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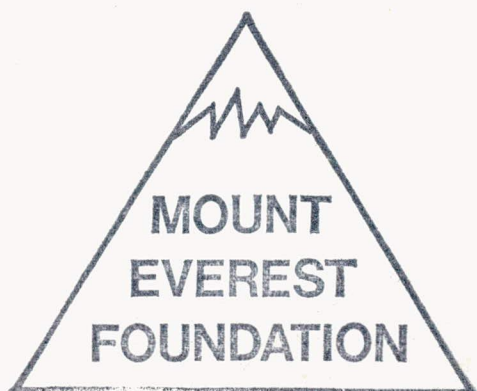
RAE MOUNTAINEERING CLUB

KISHTWAR HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION 1980

**Report on the first ascent of
FLAT TOP**

by Major Rod Wilson

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Royal Aircraft Establishment

Mountaineering Club

Kishtwar Himalayan Expedition 1980

5 Meerside Avenue,
Weymouth,
Dorset.

Mr. David Edmondson,
Middle Place,
Heathwaite Manor,
Windemere. LA23 2NQ

December 23rd, 1980.

Reference - 79/41

Dear Sir,

I am enclosing an Expedition Report for which we were in receipt of a grant. A current map has been despatched to the Alpine Club as well as copies of this report.

On reading the report you will see that we have reduced the mountaineering to a minimum at the expense of the appendices. Our expedition was well planned and executed and the lessons learnt could be of considerable use to future expeditions to Kishtwar.

If you require further details please contact me at the above address or Red Wilson.

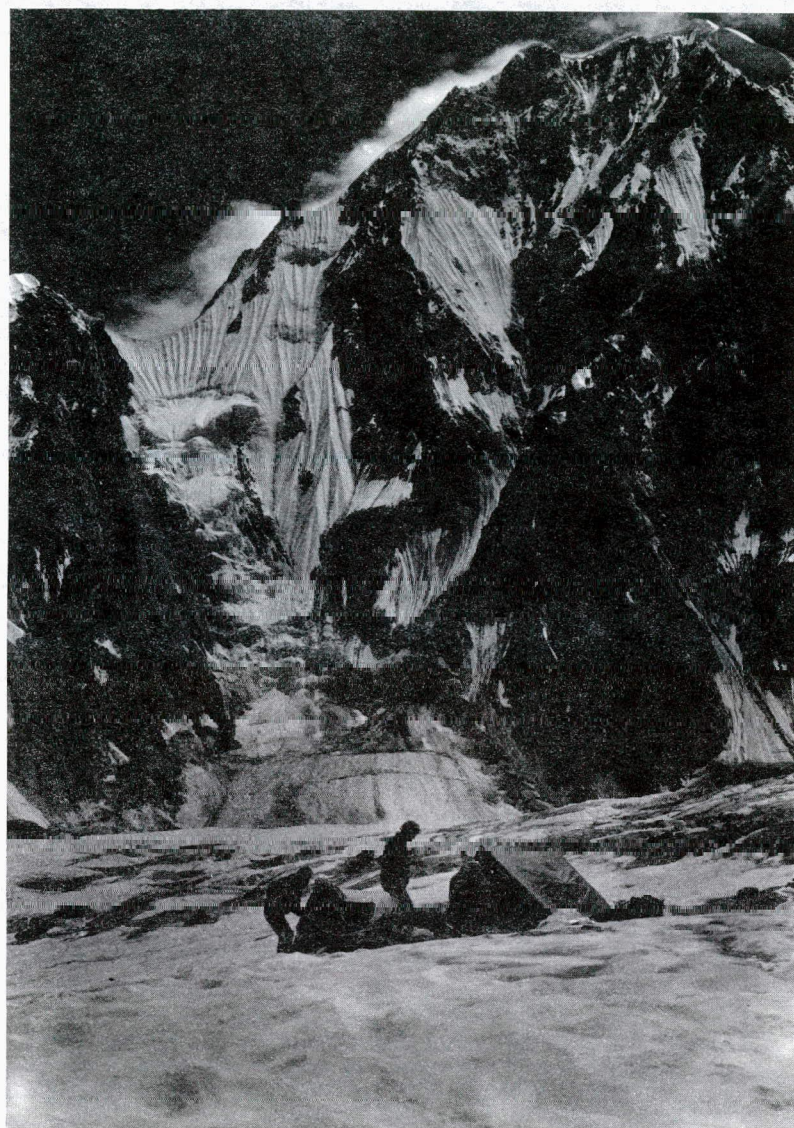
Yours sincerely,

Murray Hodgson

M.T. Hodgson.

**Monochrome
detail of new
map referred to
in text
1:200,000**





FLAT TOP



Hodgson, Finklaire, Wilson, Phillips



CAMP IV

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INTRODUCTION

Although this expedition was the result of a team effort, the inspiration from the very beginning was that of Pete Finklaire. He it was who, towards the end of Summer 1979, decided to assemble a small team to climb in the Indian Himalaya. His first approach was to Bob Nelson with whom he had made a trekking trip to the Kulu region (prior to a climb) in 1978. He then invited me to be the nominal leader; it was necessary that one person should supervise the administrative arrangements and it was felt that my military rank might carry some weight among the Indian bureaucracy. The rest of the team consisted of Roger Phillips, Murray Hodgson and Jenny Postance. With the exception of Murray all are members of the Royal Aircraft Establishment Mountaineering Club and even he is a one-time member. The expedition had one great asset then at the very outset; all its members not merely knew each other but were close friends who climbed together regularly. Consequently the whole trip may be characterised by the friendly and relaxed atmosphere and a total lack of friction.

I propose to describe our preparations and the approach in some detail since I believe there are many lessons to be learnt from our experience.

PREPARATIONS

The first task was to find an objective. Initially we concentrated on the Kulu since Pete had climbed there before. However when it became clear that most of the team preferred the trip to take place in July and August we decided to move our attention further West and North. The Kulu, it seemed, sits astride a notional Monsoon line; that is, it may or may not be just affected by the Monsoon during those months. We decided the risk was too great and looked therefore at areas beyond the influence of the Monsoon. We next explored the possibility of a visit to the Karakorum but this was ruled out by the length of the approaches, since none of us wished to be away from the UK more than 6 weeks.

Finally we came across that part of the Western extremity of the Greater Himalaya which extends North and East of Kishtwar in the Indian State of Jamma and Kashmir. There were many unclimbed peaks over 6000m and among these we found Flat Top, 6100m. It was a very striking mountain, occupied an important position at the head of the S branch of the Brammah glacier and appeared to be unclimbed. On making further enquiries it was recommended to us as an excellent objective by Mo Anthoine and Paul Nunn. Other possibilities were mentioned but Flat Top henceforth headed our list.

The next job was to find out at least enough about the mountain to be able to make an application to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation for permission to attempt it. A brief visit to the Alpine Club library yielded enough information to locate the peak on a rough sketch map (which has to be attached to the application) and to draft an itinerary. The application itself should be in the form of a letter to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, c/o Ministry of Defence, 18 'Q' Block New Delhi 110011, and the details required to be included may be seen by obtaining a copy of the application form from the Indian High Commission in London. We had a reply very quickly from the IMF's clerical officer Sri Munshi Ram provisionally booking the peak for us and all that was required to confirm it was to send a bank draft for 3000 Rupees (then about £170).

Having secured the peak planning began in earnest at about Christmas 1979. The first priority was to find out as much as possible about the region, the peak and other people's experiences and this became my task. The prime sources are clearly a good map and previous expedition reports. The latter are to be found either at the Alpine Club or the RGS, but the former was something of a problem. The Indian Government forbid the export of OS maps of areas close to its frontiers. (Note: it is said that Liaison Officers are provided with up to date maps but this is not necessarily the case and cannot be relied upon). A very early, 1940s, 1:250,000 series is available but is useless as far as the mountains are concerned. Many of the reports contain sketch maps and these can be used to gain information about the names of peaks. There is a Japanese ridge map 1:200,000 of the whole area but this is now out of print, occasionally inaccurate and out of date as far as the names of peaks are concerned.

I soon decided to make my own map using what information I could glean from reports and the Japanese map, but relying upon satellite photographs purchased from NASA for the topography and this task occupied most of my spare time for the rest of the winter. The result was a hachured map in 1:200,000 and a copy may be seen in the Alpine Club library.

As for information about the area, by far the best report available, and fortunately the most relevant was that of Anthony Wheaton's ascent of Bramman I in 1978. We also studied the accounts of Charles Clarke, Rob Collister, Geoff Tier and several others. Geoff Tier lives in the Camberley area and was therefore able to give us much additional information first hand.

It appeared that Flat Top had been attempted once in 1977 by Martin Boysen. He had chosen the West Ridge which rises from the col between Flat Top and Brammah I, but had been defeated by the weather in a particularly bad year. On studying photographs obtained from Ant Whenton, Charles Clarke and Joe Brown (who attempted Brammah II in 1979) we decided on the North Ridge, which, although longer than the West, seemed to offer a safer and easier route, in which latter expectation we were proved wrong.

A meeting was held in January at Roger Phillips house and after much poring over photographs we turned our attention to the more mundane task of allocating responsibilities; Murray was to be Treasurer, Pete-Jenny would look after the food, Bob would arrange the flight to India and our insurance and I would provide the medical kit while continuing to deal with the various authorities. In addition Murray undertook to design special tents (see Annex D) and to procure whatever equipment we needed at the best possible discount, while Peter would consider what climbing equipment was needed and would design and make a snow shovel to be attached to the shaft of an ice-axe.

We considered the itinerary, came to the conclusion that in order to have some 25 days above base camp we needed 6 weeks in all and went firm on the period mid-July to the end of August. At the same time some rough costings seemed to suggest that each of us would have to contribute about £600 depending on the level of outside support and this proved to be a very accurate estimate. We discussed possible sources of finance but abandoned the idea of a major fund - raising effort in view of the amount of work involved. The Mount Everest Foundation and BMC were of course approached and very generously each gave us £300.

On a previous expedition to Dhaulagiri IV Murray had a photograph made into a postcard which was then sold to raise funds and we decided to follow suit. A picture of Flat Top, taken by Ant Whenton from Brammah I, was duly printed and a rubber stamp made with the name of the expedition on it. Eventually we sold over 500 of these. Each one was signed by the whole team and they were posted from the roadhead on our way into the mountain. To date we have not heard of any going astray.

After Easter had passed we began work in real earnest. The longest job was the purchase of food and the packing of it, first in waterproof 2 man-day packs (for details of these see Annex B) then into boxes together with Base Camp food for transportation to India. I should point out here that the food was felt by the members of the team to be one of the outstanding features of the trip and we were all especially grateful to Pete and Jenny for the amount of careful planning and effort that they put in. The level of morale is an extremely important factor in

determining the success of an endeavour such as this and few things affect morale so much as the quality and quantity of food and we believe therefore that it is an area deserving of much thought.

At this point the expedition received a sad blow when Bob Nelson contracted a serious infection of the inner ear which his doctor predicted would take months to clear and which so affected his balance even in normal circumstances that he felt compelled to withdraw from the team. The loss was keenly felt by all of us. He had been in the group from the beginning and was to be missed both for his bulk (he must be about 8 feet tall) and his humour.

The final job was packing the equipment to be air-freighted. We already knew from Ant Whenton that since we would be using mules on the march-in there were important constraints on the method of packing. Ideally packages should be about 12" square in cross-section (length is not so important). We found that ex-army kit bags fitted the bill nicely. They were just the right shape, could be man-handled easily and were able to be padlocked.

On making enquiries of Pan Am we discovered that there are three rates: the highest, £3.54 per kilo is for consignments under 45 kilos and clearly would not concern us; over 45 kilos the rate is £2.84 per kilo; finally, on presentation of a valid air ticket to India one may send unaccompanied personal effects at £1.77 per kilo. On a previous occasion Pete had run into problems with the Indian customs by sending his climbing gear as personal effects so we decided to separate our equipment into the 2 categories, climbing gear and personal gear. We each kept back 20 kilos of climbing gear to accompany us on the plane since this would reduce the amount going out at the higher rate. In the event the Indian customs took no interest whatever in the distinction between personal effects and climbing gear (except in relation to the question of re-export; see below) and future parties might feel inclined to risk sending everything (or at least more) at the personal effects rate.

Mid-July eventually arrived and the air freight was despatched about a week before we were due to leave.

One thing that must strike everyone on reading expedition reports is the amount of delay that can be encountered in Delhi for one reason or another and we decided to split into two groups with myself and Pete going out 2 days earlier than the rest specifically to deal with as much bureaucracy as possible. This would save money also, of course, as we had heard of teams languishing in Delhi watching their resources dwindle day by day. As will be seen this proved an excellent idea and the main party must have created a near record for the least amount of time spent in passing through Delhi on the way out.

UK - DELHI

The mandate given to Bob in booking air passages was to find the cheapest and this proved to be Ariana Afghan Airways at £270 return. There were, however, a number of penalties to pay in exchange for the cheap rate. First of all they only fly from London once a week on a Sunday morning and we were travelling Wednesday and Friday. As a result the first leg was by BA Tristar (very noisy and uncomfortable) to Amsterdam to pick up the Ariana DC 10 for Kabul. Our flight called at Istanbul, the others at both Paris and Teheran, losing an hour on the ground each stop. At Kabul we had to change yet again to a 737 for Delhi. All this added up to a long journey (even longer on the way back as we broke down at Teheran and missed our connection in Amsterdam). Other parties might well feel it worth an extra £20-£30 for a more direct flight. One compensation was that the DC 10s fly very much below capacity and there is bags of room. On our flight out there were only 30 of us occupying 300 seats which meant we really could stretch out and go to sleep.

Also, I think we all felt the short stay in Kabul to be something of a bonus in view of the presence of the Russian Air Force in staggering numbers.

Pete and I landed in Delhi shortly after midday and our first priority was to get our air freight out of customs. We had heard of long delays being encountered but were fortunate enough to get the procedures just right with the result that by the lunch-time the following day we had everything in our hotel room in Delhi.

CUSTOMS CLEARANCE

On passing through customs it is worth getting a Landing Certificate which entitles you to import a small amount of goods (about Rs 1000/-) duty free. It is not really necessary and we did not use it but it could be a second line of defence, as it were, should the normal procedures go wrong.

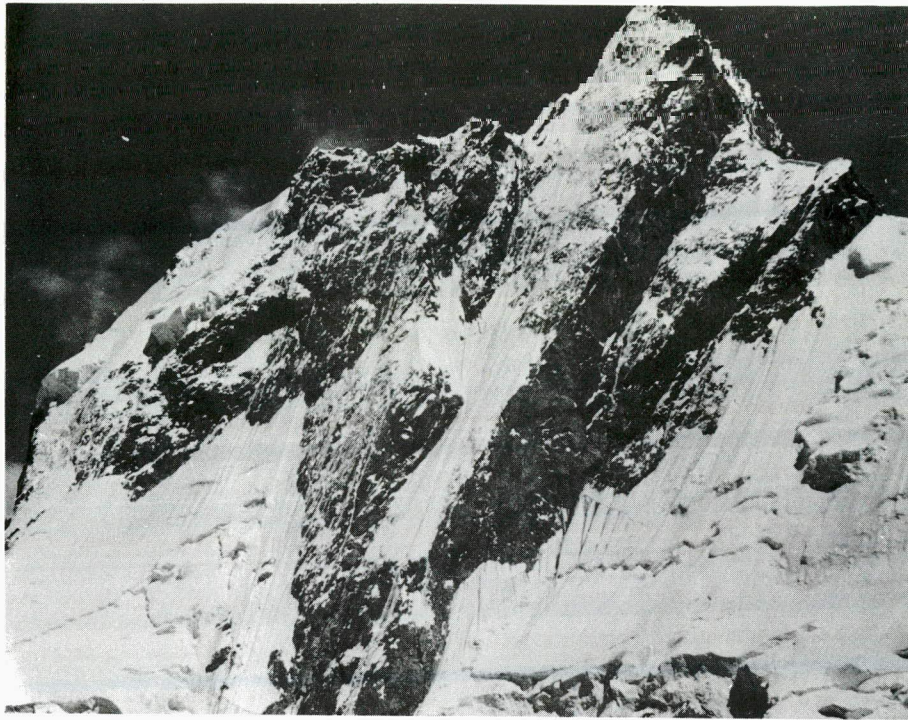
The first thing to do on arrival is to visit the Pan Am office about 100 yards from the main building to collect a further copy of the Waybill. The packages will have been delivered by Pan Am to the Customs Warehouse Corporation, about 3 kms away on the Gurgaon Road. Do not bother going there next as nothing can be done at this stage. From the airport we went into Delhi, booked into the YWCA Guest House and went straight off to the IMF which is situated in Rajarji Marg (formerly King George Ave) a little beyond a large Government building known universally as South Block. The main thing to do at this stage is to get from Munshi Ram a letter to the Customs explaining who you are and claiming total exemption from all customs dues (even on food). He knows what is required and it will not take him long to provide the necessary authorities. Having obtained the letter we then called it a day. There would be no point going back to the customs unless you have a clear half day left.

The following morning, armed with the Waybill, letter from the IMF, passports and lots of patience we went back to the CWC warehouse. It opens at 10 a.m. but it is worth being early (we were entry No 1 on the daily ledger) since it becomes bedlam as the day wears on. The department you want is the Unaccompanied Baggage Unit round the back of the building and as soon as they will let you in you park yourself inside the office of the Superintendent himself. From then on you are in their hands for the next three hours or so. The procedure involves a great deal of to-ing and fro-ing, the collection of large quantities of paperwork and can be a severe drain on reserves of patience. It does no good to try speeding things up or to become angry. In fact the people there are as helpful and considerate as they can be within the constraints of the rules and procedures (it is these, not the people that are irksome).

Two things can be done in advance which will expedite matters. The first is to prepare very detailed lists (several copies) of the contents and values of each package. Everything is exempt duty but keep the values ridiculously low anyway. In the case of food boxes containing pre-packed high altitude food it is sufficient to specify X number of packs and on a separate list give the contents of a representative pack. The second thing concerns the question of re-export. In certain cases the exemption from custom dues is on condition that the goods are re-exported at the end of the trip and the person whose name is on the Waybill will have an entry made in his passport to ensure that they are in fact re-exported. Obviously food will be consumed while anything which can be classed as personal effects do not matter. The only things which they are concerned about are such things as climbing and camping equipment. They were not too fussed about all of that either as long as you specify a reasonable amount. It might be worth preparing a list (in duplicate) with values, in advance, although we had not done so and had to make one out on the spot. Not merely does it save time but impresses the customs officials. The important thing to remember is that you will eventually have to prove that you have re-exported everything on the list, so you should avoid including anything that is likely to be left behind.

ACCOMMODATION IN DELHI

On Ant Whenton's recommendation we decided to stay at the YWCA International Guest House in Sansad Marg (still known by many as Parliament Street). It cost £8 a night Bed and Breakfast for a double room and lunch and dinner were just under a £1 each. The food is excellent in quality and quantity and the rooms are air-conditioned. The WMCA we gather is cheaper but not air-conditioned and there are many smaller hotels, some extremely cheap. It is worth noting also for parties operating on a very limited budget that the IMF have just opened a climbers hostel with dormitory accommodation somewhere near the airport. It will be very cheap but we did not visit it and cannot say what



BRAMMAH 11



Lower ridge, FLAT TOP

the standard will be like. Apparently there is a climbing wall provided.

LIAISON OFFICER

Apart from the customs documents and as a courtesy the only other reason for visiting the IMF is to contact the appointed Liaison Officer. The question of the LO was one which had worried us since many of the reports speak of delays of up to 2 weeks waiting for an LO to arrive. We thought we had overcome this problem rather nicely by, as it were, appointing our own. Ant Wheaton's report of 1978 had mentioned one Abdul Hamid Hap, a clerk in the Tehsildar's (local administrator/magistrate) office at Kishtran, who had been very helpful to them. The following year he had arranged for Hamid to be their LO and this had been an excellent arrangement since he was on the spot, had many local contacts and of course could be met in Kishtran rather than Delhi. He was also known not to want to go above Base Camp. Ant recommended him to us, I wrote to him inviting him to be our LO, got permission from his employer, the Tehsildar, and then sought the approval of the IMF, which Munshi Ram readily gave. However when we turned up at the IMF we were informed that Munshi Ram had changed his mind a few days earlier, given Hamid to some other party and assigned someone else to us. Fortunately our new LO, P C Pandey, a mathematics lecturer from the Kumaon hills in Uttar Pradesh was already in Delhi and the change did not cause us any delay.

Nevertheless the whole system of appointing LOs is most unsatisfactory for we were now faced with an unknown quantity. The rules say an LO is to be provided with whatever equipment and clothing he needs and of the same standard as the rest of the team. The problems are obvious; you cannot bring footwear from England without knowing the size for instance. Similarly whereas some LOs are content to remain at Base Camp others may wish to climb and the rules say he must be allowed to if he wishes, in which case he will need the full range of equipment including good boots, axe crampons, harness, duvet etc. Again we were fortunate in this respect since, although Munshi Ram introduced "PC" (as he came to be known) as "an outstanding mountaineer", he turned out to be no kind of mountaineer at all. He had attended some kind of course but could not even make it from Base Camp to Advance Base along a commonly used shepherd's path because for a patch of old snow (known henceforth as PC's patch) which the porters crossed barefoot. Nor indeed did he seem to have any feeling for mountains and in fact never once made the effort even to see Flat Top.

Of course the whole thing suited us since we had not brought any climbing gear for him. We could also proceed with our original plans without having to take another person into account. Nor indeed did we have the problems with food that would have arisen above Base Camp as a result of his not being willing to eat beef! On the other hand we could not use him to ferry loads. In addition we had to pay his transport from Delhi, pay for his accommodation on the way, provide him with food at Base Camp and even employ a cook (he did ferry loads from Base to ABC) and really received very little in return.

To be fair he was a pleasant enough fellow; it is the system which needs revision. LOs may have been necessary for the large scale expeditions of the past but are an unnecessary drain and intrusion upon the small, intimate expeditions of today.

DELHI - KISHTWAR.

Having dealt with the customs, the IMF and the LO and having paid a courtesy visit to the British High Commission (a requirement in my case as a serving officer) where we left personal details, including blood groups, the only remaining task was to book seats on a train to Jammu.

The only way to travel any distance by train in India is first class, which ensures you 4 to a compartment, a sleeping bench each and a fan (though not necessarily electricity to work it!) and the only way to get a first class seat is by booking in advance at the Northern Railway Booking Centre, just behind Block C, Connaught Circus. This task was completed by Friday evening so all the formalities were dealt with within 36 hours of our arrival. When the rest of the party arrived Saturday lunch time they had nothing to do but rest before leaving for Kashmir on Sunday.

The overnight train journey to Jammu was most unpleasant. It began with a four hour delay in New Delhi station, it was extremely hot and finally the electricity supply to our carriage failed so that we spent most of the night without either light or fans, which made it impossible for most of us to sleep, the heat being practically unbearable.

As a result of the late start there was no question of catching the morning bus to Kishtwar and we had to spend the day and night in Jammu. We stayed at the Tourist Reception Centre which has some air-conditioned rooms at about £3 a night for a double room. It also has a revolting restaurant selling awful food and it is worth knowing that directly across the street is the Cosmos, one of the best restaurants in town, and the team is unanimous in recommending its Russian salad and Nan bread (amongst other things).

Having to spend a day in Jammu was not in fact a problem at all. On the contrary it is essential, as we accidentally discovered. We had expected to be able to buy most of our local food in Kishtwar but since we were in Jammu anyway did our shopping there. It was as well we did since we later discovered that very little of the things we wanted were

available in Kishtwar anyway. I would not advise any party to rely on being able to buy anything there.

There is one thing you must buy in Jammu and that is Paraffin which is in extremely short supply in India. Even there it was extremely difficult to get since there is a law prohibiting the sale of more than 5 litres at a time. This was the one case where the LO was extremely useful. After two hours of tramping the streets he managed to persuade one trader to take pity on us. Let me say again there is no Paraffin to be bought in Kishtwar (I had been warned of this in advance by Hamid).

That evening I went to the bus station to book seats on the morning bus to Kishtwar. Technically you don't need to book seats but the only seats even mildly tolerable on a fundamentally intolerable leg of the journey are the front seats so it is important to book in advance.

The buses are desperately uncomfortable and in imminent danger of falling to pieces but the drivers are superb; they have to be to survive a fourteen hours drive along an unmetalled road, usually wide enough for only one vehicle and, for over half the journey, with a sheer drop of at least 2,000 ft down to the Chenab a mere foot or two from the nearside wheels.

Fortunately the bus stops every now and again and you can get out, stretch your legs and have a cup of tea (we took to keeping our plastic mugs with us at all times since an Indian cup of tea is very small - and the cups rather dirty - and it was better to buy 2 or even 3 at a time): (note that the tea will automatically have sugar in it unless you specify "Nai chini").

The bus will probably arrive in Kishtwar after dark and the depot is some way from the Dak Bungalow but for a small sum, 10 - 15 Rupees, the bus driver may be persuaded to drive you, and more important your luggage, down there when everyone else has got off.

The Dak Bungalow is a very pleasant place to stay but has only 6 rooms and is easily filled. If you know the exact date of your arrival it might be worth trying to book by post.

Two things have to be done in Kishtwar. The first is to report to the Police Station where a note is made of Passport numbers etc. The second is a visit to the Tehsildar. Strictly speaking this is unnecessary but in fact he is the most powerful man in the whole area and can be extremely helpful. In the past there have been problems with mules. Mainly as a result of Japanese parties paying 2 or 3 times the going rate there have been attempts to levy exorbitant charges and also cases of attempted blackmail somewhere along the route. In addition, now that the road has been extended another half day's walk on from Kishtwar you would wish to pick up mules at the new roadhead, Palmar and this should be

arranged in advance. The Tehsildar can help with both these situations; he will send one of his men to Palmar (you pay his bus fare) to secure the services of a muleteer and will also ensure that you pay only the normal daily rate (for details see Annex E).

KISHTWAR - BASE CAMP

The bus leaves for Palmar at about 7.30 am and it is worth going the evening before to book seats and to arrange for the bus to pick you up outside the Dak Bungalow, which is on the route. The drive is a most spectacular one down to the Chenab and back up the other side and only takes $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 hrs. It takes some time for the mules to travel in from their grazing and to load up but the first day's march is short so there is no great hurry.

The first overnight stop is normally at the Forest Rest House at Ekhala. Note that although there is a tea shop next door there will probably be no food available at all, except possibly rice. Other parties, and ourselves, have tried to live off the land on the walk-in mainly, I suspect, because all the food, especially that brought from UK is sealed up in waterproof boxes. We would recommend any party make a separate container of food for this period and make sure that it is accessible. On our march we ate very little until we reached Base Camp and this can easily spoil what should be a pleasant and exciting stage of the expedition.

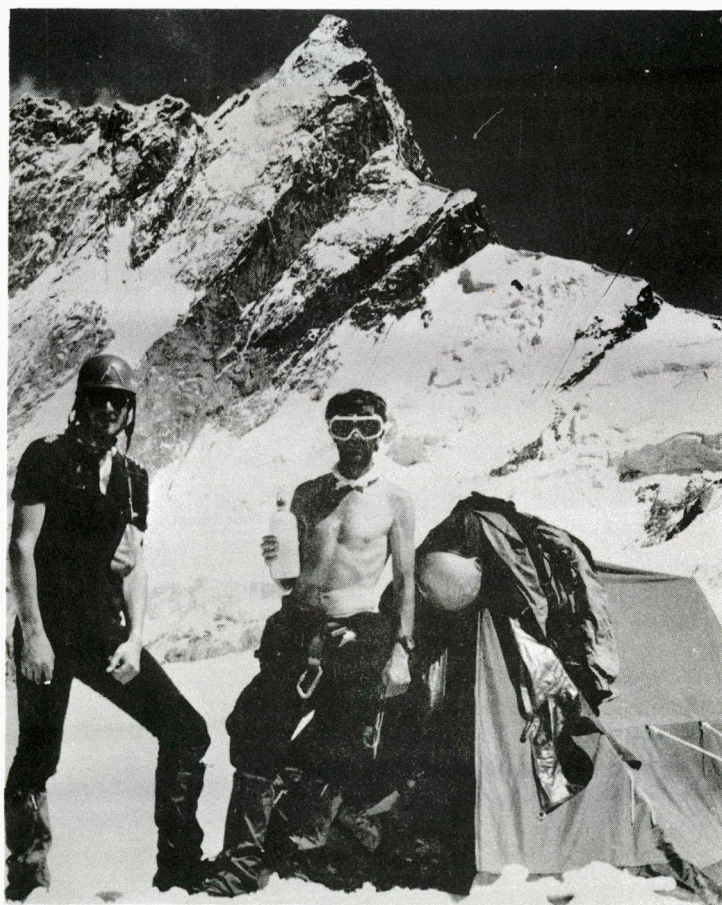
From Ekhala a day's march brings you to Suid. We had heard one could sleep on the floor of the Additional Tehsildar's office but he was away and the office locked. We had been warned by Hamid that we might be charged high prices in Suid so we were a little suspicious when we were invited to stay in the house of Om Prakash at Poindhara to one side of the village. In fact he turned out to be a very good chap who refused to take anything from us except what we calculated we had cost him in tea and flour etc.

The following day was wet at first and the muleteer was not keen to set off up the North Nullah. He felt, or had been told (he had never been there before), that the track was difficult and would be too slippery for the mules. In fact it seemed to us it would be quite safe except perhaps in heavy rain. The result was we had to stay another day in Suid. It is a pity we cannot recommend Suid because the setting, at the junction of the North Kibar and Kiar Nullahs with the Marua, is very beautiful. Unfortunately the village is squalid; no-one had any sort of sanitary arrangements and all the paths were lined with excrement.

Just before Suid is the village of Sondar and here we had engaged as cook an old ex-soldier called Balag Ram. In fact we did not want a cook at all but the IMF rules say the LO must have one so we were delighted with Balag Ram who not only offered to carry loads higher up but would accept 20 Rupees a day, a good rate. On the other hand we engaged another chap in Suid to come up with us and carry loads after Base Camp and this proved worse than useless. He came to



BRAMMAH GLACIER



**PETE FINKLAIRE
MURRAY HODGSON**

to base, took his money and took off. As it turned out we didn't need him anyway. After Suid the next stage is to Hawal or thereabouts. There is nowhere to stay at Hawal so it is probably better to go on beyond the cultivation to a camp site by the river although it makes for a long day.

The last day's walk is a very short one to Sattarchin where one has to make Base Camp, since if you are going to the South side of the Brammah glacier it is as far as the mules can go. It is a superb site anyway, on a wide plain with views up to Eiger on one side and Brammah and his Wife on the other. There are cattle, sheep, goats and horses grazing here and one can buy fresh goats milk from the shepherds who are known as Gujars. These same people were willing to carry loads up from Sattarchin, coming back down the same day.

STOCKING THE LOWER CAMPS

During our planning we had had to confront the problem of the distances between camps. There are obviously two alternatives: to place them a complete day's march apart or at such a distance that we could carry up a load and return the same day. The latter possibility might mean more camps overall but we decided in its favour for three reasons. If the camps were a full day apart we would have to carry sleeping bags and personal kit everywhere, thus reducing the amount of communal equipment on each trip. Secondly, by staying the night at the end of each carry we would be burning fuel and eating food we had just carried up. Finally we would not have been able to use porters between the lower camps without providing them with food and shelter.

Our first step then was to move everything up to an Advance Base Camp above the S bank of the glacier just before the glacier itself swings round into the Southern turn at the place Ant Whenton called the Corner. With help from Balag Ram and 2 locally employed porters we accomplished this in 3 days and henceforth did not visit Base again until the retreat from the mountain. The spot chosen for Advance Base Camp had two unexpected advantages arising out of the presence there of some shepherds known as Bakarwals; they provided us with a little fresh milk each day and two of them were willing to carry loads on the glacier.

During the last 2 days of the carry to Advance Base Camp we had split into two groups and Roger and Murray had gone on ahead to reconce the route and find a site for Camp 1. On rounding the Corner they had descended to the dry glacier and followed it South and then East to a site just an hour short of the bergschrund at the foot of an obvious contour leading to the North Ridge. It was a long stage but still short enough to do a round trip in one day.

The first time we did a mass carry the two Bakarwals would only go half way, as far as the end of the rubble and beginning of the ice proper, but on the second day they overcame their misgivings and carried all the way to Camp One. Thus, in two days we were able to install ourselves at the head of the glacier and move on.

FLAT TOP

Our next objective was to place a camp on the ridge which we hoped to gain by an obvious couloir. From a distance the bergschrund looked difficult. In fact it did not cause any problem except that we had to cross it on one side of the contour in the morning when going up but descend the other side by abseil later in the day when there was considerable stonefall across our ascent route.

The couloir was easy and led to a magnificent snow col with a tremendous view of the North West face of Brammah II. Here we placed two of the tents specially designed for the expedition by Murray and Pete and which proved highly satisfactory (see Annex D). Two carries were required to stock this Camp 2 with one day lost in between due to poor weather.

It is worth noting at this point that we enjoyed very good weather throughout the trip. Only two days above Base Camp had to be completely written off and one other partially. Towards the end there was a tendency for the weather to deteriorate in the afternoon and we had fresh snow during the nights. This would normally clear but was beginning to accumulate after about the middle of August. If our experience, and the negative indications of other expeditions, can be taken as a guide then the period mid-July to mid-August seems to be the best time to climb in this region.

From the col it had been our intention to follow the crest of the ridge as much as possible and certainly as far as a rock band at the base of the final pyramid. However this proved impossible due to a number of large crevasses barring the lower sections and we embarked up on the first of a series of traverses along the East side of the ridge. At the end of the first of these we climbed back towards the crest and placed another of our special tents on a platform cut out of a steep snow slope with the aid of a shovel, designed and made by Pete in such a way as to screw on to the bottom of his ice hammer. This proved to be an excellent and virtually indispensable piece of equipment.

As this last stage was being carried out I had descended to Advance Base Camp to let Jenny know how we were getting on and to collect some 'goodies' and a few bits of equipment. I then went back up to Camp 2 where I met Pete and passed on the news etc from below before he moved on to Camp 3 to catch up Murray and Roger. The following day they were intending to tackle the rock band while I moved up behind them to join them at Camp 3. It was at this time that I had misgivings about our ability to complete the climb in the time available. From the col onwards the mountain was proving more difficult than we expected and therefore more time-consuming. We were running short of tents and food as a result of the increased number of camps. After the establishment

of Camp 3 we had only one single-skinned 2-man bivvy tent and a few man-days food left. To have brought up more would have required more time than was left to us. Although the others would have been willing to attempt the final stage as a four I decided that the three of them should go on with the bivvy tent while I began to clear the mountain behind them leaving only what was essential at each camp and eventually dismantling Camp One completely.

From Camp 3 it has been intended to follow the crest of the ridge to the foot of an obvious rock band at the base of the final pyramid. This proved impracticable as the ridge was too sharp and heavily corniced. It became necessary to traverse the East side of the mountain across very steep slopes of snow and rock. The first day the going was very slow and it was not possible, as had been hoped, to place a camp within striking distance of the summit. Again Pete's shovel was put to good use clearing a platform for the tent on a steep snow ridge. The following day was taken up retrieving the tent from Camp 3 and swapping them at the new site (which became the new Camp 3). They now had the bivvy free to be used higher on the mountain.

To make further progress it was necessary first to abseil from the camp to a further traverse line which would lead to the foot of the rock band. The route lay across very steep ice of up to 70° in places but eventually brought them to the rock and some very enjoyable climbing up the rock band. This eventually led to mixed ground and a site for the bivvy tent was found at the foot of a large rock buttress.

The following day was the last available for reaching the summit if we were to keep to our deadline. Although the weather seemed unsettled they set out up a typical Scottish gully which gave way to a snow field leading to the summit ridge. More steep mixed ground followed until they found themselves beneath the very large summit cornices. Some difficulty was encountered breaking through but eventually they surmounted it and stood on the summit. Unfortunately, as is so often the case, the clouds closed around them cutting off any view and after only a short stay they began the descent arriving back at the bivvy tent in good order just as darkness began to fall.

The next day they enjoyed very fine weather but had a very long, strenuous day returning to Camp 3 as the snow conditions had begun to deteriorate considerably. They were even worse the day after as they descended to the col. The workload was gradually increasing because, although I had cleared as much as I could, there was inevitably a certain amount of gear to be collected on the way and by the time they set off from the col (after a day's bad weather which confined them to the tent) they were heavily laden and having to lower gear before them as they went. Even the gully had become difficult and dangerous but they eventually got everything across the bergschrund, that fixed rope being the only one left on the mountain. I had cleared Camp 1 completely so they had to descend all the way to Advance Base Camp and arrived very tired in the late afternoon, where Jenny prepared a celebratory feast and the successful ascent was toasted with a bottle of whisky.

THE MARCH OUT

The day before Pete, Roger and Murray came down to Advance Base Camp I made a trip to Base and back to arrange for porters to help clear Advance Base Camp the following day and mules to take us down to Suid. Although very tired Pete and Roger had to go back up the glacier to collect some gear which had had to be left behind while the rest of us, with the help of Balag Ram and 3 porters, dismantled Advance Base Camp and moved everything down to Sattarchin. Again Pete and Roger had had a very hard day by the time they rejoined us that evening.

There are no mules to be hired at Sattarchin and since it would take an extra 2 days to get some from Suid it seems better to use the horses of the Gujars living in Sattarchin. They are very strong and will carry a little more than mules though one must remember that the constraints on size and shape of packages still pertain. On the other hand the Gujars are shepherds and not as skilled as professional muleteers at securing loads and planning a journey. They began by losing a horse which set at nought our plans for an early start. There were numerous delays as loads began to slip and, since it is a long way from Sattarchin to Suid anyway, the late afternoon found us several miles from our destination. The Gujars now began to agitate in favour of an overnight stop and needed a great deal of persuasion on several occasions to carry on. Darkness fell and only a fortuitous moon enabled us to make Suid by 9 o'clock.

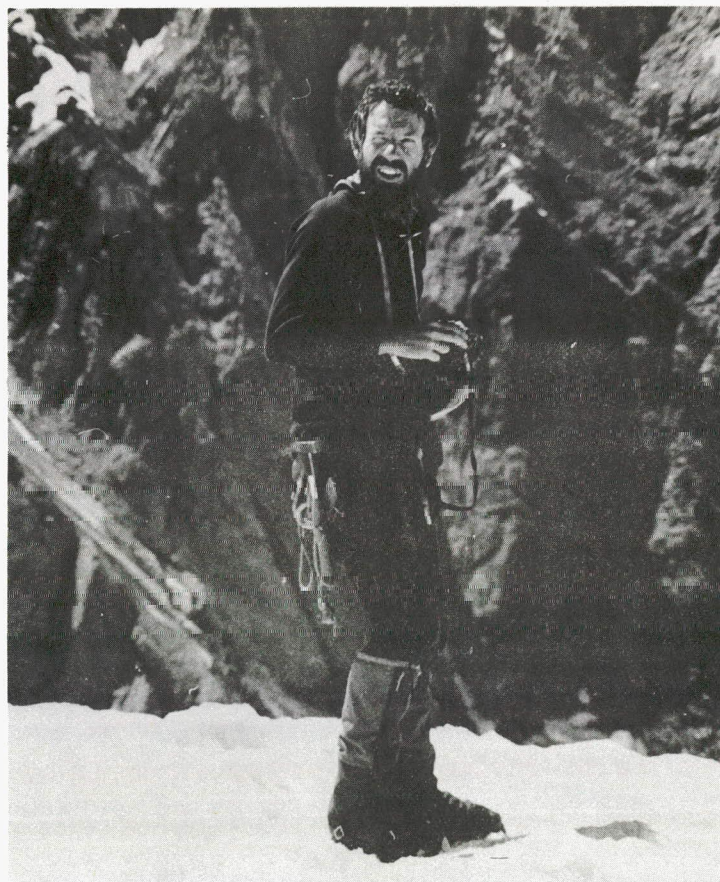
At this stage, because the evacuation of the mountain had been such a speedy one, we had gained a day and from this point on we strove to retain it so as to have an extra day for relaxing in Delhi. We almost lost it immediately as we were told at Suid there were no mules available to take us to Palmar. As the morning wore on we gradually collected, in ones and twos, a group of 5 mules and donkeys and were able to set off at lunchtime. Shortly after crossing the bridge at Suid we came upon a grain depot where there seemed to be plenty of mules and if the same problem should arise again it would be worth inquiring there. Having set off late again it was made clear to us that we would not reach Ekhalā that day but would have to stay overnight at another village from which we were assured we could make Palmar in time to catch the evening bus to Kishtwar at 5.00. This proved to be a very optimistic view as far as the mules were concerned. We were there in good time but if the bus had not been an hour late and if we had not come to a financial arrangement with the driver we would have lost our 'day' at the very end of our march.

The Dak Bungalow at Kishtwar was full and we had to make do with a verandah which meant that, courtesy of the mosquitoes, it was a very tired party which climbed onto the bus at 6 o'clock the following morning. For 10 Rupees we had again arranged for the bus to come and pick us up and this was money very well spent.

On arrival in Jammu PC and I immediately rushed off to the station to book seats on a train to Delhi for the following day. There are five each day and every single one was not



BRAMMAH 1



ROGER PHILLIPS

only fully booked but had a lengthy waiting list. Nemesis had finally caught up with us and we spent our 'day' in Jammu. Even the trains for the next day were fully booked but a bribe of 20 Rupees eventually secured us places.

In Delhi the one remaining chore was to despatch the air freight. We thought this would be a simple matter but it is important to leave a whole morning since it all has to pass through customs who take pains to ensure you are exporting everything you undertook to re-export. It is worth putting everything on the re-export list together so that the customs can check it easily without opening every bag. If anything from that list should be lost on the mountain a certificate to that effect should be obtained from the Liaison Officer. The morning is then spent trekking from one office to another collecting innumerable signatures (including 3 separate visits to the same official). The last thing of all is to pay Pan Am the freight charge and it is worth remembering that you cannot pay in Rupees unless you have saved a Certificate from when you converted your Travellers Cheques (the same applies if you wish to change Rupees back to Sterling at the airport).

This final task completed we surrendered ourselves to a couple of days sight-seeing, buying presents and, most important, eating before eventually boarding the plane for UK.

ANNEX A

Balance Sheet

<u>INCOME</u>		<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
	£		£
Mount Everest Foundation	300	Travel: Air Fares	1350
BMC	300	Air Freight	593
Sale of Postcards	280	Trains	88
		Buses	25
		Taxis	27
Members Contributions	2679		<u>2083</u>
	<u>3559</u>	Insurance	197
		Peak Fee to IMF	171
		Eqpt for LO	56
		Food: Mountain, prepacked	330
		Local purchase	<u>130</u>
			460
		Mules	184
		Porters & Cook (for LO)	36
		Accommodation:	
		YWCA	169
		Jammu	21
		Kishtwar	22
		Other	6
			<u>218</u>
		Fuel & Cooking utensils	23
		Tentage, 2 mountain tents	85
		Modifications to tents	12
		Letter heading	26
		Rubber Stamp	8
	<u>3559</u>		<u>3559</u>

ANNEX B

FOOD

Food, as is often the case on expeditions, was by far the most talked about subject, and at times became a point of fantasy!

It is therefore vital to eat well on an expedition, food playing an important part in success.

Our food was split into two sections: Base camp food, which would be eaten up to advanced base camp; and High Altitude Packs, which would be eaten above advanced base camp.

BASE CAMP FOOD

Enough dehydrated meat and vegetables were exported from the UK to supply 90 man/days of food. Combined with local produce, this enabled us to set up a kitchen at advanced base camp, which Jenny controlled. With Jenny resident at advanced base camp, and four climbers coming and going, this system provided variety and flexibility.

HIGH ALTITUDE FOOD

It was decided that 2 man/24 hour self contained packs would be the best way of organising the high altitude food.

The following factors were considered when designing the packs:

- (1) Weight
- (2) Time and fuel required for cooking
- (3) Variety
- (4) Amount of liquid (drink) required for climbing at altitude
- (5) Volume

The food chosen (listed, with quantities) was packed in 8"x8"x3" cardboard cake boxes purchased from a local Baker. These were of perfect size, weighing very little; and when wrapped and sealed in polythene, were strong and waterproof.

All foods which were not available in individual quantities, or could be affected by dampness, were sealed in polythene tubing, using a heat sealing machine. This was very successful in gauging quantities, protecting foods/drinks, and cutting down packaging weight.

Where an alternative appears on the list, the lightest product, together with the lightest of the freeze dried products were selected to make up six summit packs, which weighed 2.5 lbs. The heaviest combination was then selected to form Glacier packs; these weighed 3.2 lbs. The remaining packs were called mountain packs which generally weighed just under 3 lbs.

The packs were also numbered according to flavour so that four climbers could eat the same meal when together, but not have the same menu on consecutive days.

Both the Base Camp food and the high altitude packs were packed into three boxes each weighing 48 lbs., and air freighted to India.

The boxes were well sealed with a heavy gauge polythene and a strong binding tape. These made good mule loads, and remained intact until Base Camp.

Thirty six high altitude packs were made up, which combined with the Base Camp food, gave 162 man days of food against a calculated requirement of 125 man/days (5 people for 25 days). This gave a safety margin of 37 man/days. I still consider these amounts to be about right.

With the exception of the freeze dried foods and condensed milk tubes, all the food was purchased at a local cash and carry.

Oxo became a favourite drink on the mountain, and Pot Noodles were very popular at meal times. Pot Noodles are much cheaper than Freeze Dried Food, but a little heavier.

LOCAL FOODS

INCLUDING FOOD FOR LIAISON OFFICER.

POTATOES	25 kg.
RICE	15 kg.
FLOUR	15 kg.
SUGEE (SEMOLINA)	3 kg.
SUGAR	8 kg.
CONDENSED MILK	12 tins
DRIED MILK	4 bottles
JAM	1 tin & 3 jars
SPAGHETTI	2 packs
TINNED CHEESE	4 tins
CORNFLAKES	2 packs
TINNED FRUIT	10 tins
TINNED FRUIT JUICE	10 tins
BISCUITS	4 packets
SALT	2 packs
DHAL	2 kg.
MASALA	1 pack
TEA	4 500 gram tins
COFFEE	1 large tin
BOURNVITA	1 large tin
CHOCOLATE DRINK	1 large tin
CHOCOLATE BARS	25
BOILED SWEETS	
CUSTARD POWDER (A FAVOURITE)	1 tin

With the addition of our cook the rice and flour ran out, resulting in Balag Ram returning to Suid for more. The rest of the quantities were about right. A few more breakfast foods would have been nice.

BASE CAMP FOOD (U.K.)

All the meat was Bachelors Catering Packs, each pack serving 12.

The soups were all 5 min. Catering Packs.

2	SAVOURY MINCE
2	FARMHOUSE STEW
1	BEEF CURRY
1	CHICKEN CURRY
1	SWEET AN' SOUR CHICKEN
1	BOLOGNESE SAUCE
1	BEEF GOULASH
4	PACKS (1 GALLON) OF SOUP
4	PACK DRIED PEAS
1	PACK DRIED BEANS
1	PACK DRIED CARROTS
1	PACK DRIED ONIONS
12	SACHETS OF CHEESE SAUCE MIX

HIGH ALTITUDE PACK

2 POT NOODLES/INSTANT POTATOE
FREEZE DRIED MEAT PACK
FREEZE DRIED VEGETABLE PACK
PUDDING PACK (MOUNTAIN HOUSE INSTANT WHIP)
BREAKFAST PACK (FREEZE DRIED OMLETTE/GRANOLA/MUSELLI)
2 CUP-A-SOUPS (2 FLAVOURS)
2 RISE & SHINES (5 FLAVOURS)
2 BARS OF CHOCOLATE - 50 GRAM BAR
2 NUTS & RAISINS/PEANUTS
2 BARS OF OAT CAKE (HOME MADE)
2 OXO CUBES
10 SUGAR SACHETS
6 TEA BAGS
1 BAG CHOCOLATE DRINK (MAKES 2 MUGS)
2 CUP-BAGS INSTANT COFFEE
1 BAG DRIED MILK/TUBE CONDENSED MILK
 $\frac{1}{2}$ PACK MEDICATED THROAT SWEETS
CANDLE
TOILET TISSUE
MATCHES
SALT

ANNEX C

CLIMBING EQUIPMENT

HARDWARE: The following list of equipment was split into two 'leader kits', to enable two pairs to move independently on mixed ground:

- 50 KARABINERS
- 4 DEAD MEN
- 12 ICE SCREWS/DRIVE INS
- 7 x 2 FOOT SNOW STAKES
- 15 ROCK PITONS
- 12 CHOCKS
- 15 SLINGS
- VARIOUS LENGTHS OF WEBBING TAPE

ROPE:

- 4 150' 9mm CLIMBING ROPE
- 3 150' 9mm FIXED ROPE
- 1 300' NO. 2 FIXED ROPE

Before leaving U.K. I had manufactured the 7 2 ft. snow stakes and a snow shovel which screwed onto the end of my ice hammer.

The snow stakes were used all over the mountain for many purposes, and were all left behind as abseil anchors during descent.

The shovel became one of the most vital pieces of equipment on the expedition, as every camp above the col was dug in to the slope. We would have been in real trouble without it.

A few more dead men would have been useful - four were not enough.

The 300 ft. No. 2 rope was the only rope left in place - to abseil over the bergshrund to the glacier.

Although not all the hardware was used, we felt the safety margin to be correct. A fair amount of hardware was left on the descent.

ANNEX D

TENTAGE

Tents taken	Vango	MK 5	STD	1
	"	MK 4	CN	1
	"	MK 3	STD	1
	"	MK 3	LW	1
	"	MK 2	STD	1
	Conquest	Special		2
	"	"	Link extension	1
	"		Mountain Bivvy	2

The Vango characteristics are well documented and need no explanation other than that they were used only at Base, ABC and Camp 1, ie up to 15,000 feet. The main problem with the Vango is that on snow or ice it cannot be left unattended. Pegs will melt out in snow and in ice they cannot be tensioned since this will cause them to 'creep' through the ice very quickly. On the dry glacier we used rocks entirely as anchors.

The Conquest Special was developed by us from the basic Conquest. The inner was square-ended and had a double door, the extra one being of mosquito netting. The rear was zipped in an inverted V to give access to a separate storage compartment. A snow valance was attached to the sides and rear with eyelets to give the option of fixing close to the tent walls or by available materials on the valance. 'A' poles at each end rested in eyes through valance to give rigidity. The fly sheet was of conventional design but with inverted V zips at the front and with a snow valance all round. Again we had the option of using pegs in rubbers at the junction of fly and valance. It proved a very versatile tent and performed well even at altitude. No difficulties were encountered with either leaks or condensation. The rigidity provided by fixing the poles through the valance was appreciated, especially at Camp 3 where, because the site was a platform cut out of a steep slope, the outer poles were supported by stakes driven horizontally into the snow. However at 17 lbs we felt that it was rather too heavy.

The Conquest Mountain Bivouac tent, again developed by us was single skinned with a single rear pole and sleeved A poles at the front. It had a tunnel entrance, central guys and two tapes through the ridge to allow the occupants to belay directly through the tent. It was used at the highest camp where it had to sleep 3 though designed only for 2. Cooking was difficult in the tunnel and there were problems with seepage and condensation but as a bivouac it did what was asked of it. It weighed 8 lbs.

ANNEX E

TRANSPORT

Delhi-Jammu - by rail - 1st class sleeper overnight costs Rs 129/- each (£7).

Jammu-Kishtwar - there are four buses each morning and the journey takes 13-14 hours costs Rs 13 to 16 (less than £1) and depending upon how much is charged for your luggage (there does not appear to be a standard rate).

Kishtwar-Sattarchin

Mules are best arranged through the Tehsildar since this gives protection against being charged exorbitant rates. The going rate for us was Rs 50/- per day per mule, though a tip is expected at the end of the journey. Each mule will carry 70 Kg but it must be packed in long, thin shapes. We found that army kit bags, which can be bought very cheaply are not only ideal but can also be padlocked.

At Sattarchin you will find horses which can be hired at 50 Rs per day to take you down as far as Suid where mules are always available.

Porters

The going rate seemed to vary somewhat. The prices quoted in Suid were Rs 30 per day, we paid Balag Ram Rs 25, but the high altitude shepherds were happy with Rs 20 per day.

ANNEX F

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

The team did not include a medical officer but all had some experience at least of mountain medicine either through association with mountain rescue teams or through attendance on courses. In addition we took some pains to acquaint ourselves with the various drugs included in our medical kits and in particular learnt how to administer intramuscular injections. It was noted that an orange makes a suitable uncomplaining subject for experiment.

We assembled two complete medical boxes one for ABC and a lighter one which was carried to Camp 2. In addition each member of the party carried a certain amount of basic first aid equipment, a selection (according to taste) of analgesics and a specially made up emergency kit. This latter comprised a syringe, needle, sterilising swab, cotton wool and a 30mg/1ml ampoule of Fortral packed inside a stout plastic cylinder cut from the spindle of a roll of computer paper.

In the event, apart from some minor stomach upsets on the walk in, the usual headaches and one case of chronic constipation, which became part of the folk-lore of the expedition, no medical problems were encountered. The local people constantly came to us for any medicine we were willing to dispense and were not easily put off by our self-confessed medical ignorance. A good supply of enteric-coated aspirin had been recommended to us for the contingency.

Two weeks before leaving UK we began to take anti-malarial precautions and one day before leaving we started prophylaxis against dysentery.

Shortly after our arrival back in UK one member of the team exhibited short-lived (after days only) symptoms of malaria but this was never confirmed despite blood samples being scrutinised.

The medical boxes contained a good supply of bandages and plasters and the following drugs:

Paladrine - for malaria - some strains are now resistant to this and chloroquin or some other might be preferable.

Streptotriad - protection against dysentery - we were warned of possible side effects and of mild withdrawal symptoms (upset stomachs) after 6 or 7 weeks of constant use. Neither was noticed by any of us. Its use was suspended anyway for the period above ABC.

Frusemide - Tablets - for oedema, e.g. swelling of ankles or wrists, or breathlessness.

- Ampoules (40mg) - for more serious cases, particularly if pulmonary oedema is suspected.

Stemetil - for nausea or vomiting.

Nulacin - for indigestion.

Lomotil - for diarrhoea.

Fybogel - for constipation (a fibre regime rather than a purgative).

Histryl - for rashes and mild allergic reactions.

Hydrocortisone Sucinale - ampoules and sterile water for severe allergic reactions indicated by extreme swelling of the mouth, tongue and eyes.

Floxapen - a form of penicillin for wound infections. Check that recipients are not allergic and suspend streptotriad while undergoing treatment.

Tetracycline - for anything requiring extra antibiotic cover or if patient is allergic to penicillin. Again suspend streptotriad.

Panadol - for headaches etc.

Codeine Phosphate - for headaches - very small and easily swallowed, say, if throat is dry or sore.

Enteric-coated aspirin - for headaches and as placebo for locals with unidentified complaints.

Distalgesic - for more severe headaches.

Fortral - ampoules of 30mg and 60mg for severe pain such as resulting from injury.

Chloromycetin Eye Ointment.

Merocets - for sore throats (we found these good).

Anusol - for piles - never used (is this unique?).

Cymex - for cracked lips.

Hibitane - antiseptic cream.

Lasonil - for bruises, sprains (found ineffective).

Tinaderm - foot powder, fungicidal.

ANNEX G

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography was a personal matter, with members using their existing cameras, and choosing and buying their own film.

It requires great effort of will to keep taking photographs at high altitude, especially when the climbing is hard, and the weather threatening. However, everyone worked well at this "chore", resulting in an extremely good photographic record of the expedition, both in quality and range.

EQUIPMENT

ROGER	CANON A.E.I. 28mm LENS 50mm LENS 150 - 200mm ZOOM LENS
ROD	PENTAX SPOTMATIC 50mm LENS
MURRAY	ROLLEI B.35
JENNY	CHINON CM3 28mm LENS 50mm LENS 200mm LENS
PETE	OLYMPUS OMI 28mm LENS 50mm LENS 135mm LENS 2 x TELE CONVERTER COKIN FILTERS - GRADUATED TOBACCO GRADUATED NEUTRAL GRAY STAR BURST POLARISING PASTEL

The rewind mechanism on Murray's Rollei failed after its first film. The Chinon CM3's light meter slightly over exposed most of its shots. The rest of the equipment performed well.

All members used ultra violet filters fitted to all lenses permanently. These helped to cut down the glare at high altitude, and protect the lens.

The only equipment used above advanced base camp was Rod's Pentax, Roger's Canon with standard and wide angle lenses, and my Olympus with standard lens. I carried my 2 x tele converter and the five Cokin filters as far as Camp 3. Above Camp 3, no accessories were carried.

I found the 2 x converter very useful as a lightweight (1/3rd the weight of an extra lens) method of gaining a 100mm focal length lens; however the aperture should be kept above F5.6 to maintain an equal quality. This is generally not a problem with the strong light present at altitude.

The Cokin filters are useful for creating special effects out of already photogenic scenes.

FILM

Ninety per cent of the film used on the expedition was Kodachrome 25.

Slow ASA films give the closest grain and the best quality colour when the slide is projected. Bright conditions at altitude not only permit the use of slow ASA films, but require it.

The colours of Kodachrome 25 complement the deep blues and whites of the mountains. Kodachrome 64 gives a little more versatility for the less bright conditions of the walk in. Colour slide film is not available in India, so it is vital to take all you need; any excess is easily sold in Delhi! I took one roll of Black and White (Ilford FP4), which I used between films at the col.

When boarding an aircraft, hand baggage is often x-rayed. Unless there is a notice to say otherwise, this will ruin film.

Jessops of Leicester are generally the cheapest place to buy film, and if an order is placed by mail, the film is generally received within one week.

Jessops address: Photo Centre, Hinckley Road
Leicester, LE3 0TE.

On bright sunny days at high altitude, I often under exposed by $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ a stop of aperture; this gives a sharper and better colour rendering.

Before leaving the UK I machined a small aluminium bracket which attached a camera by its tripod fitting to an Ice Axe. This made an ice axe into a mono-pod, and with use of the auto timer, photo's of all who were present, including the three of us on the summit, were possible. The bracket was approximately 25mm in diameter, and 30mm in length, and weighed only a few ounces.

