarrat Ltd.	£5	5	0
J. Pearson, Esq.		10	0
British Home Stores Ltd.	£1	1	0
Oread Mt. Club	£5	0	0
Chester Mountaineering Club	£3	3	0
Oxford Mountaineering Club	£5	5	0
L. Toft, Esq.	£1	1	0

The Transitional Effects of Modernisation on the Afghan Society

A GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY by R. HOLMES F.R.G.S.

Who are the Afghans? The Afghans are for the most part, of original Indo-European stock, though other races, especially Mongolians, are well represented. The Pushtuns, who account for about 50% of the total population are of Aryan origin. Next come the Tajiks who, like the Pushtuns, are descendants of the original Aryan stock, settled in the country during the days of general migration. They form 18 - 20% of the entire population. The rest are Hazaras, Turkomen, Uzbeks, Kilibashes, Kirghiz and Arabs. The official population estimate is over fifteen million, but with the absence of any complete census and the sparsely settled nature of much of the country, ten to twelve million is thought to be a more realistic figure.

For centuries, Afghanistan has remained to a large extent isolated from the effects of world change. It has been free of the transforming experience of colonial rule and administration, excluding foreign influence. With the general development of the nation, the ancient Afghan Social Order is in transition. Transition from what to what?

The traditional Social structure

Until recently, Afghan society has been organised along vertical rather than horizontal lines. That is affiliation was determined by the tribe clan or family of the individual rather than by economic or ideological interests.

Afghanistan, often called "The Crossroads of Asia" has had its population built up over the centuries, from numerous sources, providing a complex of races. The principal social groups are determined by the following ethnic differentiation:-

Pushtuns	4 - 5 million
Tajiks	2 - 3 million
Uzbeks	1 million
Hazaras	1 million
Turkomen	½ million
Others	1½ million
Total	10 - 12 million

It can be seen that the Pushtuns were and still are the dominant cultural group. This is reflected in the fact that the government is preoccupied with Pushtun problems, and there are in fact only two non Pushtuns in the Cabinet.

These factors have tended to impart to the Afghan society a distinctively Pushtun flavour. This is strengthened by the fact that many of the other ethnic groups are isolated in remote parts of the country and exist virtually as autonomous units, having no influence outside their own tribal sphere. Even today, communication is not sufficiently good to prevent this isolation, and the advance of the capital, Kabul, and other major towns, is having no effect on these groups. The Nuristanis in the Hindu Kush Mountains, for example, are living as they were several centuries ago, and remain a very closely knit community organised totally along vertical lines. The Nuristanis today are the epitome of the past social organisation of the other ethnic groups.

The Developing Society

As could be expected of a society in a transitional state, many of the present day social groups are a mixture of old and new affiliations.

Although there is a discernable trend towards the formation of economic classes, such as professional, skilled manual, unskilled manual etc., individuals within any given class often find loyalties being pulled because of a strong attachment to the family or tribe. The trend is now away from family affiliations, so that an artisans interest is becoming more identified in the problems and interest of other artisans in the same trade.

This process is just getting under way in Afghanistan, and then only in the major towns, with good communications, such as Herat Kandahar and Kabul. The horizontal class divisions have not yet had time to conform to a rigid pattern, as they are still emerging and becoming more definite, but for our purposes, certain horizontal social groups can be defined. These are set out in the following table:-

Horizontal Social Groups

Group	Estimated Number	Members	Ethnic or Vertical Groups
1. Elite	2 - 3 thou.	King, Royal Family, top Govt. officials, wealthy merchants, large land owners tribal chiefs.	Pushtuns
2. Intelligensia	8 - 10 thou.	Higher ranks of Govt. employees, professional men, teachers, students, top religious leaders army officers.	Mainly Pushtuns but several Tajiks
3. Urban Middle Class	800,000 - 1 million	Lower civil servants, shop keepers, scribes, accountants artisans literate religious leaders	Mainly Tajiks, but many Uzbeks and Pushtuns, also some Turkomen and Hazaras
4. Lower Class	8 million		
a) Urban			
1. Proletariat	20,000	Factory, semi skilled workers	Tajiks, Hazaras, Pushtuns.
2. Military Police etc.	40,000	Enlisted men in armed forces and police	Tajiks, Hazaras, Pushtuns and some Trukomen.
b) Rural			
1. Cultivators	7 million	Small landowners, peasants and semi nomads	Pushtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras
2. Nomads	200,000	Pure nomads, non cultivators	Pushtuns, some Turkomen.

Let us now compare the traditional and modern society.

Primary loyalty had always been to the vertical group, that is to the family, and it was to the family that the individual looked for the solution of problems. The government is now being substituted for the family and it is to this that the individual now looks for his solutions. This swing away from the inward force of the family or tribe, towards the outward sources, is having other far reaching effects. In the past there has been a strict adherence to orthodox religion, but a broader, interpretive attitude is now coming to be accepted. For example, since 1959, women have been officially free to dispense the all enveloping cape called a "Chadri". That so few women have actually dispensed with this garment is a barometer to the rate at which modernisation and social transition are taking place. (Virtually the only Afghan women to be seen in western dress within Afghanistan, are in Kabul, and then only as a fraction of the total population.

Social status always depended upon the individuals' ancestors, piety, age or wealth, but increasing importance is being placed upon the possession of educational

qualifications and type of occupation. Kabul benefits greatly from this, as educated Afghans rarely want to go back to the provinces, resulting in the gradual advancement of the Capital while the provinces remain static.

This growth of importance in education has led to a cultural emphasis on world knowledge, science and technical accomplishments, instead of the tribal narcissism and pre-occupation with mysticism and romanticism.

Class distinctions are becoming inevitably more pronounced.

To summarise then, this transition from an ancient to a modern society will greatly benefit Kabul, to the detriment of the provinces, as the Capital will act as a magnet to the men they most need. Until communications improve, little can be done about this situation.

In this fluid environment of transition, the individual tends to feel rootless and dis-orientated, having given up old loyalties and not yet having found new ones. This is the point that the Afghan Government must capture and turn into National advantage.

This brief paper forms part of a comprehensive report on the problems of development in Afghanistan to be published later in the year, and deposited with the Royal Geographical Society.

A second paper is also being produced for the Society by D. K. Scott and G. Lee. This will be the result of an environmental survey conducted at Kow Jon - a village in the Panjshir Valley.

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See No. 1349-1350. (Sept./Oct. 1966 - Nov./Dec. 1966).
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ERRATA

P.7 Read : Dasht-i-Rewat.
P.10 L.6 Read : The Afghanistan Government fortunately
P.10 L.43 Omit 'equipment'
P.15 Punta Torino
P.17 L.14 Read : "accuracy" for "competing"
Third photograph read : Herat to Kandahar
P.25 L.6 Read : "effort" for "effect"
P.28 L.2 Read : Rochefort
P.30 Read : Sharan Valley
P.32 L.15 Read : Suigal
Map VI Read : William V. Cheverst
Photographs between Pages 42 - 43 read : Cow Jon

P - Page No. L. - Line No.



Key to Map:

- Glaciers.
- Unclimbed Peaks
- Peaks Climbed before 1966.
- Lake
- Bridge
- Village
- Footpaths

Heights in Meters.

From Advanced Copies (Kart Inst. Kabul)
by Wolfgang Frey - January 1967.
For Sharan Valley see Report Map V

Approx. Scale 1:67,000 0 1 2 3 K.M.

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