

HINDU KUSH EXPEDITION

1970

IMPERIAL COLLEGE OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Final Report.

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Vote of thanks

The Imperial College Hindu Kush Expedition 1970 wishes to thank the Imperial College Exploration Board for its sponsorship without which the expedition would have been impossible.

Conception and plans of the expedition

The early stages of any expedition are the most difficult; imagination in selecting an objective is called for and this is not a commodity one can purchase. In our case Ian, an avid mountaineering literature gourmet was reading Doug Scott's report of his 1967 Midlands Hindu Kush Expedition in which the area to the east of the Munjan was suggested as a little climbed region. The Hindu Kush as a whole also had the advantages of good weather and cheap and easy access; in short it lent itself to alpine climbing for the amateur. We obtained a useful list of addresses from this report and hence procured a map of the region centering on the high mountain chain running N.N.E.-S.S.W. dividing the Munjan from the Bashgal. For this map and other essential information of the climbing already done here we are indebted to Wolfgang Frey who keeps the Archives of Climbing in the Afghanistan Central Hindu Kush. More information was gleaned from the Royal Geographical Society which in turn yielded published books on the Hindu Kush, Eric Newby's 'A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush' being the most entertaining and readable.

From this jumbled mess of facts Bruce and Ian selected the Toghw valley because at that time it was unvisited and there were plenty of high unclimbed peaks at its head. We proposed to reach the valley by taking porters and pack animals from Kamdesh in the main Bashgal Valley travelling west to the Parun Ost over the mountain chain via the Kotal Weran or Sudrimbida, down to the Munjan Valley and north up this until we were able to enter the Toghw from the West. This march in route was chosen in preference to the standard approaches from the north via Faizabad or the S.W. via the Anjuman because it would break new ground but unfortunately we could not implement these plans owing to porterage problems. We also hoped to inspect the Kotal Toghw and to see if it was possible to return with pack animals over this high pass from the Munjan to the Bashgal.

By this time Ian and Bruce are not alone in their researching, in fact the expedition seemed to have formed itself and all seven of us were doing our bit to get it well and truly established. Although we had missed the Mount Everest Foundation grants, for it was then late February, Imperial College Exploration Board put us on a firm financial base with a contribution of £450. All the work which followed in obtaining gifts from firms or goods at reduced rates required a steady plodding pace, patience and tenacity, three characteristics essential to the structure of the whole expedition.

Summary (of the expedition).

Firstly the expedition personnel

Paul Bunting - civil engineering undergraduate at I.C.

Bruce Booker - chemical engineering undergraduate at I.C.

Dave Palmer - a man who decided electrical engineering at I.C.
was too much of a strain.

Maggie Staples - just graduated in Sociology at Reading and
honey mooned in the H.K.

Ian Staples - graduate in botany at Reading who disliked his
Ph.D. work at I.C. and also honey mooned in the H.K.

Kev. Wills - just graduated in geology at I.C.

Rich. Wroot - just graduated in physics at I.C.

Here it is proposed to give a brief outline of the outcome of the expedition, only one particular part being referred to later in greater detail.

The expedition left England on July 15th 1970 and arrived in Kabul on July 29th spending 8 days there twisting red tape until leaving for the mountains on August 6th. Arriving at the road head in the Bashgal Valley at Barg-e Matal on August 8th, we spent two days haggling over the price of porters and four days on the walk in.

It must be mentioned here that the proposed route from Kamdesh was impossible because the men from the Bashgal would not carry over to the Munjan. Instead we made base camp at Gotugalsee in the high summer pastures at the head of the Skurigal to the east of the main mountain chain and from there struck out at the mountains. In all 18 summits were climbed, 13 of them virgin, the most notable ascents being the Kohe Marchech (6,450m), by the unclimbed S. ridge, Shaki-Kabud (6,190m) by the unclimbed SE. face and a virgin peak, the Pyramid (5,800 m) by the S. face. Two members of the expedition also crossed the watershed, walking from the Skurigal over to the Munjan and back. In total 5 1/2 weeks were spent climbing, the weather being excellent nearly the whole time.

On the return trip we reached Barge Natal on September 22nd, Kabul on September 25th and London on October 18th. Fortunately none of us suffered any major illness but upset stomachs were common as was mechanical trouble with the vehicle. The round trip took 3 1/4 months and we covered some 12,000 miles, saw a lot of different countries, climbed plenty of mountains and above all enjoyed ourselves. One comment which will always stick in my mind was made by Bruce who took up climbing when he first came to I.C. - 'The first climbing holiday I had in the Alps, so obviously the second needed to be in an outlier of the Greater Himalaya, the Hindu Kush - what more can a man ask for?'

TRAVEL REPORT

A quick look at the alternatives - soon made it obvious that the only way we could afford to transport ourselves and a couple of tons of gear to Afghanistan was by driving overland. Having decided this we looked around for a suitable vehicle, and being of the opinion that four wheel drive was desirable and cheapness essential we settled for an ex WD truck. The most suitable variety was an Austin K9, being amply strong enough for us as well as reasonably fast and within the 3 ton limit, enabling it to be driven on an ordinary driving licence. The main disadvantages are that it is petrol and for the outward journey the passenger space was a bit cramped.

Having purchased a fine example of this model by suitably devious means we set about giving it a check over. The clutch was replaced with new components, as were the front brake shoes and rubbers in the brake system. The gearbox and radiator had seen better days and so sound second hand replacements were purchased. A new fuel pump, distributor, a third seat in the cab and a general check over finished the mechanical work.

Finally, resplendent in a new coat of ex British Railways maroon paint and with hastily assembled luggage racks crammed on in every

vacant nook and cranny, announced by squawks from a newly acquired klaxon, Albert, as he was from henceforth known was driven back up to London, arriving there shortly after midnight.

Several days later Albert was fully, very fully, loaded and many an anxious glance was thrown at the sagging springs and bulging tyres, not to mention the assorted articles tied on all over, and the small space left under the canvas back in which four people were expected to sleep. But our worries proved unfounded and we were soon bombing off to Ramsgate, accidentally missing the last hover flight and therefore being forced to spend the night at Kev's father's house. By pure coincidence he had just laid in a large stock of alcoholic beverages which we consumed so as not to cause any offence. The next morning saw a sorry group of explorers staggering out to the truck. Kev. was tastefully sick over the daffodils, but the prize for the best hangover must be awarded to Paul who puked for almost the entire hovercraft crossing as well as in every capital of Western Europe.

The hovercraft from Ramsgate to Calais provided a cheap if unpleasant trip to France and in the first 24 hours we covered 700 miles - frightening speeds being registered, or rather not registered by our 60 mph. speedo, down some of the autobahn hills. However, a

slight misfire developed at high revs, which gradually worsened as the journey proceeded. After much cleaning of the carburettor and retiming of the ignition it was diagnosed to be a fault in the fuel supply and pump. We never really overcame this and the greater part of the return and some of the outward journey was accomplished by siphoning fuel from Jerry cans on the roof rack.

On the morning of the fourth day we arrived in Istanbul and crossed the Bosphorous. Then came long days across Turkey, split by delicious cups of Turkish coffee, taking us through the mountains near Erzerum providing some exciting night driving on unmade roads. For the return we found the road to the south to be much better for this section. It was on the long hills and in the hot weather in Turkey that we found we had overheating problems. This was alleviated partly by smashing out the faulty thermostat with a hammer and partly by propping open the bonnet, which was later removed altogether in the Persian desert. So after about a week we arrived at the Turkey-Persian border which was closed for the night so we had our first and much needed stop to sleep.

We woke early the next morning to a superb view of Mt. Ararat, of Noah's Ark fame, across the plain. This was the first really non-European border and proceedings were typically slow and thorough. In general we did not have much trouble with borders either going out or returning. Some took 5 or 6 hours but this was just the normal workings.

The most irritating was the Bulgaria - Turkey border where each way we were asked to unload the truck completely .not an easy task.

Another two days took us to Teheran and good roads where more by luck than judgment we chose the Caspian Sea route to Meshed. This proved to be a wise choice as the weather was much cooler than on the more direct desert route. The road was good through the Elburz Mts. but we were briefly hindered by a torrential rain storm causing a series of landslides to block the road. Again it was the middle of the night but it was also a bank holiday and there was a lot of stationary traffic to add to the confusion. Those in the back were awakened by the back wheel dropping into a drainage ditch and so once woken we thought we might as well clear a way through as only one Persian coach driver seemed to be doing anything. After a very wet, muddy hour or so we cleared most of the big rocks, then Albert ploughed strongly through the waist deep mud in 4 wheel drive with very little effort. The next two landslides were smaller and when we had towed a few cars out of them we were able to continue on our way leaving the jammed traffic behind and feeling rather smug.

The Caspian Sea Meshed section was over rough unmade dusty roads but was quite pleasant through wooded country, gradually changing to

desert at Meshed. After Meshed was the desert proper and the overheating problem persisted. We were all right if we kept going but a stall was enough to cause vaporisation in the fuel line and a cooling off stop. Thus we arrived at the Afghan border late one evening where we found the English speaking customs very helpful in getting us through that night, although we were required to produce lists of stores which should have warned us of future problems. That night we had our second sleep stop on what we thought was an empty piece of land, but in the morning we woke surrounded by people from a village set back from the road who regarded us with quiet curiosity while we had breakfast and prepared to leave.

The next section across Afghanistan was on very good Russian or American built toll roads all the way. A pleasant stop was made at a modern though now a bit run down, Russian hotel which had a excellent swimming pool. At this stage the fuel supply was giving a lot of trouble and we finally rigged up the jerry can supply system so the pump did not have to lift the petrol at all i.e. a gravity petrol feed, Finally a day later and two weeks after setting off we arrived in Kabul.

In Kabul the fuel line was replaced by a length of plastic tubing and we were able to revert temporarily (until we were almost

back to Kabul on the return, as it happened) to using the proper fuel pump. To make up for this we developed a misfire which turned out to be a blown head gasket. Luckily, we had plenty of these and so this presented no real problem. The only puncture of the trip, a nail, was repaired locally for 60 Afs, about 6/-, including a new valve stem at the same time. Generally the tyres gave very little trouble. They were not new to start with and were in reasonable condition when we returned. When we did check the pressures they were never much down and we never used our own puncture repair kit.

After two weeks in Kabul, spent camping by night up at the Khaga Dam Lake behind the city and by day in numerous official offices, we reloaded and set off towards the mountains. The route went down through the very impressive Kabul Gorge, on the W. Pakistan road, to Jallalabad, where we turned off north and along the minor road to the mountains. This led up along the W. Pakistan border following a huge river valley for about two hundred miles, and being a border area we required special permission. The road itself was the worst so far being no more than a single lane track, and was very slow. We decided to stop that night rather than risk the drive. Late the next evening after a very nerve racking day following the unstable looking road

along the edges of steep gorges and over very rickety bridges we arrived in Kamdesh where at that time we intended to hire donkeys and porters. The next day we found that this approach to the climbing area was impractical and so continued up the road to the road head at Barg-e Matal.

This last section of road was quite eventful on the mechanical side as one of the side engine mounting rubbers disintegrated allowing the engine to rock more than it should hence this resulted in the fan blades catching on the radiator cowl and causing a blade to snap and fly off, fortunately without damage to the radiator. To balance the fan we hacksawed off the opposite blade, leaving four fan blades. The next thing was a radiator hose bursting due to the engine movement but a spare hose saw us to Barge Matal.

RETURN JOURNEY

Rich and Dave returned early to Barge Matal, where 2 soldiers had been guarding the lorry on the orders of the head of the village while we were away. They repaired the engine mounting by padding it with washers and generally tidied the lorry up, as many bolts and roof racks had worked loose on the bumpy last part of the journey. When we again set off we found the going much easier with the lighter load and we could reduce the amount of four wheel drive used to reduce the chance of breaking a half-shaft on the steep rocky sections, or where a lower ratio had before been needed. All went well until just before dusk when we put a back wheel off the road. By the time we had got back onto the road, (with much digging and arguing about the best way of doing so), it was dark so we stopped for the night.

All went well for the next day until, back on the main road, fuel problems cropped up again and we changed back to jerry cans on the roof. Again we proceeded until, after a period of unusually high revving, the water pump completely fell apart. Obviously, when the fan-blade had broken, the strain had damaged the ball bearing, only bits of which now remained, We turned round and rolled back

down the hill to a good parking spot and village and went to bed. Next day Rich. and Bruce caught the bus into Kabul with the damaged pump and, finding the "garage" section of the town, had the whole lot welded together, with a new bearing, for the very reasonable sum of 200 Afs, returning with it the same night. The next day we arrived back in Kabul for another bout with bureaucracy. Eventually we were off again and the return journey followed the path of the outgoing, points of interest being the second fan-blade failure, cutting us down to 2 blades and calling for heavy hammer work to straighten the pump shaft. A temporary repair was effected in Herat, while the border formalities and Afghan coat buying were done, but in Meshed, to our surprise, we were able to find a second hand Austin Pump on an old rusty Austin truck on the Turkey-Persia border, which yielded an excellent replacement fan so we had no more trouble on this front, although boiling over was still a problem on any hills during the daytime.

The next breakdown developed from a general misfire and power loss through Turkey until one night, as we reached the brow of a hill outside Istanbul, we lost compression completely on one cylinder, due to a burnt-out exhaust valve. The next morning, off came the head again and off we went by bus to Istanbul where we managed to have another made up quite cheaply and indulged in more souvenir

buying before fixing the truck, We went to see Brin and husband who we had met in Kabul. They advised us where to obtain the exhaust valve and, that evening, entertained us to an excellent dinner until feeling very bloated, we decided to have a night's sleep and continued the next day, thanking our hosts profusely. All went well back through Bulgaria until, in Yugoslavia, we could hear another valve going, A few enquiries persuaded us that we might just as well carry on regardless, so we chugged home along the Autobahns to Calais, hovercraft, and finally, London taking just about 5 days more than on the outgoing journey.

So, generally, you could say that, given a reliable vehicle, travel to Kabul and beyond represents no problem nowadays. Both petrol and diesel (much cheaper) is easily and regularly available, The roads in summer anyway, are reasonable all the way and there is a lot of road building in progress. Even after only 2 months we found many rebuilt sections and it won't be long before there is tarmac road all the way. The choice of vehicle was justified in that although four wheel drive would not have been indispensable, it certainly came in very useful on occasions. One thing that is certain is that if it had not been such a generally rugged vehicle it probably would never have survived the rough section or some of the makeshift repairs.

On the subject of repairs, once outside Europe, spares for K9's were unobtainable, but this was more than compensated for by the skill and willingness of the local machine-shops and garages which seemed used to repairing absolutely anything.

The speed of travel was only possible by continuous driving day and night, and at night in the Eastern countries, great care was needed. Extra illumination was essential, so a spotlight was wired in with the main beam, improving matters considerably.

Fuel Consumption : -

Motorway 10-12 m.p.g.

4 Wheel drive ~ 5 m.p.g.

Average over trip of 12,000 miles 9.6 m.p.g.

Walk in and porters

Having finally arrived in Barge Matal we thought our travel difficulties were over, however we had not bargained for the problems of hiring porters. We arrived in the early evening and were most surprised to find a group of American climbers led by Jack Dozier, who had just returned from filming a climb on the West Ridge of Kohe Marchech. Meeting them proved very useful for Jack Dozier was able to give us an outline of the local Katarawie vocabulary which is spoken in this area of Nuristan. Some people did understand Farsee, the Persian which is the official language of both Iran and Afghanistan, but the farther up the Bashgal valley we travelled the more and more the Katarawie was spoken and hence the more useful was the brief dictionary. In another sense, however, the visit of Americans had distinct disadvantages because being a well financed expedition they had paid the price asked of them for porters without haggling and hence had set a precedent. Thus it was very difficult for a group of impoverished English students to hire porters and pack animals for a price which suited their pocket.

The business of hiring the local men began the following morning and at first things went well and we anticipated a lunchtime start.

Most of the men seemed satisfied with 70 Afs. a day agreeing to take 3 days to reach our proposed base camp at Gotugalasee, or the High meadow as the Yanks called it. It was agreed to pay 400 Afs. a day for the one available horse, the same price as the Americans had paid. But the things which we really wanted were donkeys, because they would be less expensive than a horse, yet could carry four times as much as a man. When inquiring about donkeys we were told that none were available, but on reflection we thought this unlikely and that the locals were just trying to get as many men as possible employed as porters and hence make the maximum amount of profit from the portering of our equipment. Over the next couple of days three donkeys were offered and then five and it was agreed to pay them 200 Afs. per day but even with the horse we still needed 12 to 15 men. The chief obstacle in the negotiations was a young man of 19 or 20 called Hazrad Gould. He had been a paratrooper in the Afghan army and seemed to have his head screwed on the right way and insisted that the job would be done but at 100 Afs. a day per man, the price which the Americans had paid. For the first time in our lives we realised how difficult the job of management is, trying to reach a solution satisfactory to both sides. Paul, the self appointed manager of the contract tried his best to knock down the price

and we even pretended that the whole deal was cancelled and we were returning down the valley. But all this sham was to no avail. Whatever the reason, whether it was our incompetence as business managers or the fact that the Americans had set the market, after all the haggling had ended we paid the American Standard Price. 200 Afs. a donkey, 400 a horse and 100 per man per day.

So it was with 5 donkeys, 1 horse and 14 men that we left Barge Matal mistakenly thinking that all our problems were over, for after all the men had promised to reach the base camp some 40 miles away in 3 days and we had enough money to pay so everything was in order. At first things went well but it was painfully obvious that most of the men were not used to carrying heavy loads. Normally they spent most of their time sitting around whilst the women worked out in the fields and were thus a little out of condition. We had not left until lunch time but they had promised to reach Peschawer before stopping for the night, but the day was not without incident. Once the men walked across the edge of a crop field where an old hag was toiling away and she jumped up and came towards them brandishing a stick, screeching obscenities and proceeded to beat them and drive them off the field, much to

their own amusement. The next hour or so passed quickly as the porters forgot about their heavy loads as one and then another mimicked the old witch. About four in the afternoon the men stopped and we could see that trouble was brewing for they said that they could not reach Peschawer that evening. For some obscure reason Ian had a wrestling match with Hazrad Gould the union man and then the men were prepared to carry on although the threat of half wages may have influenced their decision. For the last hour we walked in the dark the donkeys having already stopped with Bruce and Rich. for the donkey man feared their animals might stumble on the stony path, but they promised to catch us up the following day. That night we just camped like a wagon train in the middle of the village square, our gear tied together and surrounded by half sleeping bodies ready to pounce on any stealthy straying hand.

Before we had even set off the next morning the donkeys with Bruce and Rich, our equivalent of Nuristan pack donkeys, had passed through Peschawer and headed on up the Bashgal valley. Three miles up from Peschawer a smaller valley, the Skurigal, went off to the West and it was up here that the base camp and the mountains lay. The scenery here was very impressive. On one side of the confluence a great wall of metamorphic schist rose

sheer for more than a thousand feet, at the foot of it dropping away to the scree and down to the tumbling river below. Here, the path crossed a small rickety wooden bridge, too small for the donkeys, who had to ford several streams where the river formed a small delta on the valley floor before joining the main Bashgal river. Above this progress was slow as the path crossed several scree moraines and so by the early evening it was clear we could not reach Pacygram but stayed the night beneath the small village of Ganjelukeal. But the day had not been without its rewards. Snow capped mountains now appeared on the horizon and the last of the apricot harvest had been gleaned by Afghan porters and English climbers shinning up the prickly trees and raiding the last of the fruit. We slept well that night, all except Rich, who mistakenly had drunk some paraffin which had been bleached by the sun, instead of water. This combined with some altitude trouble saw fit to make him feel ill for the following week, the whole of which proved pure drudgery for a man without his home comforts of a girl friend and pieces of toast with butter dripping off the edges.

We reached Pacygram in the late afternoon and here met with a problem which we had expected. The men of Pacygram, far sturdier and tougher than our present porters, insisted that they should carry

our equipment on up to the base camp and that we should sack our present porters and donkeys. We did not object to paying off most of the Barge Matal men for they had done nothing but grumble since our departure but the donkeys and their keepers had worked well and done all we had asked of them. But we realised that it would be useless arguing so we paid off the porters and donkey men who went off down the valley highly delighted with the profits of the last 3 days, made a list of the Pacygram men who were willing to carry and settled down for the night in this last village up the valley surrounded by craggy rock peaks and great jumbles of moraine. Over to the South on the West of a small side valley rose a fine unclimbed peak, its face dissected by narrow steep icy gullies cleaving up between the great sweeps of granite. A worthwhile climb which we could try after we had climbed the peaks at the head of the valley and so with this pleasant thought and some fine cheese bread which one of the porters Mohammed Gould had procured for us we fell into a very restful sleep.

Without delay the next morning we were off at 8.00 and it was pleasant to be able to wander along at our own pace without having to cajole the porters to move a little faster. At one point the path divided and we took the lower one down by the

river. After a while we stopped to wait for the porters and became anxious when they did not appear. But our worries were without foundation for we found them higher up the valley spending their time in a sporting contest of triple jump, long jump across the river and a game rather like bowls but throwing lumps of stone instead of rolling woods across the green. Whilst we had sat and waited on the lower path they must have overtaken us by the upper path across the moraine. Not to be outdone Ian and Paul tried the long jump across the swollen glacial stream and needless to say finished up in the icy water.

Another hour and a half took us past a small goat pen and round a great pile of rubble which blocked half the width of the valley and then the path dropped slightly to a large flat grassy plain dissected by meandering streams and dotted with grazing goats and cows. It was the high meadow Gotugalasee to the locals, the high pasture where the animals were kept for the summer and at last we had arrived at our base camp. As twilight was falling the porters all knelt down, faced Mecca and prayed. It was a fine sight these local men then the animals grazing out on the meadow and behind the mountains rising ominously in the half-light.

That night Gotugalasee was the scene of great festivity. A huge fire was built, the porters bought or purloined a goat and

singing and dancing continued far into the wee hours. We really knew that we had arrived, all the trials of the past were over, what was before us now depended purely on ourselves. The mountains were there, it only remained to climb them.

Climbing Report3 personal accountsThe Exploits of Bruce and DaveD. Palmer

Since arriving at base camp I had been fired with optimistic enthusiasm to climb point 5,700m, a magnificently pointed peak which was visible between the shoulders of valley A from near base camp. On the first day Ian and I sallied forth with the declared intention of reconnoitering valley A but with the secret purpose of a swift attack on Koh-i-David as it was later nicknamed. We were beaten back after the first day because Ian was badly affected by altitude but we returned with a far more realistic estimate of the scale of the area. To reach the base of the mountain we had about 4 miles of very rough moraine to cross.

The next day Bruce and I sallied forth with twice the amount of food on a second attempt. We spent a peaceful night at Camp 1 which Ian and myself had set up on the previous night. At 7.a.m. the next morning we set out with bivouac gear and four days rations plus climbing gear and flares etc. There is no obvious way through the confusion of moraine waves and such a desolate, demoralising heap of slag I have never seen. We agreed to attempt the ice couloir which leads up to the ridge fairly near the summit rather

than the less steep snow field further to the S.E. and we therefore kept to the right hand branch of the glacier. At about 4.30pm. we were just inside the corrie and for the first time were on clean snow covered glacier. We bivied on a levelled out batch of snow between two grumbling crevasses, using the nylon bag for the first time with our sleeping bags. We both had a good night's sleep and woke to find ice on the inside of the bivi bag and that I had a bad headache which disappeared after about an hour.

We set off again at 7am. when the sun was on us taking stove and brew up material but no heatable food and crossed about a mile of badly crevassed glacier to the foot of the couloir which had a vicious looking bergschrund across it. The couloir is about 1,000ft long and fairly wide with stones rattling down both sides almost continuously. The middle seemed brick-free so we crossed the bergschrund and slogged up at about 45° the snow turning to ice near the top. The large cornice was broken near its right hand edge so we crossed here and found ourselves on the summit ridge. The ridge isn't very steep but the ice and in some places loose, chossy rock

falls away very steeply. Bruce dropped a water bottle which bounced about 100ft below us and disintegrated, demonstrating both the inclination and the brittleness of plastic at low temperature. We were too knackered to reach the summit that day though Bruce was going better than I was. We bivied 600ft below the summit (18,000') and had a brew before sending a green flare and turning in.

Bruce had a restless night and I woke again with a bad head but that soon cleared. We watched a beautiful dawn, the valleys filled with cloud with dozens of sharp pink peaks sticking through. Breakfast, however, ruined our peace of mind - reconstituted apple rings like tasteless rubber and sugarless black coffee far too strong made with the apple water which would have been more suitable for stripping paint than for human consumption.

We crossed a short snowfield and then up about 100ft of easy rock up to what turned out to be a false summit, so feeling a little demoralized we descended about 100ft and climbed another 400ft of mixed ice and rock to the true summit where we spent an hour sleeping and building a pathetically small cairn, which was all we had the energy for. The summit is a pile of boulders which

looks likely to crumble at any moment but from it we had some fine views between a cloud cover which was accumulating. I had stupidly left my camera about 1,000ft down on the ridge so we had to rely on Bruce's black and whites. We could pick out the Tirich Mir massive to the N.E. and what could have been the K2 range in the far distance. To the S. is a beautiful peak of Koh-i-Tundy-Shagai-Shah which is really plastered with snow. We were a little disappointed to find that we were not on point 5797m which we could now see further along the ridge rising about 200ft above us.

The cloud cover was increasing and a few flakes of snow fell so we left the summit and went back down to the previous night's bivi site collected the gear we had left there and continued down. While descending unroped over one of the steep ice pitches Bruce slipped and slid down about 70' but fortunately stopped himself by thrusting his wrist into a pile of sharp rocks causing a deep gash in it (his wrist) from which copious blood gushed. He was, not surprisingly quite shaken, and so was I so I put my crampons on and followed him down the ice very cautiously. After a short stop to bind Bruce's wrist with a snotty handkerchief and collect my camera, we arrived at the top of the couloir which neither of us

were looking forward to. Front pointing all the way down was more strenuous than going up. We were glad to get across the bergschrund having been narrowly missed by a few 10 gal. sized bricks which whistled down at high velocity. Once at the bottom we ran like hell to avoid more bricks. An hour saw us back to our first bivi where we gorged ourselves on double rations. We let off the statutory white flare and turned in shattered after repairing the somewhat subsided level patch.

We felt no ill effects next morning and leaving most of the climbing gear we departed for base camp arriving by midday at Camp 1 where I stayed and Bruce continued down to base camp. During this exploit we had discovered that an ice axe and a peg hammer were a reasonably efficient if somewhat awkward alternative to a tin opener which we had forgotten.

When Bruce arrived back at Camp 1 next day, we decided to make an attempt on Point 5797 which we thought would be quite difficult. The ridge near here is very steep and appears to be constantly showered with stones from above. We collected the gear from the previous trip and continued over to the other side of the glacier and bivied in a semi igloo, built with an incredibly cumbersome and expensive snow saw, just beneath a long

buttress leading to the ridge

The next morning the stove was playing up and Bruce spent 1 1/2 hrs. trying to coax it to life. We were not in a pleasant mood when we set out very late for the bottom of the buttress. Late afternoon saw us 600ft up with two conclusions clear in our minds (a) that steep rock-climbing is very strenuous with a 50lb pack and (b) that we wouldn't even reach the top of the 2,500' buttress let alone the summit further along the ridge before our food ran out at our present rate of progress. The obvious result of coming to these conclusions was that we came down, slept again in the igloo and scampered back to base camp for more food and a rest.

When we came up again, Mags told us that Ian and Rich. were making an attempt on the summit, so with lots more nosh we slogged through the moraine yet again, with the idea of supporting them if they needed it and if not, trying something else. That evening we saw their flare from the summit ridge, so next morning we left them to it and ascended the long buttress again to about the same height, traversed right into a gully and climbed up about 500' of ice to a col on the ridge. Here we found more signs of the Scots

expedition and were dubious of the point of climbing the peaks to either side of the col, so after a brief discussion we decided to go down into the Toghwa Valley, firstly to see what it was like as we had originally planned to establish a base camp there, and secondly to find the Scots, if they were still there and find out exactly what they had climbed.

The descent was down 40° ice, 200' scramble down a rognon and then down 38-40° ice again. On reaching the glacier I was exhausted and wanted to stop, but Bruce was carrying the food so we carried on. After 2 hours we suddenly came on the end of the glacier and moraine and found a grassy spot to camp. We agreed that now we were here we might as well visit the Munjan River and hence we rationed our evening meal so as to have enough food to last. Bruce had 196 Afs with him which we could use to buy food in a Munjan village.

At 9.00 the next morning we left all our climbing gear in the tent and set out down the Toghwa valley. We didn't take the stove and were relying on fixing wood lower down. Just above the first lake we found the remains of the Scots base camp. From there the traces of a path led across the scree, which swept down from the surrounding peaks into the lake. This path gradually improved but the scenery

didn't. The whole valley is bleak and barren with very little vegetation. The top, however, is beautiful with a line of magnificent peaks with a lot of snow on them.

All day we expected to see the Munjan River round the next corner and all day we didn't until 4.30 when we saw at last the village of Shah-i-Pari nestling down amongst a patchwork quilt of fields at the bottom of a willow filled valley. Once in the village we concentrated first on the most important item, and asked for food. We were shown into a house and seated on our hosts "bed" whilst his wife baked us bread. We also negotiated for six eggs and a sparrow sized chicken which arrived with its throat cut. The house was very dark and dingy, the only light coming through a 1' square hole in the roof, through which smoke escaped. Bruce discovered 2 ancient matchlock rifles hanging above the bed. The owner proudly showed them off and even had powder and lead balls for them, though if he had the courage to fire it he was a braver man than I. The price he quoted was about £5. When we left our host trotted behind us begging for baksheesh so we gave him an empty meat tin.

We bivied in the woods above the village, but the wood was green so we ate a cold curry and bread and went to sleep feeling pretty

miserable. We woke at dawn and breakfasted on more bread. Pocketing our pride we set off back to the village to scrounge some dry wood and take more photos. While we were at it, we bought more eggs and bread and brewed up tea and hard boiled all the eggs. A pleasant half hour was spent washing in the river and playing with a young lads stone bow which Bruce bought for 10 Afs. Every time I fired it I hit my bloody thumb.

Feeling lazy we meandered back up the valley a little way and ate a couple of eggs and brewed up the chicken. While we were cooking, we were accosted by a local who enquired whether we had seen any cows further up the valley. When he learned that we had seen half a dozen he was anxious to know whether any Nuristanis had crossed the pass with us - obviously apprehensive of cattle thieves. At 2.00 we set out again and carried on to the start of the 2nd lake where we bivied.

Whilst breakfasting on bread, eggs and tea, the cowherd who had asked about the cows turned up with a friend and shared our meal. I swapped my balaclava for a local hat. They were on their way to collect the cows and had with them a .22 rifle just in case they came across an item (?) on the way. The rest of the day was spent

in a hungry, tired slog back up to the tent where peanuts and fruitarian bars tasted like caviar.

Early the next morning we packed our gear and feeling very lazy and tired we set off back up the glacier. We were making very slow progress when Bruce slipped and almost fell into a crevasse and was a little shaken. He was a whole lot more shaken a few minutes later when we came upon a body perched on a pillar of ice. His broken rifle was nearby as was his bayonet and cartridge belt and several 15'x4" poles. The body had obviously been there a long time (i.e. 20 years or more). We left him as we found him and trudged on up and it was only the thought of tinned sausages back at the igloo that kept us going up the couloir to the col and then 3 abseils and the long traverse to the scramble down to the bivi. Obscenities flew thick and fast when we discovered that Ian and Rich had scooped the lot. The bivi site had subsided somewhat and a crevasse had appeared along one side but we couldn't have cared less. At seven we let off a white flare and turned in.

In the morning we cursed again about the sad lack of sausages and we cursed Ian and Rich for leaving the snow saw, a duvet and the remains of their food for us to carry down. I was secretly a bit

pleased at this opportunity to become a martyr so we loaded up and staggered off towards Camp 1 still cursing. At Camp 1 there was more gear left for us to carry but cursing was getting monotonous so we brewed up soup, curry and spuds and then set off towards base camp. About half way down we met Rich and Paul who were starting off on a preliminary search for us. After a chat and a much needed smoke for Paul and me we all started back to base camp.

The First Ascent of the S. Ridge of Koh-i-Marcdech 21,200 ft.

At about midday on Tuesday the 8th of September, Bruce and I left base camp with 5 days of food in high altitude packs plus some soup, potatoes and dried meat. An hours walk took us to the meadow just below the entrance to valley B where we were confronted by a stropky bull who stalked up and down between us and his herd gnashing his teeth and sharpening his claws on the human skeletons which were lying in various grotesque contortions all around. To be quite honest it was quite big and had bloody great white horns with black tips. After a slight detour, we continued on up along the right side of the main stream until we came to another steep section leading to a meadow at the base of the S. ridge of Marcdech. As it was moraine from here as far as the eye could see we selected a large boulder and built a little wall round a bivi site to keep out the carnivorous cows.

After yet another ridiculously comfortable bivi, (surely the last pair of words is a paradox by definition), we went a couple of hundred feet up a sort of spur and traversed round on to the moraine, so missing out the steep section and arriving on it where it is reasonably level. We were now in sight of an imposing icefall where the glacier flowed over a rocky buttress about 300' high in the middle of its path. At the top it was very badly crevassed and we wasted a lot of time finding our way through. When we did we found ourselves on a vast flat glacier on which there were half a dozen boulders. We bivied next to one, more for its company than the minimal shelter it provided. We also chose the spot because the entire glacier was covered in snow ice pillars from 1-3 foot high with the exception of a few spots including ours. It was too cold to build any kind of windbreak so we dove into the bivi bag and brewed up.

We started early next morning leaving the dried food and a second bottle of paraffin by the boulder. After some heated argument we chose a gully which looked free of stone fall and set off up it. After about 700' of 45° ice a short scramble led on to a snowfield which in turn led us to the ridge. We had joined the ridge just above a small peak so we went and climbed it. Bruce built a small

cairn on the top but I was too tired to bother. Back on the snowfield-cum-ridge, we peered over the other side to see a dizzy drop of a thousand feet. Above us the north face of Marchech rose another 3000' sheer -an awe-inspiring sight and a worthy goal for a future expedition. After lobbing a few bricks over the edge to count the number of minutes it took them to land, we both confessed to "not feeling much like going on today", so we set to and built another 5 star bivi shelter being not dissimilar in luxurious comfort to the Park Lane Hilton, except it was a bit hard and the wind coming through the bit where the roof should be was bloody freezing. After much pumping the now leaking primus, we finally brewed up our curry and having drugged ourselves with secanol we spent a pleasant night.

The sun was on us at dawn but despite the sun it was cold enough to freeze the genital appendages off a brass monkey. Both of us wore double duvets and Bruce added his caggie. I couldn't get the stove to light and lost my temper with it after burning two fingers. Bruce took over and managed to brew enough water for "ready-brek" and coffee and to heat his sausages. I had mine cold after breaking them out of frozen brine. We eventually set off climbing in single duvets and made our way up several fairly straight

forward pitches of bad rock. There were however, several sharp gendarmes of granite on which was to be had spectacular and satisfying climbing. The ridge became narrow and shattered and fell away sharply on either side. 4 pm. saw us at about 20,000ft with the summit still looking quite remote. I persuaded Bruce to stop and he disappeared round a corner to seek a bivi-site. A couple of moments later came a shout that "yes, he'd found a magnificent ledge" so I scrambled round to find him feverishly hewing a ledge out of what appeared to be solid rock. It turned out to be scree set in ice and we leveled out a ledge and were soon brewing up by the light of the sunset when we heard voices. Earlier in the day we had seen figures coming across onto the glacier from the Sharan Valley. When we had convinced them of our existence on the mountain by firing a green flare we had a few minutes shouted conversation across the West face. It appeared that they were Swiss and on their way down the West ridge after traversing Koh-i-Moruisq and Marcheche. This upset us somewhat because the Yanks had left two 150' perlons on the west ridge which we had hoped to retrieve. Anyway the Swiss disappeared downwards while we tucked into a new concept in culinary delights - goblin curry and dried egg - it was delicious. Bruce drugged himself with panadol as there was no secanol left and we spent another reasonable night.

We waited patiently until about 9.00 am. next morning for the sun but it was hiding round the other side of the ridge and we had to get up in the bitter cold, cook a meal on a very leaky primus, struggle on with frozen boots which numbed our toes so we headed quickly up to the ridge to thaw out in the sun. Even in the sunlight, however, it was too cold to climb without duvets. We roped up for a steep scramble up a gully and a delicate traverse across a slab. The route continued up easy ground until the last forbidding steep section leading to the summit ice. We discovered however, a series of ramps zigzagging up the buttress up which we scrambled only roping up for a short very steep pitch for which I belayed Bruce on a very dubious clog blade. Climbing at 21.000' was hard work and we were very short of breath when we crossed the final 40' ice pitch to the corniced summit. We made cold coffee, ate our goodies and took what photos the clouds would allow and after shivering for 3/4 of an hour we packed up and started down the West ridge. A short scramble down ice and scree brought us to an abseil sling in place so we used it. Our duvets stood up well to 400ft of roping down which brought us to a steep drop into the gully. By this time it was snowing and well below zero degrees. Bruce abbed down in a trice and I was halfway down when a couple of huge blocks

broke off just above me and whistled part bouncing on the rope where it went over a ledge and disappeared, just where Bruce had disappeared a few moments previously. I had a few nasty moments until Bruce's poetic, if obscene abuse came wafting upwards to encourage me downwards. When I got to the bottom I was so tired I almost fell off the rope which then jammed so we cut it with a swift blow of an ice axe.

It was now freezing hard enough to discount the danger of falling stones so we made fast progress down the gully and crossed the bergschrund by moonlight. The companionship of a boulder was again sought but this time we had to clear snow pillars to get a flat space to kip on. Next morning we set off late, collected the gear from our second bivi site and made all haste towards the now very squalid base camp.

Climbing report for Kev. & Paul

Before ever visiting the Hindu Kush I imagined it to be a really desolate area with howling winds, climbing in falling snow and the peaks to be completely snow covered: and all this despite literature such as 'A short walk in the Hindu Kush'. But I suppose Scott's report and Tranter's 'No Tigers in the Hindu Kush' did paint a rather more foreboding picture of the area.

When I first looked at our base camp it looked more like a holiday camp on the Costa del Sol, than the start of a serious climbing expedition. It proved to be a very habitable place if one could endure a multitude of buzzing flies and the tooth grinding sand which covered your food whenever the wind blew; but the sun shone brilliantly out of a clear blue sky from seven until five, there was an abundance of excellent fire wood and a sparkling glacial stream ran not ten yards away, but it might be said that it was cold enough to freeze them off a brass monkey. This campsite was situated at 11,000' and it seemed only a spit to the foot of 21,000' Kohe Marchech and the 20,000' Shaki Kabud. All the other visible peaks were large bumps on a ridge, many of them with pure rock tops and only snowy gullies dissecting their rocky buttresses and shattered ridges leading to their

summits. I was disappointed for I had expected great peaks flanked by snow and ice faces, which would stand alone dominating the whole aspect.

But having made the effort to get here we thought we had best climb some of these peaks and see what they were like. Firstly we considered that a minor reconnaissance was necessary in Valley B for that is where we thought the Kotal Toghwa lay, this being at the head of Toghwa Valley, which we had originally hoped to visit. The going was harder than expected. There was a semblance of a path up the main valley and then up the steep endless mass of scree leading up to the lip of this hanging valley, which helped substantiate the theory that the pass over to the Toghwa Valley lay at the head of Valley B. After four hours of slog Key, Bruce and I had reached a lake held at its downstream side by a wall of rock worn smooth by ice flow. From here the valley gave back into a major ridge on the left at c.18,000' which had a very steep N. face and under it a subsidiary ridge which seemed to run into a complex of ridges dividing us from Valley A. On the right superb sun drenched granite slabs gave themselves up to jagged rocky summits at c 17,500'. But straight ahead it was impossible to tell exactly what lay there, an intricate network of ridges and interlocking spurs, vast expanses of scree all

blended together in a confusing kaleidoscope. Each of us gained a better vantage point and tried to understand the pattern and upon discussing our separate views all came to the conclusion: eventually the scree gave way to a fairly flat glacier in the gap slightly to the right up the valley. And so it proved, for after a minor scrambling cum climbing slog up the N. ridge of valley A and climbing a hump marked 4,703m on Frey's map Kev. and I set off with four days food plus all climbing gear to establish ourselves near the head of Valley B and climb some of the surrounding peaks. With a pack of 50lbs the scree proved even more of a bind and that first day instead of reaching the glacier we only made the foot of the next scree step, only a little higher than the second lake. The following morning we flogged up this second scree slope which was made up of huge blocks of solid granite. This lasted for 1,000' or more but at the head of it the valley opened out into a completely flat area filled with glacial deposits and dissected by small streams. Ahead and to the right more scree but not so long as the previous steps but up to the left a clean unbroken 1,200' sweep of pure granite - an ideal playground for rock technicians we thought. Nestling at the foot of this a band of snow - nothing unusual but on a second

glance Kev's eyes lit up. The snow band supported hundreds of large ice penitents, pinnacles of ice 6' to 10' high which grow by sublimation and are a rare phenomena needing the right temperature conditions to grow. After this minor diversion again it was up the next scree slope and eventually on to the glacier a very chossy mixture of ice, snow and glacial debris flanked by rakes of scree on either side. At c. 16,000' on the glacier we made our advanced base camp. It was 4.00p.m. before our camp was finished but we decided that we had time to go to the head of the glacier to the Kotal Togh. The glacier only had one or two minor crevasses and we were soon at the col expecting to see an obvious way down to the Togh Valley, but instead finding a mess of choss and ice dropping steeply to the valley below. There were large crevasses and the constant creaking and straining was accompanied by the gushing of a snow and ice fall over to the right. Surely there was no safe descent down this slithering slag heap, but the daylight was fading and we didn't pause to investigate. Back at the tent we formulated plans for our stay up here. There were two obvious peaks, on the N.E. side of the glacier a rock summit with an arm of the glacier leading up to steep scree and rock and on the S.W. side a more imposing peak with a steep wide snow ramp between two rock buttresses. This peak 5555m is at the end of

the main ridge c. 18,000 which cuts this area of the Hindu Kush. As expected the first peak was claimed easily with only 200' of perhaps v. diff. rock climbing at the summit. Still the view was grand looking up to Shaki-Kabud to the N.N.E., and Marchech to the N.E. and to the W. looking over the col at a great panorama of peaks and jagged ridges stretching as far as the eye could see. But of more immediate interest as we looked S.W. across the glacier was the ramp of 5555m. It ran to within c.400' of the top giving out onto the rocky N.E. ridge. Where it met the glacier there was a bergschrund but it looked feasible in a day, however first appearances proved deceptive.

By 7.00 the next morning we were standing by the bergschrund, not a wide fissure but the snow and ice on the other side looking rather frail and friable as it cantilevered over the gap. The snow proved to be very hard and quite steep and we had to cut steps in places. Where the ramp joined the rock buttress on the left it was time consuming to climb because of the necessity to cut steps in the steep hard snow. We had hoped to get in to the centre of the ramp where the angle seemed shallower but the intermittent stone fall there and the security of peg belays on the left hand rock buttress persuaded

us otherwise. Pitch by pitch the going was slow and by 3.00p.m. we realised that if we wanted to climb the peak we would have to bivouac out, unfortunately without bivy sac, sleeping bag or food: we'd only taken our lunch for that day. About 2/3rds of the way up the ramp was its narrowest point - less than a rope length we hoped. As the sun began to sink the stone fall had almost ceased and so we decided to cross the ramp to the rocky N.E. ridge and hoped to bivouac on the easy angled buttress beneath it. The traverse was ponderously slow with me cutting good buckets in the ice for I didn't fancy a peel in this exposed position. It took me an hour and a quarter to reach the other side but fortunately I had 5' of rope spare and was able to make a good belay. Kev. was across in 15 minutes and we moved together over easy rock and found a good ledge just beneath the ridge. By now it was twilight and we settled down to our lunch and a sleeping tablet and after a rough fretful night woke up feeling rotten. But even in our dilapidated state we could not help noticing eight figures tramping across the glacier below. It was difficult to see whether they were locals or climbers. They disappeared over the ridge just to the right of the col and so we deduced that they were local and that they had gone down the Kotal Toghwa track.

After more scrambling on the ridge and its buttress we had a pitch of good snow which took ten minutes followed by some diabolically chossy rock climbing and we were on top. It was 9.30a.m. and it should have been a joy to be up there in the morning sun but we were both rough and hoped for an easy descent down the N.E. ridge. It was technically very easy, sometimes moving together, other times descending in pitches, but the loose rock, tiredness and a stinking head ache made it pure drudgery. Finally at 2.00p.m. we found a steep snow slope bounded by a subsidiary ridge and using tape runners on the rock three 150' abseils took us just over the bergschrund and on to the glacier again. We ate well that evening and plodded back to base camp the following day with me continually cursing as I bashed across the disheartening expanses of scree.

Whilst Key, and I had been in Valley B the others had established two camps in Valley A: an intermediate one, where Mags. stopped and painted, before the 'minefields' of scree and a camp with an igloo somewhere up on the glacier at the head of the valley, after the 'minefields' of scree. They were interested in the peaks at the head of the valley, so Kev. and I decided to try the peaks on the ridge behind the cwm at the S.E. end of the valley. Again we took 4 days food, met a haggard yet sun-bronzed Apollo called Rich. Wroot

on his way to base camp and then for 4 hours turned our eyes to the ground and laboured up the scree, eventually arriving at the cwm. Unfortunately the glacier was small, undulating and wet and we resolved to clear a space on the lateral moraine and glad to say it proved to be an excellent advanced base camp. During the next three days we climbed to four points on this ridge between 4,800m and 5,200m, marked as peaks on Frey's map, but truthfully they were more rises in the level of the ridge. However, these three days were not without incident for we had 1,500' of beautiful snow leading up to the ridge with 30' of front pointing at the top. Traversing along the ridge, one was in a fine position and it sometimes produced interesting pitches even though the metamorphic rock was often very loose and chossy. Once Kev., believing the block he stood on to be far better than the poorer handholds was left suspended by the untrusted latter whilst the goodly former trundled merrily down the choss. From the crest of the ridge there was a fine view over to the S.W. There Kohe Tundi-Shaghai, its N.E. face plastered in snow and to the right the pointed K.9 glistened in the sunlight and it was easy to gaze for half an hour planning a route. Unfortunately one day we lingered on the ridge

too long, abseiled down a chossy gully where I was hit by a flying rock and after 4 or 5 more abseils using trustworthy 1/4" sisal for belays found ourselves in twilight. Rather carelessly but speedily we clambered down a rocky ridge eventually reaching a good snow slope which we. cramponed down reaching the glacier in darkness. It was difficult to find the tent amongst the debris of scree and glacier. The trog back to base camp proved pleasant, the scree yielding easily to downward descent: perhaps we were fitter or perhaps the games of two man bridge gave us something to think about as we bounded downward.

The days of festering, officially recuperating at base camp, were protracted, firstly because we were lazy and then because we were worried, Bruce and Dave had left the igloo some days earlier to try a peak to the N. of Kohe David. I went up to the intermediate Camp I to relieve Ian and Mags who were watching for a flare signal and there I stayed for two days seeing no signal but reading a lot of my book. I returned to base camp with no news. The next day Rich. and I set off with food for 4 days, hoping that the two had not had an accident. As we rested in the afternoon sunshine, two scruffy yobs, known as Bruce and Dave, rounded the corner after an 8 day trek over

the tops down to habitation on the other side and all on two days food and a scrawny chicken and bread they had bought in this village. We were both relieved and glad to see them.

Kev. and I were now satisfied with our climbing in Valleys A and B but the valley running N.E. from base camp attracted our attention, On its E. side lay a peak 5460m and adjacent one called Kohe California, so called by Steve Arnon, an American leading a trogging party and who had viewed Kohe Cal. as he had climbed Kohe Harvard which he did from our base camp in one day, a fine achievement considering the 6,000' ascent. Also at the head of this valley was Kohe Askival climbed by Tranter's 1966 expedition and the two outriders of Askival, one on either side of the glacier were unclimbed. So we had four peaks in mind and had 6 days food which we could stretch by a day or two. The walk up to the advanced base camp was the most pleasant yet encountered only 3 or 4 hours of scree trogging, the rest of the time following the river up the valley at a gentle gradient. Ahead on our immediate right were 5,460 and California, but far more imposing were the two peaks ahead. On the right was a shambling rocky peak c. 5,600m with a cleft pinnacle as its summit. Immediately this was christened the Shark's Tooth for such was its aspect. But farther back still, seemingly at the head

of the valley the top half of a giant pyramid was to be seen. Its sides rose uniformly to a single perfect summit and in between was a face of pure whitish rock, completely free from snow. The same idea struck both of us simultaneously: even though this was obviously Kohe Askival, Tranter had climbed it from the other side and would not have ventured out on to this rock face and so this would be a truly worthwhile route. The next day we decided to climb the Shark's Tooth taking a rock filled gully up to the S. ridge. But half way up another gully seemed to rise steeply up to the summit. We took it. Higher up there was a small ice field covered in penitents. Keeping to the rock we skirted this and finally arrived above it where we roped up to climb the steep rock which led to the summit. I climbed up for 40' and then began to traverse left and suddenly gave out such a yell that Kev. thought I was peeling. Not 20' away sat on a rock ledge was an eagle. I only caught a glimpse, it was large, mottled brown and had a hooked beak but fortunately it was scared and flew off leaving the summit to us. After that the alternative name for the peak was Eagle's Nest. The summit itself was very fine being a wall of rock perhaps 10' thick, cleft in the middle by the eagle's perch, on one side dropping 100' or so to the small ice field and on the other 2,500' to the glacier below. But

the top was flat and quite sufficient for the two of us but we tied on nevertheless for it was an airy place. However, such a place does afford excellent views particularly of the S.E. rock face of Askival. But whilst we ate at our leisure and surveyed the route, we became aware of a contradiction in our ideas. This peak lay on one side of the glacier not at its head for there was another peak not as imposing as the pyramid but approximately the same height. The reality then sank in, the fine 2,500' rock face did not belong to Askival but to the unclimbed peak of the Pyramid. Any doubts about attempting the rock face were dispelled, a fine line to the summit of an unclimbed peak - what more could we ask for?

The start the following morning was not as prompt as we had planned - we blamed the lack of early morning sun at our advanced base camp and it was 11.00a.m. before we had rounded the corner and stood on the glacier littered with stones looking up at the full expanse of the vast face. I think we were both a little overawed for neither of us had ever attempted this sort of route. The left hand flank was continuously steep but the angle giving back a little nearer the centre of the face. Here half way up was a large scoop from which water trickled down the centre of the face but more disturbing was a great fan of stones at the foot of the rock, obviously the debris loosened from the ice in the scoop by the sun.

We hoped we could find a route up the face which would avoid this stone fall area but to gain the summit we had to reach the upper side of the scoop. One good point was that we agreed on the line of the route: straight up for c. 300' what appeared to be a crack; where the angle gave back a little there seemed an obvious traverse line and then up again would bring us to the left hand side of the scoop; once into the scoop up its left hand side until we reached the left hand ridge; follow this nearly to the top where another traverse line led across the upper part of the face to the right hand ridge and up to the final flat summit ridge at the far end of which stood the summit pinnacle.

The start was discouraging, the first 25' being overhanging and only yielding with the aid of 6 pitons but then the crack led up the face needing a mixture of jamming and layback, finally petering out, but it had taken us past the steep slabs. Now we were able to traverse to the right, rising slightly for four 150' pitches. The traverse line seemed obvious and finally led to a series of easy angled flakes and so by 6.30p.m. we had reached some reasonable ledges where we bivied. Individual ledges were not big enough for two but we spent a reasonable night despite shivering in the shade the next morning until the sun reached us. For the next five pitches we went straight up,

the rock being a lot steeper and this brought us to a good ledge to the left and below the scoop. Above were two vertical and strenuous looking cracks, slightly down and to the right a rather bald slab about 20' square at the top of which was a small terrace which disappeared round the corner to the c.200' of rock which would lead into the left hand side of the scoop. The small slab was the most technically difficult part of the route with one peg for aid and two V.S. moves. I belayed on the terrace and Kev. came across, looked round the corner and was about to move up the steep rock gully when a volley of stones came down this chute. Seeing no other obvious way up and reckoning that it would be half an hour or so before the next fall, Kev. set off at a speedy rate. Unfortunately he could not reach the top of the gully in one rope's length and was forced to belay in the gully. I wasted valuable time taking out a piton when I should have left it but then climbed up to Kev. I was within 10' of him when the dreaded rumbling was heard again. A stone hit me making me fall on to the rope and Kev's helmet, fortunately not his head, was badly splintered by a falling rock. As I lay face down on the rock the rope holding me I saw a 2' cube of rock bouncing through the air about 20' to the right and I was glad we weren't in the way. I led through and belayed about

8' from the top reckoning any bouncing stones would pass over my head. Kev. bombed up and sure enough a solitary stone whined over our heads and rocketed down the gully where Kev. had been belayed ten minutes earlier. As we sat at the left hand side of the scoop eating sardines we named it Hell Hole Gully.

The rest of that day went according to plan although it was 8.00p.m. and dark before we found a suitable bivouac ledge, this on the right hand ridge after we had followed the break of the high level traverse. The site was ideal, flat, room for two, a supply of grit free ice and even a rock balustrade to prevent you falling out. Again shivering in the shade, we breakfasted, climbed out into the sun up 200' of easy rock and on to the flat summit ridge. We moved together but occasionally climbed a 30' pitch and by midday had reached the final summit pinnacle, a fine point with only room for one at a time. From just beneath it we surveyed the area. To the E across the glacier was the Shark's Tooth, to the N. Askival and beyond that we saw the mountains dying away, probably the Faizabad access to the Hindu Kush, and W lay Shaki-Kabud and the twin summits of Marchech and Morusq. A pall of dirty snow and stones rose above a small avalanche in a gully on Marchech and we hoped that Bruce and Dave, who were climbing Marchech at the time were well away from it.

It had been a really choice route up this peak and now it was time to get down to the glacier. We started down the N. ridge, another characteristic pile of loose blocks and eventually took some broken rock leading to an icy gully and finally down to a rock wall where we abseiled down, crossed the large bergschrund and trogged along the glacier. It was easy trogging until the glacier became a jumble of crevasses and ice-cliffs. We tried to skirt these obstacles on the right and it didn't prove too difficult. Eventually it was 7.00p.m. before we reached the advanced base camp tired but well satisfied.

Late the next morning we set off back down the valley, left most of the gear in the small valley leading up to California and 5,460m and bombed down to base camp, perhaps because we were pleased with this last route or maybe because we had such light sacs.

After a day's rest we went back up the valley, picked up our gear and set off up to the cwm beneath Kohe California and 5,460m. By this stage, after 4 weeks of solid climbing we were starting to feel a bit tired and so decided to climb 5,460 first as this looked the more difficult of the two. It appeared to be a completely rock peak with a stony gully leading up to the left hand ridge. This

ridge looked no more than a scramble. However it proved rather more difficult with 12 rock pitches of good climbing leading to the summit. It was four o'clock before we stood on top, Kev. said that we'd be forced to bivouac this time, with emergency rations of four fruitarian bars but I hoped we could ab. off into the gully before it was too dark. Kev. was right and we spent a reasonable night on a large ledge and at 7.00 the next morning, very cold, continued abseiling until we could cross some snow at the foot of the rock down on to the scree and back to the advanced base camp for 11.15a.m. By then the warm sun was blazing down and we festered the day away eating, snoozing and reading. California was an easy proposition with only 1,500' to climb from the tent but it was interesting. First was a long gully that provided excellent snow and two pitches of ice climbing at the top where we reached the col between California and 5,460 and continued up the ridge. Suddenly the ridge finished and gave out on to a very flat area, large enough to accommodate a football pitch. We stood at one end looking over the litter of stones and snow to the final slope leading to the top of the other end and wondered how this had been formed. All the other peaks we had climbed had the characteristic rocky pinnacle type of summit and this was more like

a Lakeland peak although the scenery around was somewhat more impressive.

Throughout the expedition we had hoped to climb Kohe Marchech but now Bruce and Dave had been up there for four days and probably climbed it by now. If we had had time for a rest and then another five or six days we would have tried but time was pressing. When Bruce and Dave returned. Bruce had an appetite for more climbing but no one else had. He eventually persuaded me to go up the only remaining valley, the one due E from the base camp. We both went in a semi-serious manner. Bruce for something to do and me to find the ice axe left up this valley by Steve Arnon when he had climbed Kohe Harvard. We found the axe, saw some eagles and awoke one morning at 17,000' completely shrouded in snow filled cloud but the sun cleared it in a couple of hours and generally it was a worthwhile two days.

Looking back on what we had done, four of the thirteen peaks we climbed had been really good, the Pyramid, Point 5,555m, the Shark's Tooth and Point 5,460m. The rock climbing had always been in a fine position with beautiful warm, dry rock although the quality varied from piled tumbling blocks of metamorphic schists to sound clean

sweeps of perfect granite. There had not been as much snow as we expected it generally being found in good condition on N. faces where the sun has not disturbed the hundreds of lethal loose blocks supported by the ice and snow. The vast sweeps of scree wear you down mentally and physically but our only word of advice to potential Hindu Kush climbers is "take a crash helmet".

Climbing Report for Ian and RichAscent of The Cathedral 18.050ft, at the head of Valley A.

We called this granite bastion 'The Cathedral' its striking form had attracted our fascination because of its Yosemite-like proportions and we thought we could sneak to the summit via a steep ice-rock gully running between this cliff and an adjoining pinnacle – a good acclimatization route!

Thanks to Ian's organizational brilliance we left our camp at the base of the terminal moraine that morning with no stove, no pegs, runners etc., just armed with that true mountaineering spirit fortified with a scattering of sugar lumps, packets of peanuts and the odd tin of food and a 150 foot of rope for forms sake.

That evening exhausted after moving over chossy moraine for 6 hours we settled down on a flat glacier boulder a few hundred yards from the base of the mountain.

22nd August.

Awake at 5.00 so as to be well ahead of the sun and resultant stone showers, we left our sleeping bags behind and set off for the

gully. The first 4-300' consisted of ice and snow penitents which from a distance looked like convenient footholds but which turned out to be about 3 foot high and acted like turnstiles. At first the slope was about 45° giving easy going but as the ice slowly became smoother and steeper it led to 55°. Richard's comment "Don't you reckon it's a bit steep considering all the gear we haven't got?" prompted us to tie onto either ends of our rope. What companionship a perlon thread provides! Making good use of natural belays, psychological or otherwise, and dodging the many stones and ice chunks which skimmed past us. At the halfway stage we left the gully to climb on the loose rock of the pinnacle preferring the grip of decomposing granite to that of stones buzzing around us in the gully.

Eventually at 2.30p.m. we emerged from this 2,000 foot stone shoot and hurried across the ice dome to the summit. Imagine our amusement to discover that 2 heathen litter leaving Highlanders had climbed the peak from the peak from the Munjan side only 7 days previously and scattered the enviable wrappers of a Mars Bar and a Kendal Mint Cake bar.

As it was too late and we were too tired to descend the gully we bivouacked right on the summit where the only sizeable boulders stuck out of the ice.

Sunday, 23rd August.

Although equipped with duvets we spent one of the most miserable nights either of us wished to savour as once the sun dipped at 5 o'clock our body temperatures rapidly fell leaving us in suspended animation. However, Apollo is a great respecter of persons and our thaw started at 5.a.m. as the sun rose. We breakfasted on endless, indigestible, inedible nuts and then set off down. Making steady progress reversing our pattern of the day before our rhythm maintained by the metronomic downward hum of stones.

Arriving at our first bivi site at 2.p.m. and picking up our sleeping bags and polishing off a tin of fruit we hurried onto the camp we had left 3 days previously. Totally flaked out we were spoon fed by Maggs and after drinking a gallon of sweet tea we curled up and slept for 12 hours.

GULLY LESSON THE HINDU KUSH ARE FALLING APART - FAST. WE PROMISED OUR SKINS NEVER TO ENTER A GULLY AGAIN.

The Ascent of the 'Snowy Mountain'. 19,150ft by the East FaceWednesday, 26th August

At the head of valley A there was a semicircle of mountains which had been eroded into by the glacier at their feet so that a continuous horseshoe of steep faces had been left to protect these summits from being disturbed.

Having spent 3 days resting in our advance camp we decided that the time had come for us to have a closer look at these cliffs. Leaving Maggs. to sunbathe and paint, we started the 5 mile plod over the glacier moraine to the couloir at the head of the valley. This was like travelling continually upwards on a down escalator so although I had already made a dump of gear and food in the couloir and we were travelling light we were glad to bivouac on a boulder high up on the glacier. Now that we had a closer view we felt that we could climb to the highest summit in this horseshoe – the 'Snowy Mountain' (named from its appearance from the west) by its East face. Once that had been decided we fell into the blissful sleep of the innocent oblivious of the shunting yard noises of the glacier around us.

Thursday, 27th August.

We woke at 5 and were busy consuming a 5 course breakfast as that ever reliable Hindu Kush sun rose and thawed us, and small glacier rivulets into activity.

Leaving as much as possible behind we set off towards the horseshoe. High up on the glacier we came across Dave and Bruce's ice-block igloo, ideal for those who like sleeping on a criss-cross of crevasses. Leaving more food and equipment here to further lighten our loads we moved on to the bergschrund. This was crossed at 9.00. The rock in our immediate area was mica schist, which in the daily freeze-thaw cycle, produced an actively unstable cliff structure. Our choice of routes was simply dictated by the fact that the ice was only grey at the point where we hoped to start climbing and not black from accumulated rock falls. This desire for speed was foiled by large mushy ice penitents which blocked our path and seemed designed to convert our maximum effort into minimum progress.

Eventually we reached rock and could start the climb proper. The first 3 pitches were fairly straight forward and just loose enough to provide exhilaration. The 4th pitch was spectacularly

steep throwing Rich. into photogenic postures; the 5th was again steep and terrifyingly loose, so loose in fact that from stance to stance the rope just flapped free as none of the rock was solid enough to place any protection without risking a major cliff structural collapse and I was too frightened to reverse down it.

The sun had now gone off the cliff and the cold had instantly become acute. Fortunately after one more loose pitch we reached a sloping bivouac ledge. Sighted at different heights we spent the next hour paranoiacally attaching everything:- sleeping bags, sacs, ourselves as solidly as we could to the cliff. Before settling down Rich arranged a series of different belay lengths for himself so that he could wander in the night as he was still bothered by dysentery.

Friday, 28th August.

Awake at first light. Sardines and tinned pineapple were consumed but as we had used up the last of our water the night before, coffee was struck off the menu. The early morning view back down the valley made us forget the crumbling cliff for a minute until we were startled by a shower of rocks and Richard not protected by the cliff was dazed by a stone which cut his head open.

We were now becoming anxious as the route upwards was far from obvious, Rich. was not feeling good from his cut and rocks tumbling past in our vicinity were becoming tiresome. Curiosity however, made us decide to just have a look a few more pitches higher and when we found some icicles we could suck to relieve our extreme thirst, both of us warmed up to the climbing.

10 pitches finally lead us to the summit ridge which from low down had seemed to be a continuous line of overhangs but which gave us one traverse line of weakness through these rock cornices. The way through these cornices revealed a large flat snow field and pools of melt water. Coffee was soon brewing and 9 desert spoonfuls of sugar in each charged us with ready energy. We then started to flog to the ice dome summit. Although this was steep and badly crevassed we found our way easily through these obstacles. The flat summit was reached at 5 and we were surprised to find from an empty film box that a large Japanese party had been there a few days before us making the first ascent of the mountain from the West. Photographs all round and then back to bivouac on the ice field where we had first emerged from the face.

Saturday, 29th August

No movement from within our down envelopes from either of us until the sun had produced a thorough thaw and then followed the ultimate of

drags - 10 abseils from highly dubious abseil points took us to the base of the cliff. Remaining roped, thankfully, as an after thought, we crossed the bergschrund and glacier to the igloo. On the way I did my utmost to get killed falling through the obviously paper thin ice bridging a deep bell shaped crevasse but the rope and crevasse were kind. We stopped for goodies and then remaining roped until we reached the moraine (we were more than a little chastened by the previous grip) we reached our previous boulder bivi site at dusk.

Sunday, 30th August

A very late rise was followed by an even later stagger down the eternal moraine to reach the camp and fall onto fresh baked jam butties miraculously produced by Maggs. following a baking trip to base camp.

The Ascent of the S.E. buttress of Shak-i-Kabud (20,500 feet).

The American Koh-i-Marcheck Expedition we had met in Barge Matal had mentioned this route as being a plum and this aperitif stimulated our appetites when we saw this peak in full face view from the summit of the 'Cathedral'. The south side of the mountain consists of two Walker Spur like buttresses each leading to the summit ridge and separated by a long ice gully reaching from the glacier base of this face to the summit crest.

As we were fit, acclimatized and drugged with our previous successes we decided that one of those buttresses would provide a fine excursion to the summit.

Helped by Maggs. we spent a day and a half lugging food for 6 days and all of our gear the 8 miles up to the base of the glacier in valley B. The scenery was overwhelming and more than at any other time on our trip we felt the size and solitude of this area which enhanced our apprehensions about our proposed route. We then returned to base camp to spend a couple of days resting and consuming vast quantities of freshly killed and fried stringy sheep.

Tuesday, 8th September

After a gluttonous feast of iced drinking chocolate we left

base camp carrying empty sacs and arrived fresh at our dump below the glacier snout.

The meadows and moraine up to this point had been a wild profusion of Delphiniums and Edelweiss. Marmots had tucked into a few of our packets of peanuts, but they were more than welcome to these, and, following their example we dined in style on coffee and massive sheep's meat Cornish pasties made by Maggs.

Wednesday, 9th September.

Leaving our cagoules and some food behind, we followed the lazy curving of the glacier until it abutted hard against the buttresses of Shak-i-Kabud. However, we both found this glacier grind hard work as it took us to nearly 17,500ft, and we were carrying 50-55 lbs each. After painfully making our way across a badly crevassed zone we reached a cold glacier bivouac site.

Thursday, 10th September.

We woke early feeling totally depressed, this feeling not being helped by the fact that the few square feet of our bivy was the last spot on the glacier to receive any sun. Sweet coffee stabbed through our private glooms and discarding half of what we had brought with us, as the lesson of the day before, had at least

taught us we could not possibly climb to any standard carrying more than 25 lbs., we turned our noses towards the right hand buttress. After crossing the bergschrund, we reached the base of the buttress at 10a.m., sincerely wishing that our prides would take us and our feet instantly back to base camp. However, after an initial loose pitch the rest of the day was spent climbing ten very enjoyable pitches on good solid granite - "O Sole Mio" rang out from the buttress.

At 4.00, as the sun deserted the face, we suddenly came across two separate platforms where we could idle away the night hours. Sweet sickly coffee and some scrambled dried egg satisfied our hunger and we submerged into our private dream worlds.

Friday, 11th September.

We stayed cocooned in feathers until the sun came around the corner and produced its luxuriant thaw. Rich. had been very neatly sick during the night over the side of his perch but he still tucked into Ready-brek and syrupy coffee with gusto.

A mixture of twelve steep and delicate rock pitches brought us to the rock ice junction at the top of the buttress by the late afternoon, and as a group of sarcophagi offered us level beds we

stopped, and started the inevitable brew-up. Due to our stove having been "overhauled" by a member of our party before we left, it refused to do more than flare like a fitful candle and after nearly an hour the pint and a half of water finally contained no more ice. As our excitement over this impending beverage mounted the stove tipped over. That last straw sent us both our separate ways to huddle down and curse the name of the offending "mechanic".

Saturday, 12th September.

We slept well though this bivouac was at 20,000 feet, but woke with stag night hangovers. We breakfasted on Panadol, Ready-brek, sardines, and this time succeeded in melting down ice for a brew.

Still feeling groggy and tired we made our way along the easy angled final ridge of the buttress to meet the summit ridge. We moved together as our hangovers slowly lifted but it took us to the early afternoon to reach the summit. We found this really hard work and were so busy concentrating on spiking our dotted line upwards we were surprised when we ran out of ascending ground. As on the Cathedral we found litter remains of a Highland visit. Two wee Scotsmen having climbed the South Face via the long gully between

the two buttresses a few days before.

After the flog to reach the ice summit it was like free-fall descending and within what appeared minutes we were back at the top of the buttress. Now we were very tired and rather than risk the uncertainties of descending the central gully with the danger of stone fall and toppling cornices we decided to abseil down the familiar territory of the buttress.

Four to five long abseils took us to dusk, and to a superb bivouac site. This was a large flat block, jammed between the walls of a short chimney and was completely overhung, and so was a haven from anything dislodged from above. Our final abseil had resulted in a jammed rope so whilst Richard carried out epic rope recovery procedures in the pitch dark, I, content in my safe role, made the bivvy site comfortable.

Sunday, 13th September

If a menu had been presented we would have chosen Panadol but as these were used up we breakfasted on the usual. Eventually, the sun thawed our boots and ourselves out and we set off down. Six more abseils took us to the base of the buttress and just as we were pulling down the rope after the final abseil, a group of boulders whined over our heads and did not hit the glacier until well beyond

the bergschrund. Chastened by this, we crossed the sun rotted ice bridge across this crevasse as rapidly as we dared and reached our glacier bivvy site at three.

Only stopping to gobble down a tin of pineapple we had left there, we abandoned the rest of the food and aided by gravity and increasing oxygen supply, we let the glacier rush past us. After only 1 1/2 hours, we had reached the glacier snout, and our original dump, and collapsed completely worn out. We were really glad to be down, for as we scuttled down the glacier the weather had changed. Shak-i Kabud had vanished behind thick black clouds and snow was beginning to fall heavily. Two tins of sausages left there gave us some vitality and we decided that base camp could be made that night - a journey that had taken us two days on the way up.

Obstacle after obstacle was passed and we reached base camp in the dark to be welcomed by Maggs, who had made vast quantities of fresh bread and a blackberry pie and Moulil Khan, the soldier, who had put on a huge pressure cooker-full of tea.

Conclusions on the climbing

Unlike the Alps where help is close at hand but the weather changeable, the Hindu Kush is remote but the weather is excellent. During the 5 1/2 weeks which we spent climbing, there was one rain downpour lasting 2 hours and it snowed only at the end of our stay, at the middle of September. The remainder of the time the sun shone from a cloudless sky all day long and then gave way to clear, cold starry nights. Because of these weather conditions we feel that our style of climbing was ideal; taking enough food for 4 or 5 days and setting up an advanced base camp from which to strike out at the surrounding peaks, some possible in a single day, others requiring bivies. Provided that warm gear, including a sleeping bag, was taken, these were very comfortable, Bruce and Dave being the undisputed 'Kings of a Comfy Bivy'.

The approach from base camp to an advanced base camp usually involved a long plod across 'minefields' of jumbled scree eventually giving way to a glacier. With no footpaths the scree was hard, slogging grind, but the glaciers reasonable, On our visit to the Hindu Kush there was very little snow on the mountains themselves, the most being found on North faces, but it was in good condition probably due to the very stable weather conditions. The rock varied from excellent to atrocious, the igneous granite being sound

and reassuring to climb on whilst the metamorphic rock was loose, rickety and unnerving and as in any mountain area, the stone fall was always a danger but no serious injury was sustained from it.

To sum up, the climbing was enjoyable and the sun drenched rock particularly pleasant, which compensated for the grind across the scree fields. Looking to the future, the great sweeps of granite slabs and walls should provide excellent climbs of increasing difficulty and would be worthwhile objectives for future expeditions to the area.

List of ascents

<u>Date (on summit)</u>	<u>Peak</u>	<u>Route</u>	<u>Climbers</u>
Aug 15 th	Koh-i-Bididi 4,703m	S. Ridge	Bunting & Wills
Aug 19 th	Koh-i-Sang-Shai 5560m	S.E. Ridge	Bunting & Wills
Aug 19 th	Koh-i-David 5,700m	N.E. couloir	Hooker & Palmer
Aug 21 st	Koh-i-Do-Shai 5,590m	N.E. snow ramp	Bunting & Wills
Aug 21 st	Point 5,680m	E Wall ice gully	Staples & Wroot
Aug 25 th	Point 5,055m	N.E. Ridge	Bunting & Wills
Aug 25 th	Point 4,870m	S.W. Ridge	Bunting & Wills
Aug 26 th	Koh-i-Troi Shai 5203m	N. snow gully & S.W. Ridge	Bunting & Wills

<u>Date(on summit)</u>	<u>Peak</u>	<u>Route</u>	<u>Climbers</u>
Aug 27 th	Koh-i-Troi Shai 5250m	E. face & N.E. Ridge	Bunting & Wills
Aug 28 th	Point 5,797m	E. Face	Staples & Wroot
Sept 5 th	Shark's Tooth 5,550m	S. gully & S.E.face	Bunting & Wills
Sept 8 th	The Pyramid 5,820m	S. Face	Bunting & Wills
Sept 12 th	Shaki Kabud 6,190m	S.E. Face	Staples & Wroot
Sept 12 th	Point 5,460m	W. gully & N.E. ridge	Bunting & Wills
Sept 13 th	Koh-i-Marchech 6,450m	S. ridge	Hooker & Palmer
Sept 14 th	Koh-i-California 5107m	N. snow gully & W. ridge	Bunting & Wills
Sept 17 th & 18 th	Two peaks c. 5,100m	Traverse on E/W ridge	Bunting & Hooker

From August 29th - Sept 5th, Hooker and Palmer crossed the main ridge just E. of Point 5,797m, visited the village of Shari Pari in the Munjan Valley and then returned to Gotugalasee in the Bashgal.

Essential Documentation

a) Personal

b) Vehicle

a) Personal Documentation

(i) Medical Certificates: These International Certificates of Vaccination against Cholera and T.A.B. and Smallpox are essential for a journey of this kind. Iran and Turkey in particular are very fussy about this and if proof of these vaccinations cannot be produced at the borders, then they will insist on re-vaccination and a period of quarantine at the very least. We were also vaccinated against Typhoid, Paratyphoid and Tetanus as a precautionary measure. These certificates need an officially approved stamp as well as the vaccinating doctor's signature before they become valid.

(ii) Passport and Visas: The relevant visas are, Transit visas for Bulgaria and Iran, and an entry visa for Afghanistan. The transit visas are easily available from the respective embassies in London, on completion of an application and at a small fee. Each application needs to be accompanied by up to three photographs and takes about one or two days. The Bulgarian transit visa covers both journeys through the country, but it was necessary to obtain a

second visa for Iran from the Iranian embassy in Herat, Afghanistan on our return journey. This delayed us by a day as apparently this is the minimum time needed to stamp a passport! Again photographs are required.

However, the entry visa for Afghanistan is much more difficult to obtain, and our applications were not simplified by the embassy staff in London. Each time we visited the embassy we were told of different application procedures, including the fact that it would take two months to obtain the visas - this only a week before we were due to leave. We were also told at various times that the Hindu Kush mountains were not worth climbing, and that a girl could not possibly accompany a mountaineering expedition. It was only after a great deal of help from members of the Royal Geographic Society and last minute panic that we finally obtained our visas. However, this was the main cause of our leaving England fifteen days later than planned.

(iii) Permission to visit and climb in the Hindu Kush:

This must be obtained in writing from Kabul, and without it we would have been turned back by a military checkpoint on our approach to the mountains. The process of obtaining this document took us nine days, and is seldom done in less than a week - NB the "weekend"

in Kabul is Friday and Saturday and nothing official can be done during it. After these nine days of visiting every official building in Kabul, three or four times each, and with the prospect of never finding our way out of all the red tape in which we were tied, we left Kabul and headed for the hills, ignoring a bill of £180 for the import duty on our food. We clutched a dirty piece of paper covered in signatures which amounted to our permission to climb. We hoped that whosever job it was to check this paper would not notice if any were missing!

However, it turned out alright in the end and after another 3 days spent in Kabul on our return, we had managed to obtain our exit visas and reduced the bill to £70. The chief reason for this was that on our return, a new set of officials had replaced those with which we had dealt, hence no one knew for sure how much food we had brought in the first place!

- (ii) International Driving Licences. These are easily available from the Automobile Association at a price of 10/- each.

b) Vehicle Documentation:

- (i) Log book.
- (ii) Insurance - Green Card - This is not accepted in Iran and although insurance cover is not essential it is highly advisable to take

out 3rd party cover at the border. We did this for only £1 each way, which allowed us up to four days to cross Iran, about 1200 miles. From Turkey onwards, vehicle insurance is not compulsory, but the consequences of injuring a third party can be so severe that it would be very foolish indeed to proceed without cover, Especially considering the crazy way in which the locals use the roads -e.g. lights at night are considered to be an optional extra.

(iii) Carnet de Passage - This is a document, obtainable from the A.A. costing 30/-, which agrees that if the vehicle concerned is not exported from a country (due to sale of, or accident to the vehicle) within a fixed period, then that country will receive the import duty on it. This, in the case of Iran is 200% of the vehicle's value. However, the 30/- only buys the document itself and the relevant amount of money must either be issued against or kept on one side in a bank in England.

This document is accepted at all borders from Turkey onwards and considerably lessens the time taken in crossing frontiers. However, it is not essential, as, for only a small fee (10/- for Iran) it is possible to get a document at the border of entry agreeing to export the vehicle within one month of entry. This does, nevertheless involve a bit more frustrating time and paperwork.

Frontier Crossing

From Bulgaria onwards the average time taken in crossing from one country to another was four to five hours, and this without being searched. It is often a very frustrating procedure involving a certain amount of persistence and patience, made considerably easier by the possession of the above documents.

The Food ReportHigh Altitude Food.

The high altitude packs were made up on the principle that all the food could be prepared by heating 1 dixie of hot water per meal or if necessary eaten cold in case of stoves not functioning or high altitude lethargy.

Each 2 man/day pack weighed approximately 8 lb. The alternative to weight was dried food involving lengthy reconstitution in boiling water (at 20,000ft water boils at about 85°C) and additional fuel.

The pack consisted of:-

Breakfast:- a long day ahead so the biggest meal.

	8 oz	Ready Brek	
2	4 oz	Tins sausages	
	1 oz	dried egg	
	1/2 oz	coffee	
	10 oz	sugar	
	4 oz	dried milk -----	too much 2oz enough.

Lunch

	4 oz	Tin pineapple	
	4 oz	" sardines	
	16 oz	nuts and raisins)
)find alternative
or	8 oz	" " " and 2 fruitarian bars)
	2 oz	glucose tablets	

Evening Meal

32 oz. 2+16oz Goblin ready meal
(3 varieties - chicken or beef curry and Irish stew)
1/2 oz. coffee
6 oz. sugar
2 oz. dried milk ----- 1 oz enough.

Generally most of the food was a success with Dave, Kev, Bruce and Paul but Ian and Rich, found that they couldn't stomach the ready meals of the sardines after the first few days at high altitude.

Fruitarian bars by Mapletons were a universal failure being very unpleasant in taste and consistency except under conditions of extreme hunger, and the nuts and raisins were hard to digest. Perhaps something with a similar food value but a little more appetising should have been chosen.

The tinned sausages and the pineapple with its generous supply of juice were firm favorites with all.

Base Camp Food

Base camp food consisted mainly of:-

Porridge oats

Dried egg

Spam

Ryvita and tinned margarine

Tinned Primula cheese

Dried meat and curry

Powdered potato and a little spaghetti and rice

6 varieties dried veg.

This was liberally spiced with extra goodies like tinned fruit of all kinds, honey and jam, appleflakes, a few tins of meat, garibaldi biscuits and drinking chocolate.

Basically no one could be bothered with the dried meat and veg - it took too long and was pretty unappetising when done. We stayed away from base camp for a larger proportion of the time than originally estimated. At frequent intervals, however, Mags cooked us fresh bread and apple pies etc. which went down very well and halfway through our stay we butchered a sheep and had fresh if a little stringy meat for three days.

The sugar ration of 1/2 lb man/day was too generous in base camp although we used it all at high altitude. The tinned cheese on Ryvita and margarine was a firm favourite as the staple diet although a few hardies graduated onto brown sauce sandwiches - ugh!

The base camp food was packaged in 28 man/day units in poly bags and packed into Triwall boxes, as were the 2 man/day high altitude rations, to withstand the rigours of the journey and portorage.

D. Palmer

Equipment Report

The main problem in selecting equipment to be taken was that of knowing exactly what the climate and climbing were going to be like. Reports of other expeditions conflicted on this but it was eventually decided to work on the assumption of generally Alpine conditions and technique, modified by the prospect of somewhat colder nights at high altitude and the needs of multi-day routes. It was hoped that peaks could be climbed by pairs of climbers bivouacking without the need for much pack carrying to intermediate camps.

As it turned out the conditions were even better than had been hoped, always perfect weather and reasonable terrain, enabling these methods to be used safely and comfortably.

Specific equipment notes

Boots:- Here the choice was between single or double boots. On the advice of Lawrie's we decided to use their standard Alpine boots, bought large enough for several pairs of socks and/or nylon mesh insoles, according to personal taste. The boots were generally found

to be comfortable, warm enough and good for climbing in, though, as would be expected, by the end of six weeks the granite moraines had taken their toll of everyone's boots.

Ropes:- Six 150ft lengths of Viking 9m.m. perlon rope were used for climbing. No fixed ropes were used.

Tents:- An assortment of old tents were used for base camp, including Edgingtons, a Black's mountain and a Rafiq - the weather was seldom bad enough to need them. Two special lightweight nylon tents made specially by Mountain Equipment, were used successfully for high camps. These would have been better with A-poles as originally intended, but again they never had to contest with strong winds, so perhaps the lighter single poles were just as good. (Total weight of 2/3 man tent 4lbs.)

Bivouac sacks:- Two Mountain Equipment two man nylon bivi sacks were much used and found to be really excellent. We also had a triangular type bivi sack which was very unpopular, as it did not permit two people to lie down without asphyxiating one of them.

Sleeping bags:- An assortment were taken, all were plenty warm enough. They were 3 Point Five expedition double quilted bags. 2 - Blacks Karakorum, also double quilted. 1 Mountain Equipment lightweight bag - this

was found warm enough on its own, and its, extremely light weight (1 1/2 lbs.) makes it a very good one for bivi-ing.

Various B lacks and Fairy down sleeping bags were used at base camp.

Duvet Clothing:- each member of the expedition had an Annapurna double duvet. In practice one very seldom needed to wear more than the inner duvet to keep warm. The duvets were found to be much tougher than they looked, and could be climbed and abseiled in without damage. Only criticism was the design of the hood, but apparently this has been modified on later models.

Rucksacks:- 4 Brown Best Snow Cap rucksacks were used for both climbing and load carrying, often around 60lbs, and performed well. They were nice and big and comfortable to wear, though the straps of plain webbing, could perhaps be improved.

2 old Whillans sacks were used, but were really a bit on the small side.

Several army pack frames were taken and though they were seldom used for climbing they certainly helped the porters to carry boxes and awkward loads in reasonable quantities.

Gaiters:- Karrimor Alpine gaiters were very good.

Cagoules:- various makes never really needed.

Prussikers:- 3 sets of Cloggers - never used.

Pitons:- mainly clog pitons - good as always.

Clog dead men:- six were taken, none were ever used due to the absence of soft snow.

Other special clothing:-several members of the expedition bought Helly Hansen "polar" pullovers and mitts, which were quite warm, although all but one were stolen on the walkout - a testimony of their desirability.

Socks:- Star knitting ring stitch socks were used by all and found very good indeed.

Nylon mesh insoles:- were used by some and found to be warm and comfortable.

Glacier cream:- many different types were taken, but by the time we started climbing we were so suntanned from the journey that we hardly needed to use any of it.

Other equipment:- the normal full complement of Alpine gear, axes, crampons etc., mostly not new was taken. Stoves were an assortment of old petrol and paraffin stoves and gave a fair bit of trouble. It would have been worth buying some new ones.

People to thank

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GEOLOGICAL REPORT

The geologic history of Afghanistan stretches back over 600 million years. However, the events which were responsible for the present geological structure came to a climax some 25 million years ago - geologically very recently. This was during the moving together of the African and Indian Continents towards Eurasia. Along their common boundary there has been an intense period of mountain building forming the present chain which stretches from the Pyrenees to the Eastern Himalayas. In Afghanistan this chain trends East-West at the Iran frontier, but it swings round to the North East-South West to meet the Pamirs in the U.S.S.R.

The rocks of the Hindu-Kush are some of the oldest in Afghanistan. The metamorphic basement consists of Pre-Cambrian Gneisses and Schists; these are covered by younger sediments, (in places themselves metamorphosed). Both these units have been intruded by a series of younger granites. The present surface features were formed partly by erosion during the rapid mountain uplift and lately by glacier and river erosion.

We were able to observe these general features on our journey into the mountains. The road from Kabul crosses the sediments which flank the mountains. From Jalalabad to Barikot the track follows

the Konar river valley which, like many of the rivers in the area, parallels the main structural trend. Recent tectonic uplift has caused the river to cut a deeper course and a steep sided gorge has been eroded where unconsolidated river sediments form the valley floor. North of Barikot, the section past Kamdesh to Barge Matal is cut through crystalline rocks across the geologic trend and is consequently much rougher. Our walk to base camp from Barge Matal was also over crystalline rocks, mostly schists. Geological observations over the whole route in were assisted by abundant exposed rock. This is related to the arid climate and consequent lack of vegetation. It would facilitate geological interpretations from aerial photographs, but unfortunately we were not able to obtain any photographic cover.

To the mountaineer, the two subjects of most interest are the geologic control of the climbing routes and the formation of surface features. A knowledge of the former subject can give important information when selecting a route. There are three main factors to consider - the rock type, the geologic structure and the situation. The rock type may either help or hinder a climb. Deep seated igneous rocks such as granite and gabbro, provide sound routes, whilst

unconsolidated sediments are unlikely to form mountains at all. In our case there were two main rock types, granite and schist. Granite is composed of hard interlocking minerals, it is resistant to erosion and has good friction - we were fortunate to have a number of granite intrusions in our area. Conversely schists are not usually suitable for climbing, the minerals are friable and in parallel orientation, so the rock splits very easily and loose rock is likely to be a problem. Many of the peaks in the area were composed of schists so did not give attractive climbing.

The geological structure is important insofar as one normally climbs on holds which are formed by rock disintegration along lithological boundaries or fractures. As the Hindu Kush have only recently been subjected to major earth movements, there are usually abundant fractures and good lines for routes are not too difficult to find. However, there are some granite slabs which are quite featureless. Thirdly the situation is important as it is obviously best to find the chossy schists in the valleys and the peaks composed of sound granite. Unfortunately this was not always the case, but luckily some of the granite intrusions are concentrated on the main mountain axis. There are also some superb areas of granite slabs and walls, particularly on the two ridges which lead

South-East from Skaki-Kabud.

The surface features in a young mountain area, are primarily erosional, and by far the most erosion is carried out by glaciers and rivers. In the Hindu Kush rare erosional features have been produced because of the particular climate. All the precipitation is as snow during the winter, whilst in summer the area is too far west to be affected by the monsoon and hot, dry conditions are encountered up to the snowline at about 15,000ft. A consequence of this high altitude desert environment is that an abnormally high proportion of the available water is lost by evaporation - either from the solid or liquid state. The sublimation of ice probably occurs in many other places but its effects are soon covered by fresh snowfall. In the Hindu Kush this action leads to the formation of uncommon ice features by processes not yet completely understood.

One of these features is the formation of penitents. Penitents are pyramidal spikes of ice or compacted snow, which cluster together to produce a 'bed of nails' effect on the surface of the snowfields. Fortunately the penitents tend to develop best on steep slopes where the melt-water can run off, here they are useful as holds when climbing steep snow pitches. An expedition

from Cambridge University is going out to study these penitents in the summer of 1971.

Another unusual feature is the formation of 'ice mushrooms' - these are columns of ice capped by boulders and are sometimes up to 10ft high. One would have expected the boulders, being darker, to have absorbed more heat than the ice and hence melted a depression for themselves. Instead these 'mushrooms' illustrate the importance of ice sublimation. If the ice pillar is in contact with its cap-rock it is not free to evaporate, and the shadow cast by the rock prevents the ice column from further evaporation.

As previously stated, the glaciers do most of the erosion by scouring the valley floors and steepening the valley sides, though at their snouts they are ablating. This had resulted in huge piles of scree and moraine which are difficult and dangerous obstacles to cross. The rivers are fed entirely by glacial melt-water and act as conveyor belts carrying the rock debris out of the mountains. There is a marked diurnal change in the volume of the river flow, this practically ceases during the night and reaches full spate in the late afternoon.

It is of interest here to remark on the formation of the meadow where we sited base camp. A large rock fall from the valley flank has formed a natural dam behind which a postglacial alluvial flat has

developed. This provided us with an ideal campsite and the villager's goats with an ideal high altitude summer grazing pasture.

Finally a word about the semi-precious stones to be found in the area. During the walk in we were often shown beautiful crystal specimens by the villagers and sometimes saw them in situ ourselves, The most common varieties were metamorphic minerals - dark red garnets up to 2 inches across and clear rock crystals (quartz) up to 6 inches long. Some of the granites contained coarse grained pegmatitic patches with tourmaline and topaz but unfortunately no good specimens were obtained. In the villages we saw a few pieces of the valuable bright blue ornamental stone lapis-lazuli (sodalite), but these had probably been brought over from the Munjan valley where the stone is mined from metamorphosed limestone deposits.

Often the locals would try to sell us the stones at grossly inflated prices. In fact you could tell how isolated a place was by the price expected for certain stones - those that were obtained in Pacygram for 10 Afs. were going for 500 Afs. in Barge Matal. It is unlikely that there will be any economic deposits of valuable minerals found in that part of the Hindu Kush which we visited. Mineralization

was seldom seen, and anyway if found would be extremely difficult to mine because of the complex geological structures and the inaccessibility of the mountains. Hopefully the people of Nuristan will remain undisturbed by modern geological exploitation.

Kevin Wills.

MEDICAL REPORT

As is often the case on small expeditions, none of us had much previous experience in the medical field. Being useless at mechanical first aid, the writer volunteered to mug up on the possible medical hazards. By far the most useful information was obtained by reading two books; 'Exploration Medicine' and 'Medicine for Mountaineering' (see list below). Dr. C. Grey, the College Doctor was most helpful by suggesting possible difficulties and in the selection of our medical supplies. Finally a browse through the medical reports of previous expeditions to the Hindu Kush indicated the commonest medical problems which we would face.

We all had a course of inoculations during the weeks prior to departure. These included smallpox, cholera, typhoid and tetanus all but the latter being necessary for the health officials at various frontiers. We had decided to travel out as fast as we could and to live in a relatively closed environment in the vehicle. This was to avoid picking up any infections and proved successful, for we didn't really have any trouble until we reached Kabul. From then on we were all visited by infections in various guises, the most common being diarrhoea. There didn't seem to be any particular connection

between the types of food we ate and the onset, length or strength of an infection. Often we experienced no ill effects from very doubtful looking local food, yet whilst in the mountains living off expedition rations we didn't escape troubles altogether.

Mild dysentery was by far our most common medical problem, causing us the loss of about 15 man-days and a loss of drive on many others. Though to its credit our conversations would have been restricted without it. Our standard treatment for diarrhoea was a course of succinylsulphathiazole - this usually worked well but was not the universal corkscrew we had hoped. We had various other pills for bowel infections, some working better than others according to the individual. Perhaps it would be best to take a large selection since this would normally be the most important item of the medical kit.

Our general health presented no undue difficulties. Evidently our diet was balanced and sufficient as we completed a high workload without becoming emaciated. Even after the initial three weeks of inactivity we soon regained our fitness. We sterilised our drinking water with Halozone tablets, filtering usually being unnecessary. Whilst travelling we were able to

eat a certain amount of fresh food, but in the mountains we took vitamin tablets to supplement our diet. The importance of preventing blisters should not have been overlooked, for although they usually only produce a minor irritation, they do give unnecessary discomfort which probably has more mental than physical effect. We underestimated the amount of elastoplast needed for minor cuts and blisters and consumed elastic dressing strip at around the rate of 1 yard per 75 man-days.

After diarrhoea our main problem was altitude acclimatisation, here our gradual increase in height on the walk in was a great help. The main difficulties were experienced when we suddenly increased our altitude from 13,000 feet at base camp to 17-19,000 feet during climbing. Two members of the party experienced altitude sickness including vomiting, dizziness and diarrhoea, fortunately these were short lived and disappeared after rest or a drop in height. After five weeks two parties went over 21,000 feet with no particular difficulty, so acclimatisation for this level was by then complete. Sleeping at altitude presented some difficulty and we were very glad to have sleeping tablets with us. There is some danger of feeling drowsy during the morning, but by awakening we found the affects had usually worn off. We discussed

this problem and agreed that any slight initial drowsiness was preferable to a sleepless night, especially when a hard days climbing was expected the next day.

Apart from our own medical problems, we were able to give a little assistance to some of the local people as we passed through their villages. This in itself could be a full-time occupation and it is unfortunate that there is no medical help for these people. However, it should be noted that most of the people are very fit and healthy and don't require any medical attention. In most cases only the men would approach and then only to signify that they had stomach pains - this was probably not serious and often they only wanted some attention. In these cases for our own and their peace of mind we distributed something harmless such as an aspirin or indigestion tablet. Fortunately we were of some use and were able to treat some minor irritations such as ulcers, toothache and skin infections.

Our most useful work here was to treat some people who had eye infections. Trachoma - a severe viral form of conjunctivitis is quite common in the area and sadly often leads to blindness. Unfortunately it is aggravated by living in poorly ventilated smoke filled houses, and by constant rubbing in an attempt to reduce

the irritation. One baby only a few months old had both eyes closed by the bulging pus beneath his eyelids. We administered penicillin eye ointment whenever possible and were able to reduce the infections of some of our porters and of people who passed through base camp.

One event we were not prepared for was veterinary surgery. Muhamed Gul's horse had a large septic sore on its back caused by the rubbing of heavy loads. After cleaning the wound I applied a tube of antiseptic cream (half our supply) and a clean dressing. I don't suppose it helped the horse much, but Muhamed Gul was happy.

The Medical Kit

We took a metal first aid cabinet which was just the right size (17"x14"x5") for our surgical supplies and other medications. Its only drawback was that it was not airtight and dust tended to accumulate inside. On our walk to base camp we met an American party from the Sierra Club on their 1970 Afghanistan trip. Their leader, Steve Arnon, himself a medical student, was very kind in giving us a number of medical supplies, which although not essential we found very useful. In particular he gave us 10 tubes of penicillin ointment for the treatment of local people's eye infections.

Contents of Medical KitMedical supplies

<u>Item</u>	<u>Use</u>
300 Tetracycline tablets	Antibiotic
100 Penicillin tablets	Penicillin sensitive infections
500 Succlinylsulphathiazole tablets	Diarrhoea
50 Senna tablets	Constipation
200 Chloroquine tablets	Malaria and Amoebic Dysentry
60 Seconal tablets	Sleeping at altitude
Ferrosemeide tablets	Altitude sickness
Asprin tablets	Mild pain relief
Panadol tablets	Pain relief
Morphine tablets	Severe pain relief
Demerol tablets	Severe pain relief
Aluminium Hydroxide tablets	Indigestion
Throat lozenges	Sore and infected throats
1 bottle Kaolin mixture	Soothing bowel functions
2 tubes Tinefax ointment	Skin infections
1 tube Sulphacetamide eye ointment	For eye infections
10 tubes Penicillin eye ointment	For eye infections
1 bottle Oil of cloves	Toothache
Temporary filling material	Replacing lost fillings

contents of Medical Kit continued

<u>Item</u>	<u>Use</u>
24 tubes Glacier cream	Preventing sunburn at altitude
10 sticks Lip salve	Preventing lip sores
1 bottle Calamine Lotion	Treatment of sunburn
1 tin Mycil anti sweat powder	Foot care
24 tubes Insect repellent	Repelling insects
1 tin Anti louse powder	Flea extermination

Surgical Supplies

12 Small sterilised dressings
 6 Medium sterilised dressings
 6 Large sterilised dressings
 4 Triangular bandages
 3 1/2 oz. packets Sterilised Cotton Wool
 4 Sterilised eye pads
 1 Box assorted safety pins
 1 Rubber pressure bandage
 1 Crepe bandage
 25 yds. Tubegauz and applicator
 3 yds. Absorbent gauze
 3 yds. of 1 in. Elastic plaster

contents of Medical Kit continued

1 yd. of 1/2 in. Elastic dressing strip
1 yd. of 2 1/2 in. Elastic dressing strip
10 yds. of in. Zinc oxide plaster
48 assorted Adhesive wound dressings.
1 pair Dressing scissors
1 pair Splinter forceps
1 Clinical thermometer
1 Kidney tray
1 2 oz. Medicine glass
1 Plastic eye bath
4 oz. Bicarbonate of soda
1 bottle Surgical Spirit
1 bottle Dettol antiseptic
3 tubes Antiseptic cream
1 packet Antiseptic cleaning pads
1 bottle Phisohex antibacterial soap.
1 bottle Sal Volatile
1 bottle Smelling salts.

Book References

1. Exploration Medicine by O.G. Edholm and A.L. Bacharach
published by John Wright and Sons Ltd. Bristol

2. Medicine for Mountaineering Edited by J.A. Wilkerson
published by the Mountaineers, Seattle, Washington.

Kevin Wills.

NOTES ON BASHGALI GRAMMAR

For the following notes on the Bashgali dialect we would like to thank Mr. Jack Dozier (Leader of the American Hindu Kush Expedition 1970).

Bashgali is an ancient Indo-European language related to the extinct Prakrit languages of India. It is spoken in the Bashgal valley and in the Shkuri-gul. The dialects in the Pesh and the Munjan are related but not closely.

Some random observations may enable you to conduct rudimentary conversations.

- (1) Simplify and then simplify again.

English: In order to make tea you must boil water.

Bashgali: Chai kshi: ão tipao

(tea making: water boil)

English: My leg has a boil on it.

Bashgali: Kur apsiss

(leg abscess)

- (2) The verb always comes at the end of the sentence; postpositions replace prepositions.

English: Give me a bit of meat.

Bashgali: Iã dugé achok bor giats

(Me for sake of a little meat give)

(5) The subject comes first in the sentence. Adjectives precede nouns.

English: You are a bad man.

Bashgali: Tu digar manchi assish
(You bad man are)

(4.) The subject is often expressed as the object of a postposition.

English: I want a big basket.

Bashgali: Iã tã al kawa ud ess
(Me to big basket useful is)

English: We have hay for our horses.

Bashgali: Ema ta ushp duge tus ass
(us to horse for hay is)

(5) Verbs conjugate excessively but the declension (4. cases) of nouns, pronouns and adjectives is minimal. Even gender can often be ignored.

English: Our women don't know what a needle is.

Bashgali: Ema jugur n'zatett chim-chich kai lattri ess.
(our women not know needle what thing is)

(Note that relative clauses are handled as if two sentences)

English: Your parents are good people. Why are you a thief?

Bashgali: Tu non tott lé manchi asht. Kai

(Your mother father good people are. What
duga shtar bissish?
for thief you are?)

- (6) Euphony in the sentence is essential to the Kafirs.
Thus the same word may be found in many forms in order
to make the sentence scan.

e.g. manchi, machi, mash

Many: bilugh, biliuk, bluk

Good: le, lest less lessta

For: duga, ga, tka

- (7) Sometimes the genitive is indicated only by position.
e.g. The house of Mirak = mirak amu

Sometimes by the word wā. Thus al bidi wa (of great
heart -or generous; iattri-wā-man of property-rich.

- (8) Many adjectives or nouns are formed from the verb.
Thus Industrious - less kudum kul

(good work doing)

Guide - pott zarl

(road knowing)

(9) The future conjugation is something like Slavic.

vilom - I will beat

vilosh - You will beat

vila - He will beat

vimma or vimish - He will beat

vir - You will beat

vila - They will beat

(10) The interrogative is formed by adding a or i to the end of the sentence.

tu ettish-a?

you to go?

(11) Examples of present conjugation

	assum	azumish
--	-------	---------

am	assish	azar
----	--------	------

	ass, ess	asht, ai
--	----------	----------

	ennam	emish
--	-------	-------

go	enji, etish	er
----	-------------	----

	enn	end
--	-----	-----

(12) The Kafirs, like a few tribes in the Caucasus count by twenties. Thus

1. eo	20. witsi
2. du	21. witsi eo
3. tre	30. witsi duts
4. shto	40. du witsi
5. puch	50. du witsi duts
6. shu	100. poch witsi
7. sutt	300. pachits witsi
8. osht	400. azar
9. non	1000. du azar witsi
10. duts	
11. yanits	
12. dits	

(i)

(pronunciation on page viii)

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. able, brave.....damtól | |
| 2. alas | Hai! Hai! |
| 3. aid, help, mend.....less kuth | |
| 4. to be able, can.....busth (infin.- the 35 verb forms
are extremely complicated) | |
| 5. to be.....esth | |
| 6. after.....ptiwar (postposition, not preposition) | |
| 7. ache, pain, illness.....bradzott | 18. beat, punish |
| 8. all.....sang | wisth or visth |
| 9. angry, sad.....kāpa | 19.before.....shaiyé |
| 10. arm hand.....dusht or dui | 20.big.....al |
| 11. animal.....kor | 21.belly.....ktol |
| 12. avalanche.....tunus | 22.black.....zhí |
| 13. awake!.....betso! | 23.blanket....jil |
| 14. come back.....ptiwar ats! | 24.boy.....marír |
| 15. bad, wrong.....digar, dagar, digri
or less n'ess | 25.bravo!.....shamash! |
| 16. Bashgali language.....Kató wari | 26.bread.,....buri, bór |
| 17. bed | 27.to bring...awésth |
| | 27a.bring! giats! |

(ii)

28. bridge.....sú	47. dangerous....chikúr, digar
29. brother.....bra	48. daughter....,..jú
30. broken.....petangess	49. day.....gujr, wós
31. bugs.....guzr	50. delay, late....dré
32. be careful!.....tarachi bo!	51. deep (a).....guru
33. carry.....ngusth	52. demand, request ragasth
34. cease!.....bés kshí	53. die.....mrishth
35. chicken.....kakkak	54. difficult.....zur
36. child.....parmen, liliwak	55. dirty.....mul
37. clean (a).....shta	56. do, make, build...kusth
38. clever.....kshul	57. dog.....kruí
39. clothing.....bazisna	58. down hill....brúte, buru
40. climb.....biznor kusth	59. downwards.....yúr
42. cold (a).....shil, shilté	60. drink.....pisth
43. country, valley gul, gol	61. eat.....yusth
44. coward.....widarl	
45. crop, field.....ptul	
46. custom.....chor	

(iv)

97. harm.....najiss
 98. happy.....kushan, kuzhan
 99. hair.....zhu
 100. hello.....salaam
 101. he.....aske
 102. head.....pshai; shai
 103. hear.....p'kor esth, kor kusth
 103a heavy.....ganowa, gawa, gano
 104. he, her, this, here..ani, ma
 105. high up.....chir
 106. hot.....tapi
 107. house.....amu
 108. how far.....chok badur
 109. how much, many.....chok, chi, chuk
 110. how.....kaikote
 111. hungry.....atta biss
 112. husband.....mosh
 113. I.....ia, ots, i
 114. immediately.....zapp
 115. in, on, at,.....ta (postposition)
 116. in front.....nashtarwai
 117. industrious.....less kuduxn kul
 ii8. intention.....bibdi, bidi
 119. Kafir.....Kato
 120. kill.....jaristh
 121. kindness.....mihrbani
 122. to know.....zarasth
 123. knowledge.....shu, tinch

124. lazy.....danger, beru
125. learn.....zarosth
126. leg.....chon, chu
127. left.....kuwar
 right.....pachutr
 to the left.....kuwar por
 to the right.....pachutr por

128. light (wg.).....parmenstuk
 129. little, few.....achok
 130. (n).....bór
 131. long.....drgr (no vowels!)
 132. look!, look out!.....aish kshi!
 133. loose.....jijil
 134. luck.....baré
 135. man.....manchi
 136. many.....bilugh, lé
 137. medicine.....uzha, usha
 138. morning (early).....kuiyā
 139. mountain.....pashi, ashtre, bado
 140. summit.....bado pshai
 141. mosquito.....kó
 142. name.....nom
 143. narrow.....aruni, limrai
 144. near.....turé, taware
 145. necessity, use.....úd
 146. new.....noi
 147. night, by night..... radar
 148. not, no.....na, n nothing, no one.....kai
 149. now.....tarak
 150. today.....starak gujr n'asht
 151. O.K.....lesta bala
 152. old.....siúm old person.....purdik
 153. outside.....bar, begú, bé
 154. other.....wāra
 154a my, your, his own....yost
 155. pass (n).....baskhtate
 156. path.....limrai pott

(vi)

157. *pertinacious, stubborn*....jaga
158. *poor (a)*.....ka no wa machi
159. *pretty*.....shingara
160. *quarrel*.....kila kusth
161. *photograph*.....aks
to photograph.....aks kusth
162. *property, thing*.....lattri
- 162a *rain*.....agal
163. *remain*.....otisth
- 163a *red*.....zirá
165. *rich*.....bilugh lattri, wa manchi
166. *river*.....golúgh, po, aó
up river.....chir
down river.....nir
across the river.....pér
on this side of the river....ír
167. *road*.....pott
- 167a *rope*.....kanik
168. *share (n)*.....barakti
share!.....barakshi!
169. *salt*.....zhuk
170. *same*.....é yór
171. *say, speak*.....walesth, wari kusth
172. *see*.....waresth, osh kusth
173. *seek, look for*.....aish kusth
174. *shallow*.....turungo
175. *sister*.....sos

176. slowly.....chillé
177. snow.....zím
178. son.....pitr
179. to sleep.....pshusth
180. small.....parmenstuk
181. slippery.....silkin
182. steep.....ukar, uchangiest
183. stand up!.....ushto!

(vii)

184. strong.....kartí, karwa
 185. sugar.....gur
 186. sun.....sú
 187. swim.....nosh kusth
 188. take (see "bring" or "carry")
 189. taste (what is liked).....shotik
 190. thanks.....shamash, blólest?
 191. they, them.....amnio, amkian
 192. thin.....dadar (person), turungo (thing)
 193. think.....purjonisth
 194. time, period.....wokt
 195. tight.....aron, arar
 196. thief.....shtar
 197. to be tired.....gatra biss
 198. tie!.....giró
 199. tomorrow.....dalkié
 200. tree.....kano

 201. true.....shtal
 202. valuable.....mani-wā
 203. I don't understand.....Ia n'purjosam
 203a up hill.....atóre
 204. upside down.....shai yúr
 205. useless.....úd n'ess
 206. way.....pór
 207. why.....kai dugā
 208. what.....kai, ka'st
 209. when.....kui, kai wokt
 210. which.....Kachi, kett
 211. weak.....dadar, dangariwok, akati

212. where.....kór, korar
213. whence.....kór ste
214. whose.....kust
215. who.....kāchí, kú
216. well, healthy.....aduniyé
217. valley.....gul
218. very.....biluk, belugh

(viii)

219. village.....bagram, gram	<u>PRONOUNCIATION</u>
220. wait!.....otio!	<u>a as in what</u>
221. water.....aó	<u>ã as in bawl</u>
222. we, our.....ema	<u>e as in met</u>
223. wet.....zhil	<u>é as in bait</u>
224. with (person)..mësh	<u>g as in gully</u>
with (thing)...wāré	<u>i as in pit</u>
225. wood.....dao, dar	<u>í as in meet</u>
226. wind.....damu	<u>j as in judge</u>
227. work.....kudum	<u>o as in more</u>
228. year.....sé	<u>ó as in rote</u>
229. yellow.....zarín	<u>rr heavily rolled</u>
230. yesterday..... dus	<u>u as in put</u>
231. young..... lillik	<u>ú as in rule</u>
232. you (sing.)....tu	
your.....to`st	<u>note: (1) double consonants</u>
you (pl).....sha	<u>are emphasized</u>
your.....sha`st	<u>(2) many, probably most,</u>
	<u>long vowels are</u>
	<u>strongly nasalized.</u>

Expedition expenditure excluding personal equipment costs
 - to the nearest £,

<u>DEBIT</u>	£
Austin K9 truck (Ex Army, 1946 model!)	80
Spares for, and repairs to the truck	81
Petrol (11,394 miles at 9.6 mpg = 1,188 gallons)	229
Road tolls	4
Ferries (English channel and Bosphorous)	45
Food	174
Food import duty into Afghanistan	70
Climbing rope	40
General climbing equipment (prussikers, deadmen etc)	18
Safety flares (3 miniflare packs and spare flares)	15
Tents (2 high altitude lightweights and 2 bivi bags)	43
General camping and cooking equipment	10
Medicine and first aid kit	25
Glacier cream and insect repellent	8
Water sterilising tablets	14

124.

Debit contiued

£

Packing materials (Triwall boxes and plastic bags)	16
Visas	8
Maps	3
Porters and horses (10/- per man day - 7 days total)	94
Headed notepaper	6
Petty Cash	46
Green Card - 3 months	40
3rd party cover in Iran) 2
) Vehicle
Insurance in Europe on return journey)
) Insurance 10
due to expiry of Green card.)

£ 1,081

=====

125.

CREDIT

	£
Imperial College Exploration Board Grant.	450
I.C. Exploration Board vehicle insurance money.	52
Donations	21 1/2
I.C. Recreational Club Committee grant	85 1/2
Personal contributions by expedition members	350
Sale of truck)	65
Sale of food) on our return to England	14
Sale of equipment)	25
	<hr/>
	£1,063
	=====

Hence financial standing of the expedition on 1st August, 1971, with several more items of equipment still to be sold, is an account from Imperial College Exploration Board overdrawn by £18.

Bibliography

British Midlands Hindu Kush Expedition 1967. Report

(Leader D.K. Scott,
16 Oakdale Drive,
Chilwell Notts,)

Manchester Hindu Kush Expedition 1966.

'A short walk in the Hindu Kush' by Eric Newby. An entertaining
adventure book which also describes at attempt on Mir Samir.

'No Tigers in the Hindu Kush' by Tranter describes the 1966
Scottish Hindu Kush Expedition.

Wolfgang Frey is documenting the Central Hindu Kush Archives and
will supply printed maps and information at cost price.

Address.

D. 7031 Güiltstein,
Tail finger Str. 11.,
W. GERMANY

The Royal Geographical Society, Kensington Gore, S.W.7, has many
maps and reports relating to mountaineering and exploration in
the Hindu Kush and is most willing to give help.