British Garhawl Himalayan Expedition '81

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Supported by the Mount Everest Foundation and the British Mountaineering Council.

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MAP ROOM
LONDON

In association with The Franco-Italian Expedition to the Changabang Gal. Supported by The Group de Haute Montagne, The Federation Francaise de la Montagne le Comite de L'Himalaya, And The Club Alpin Italien- Section de Roma

The Expedition Members:

British Team

Derek.L. Howard.	Historian.
Nick Kekus.	Civil Engineer.
Andy. W. Hyslop.	Teacher.

French Team

Bernard Domenech.	Mountain Guide.
Pen Leyland.	Research Technican.
Michel Ricard.	Computer Programmer.

Italian Team

Giuseppe Martellotti.	Physicist.
Donatello Amore.	Engineer.

Introduction

Due to a mix up on the part of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (I.M.F.) the peak we intended to climb, Fang (6401 m) was double booked. In May of 1981 we were approached by the other expedition, namely the Franco - Italian Expedition to the Changabang Glacier, to form a joint expedition. This we accepted in view of the Indian authorities proposal to split the post-monsoon season between the two expeditions.
This proposal was not acceptable to both expeditions, as it would limit our time in the area. And so a compromise was made, which the IMF had no objection to. This also gave us the finacial advantage of only one Liaison Officer.

The British party left the UK on the 16th August, flying into Delhi on the 17th.
After establishing ourselves in the IMF accomodation, we meet the advance party of the French/Italian team.
During the week from the 17th to 23rd August, arrangements were made with the IMF, validating the joint expedition and dealing with other formal requirements. In this period we were issued with our Liaison Officer LO, Mr Phurbu Tsering, a climbing instructor from Gangtok, Sikkim.
On arrival of the remainder of the party on the 23rd, we arranged the hire of a bus from Delhi to Josimath.
This was expensive but proved its worth with the immense amount of equipment we had aquired.
We left Delhi on the 24th August and headed north for Rishikesh.
The journey was long and extremely tiring on the poor Indian roads.
From Rishikesh we left the planes and started the long climb into the mountains.
After 15hrs of travelling we stopped for the night at Srinagar Garhwal (the capital of the region), With the prospect of at least another 7hrs driving the next day.
The roads were very bad, narrow and winding, often with horrific drops to the Rishi Ganga.
On the 25th August we continued to Josimath, taking up residence in the Hotel Nanda Devi.

The Walk-in

26th August was spent packing loads, suitable for porter carrying. The following day a truck was hired, jointly with a Polish Expedition to take us to the drop off point. We set off on the hair raising roads again to the small village of Suraithota, were we would meet the porters.

An early start was made on the 28th August, the loads allocated to the porters. In total we had 37 porters and 20 goats. The porters carry a load of 25kg while the goats carry 10 to 15kg, this being made up mainly of food for the porters.

The walk-in took 6 days. The path was generally steep and arduous, on the 2nd day we crossed the high Durashi pass 4200m , the highest point on the walk-in. The next 2 days were much easier, as we followed close to the Rishi Ganga.

On the 1st Sept the Ramani camp was left with Nick Kekus and Andy Hyslop going ahead to fix ropes on the difficult sections, to aid the porters. This stage had many tricky rock steps with exposed positions.

The following day a river crossing was made at Guba. We were fortunate to find a steel cable in place, left by a Czech expedition.

At the 2nd river crossing we found it in spate and the porters were reluctant to cross. So we waited until morning, paying off all but 8 porters to assist the crossing, the base camp being only a short distance on the far side.

The site was not the usual place but was flat, spacious and had ample supplies of juniper for the camp fire.

The Climbing

It was decided on the 5th Sept to make a carry of equipment up on to the Changabang Gal to establish an advance camp.

We made a reconnaissance of the peak, and were extremely disappointed with what we saw. The mountain had little snow and ice and the exposed rock was loose. At the advance camp we heard many rock falls this really stopped our intentions towards the Fang.

After consolidating the advance camp with further carries we retreated to Base camp to discuss the expeditions plans.

It was decided to ask the Liaison Officer to change our permission to Kalanka (6931m), the sister peak to Changabang. As the French/Italian group had permission for Pt 6187 also, this was retained, 2 members wishing to climb the peak.

Our plans on Kalanka were to attempt a direct line up the South face, with the option of diverting on to the original line via the west ridge if we found things too difficult.

So on the 13th Sept we collected all the supplies from the advanced camp. 4 climbers were to be on the ascent, sadly Andy Hyslop was taken ill the night before the attempt and returned to base camp, wreaking his chance to attempt the peak.

Also during the approach, Derek Howard who was having problems with altitude, expressed concern about his ability to continue and decided it was better for him not to go on the mountain.

So on the 15th Sept, 3 climbers, Nick Kekus, Bernard Domenech, and Guiseppe Martellotti set out on the face.

The team being as it turned out a fair representation of the nationalities involved in the expedition; British, French and Italian.

The climbers moved slowly under the strain of the heavy sacs. Containing enough food for 4 days on the mountain. Nowhere was the climbing particularly difficult but it was consistant. They were forced to bivvy high in the seracs by the on set of evening.

The next day dawned fine, but soon deteriorated to cloudy and windy weather. Eventually it started to snow very heavily, visibility was down to 20m and the route finding was extremely hard. By 3-00pm a suitable bivvy was found.

The weather was bad again in the morning, progress was slow and difficult with the build up of fresh snow. The Kalanka col was reach mid afternoon and a good bivvy site was found.

On the 18th Sept the attempt on the summit was made. Leaving most of our equipment at the bivvy for a lightweight push, progress yet again hindered by soft snow and the worsening weather conditions.

Climbing the steep initial section of the West ridge spindrift avalanches poured down on the climbers makeing things extremely difficult and hazardous. And so at apoint approximately 50 to 100m from the summit the team turned back, the weather and avalanche situation making their position a very dangerous one.

In fact their position on the mountain called for a long and tricky descent, the following day. In a total white out with heavy snow falls they descended back to the base of the mountain. Visibility was poor and the tracks of the previous days were obliterated, so route finding was difficult.

However the bottom was reached and the following day 3 extremely tired men walked into base camp.

The summit was not reached, but then all thought this bold effort was as much a success as if the summit had been. After all whats 50m between friends.

During this period on the mountain, Michel Ricard and Donatello Amore climbed Pt 6187m by a new route up the East spur of a subsiduary peak to reach the North ridge to the summit.

The route entailed difficult rock climbing on the spur and easier snow climbing on the the North ridge. It took the pair 3 days for the ascent, this was a notable effort by this team.

With the continuing bad weather at base camp it rained rather than snow, it was decided to leave on the 22nd Sept.

Only 2 members, Bernard Domenech and Pen Leyland planned to stay a little longer. It appeared from the conditions that winter had arrived 2 weeks earlier than expected. With this thought base camp was officially quit on that date. Travelling back to Delhi in 2 groups of 3, by bus and train.

On the 2nd October we flew out of India, to a cold and wet U.K. However it was nice to be back.

Notes on Equipment and Food : British Team

On the mountain we used Extreme Equipment sallopettes and Berghaus jackets in Gore-tex. This system worked extrmely well, the sallopettes were worn the whole time, only taking them off when back at base camp. We were impressed by their wind and waterproof qualities.
As underclothing Helly Hanson pile and Lifa wear was used. This being very versatile and warm, always a firm favourite.
We used a Extreme Equipment Gore-tex bivvy tent on the mountain, however we had problems with the Gore-tex freezing up, and resulting in a lot of condensation. We would be interested in any ideas on the problems of Gore-tex freezing.

Food taken on the peak, consisted of Raven Meals (freeze dried), which didn't go down too well as the meals didn't hydrate sufficiently at altitude. The meat never really became soft.
However Korr Quick Soup and Jordans Crunchy Bars went down great.
Also Golden Wonder Pot Noodle was found to hydrate well and was indeed a tasty snack. Again Rise and Shine from Kelloggs was a firm favourite.
At altitude one tends to drink more liquids than taking solids, so the more liquid foods were undoubtedly more popular. Chocolate, sweets, Dextrosol tablets, etc supplemented the diet.

May we say a big thanks to all companies that have help with donations of equipment and food, or helped in anyway, THANKS.

Extreme Equipment Ltd.

W Jordan (Cereals) Ltd.
Frank Cooper, CPC (U.K.) Ltd.

Kellogg Company of Great Britain Ltd.
Raven Leisure Products Ltd.
Golden Wonder Ltd.
Capricorn Travel Ltd.

Aladdin Industries Ltd.
J.W. Thornton Ltd.
Hamish Hamilton.
Wild Country.

British Garhwal Expedition Statement of Account

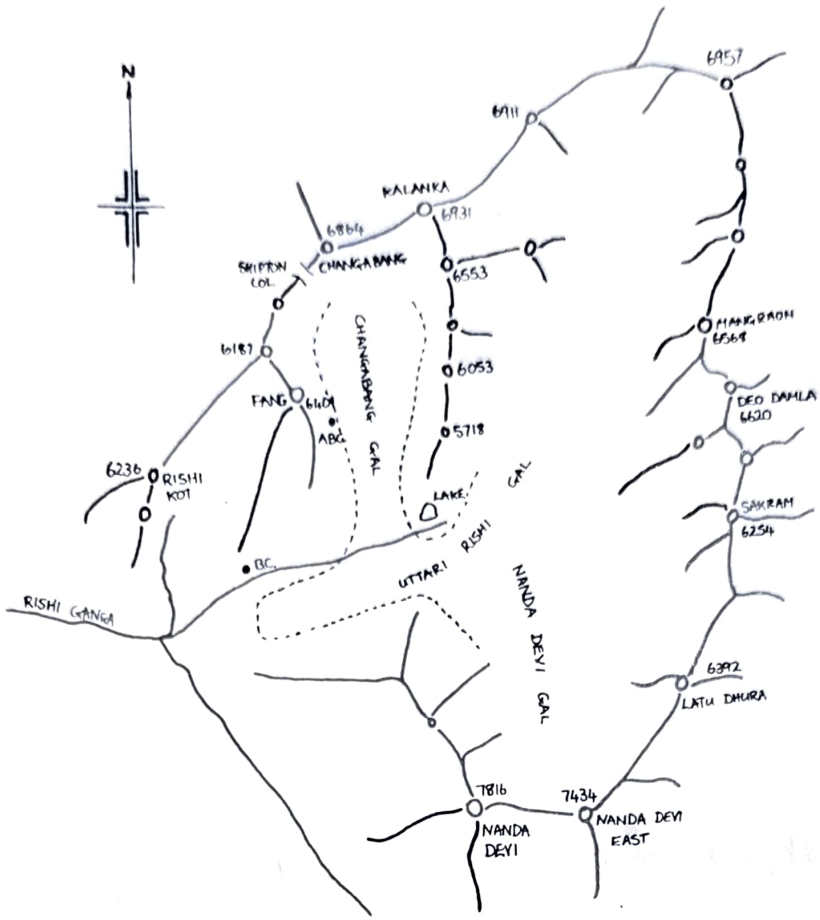
Expenditure

Item	£
Peak Fee	200
Flights (3 returns)	870
Transport (UK)	20
Transport (India)	85
Porters (incl Cookboy)	250
Accomodation	75
Food	85
Administration (post, print)	20
Insurance	90
Medical	15
Photographic	90
Total expenditure	1800

Income

Item	£
B.M.C. Grant	350
M.E.F. Grant	500
Personal contributions (£336 each)	950
Total income	1800

The figures stated here came well within our proposed budget, however our transport costs in India were more than exspected, due to the hire of a bus.



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