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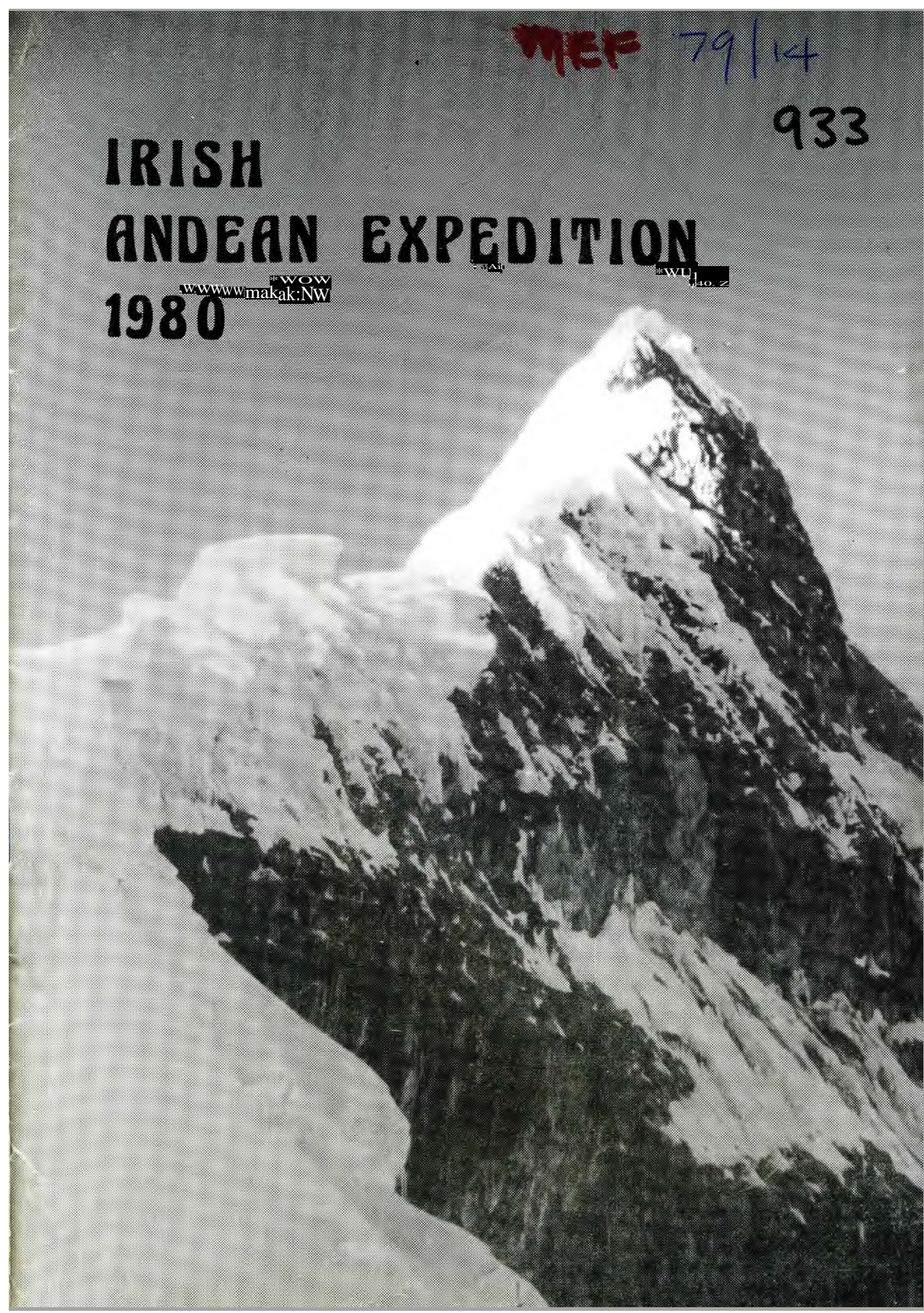
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IRISH ANDEAN EXPEDITION 1980

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In memory of our friend

TOM HAND

Cover picture : Artesonraju from the north east. The route went up the snowy face on the left.

INTRODUCTION

The Cordillera Blanca of Peru with peaks of up to 22,000 ft. lying within a few days walk of the nearest roadhead provided an attractive objective for a low budget expedition planning several Alpine style ascents such as ours. Apart from their physical accessibility, the mountains of Peru are not shrouded in the bureaucracy of permission seeking, booking fees, liaison officers, etc which delays groups in some other mountain ranges.

At the planning stage, we were particularly impressed by the wall of peaks on the south side of the Santa Cruz valley, several of them offering unclimbed faces, and we chose to visit this area.

The members of the party were :-

Calvin Torrans (Leader). Age 36. Builders' labourer. Climbing for 15 years, including 10 Alpine seasons. Three Himalayan expeditions - 1973 (Lahul), 1976 and 1977 (Kishtwar). Also climbed in U.S.A. (Yosemite) in 1978.

Emmett Goulding. Age 43. Painter. Climbing for 24 years, including 11 Alpine seasons. Expeditions - 1964 (Karakoram), 1968 (Andes), 1977 (Kishtwar Himalaya).

Tom Hand. Age 30. Rent-collector. Climbing for 10 years, including 6 Alpine seasons. Expeditions - 1971 (South Greenland).

Tom Irving. Age 21. Glazier. Climbing for 4 years, including 2 Alpine seasons. (During these two seasons he has climbed some of the hardest routes in the Mont Blanc massif).

Joss Lynam. Age 55. Civil Engineer. Climbing for 37 years, including 15 Alpine seasons. Expeditions - 1946 (Kashmir Himalaya), 1958 and 1961 (Lahul Himalaya), 1964 (Karakoram), 1968 and 1971 (South Greenland), 1977 (Kishtwar Himalaya).

Harry O'Brien. Age 30. Electrician. Climbing for 15 years, including 8 Alpine seasons.

Clare Sheridan. Age 27. Teacher. Climbing for 10 years, including 5 Alpine seasons. Expeditions - 1976 and 1977 (Kishtwar Himalaya). Climbed in U.S.A. (Yosemite) in 1978.

Dermot Somers. Age 31. Labourer. Climbing for 10 years, including 5 Alpine seasons. Climbed in U.S.A. (Yosemite) in 1978.

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The STORY of the EXPEDITION

We left Dublin on 30th May, and flew via New York and Miami to Lima, which we reached on 1st June. After our many months of preparation, we found the amount of time spent between arrival in Lima and reaching base camp refreshingly short.

Our broken Spanish was quite sufficient to see us through Customs and when we reported our presence to the Government sports office (I.N.R.E.D.) we were received with great cordiality and given much useful advice and information.

A day in a bus from Lima, a day buying food in Caraz, the last town, a vertiginous trip in a hired bus winding round steep hillsides to the end of the dirt road at Cashapampa, and a day's walk following the "burros" (donkeys) loaded with our food and gear for a month, brought us to our Base Camp at 13,000 ft, beside the Laguna Grande, ("Big Lake"), halfway up the Santa Cruz valley. Our muleteer, Pedro Huaman, who also acted as a camp guard, let us camp in the enclosure beside his "hacienda" - two circular dry stone-walled rooms thatched with reeds. He lived in one, and we used the other for cooking.

The valley is a deep trench closed at the east end by an easy pass, the Punta Union, with the beautiful peak of Taulliraju standing sentinel beside it. Every day trekkers crossing the range by this route would pass our camp, and more rarely, parties of climbers, Peruvian, French, German, American, Austrian or British would stop for a chat; they were mostly heading for Allpamayo, the most popular mountain in the area. Every afternoon the clouds built up over the Punta Union covering Taulliraju, and to begin with we worried that they presaged bad weather, but most evenings they cleared again, and we soon realised that they were harmless, though occasionally we had an hour or so of light rain or snow in the afternoon.

On either side of the valley rose the big snow peaks, 6-7000 ft above us. To the north was Allpamayo and other fine peaks, but all of them had been climbed by many routes, and we were more interested in the long ridge to the south, with many peaks, few of which had been climbed from this side. Amongst these peaks were the three summits of Nevado Caraz, the main objectives of the expedition.

(Joss Lynam writes)

We spent a few days acclimatising, reconnoitring the approaches to our proposed routes. We generally climbed in pairs, each with their own objective, but sometimes we made up larger groups, and it was four of us, Clare and Tom, Dermot and I, who set out to climb Kuriikashajana, an 18,000 ft peak on the north side of the valley as an opener before we tackled Caraz III. The names in the Cordillera Blanca are a mixture of Spanish (such as Nevado Santa Cruz) and Quechua, the local Indian language, which has survived since the days of the Inca Empire, and these (like Kuriikashajana) were often tongue-twisters.

We made a high bivouac just below the glacier on the south west side of the peak, and next day wound our way, with several false casts, amongst the ice walls and crevasses until we came out just below the summit. In the heat of the midday sun, reflected fiercely off the white snow, we all felt debilitated, and though Clare and Tom reached the summit, the lack of acclimatisation forced Dermot and me to stop about 100 metres below it.

We returned to Base the next day, where the other four were busy organising their attempts on Nevado Caraz II by the N.E. ridge (Harry and Emmett) and the North face (Tommy and Calvin).

Emmett writes of the N.E. ridge :

The only approach to Caraz II from Laguna Grande is up a steep loose gully, marked with many scars of the 1970 earthquake. It was our third ascent of the gully, which seemed to get more difficult with each ascent. Harry had a harrowing experience on the first ascent, when a large boulder came away in his arms. After this we roped up on each ascent and descent, though this was not very effective because belays were non-existent - all we could do was drape the rope over the many cacti growing from the vertical boulder clay.

Above the gully, steep vegetated ramps zig-zagged 2000 ft to the moraine below the glacier of Caraz II. Here on a small grassy slope we made our first bivouac. Next day we crossed the moraine, and descended slightly to go around the bottom of the N.E. ridge to climb up the easier west side. The next 1500 ft were easy with occasional awkward steps. At about 3.30pm we arrived at a small ledge where we bivouaced. On our previous attempt we had left our sleeping bags at the first bivouac to save weight, and our second bivouac of 12 hours at 18,000 ft with only down jackets was bitterly cold, and all we were fit for next morning was to descend to Base Camp.

This time we had sleeping bags, and spent a reasonably comfortable night. We left our bivouac at 7.30 am, climbing initially rock which was steep but not difficult. Then we reached a heavily-corniced snow ridge, so we kept about 100ft below the crest. The snow deteriorated as we got higher, until it became dangerous. With relief, I reached a small rock ledge where our ridge bent round to join the east ridge, but the upward view was no better; 300ft of loose, vertical rock, which looked as if it would collapse at a touch. Harry joined me; we hardly needed to discuss our decision, our only choice was to descend. It was 2.30pm so that by moving quickly we made it back to our first bivouac that night, and reached Base the next day.

Two days later, resting in Base, we saw a huge rockfall lasting 10 minutes from the ridge where we had turned back; I suppose this lessened our disappointment:

Calvin writes of the North face :

After spending 3 days acclimatising by exploring possible approaches to various peaks, Tommy and I set off for the North face of Caraz II. This was an impressive face of snow and ice with a little rock and had never been climbed. We had food for 5 days - we didn't know if this would be enough but we couldn't carry any more.

Caraz II had been climbed from the South side and the party descended the same way. For us to take that descent after climbing the North face would mean an extra 3 days walk out and we decided on the long North-east ridge for our descent hoping to meet Emmett and Harry en route.

After 10 hours of dangerous gullies, boulder fields and scree slopes, we reached our first bivouac and our first water that day. We drank several gallons of Apeel and then had our evening meal, freeze-dried Tuna and lots of

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coffee. By this time we both had severe headaches from the altitude.

The following day was an easy one. We had to find a route through the icefall below the face and then a way across the bergschrund on to the face. This we did quickly, and had the rest of the day to rest and keep an eye on the face itself to take note of any objective dangers such as avalanches or stone fall.

After 12 hours of darkness one awaits the dawn with longing. This was our second bivouac and a good one - good meaning you could lie down at full stretch. As I can never sleep on bivouac, no matter how comfortable, I spent the night thinking of breakfast and the climb. The icefall looked heavily crevassed and complicated so we gave ourselves one day to get through it but we managed to reach the bottom of the face in three hours. As the sun was on the face, the snow and ice was too dangerous to climb so we bivouaced at the bergschrund on a shelf we hacked out of the snow.

The next morning the problem of getting dressed never arose as we slept in all our gear. Damart long johns and vests, two jumpers, full nylon climbing suit, waterproof jacket and over trousers; with all of this inside our down sleeping bags we managed to keep the cold at bay.

A snow bridge led us across the bergschrund to the bottom of the face and the following pitches were steep and difficult and were of the weirdest ice either of us had ever seen. Nieves Pententes is the technical term for this type of ice formation - huge bucket steps in the ice - you had to step high to clear the edge of each individual step. It was like climbing a giant vertical egg-box and would be great fun if you didn't have 50lbs on your back and weren't at 19,000ft.

The route was very direct, up the middle of the face to the summit unless conditions forced us to do otherwise. We soon reached the rock buttress which we reckoned was two-thirds of the way up the face. We were both feeling the altitude badly at this stage and were hoping the climbing would get easier past the rock buttress. While belaying each other up the ice we were watching the N.E. ridge for Emmett and Harry, but could see no signs of them. The ridge looked heavily corniced and long - not an inviting descent.

While hammering in some ice pegs for a belay, some snowflakes brought my attention to the weather. The mist had moved in and things were looking bad, (we were not sure of Andean weather at this time - what we were experiencing was normal for late afternoon and rarely turns to really bad weather - in fact we had 30 days of near-perfect weather.)

Tommy came up to the belay and led through on to the top of the rock buttress which left us just under the summit. We were now on snow which was steep, soft and deep. The mist was getting thicker and Tommy disappeared into it. The climbing had become incredibly strenuous and dangerous. Tommy ploughed up through the rotten snow until he reached level ground. There was no time or energy for handshakes or summit photos. The weather was still looking bad and there was no sign of Emmett or Harry on the ridge so we would have to descend the face we had come up. We climbed back down to a ledge on the rock buttress. We were both too exhausted and ill to eat. Tommy tied himself to an ice peg and hanging from this he fell into an exhausted sleep. I straddled

a small edge of rock; after three days without sleep, totally exhausted, I still couldn't sleep so I made something to eat to pass the time. We managed to keep the liquids down, cup soups and hot orange but solids refused to stay down. The long night gave me plenty of time to think about the descent, it would be about 12 to 15 abseils to reach the bergschrund.

Both our plastic mugs had cracked with the cold and the wind shield of our stove had blown away so we decided to forego breakfast and start the descent. We reckoned it would take two days to reach Base, but by pushing hard we got down that night.

Meanwhile the rest of the party attempted Nevado Caraz III - this is how Dermot describes it :

We were particularly attracted by the North ridge of Caraz III, a 45° diagonal of horizon lifting above a confusion of moraines, scree-slopes, and the gully-riven rockfaces of our valley. Tom, Clare, Joss and I, climbing as two separate ropes, set off for this ridge after the ascent of Kuriikashajana, which had been altogether an affair of snow and ice.

Access to the mountain itself was arduous, beginning with a 1,000 ft scrambling-slope which narrowed to a steep gully blocked by a bulging rock-step, like the entrance to the castle of some unpleasant giant. We carried at least forty pounds each, and altitude added its Sisyphean boulder. Precariously lurching up on rounded holds with creaking knee-joints, double-boots on the feet, forty pounds on the shoulder-straps, fingers scrabbling in gravelly holds in the rock, we emerged from the gully into a high valley between the domineering bulk of Artesonraju and the narrow ridges of Caraz III.

The valley is steep and ravaged, riven by mighty, arrow-headed moraines, and bounded by walls of vegetated granite bearing huge, fresh scars from the 1970 earthquake. We expected to walk for three or four hours, and bivouac about half-way to the foot of the route.

A nasty species of cactus abounded in this area, its long, narrow fronds with barbs at half inch intervals like fish hooks. The plant grows out of a gnarled root of the texture of charred cardboard. When broken open the root reveals an interior composed of bowl-shaped layers of a fragile bark that gleam like delicate leather.

The rocks were patched with mosses and lichens, some of them big and thick, with a sturdy texture like old-fashioned upholstery. We spotted a "viscacha" watching us from among the boulders - a curious face like an elderly rabbit, and then an incongruous sweep of squirrelly tail.

Water was becoming a real problem when Clare spotted an isolated clump of trees, and there gushing out of a slab was a clear stream. It was a perfect bivouac site, miraculous, it seemed then, in its location and timing.

The following day, we climbed higher, the vegetation becoming more stunted and sparse, and the landscape looser and more lunar. Our intended ridge loomed above us in crumbling contempt of our intentions, and on closer inspection of its red-streaked, rotten ruins, only Joss was optimistic. Out on the left,

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above a bulging glacier, another ridge arched sinuously upward to the same peak. Steep-walled, grey, and blatantly rotten, it nevertheless allowed us an alternative, and we bivouaced below the tumbled glacier, hoping to get onto the ridge next morning via a tottering pillar of boulders - should it still be standing when we got there. It was - but during the course of the day, we knocked a lot of it down!

Joss and I climbed above the other pair, following a line of weakness which zig-zagged up the pillar of sand, gravel and anchorless wrecks of rock. The technical standard, despite double-boots and pack, was not very high, but in contrast to normal climbing, the difficulty lay in choosing what holds not to touch.

Finally, after we had climbed about 400 feet in three hours, and a sneaky rockfall had pared away any superfluous luck we might have been enjoying, there was a unanimous decision to retreat. It was too dangerous for four; we offered too many targets! The rock was unfit to rope down from any point, so we back-climbed in nervous, diagonal pitches. It was an horrific prospect at first, but we reached the glacier two hours later without a single slip.

Joss writes :

After the various climbs on the Caraz peaks, we all reached Base camp at about the same time, and relaxed for a couple of days. Four or five days of intense activity on a mountain, on a meagre diet left us with insatiable appetites and a desire to do nothing for a day or two. Freeze-dried and dehydrated foods are fine for high bivouacs, but at Base it was great to sit down to fresh fried trout (caught by Pedro in the lake) and new potatoes (remember that the potato came to Ireland from Peru) from Pedro's "fields". Occasionally our desire for fresh food led to difficulties - as when we did not steep the beans long enough, and all had diarrhoea the next day!

Calvin and Tommy had designs on the S.W. face of Allpamayo, probably the hardest of the existing routes; Harry and Emmett were thinking about its North ridge, so they jointly set up a higher camp just below the glacier on the south side of the mountain. Neither of these ventures were successful. Calvin and Tommy reached the col S.W. of Allpamayo, bivouaced, and started up the face, but Calvin became ill and they had to turn back. Harry and Emmett reached the col east of Allpamayo and traversed the tangled glacier to the foot of the North ridge, but along with a group of Austrians, they were forced to turn back by dangerous snow conditions.

Meanwhile the other four headed for Artesonraju, here described by Clare :

We were half way through our stay when we decided to tackle the 20,000 foot peak Artesonraju. It had been climbed before by several routes and we were particularly attracted by the North ridge, a long snow ridge rising from a col with two prominent steps - steep sections followed by easier angled shoulders. We had admired it from Kuriikashajana to the East and during our attempt on Caraz III to the West, and had worked out a new line of approach - from the North West.

As before our group was comprised of two independent ropes - Dermot and Joss, Tom and I. We had dumped most of our heavy gear at 15,000 ft. above Base when descending from Caraz III so lightly-laden we climbed quickly as far as the dump.

It was midday by the time we had reloaded our sacks which now seemed desperately heavy but were probably no more than the usual 50 lbs - you don't stick in anything extra on a trip like this. We had food for four days (porridge, dehydrated Vesta sauces, Erin soups, Cadbury's chocolate, Birds Apeel, tea, coffee and biscuits), climbing equipment, clothes including Damart thermal wear, also bivouac tent, sleeping bag and extras such as camera and first aid kit.

Thus loaded we walked up steep scree and grass slopes for a further three hours, never going very fast - the altitude and load soon lead to nausea and lightheadedness, if one pushes oneself too far - until we halted at a fairly level spot beside a stream at about 16,000 ft. To replace the fluid lost during the day we brewed up for about an hour - tea, soup, coffee, orange and more tea and then ate the food ration for the evening - half a packet of Vesta sauce and two biscuits each - followed by more drinks before settling down for the night.

Our route next day was up a rock ridge which gave pleasant easy climbing except for one narrow gash 150 ft deep. Dermot crossed this on some wedged boulders, and climbed a difficult sloping ramp back onto the ridge beyond the gash. It was an awkward place where we had to climb singly without sacks, which had to be hauled up - a timewasting performance - so that it was mid-afternoon before we reached the snow section of the ridge.

As we had expected, the snow was not in good condition so late in the day so we started to prepare for our bivvy. Nightfall was at 6 p.m. There was a full moon that night and we decided to start climbing at about 2 a.m.

We moved steadily up the moonlit snow; the valley below was filled with cloud and we stopped to watch the moon set. It was an extraordinary sight. As it sank towards the sea of cloud it turned a sultry red until it was finally swamped. We continued in the gloom, using our headlamps now, towards the dim outline of the col and reached it at 5 a.m.

In the hour before dawn, we explored various possibilities of climbing up from the col but in every direction we were blocked by a 200 foot ice wall, vertical in places, heavily corniced in others. Finally we followed tracks down the far side on to a snow slope and were amazed to hear voices from above the ice wall. Any other climbers we had met had been heading for Allpamayo but here were two young Americans. They had come up to the col from the East, the opposite side to us and spent the night where we now saw them - they yelled down that the ice could be climbed further along and said something about a cave. To the left the angle of the ice eased a bit but it still provided a difficult climb for 90 feet. Dermot and Joss went first and when both disappeared from sight, Tom led our rope.

I was amazed when I reached Tom to see that the depression which we had reached in the ice wall shelved back to quite a depth and was part of a magnificent ice cave. It was about 40 feet wide, carpeted in deep soft snow with 30 foot high walls of gleaming ice and ended in a perfectly smooth snow ramp which sloped up to a patch of blue sky and out into the open in the middle of a large snow field. It seemed a shame not to stop and play in this magical creation!

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We continued up snow slopes for the next few hours until we encountered 400 ft of steep ice leading to the shoulder below the final ice slope. We thought we had cracked the route but the ice ran with water and was very unstable. We decided that for the moment at least we could not safely go any further. The ice would freeze solid again during the night and we settled down to wait until dark, hacking away a large ledge in the snow to accommodate the four of us. The two Americans returned from the summit very tired just before dark and as it had taken them the whole day to complete the climb and not the three hours we had thought would be sufficient, we had to re-assess the situation.

We had eaten almost all our food, and were feeling the effects of the long day and the altitude (over 19,000 ft) and decided it would be pushing ourselves a bit too far to embark on another 10 hours climbing. So we followed the Americans back to the cave where we all slept - or tried to. It was very cold. The next morning we abseiled down the ice pitch from the mouth of the cave, and retraced our steps, reaching Base camp in the evening.

We now had time for one last climb. Rather than attempt something new and risk wasting three days on a route that might turn out to be impossible, all of us except Dermot and Joss decided on a second attempt on Artesonraju. They felt another attempt on Caraz III by a party of two would be worthwhile.

Dermot describes this :

Joss and I were full of optimism, for we had studied the route during the descent from Artesonraju. Apparently the cockscomb of rock and ice we had assumed to be the summit was not really the top. Behind it, we both saw with schoolboy excitement and whoops of pre-victory a snow slope which shelved gently upwards from our attempted ridge to reach an accessible snow summit. A ridge traverse would not be necessary at all! We need only climb the pillar previously attempted, step across the ridge, and trudge triumphantly to the top of a new route!

Early on the second day, the Caraz glacier reared ahead of us in crooked tiers of nieves penitentes, while above it stood the shattered walls and towers of the grimly ascending grey ridge. The buttress, scene of our previous attempt, slouched in repellent ruins midway along the ridge. The top of the buttress stood up unsteadily in a crested tower - standing only because it couldn't decide which side of the ridge to tumble.

We climbed the glacier and started up the buttress. We alternated the lead, and Joss started, edging along a diagonal line of blocks, and then disappearing back left along a loose and cluttered ramp. As he passed gingerly and invisibly above my head, I huddled under a protective overhang.

We climbed with over 30 lbs on our backs - ice-axes, crampons, sleeping bags, food, a stove (we intended to bivouac on the snowfield) - shrugging off the loads wearily if there was a ledge at the belay. The most difficult moves stepped up and around a steep flake where you were pushed out of balance by an overhead jut, but I had cleaned good holds on this after a loose and lunatic lunge on the first ascent.

We reached our previous high-point quite quickly, and continued up new ground - which proved more unstable than anything we had climbed below. One pitch consisted of 100 feet of huge blocks and flakes as precariously interlocked as



Unloading the bus at Cashapampa.



Descending the rock pillar of Cara, III. Katarajp (left) and Allpamayo (right)
in background.



Caraz III. "nieves penitentes" on the glacier.



The Expedition at Base Camp; left to right : Tommy Irving, Pedro Huaman, (in front) Calvin Torrans, Tom Hand, Clare Sheridan, (in front) Harry O'Brien, Emmett Goulding, Dermot Somers, Joss Lynam.

a child's tower of building bricks.

Now we were close under the tower and could go left or right to reach the ridge. I climbed steeply left to reconnoitre. Suddenly the rock was good, grey granite seamed with alpine cracks, but there was a false feeling about the looming ridge; topped with a crest of wafery snow, it lacked in advance the sense of backed-up solidity we were expecting. As I moved higher and higher the gentle snow-slopes failed to appear, and the view behind the ridge fell lower and lower, until suddenly I was peering across an overhanging rim which swept down below my cartwheeling vision in a plunging precipice of rock that finally curved outwards into the side of a valley a thousand feet below.

I recoiled shaken and climbed down to Joss. We assumed then that the snow-plateau must start on the other side of the tower, so leaving the sacks, we traversed until a diagonal weakness ran up to the desired point. From here the ridge looked exactly the same as before, wearing an immanent transparency. You felt you could almost see through it, and I started up with a hollow feeling of betrayal in my stomach.

There was a rampart of snow built up along the top of the rock with vacant sky behind it. I hacked a violent V for vision in the snow, and stared vertically, vertiginously down into the same awesome valley as before.

The frail corniced ridge curled away on my right in an insolent flick culminating in the sharp whiplash of summit. Miles further on, past emptiness, past Caraz III, beyond the peak of Caraz II, our gentle snow-slope breasted the sky with a summit-nipple of pointed snow : Caraz I.

I jammed a chock behind a loose flake, belayed myself incredulously, and yelled to Joss to come up. "There's nothing here," I shouted. "We're on the wrong mountain."

Joss reached me, looked over the ridge, and recoiled against the suction of space. It was impossible at first to accept the magnitude of the error; some source other than ourselves must be wrong - as if we had been innocently following a map, which had maliciously displaced a feature by several miles.

Joss was cursing in a fever of deprivation; not only had we failed, but the prolonged build-up of anticipation and effort - part of the value of any route - had been deflated. We had shared an optical illusion, and an hallucination of success, and had gambled our last days on them both.

With hardly a word spoken, we turned, back-climbed the pillar, descended the glacier at violent speed, just getting off the ice before dark. We cooked in near silence, still puzzling over our defeat.

Tricks of perspective and foreshortening are cruel quirks of big mountains and we had been misguided by angles and distances. But had we helped mislead ourselves - had we allowed ourselves to see what we wanted to see? Surely it could not have been just wishful thinking? (It was some consolation after our return, when our photographs were developed, to find that our cameras had been as much deceived as our eyes).

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Clare now describes the ascent of Artesonraju :

The six of us set off for the col on the North ridge, taking the apparently shorter route of the Americans from the East. The first day was the usual slog up steep grassy slopes and the slithering scree of moraines, but on the second day, soon after we reached the foot of the glacier, we found our way blocked by a complex of deep crevasses. Tommy went out in front and found a route, traversing down and across a rib of hard water ice and up at the other side. The climbing was difficult and tricky and it was two hours before we were all across and plodding up to the col. The ice pitch followed (I was climbing with Calvin this time, and Tom with Tommy) but then we were in for a shock - our stately pleasure dome had collapsed. Most of the roof was still intact but where we had slept a few days before was now a grotesque jumble of great ice blocks. We thought it had stood for years and would last for years but an avalanche on the slope above had rolled debris this far.

We bivvied on the exposed slope above the cave exit and at 4 a.m. we set out. By sunrise we had reached the ice slope which had halted us before but which was now in perfect condition. Here the real climbing began. This section involved four rope lengths and Tom and Tommy had reached the shoulder as Calvin and I started.

Above the shoulder a hundred feet of bad snow led to the final steep section - another 500 feet of ice. Tom and Tommy reached the summit at 8.30 a.m., Harry and Emmett followed about an hour later and finally Calvin and I climbed onto the summit ridge just before 11.00 a.m. The other four had been to the summit and returned to the edge where we found them huddled in a bivvy tent sheltering from the bitter wind. A further 20 minutes along an easy ridge following in the footprints of the others brought us to the snow dome of the summit. We were delighted to be on top, our second 6,000 metre (20,000 foot) peak, but after congratulations and photographs our only concern was to return to the other four and descend out of the wind as quickly as possible.

Harry continues the story :

Inside the two-man bivvy tent the four of us, Tom, Emmett, Tommy and I, were like sardines, but at least if we weren't comfortable, we had protection from the fierce wind that swept the snow slope.

While awaiting Calvin and Clare's return from the summit we planned the descent. Tom, Tommy and I would descend first, fixing the abseil points; the rest would follow - in this way overcrowding on the snow stances would be avoided.

At 11.40, having placed the first snow stake near the edge of the first steep ice slope, Tommy descended first. By this time Clare and Calvin had joined us. When Tommy had reached a sound snow stake left by the Americans, Tom and I descended to him. Having set up the next abseil, Tommy descended. I followed him down and on reaching the stance it was obvious that the snow here was bad though the angle of the slope had eased considerably. Tommy decided to back-climb down to the next snow stake which had also been left in place by the Americans, and from there he could belay both myself and Tom while we back-climbed.

I now made room for Tom by moving to the lower stance which Tommy had been using. Tom began abseiling towards me and soon reached the stance. Then, without warning, the snow seemed to give way under his feet and in a moment he fell down the slope and disappeared over the north-east face of the mountain.

To attempt to describe my sorrow or shock would be futile and only after encouragement from Tommy who had belayed to a good snow stake did I backclimb to him.

On completion of the next abseil, Tommy succeeded in traversing a debris-strewn slope, and with great effort searched the face where Tom had fallen. On the next abseil he also tried but both attempts failed to locate Tom, and only confirmed our worst fears - that he had fallen to the very bottom of the north-east face, a drop of about 1,000 metres. All we could now do was continue our descent, which we did in a state of shock and distress, reaching the bivvy at 430

with 1.5 hours to darkness we had little time for cooking and brewing, and so at 6 o'clock we lay down in our sleeping bags for another long Andean winter night at an altitude of 19,000 ft. Little sleep was had by any of the party, and to add to our problems the weather deteriorated. Our start was delayed until 8.00 a.m. when having cleared our sleeping bags and bivvy tents of snow we packed our gear with numbed fingers.

The descent to Base camp went smoothly and took about eight hours. On arrival we despatched Pedro to bring word to Joss and Dermot to return at once to Base.

Joss writes :

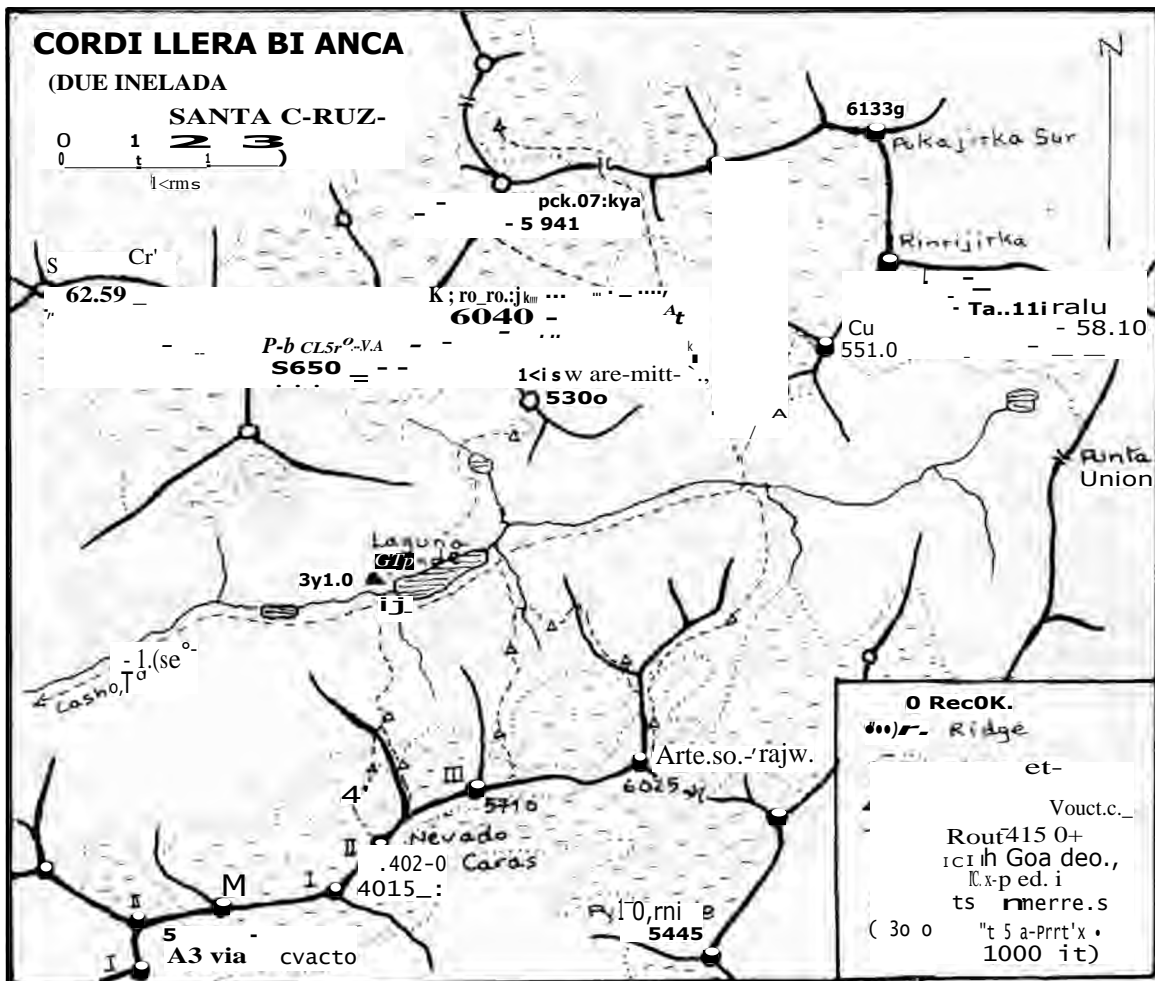
After our setback on Caraz III, Dermot and I descended to Base. There were still three days left before we had to leave Base, so we went up next day to try the 18,000 ft Kiswarraju, whose rocky south face was still unclimbed. We bivouaced that night at 16,000 ft, just below the difficulties, and had just settled down to sleep when we heard distant shouts and saw a light, down in the valley below. Clearly, something was wrong, but it was pitch dark and we could not descend until morning. Soon afterwards it started to snow, and we wondered if Pedro, who had a transistor, was only warning us of bad weather. We got up before dawn, and after breakfast descended the steep scree, now treacherous with several inches of fresh snow on it. We reached Base at about 9.30 a.m. and the others told us the sad news of Tom. We were amazed that they had managed to contact us, Pedro had climbed a 1000 ft in the darkness (admittedly on ground he knew) and shouted up to us, a mile away, and 2,000 ft higher.

Plans had already been made, and half an hour later Clare, Harry and I were on our way to Caraz to break the news, and Tommy, Calvin and Pedro were on their way up to the foot of the face of Artesonraju to search for the body. The other two stayed at Base to pack up.

16.

Three days later the others followed us down. Tommy, Calvin and Pedro had spent two days searching the tangled wilderness of crevasses and ice-walls below the N.E. face of Artesonraju without success. Although we felt the search was hopeless, we were unwilling to give up, until Senor Morales, the Peruvian Government official responsible for mountaineering, confirmed our reluctant decision that further search would almost certainly be fruitless, and would probably be dangerous.

with the help of Senor Morales we complied with all the necessary police regulations. We then returned to Lima by bus, and continued back to Ireland by our outward route, arriving on 13th July.



PRACTICAL NOTES on VISITING PERU

Entry

No permission is required for climbing in Peru, but it is well worth while to contact:

Senor Cesar Morales Arnao,
I.N.R.E.D.,
Estradio Nacional, Tribuna Sur,
Lima 1, Peru.

He is the Government Official responsible for "Andinismo", and can offer much help and advice. He also knows what new routes have been done recently - if you do a new route you should inform him.

Customs

We flew in with all our gear. When we showed customs officials a letter from Morales, approving our plans, they waved us through without examination. The general experience seems to be that there is no serious difficulty with customs for baggage you bring with you, but that baggage shipped separately will take a week or more, and a lot of cajolery, to clear.

Travel to Peru

There are a number of air routes to Lima, and it is worth shopping around to find the cheapest and most convenient. There is a charter flight daily from Paris, which is very cheap, provided you can get there without excessive expense. You can return on this charter at any time - a big advantage compared with our Apex flight on which we had a fixed return date.

Transport, etc. in Peru

Senor Morales will tell you the correct rates to pay for guides, camp guards, porters, ponymen (arrieros) and donkeys (burros), etc. It is well to get these rates straight beforehand; the Peruvian Indians are very friendly and helpful, but they consider that climbers who have spent the (to them!) astronomical sum of £500 getting to the country can afford to pay well - a very reasonable attribute as long as it is not carried to excess!

If you want to travel around by air, there are very good concessions on internal flights if you come into the country by Aero Peru.

Buses are frequent and cheap, and communal taxis (colectivos) are also reasonably priced. (If you use a taxi, fix the price before you start!) You can travel around Lima unbelievably cheaply by the excellent (though very crowded) bus services, provided you know where your destination is. Watch your gear and your wallet, incidentally, especially in Lima, there are plenty of expert thieves around.

There are also thieves in the mountains (not all locals!) and it is worth paying a guard for your Base Camp; we met two Americans who had cached their food on the way up the valley, and had it all stolen.

18.

Maps and Guides

John Rickers guide to the Cordillera Blanca "Yuraq Janka" is invaluable, and as far as we tested it, very accurate. The American Alpine Journal will serve to update the information in Yuraq Janka. There are good maps in the guide, but it is also worth buying the Peruvian Government 1:100,000 maps, whose contours give a better idea of the shape of the mountains than Ricker's ridge lines. These maps can be bought at the Instituto Geografico Militar, Lima (bring your passport).

Food and other supplies in Peru

Given the difficulty of importing goods shipped separately the sensible thing is to buy as much as possible in Peru. All basic foods are available, and fairly cheap. Even in a small town like Caraz we found it possible to buy tea-bags, tinned fish, tinned fruit, honey and jam. Chocolate is good but expensive. There may be some difficulty getting staple foods, because of local shortages - we had to shop around to get as much sugar and flour as we needed. Dried milk was difficult to get, even in Lima. Eggs and bread rolls can be bought in the highest villages, also of course potatoes, and these are likely to be most interesting fresh foods you can get. Fresh meat is rare - so is tinned meat for that matter, we made do with tinned fish.

You will need to bring dehydrated foods - we saw none, even in Lima. "Pepe" in Huaraz has some stock of freeze-dried foods, bought from expeditions, but it would be risky to rely on this source entirely (we bought ours during a stop-over at Miami). We brought our own coffee, but it is probably obtainable. They have never heard of lemonade powder! Soup powders were obtainable in Lima.

Plastic containers, cooking pots, rope, paraffin and petrol were all obtainable in Caraz. (Better choice of plastic containers in Lima).

Accommodation and Eating Out

Cheap simple hotels seem to exist in most towns. We paid 70p each a night in the Hotel Europa in Lima, and about the same in the very pleasant Hotel Suizza Peruana in Caraz. We also heard excellent reports of "Pepe's" in Huaraz.

You can eat out cheaply, but be a little choosy, local standards of food hygiene do not agree with weak stomachs, as two of our party discovered.

Consulates

It is worth while making contacts with your consulate as a routine matter when you arrive. If you do this they are more likely to be interested in your problems if you come to them later in an emergency! If you wait to contact them until you are in trouble, you may (as we did) find them rather cold.

EQUIPMENT and CLOTHING

by Calvin Torrans

Rucksacks

Lowe Alpine Systems Sacks were used by all members - either the Expedition or the Triolet.

Having decided on alpine ascents we realised we would be faced with outings of up to six days or maybe more. So we required a large sack that would be both comfortable and robust. We felt that the Lowe Sacks with their well-padded harness system which could be streamlined for rock or ice climbing would take some of the suffering out of climbing. The sacks proved excellent and were considered a necessary luxury. Two members who suffered from recurring back troubles didn't suffer the usual backache they got from their old sacks. The complicated-looking harness is actually quite straightforward.

Stoves

M.S.R. G/K Stove (Multifuel).

We were informed Camping Gaz was not available in Peru, but various sources told us it could be bought (this would be worth checking out if you were going to Peru to climb).

After some deliberation we decided on the M.S.R. Stove which had very good reports in various mountaineering magazines.

A very efficient stove indeed, it did all the things the makers said it would and a few they didn't. The stove comes with two jets, one for petrol and one for paraffin. I used petrol, paraffin, white spirit and something that smelt like paint stripper, all of which gave efficient service using the one jet marked for petrol! Taking the makers advice on fuel consumption and using the tinfoil shield one can make a pint of fuel go a long way.

Boots

All members except two used double boots (Makalu) but everyone felt that single boots could have sufficed.

Gaiters

The Berghaus Yeti Gaiter was used by all members and found to be very good. The rubber band which holds the gaiter in place will wear in time but can be replaced.

Jackets and Overtrousers

The Berghaus Mistral Goretex Jacket and Trousers were used. The prevailing good weather didn't give us a chance to test them to the full but long days in deep soft snow had no effect on them. The gussets in the legs of the over-

L.U.

trousers are a bit small.

Tents

No special tents were brought for the expedition and were not required due to the temperate conditions at base camp.

Bivvy Tents

Two man bivvy tents were used made of 2oz and 3oz nylon. Some members had Goretex shells but found the two man bivvy more comfortable. Despite the conditions, one can cook and shelter from the wind more easily in a two man bivvy tent.

Ropes

We used an assortment of 45m x 9mm dia kernmantel ropes.

Underwear, etc.

Damart clothing was used by all members. Their long johns and long sleeved vests were superb. Being warm and comfortable yet light and hard-wearing, they gave us great comfort while climbing or bivvying. The Damart gloves proved a great success as did their stockings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are most grateful to the following organisations, firms and individuals who assisted us. We were pleased and very grateful to receive so much help and goodwill.

Finance

Mount Everest Foundation
Sports Council for Northern Ireland
Ulster Sport and Recreation Trust
Alexandra Terminal Ltd.
Bank of Ireland
Burmah Castrol Ireland Ltd.
Collen Bros (Dublin) Ltd.
Comeragh Mountaineering Club
Cork Mountaineering Club
Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland
Guinness Group Sales Ltd.

Liam Convery
David Walsh
R. Doyle

Food

Batchelors Ltd
Birds
Cadbury Ireland Ltd
Erin Foods Ltd
W. & C. McDonnell Ltd.
Willwood Group

Tinned foods
Apeal, coffee
Chocolate
Soup, etc.
Vesta meals, soup
Freshers, coffee, etc.

Medical Supplies

Cahill, May, Roberts Ltd.
Fannin & Co. Ltd.

Reckitts Ireland Ltd.
Smith & Nephew, Southall (I) Ltd.
Warner Lambert Ireland Ltd.

Wellcome Ireland Ltd.
T. P. Whelehan Son & Co. Ltd.

Uvistat cream etc.
Surgical equipment, sterilising tablets, etc.
Disprin
Dressings
Suppositories,
haemorrhoidal cream
Parahyphon tablets
Savlon

Other Equipment and Supplies

Damart Ltd.
Great Outdoors
Ilford (Ireland) Ltd.
Jackson Sports
Lowe Alpine Systems International Ltd
J. J. Silber (Ireland) Ltd.

Thermal underwear
Mountaineering equipment
Black and white film
Berghaus gear
Rucksacks
Fuji colour film

We also wish to acknowledge assistance or advice from :

Independent Newspapers Ltd (Dick Roche), P. J. Carroll & Co. Ltd., Enterprise Travel Ltd, Royal Dublin Society, Dr. Anthony Latham, Dr. Sean Darby, Joe Tasker, Aleck Crichton, Thelma Davidson, Reprint Ltd., Senor Morales (Lima), Senor Molina Caceres, Senor San Bartolome (Caraz), and not least, our wives, families and friends.

Back Cover picture : Nevado Caraz II - north face. The route went directly up the face from the bergschrund past the rock island to the summit.

IRISH fINDERN EXPEDITION 1980

ACCOUNTS

<u>Receipts</u>	EIR	<u>Expenditure</u>	EIR
Gran M.E.F. (1)	442.43	Travel	4,119.59
S.C.N. I & U.R.T. (2)	153.13	Insurance	110.00
F.M.C.I.	200.00	Expenses in Peru	1,075.53
Donations - Personal	70.00	Report & Photographs	124.45
Commercial	805.00	Bank Charges & Misc.	15.52
Club	67.50	Expenses, Donations, Etc. in connection with T. Hand accident.	316.75
Fund Raising	197.50	Equipment (4)	<u>304.02</u>
Lectures, articles, Radio/Television	343.75		6,065.86
Personal Contributions of Expedition Members (3)	<u>3,798.32</u>	Cash in bank	11.77
	<u>£6,077.63</u>		<u>£6,077.63</u>

Notes

1. £400 Sterling
2. £150 Sterling
3. Includes payments for equipment purchased through expedition
4. Includes equipment for members purchased through expedition.


Joss dam
Secretary

23rd February 1981

Calvin Torrans
Leader
Ly.44^{7/1}



