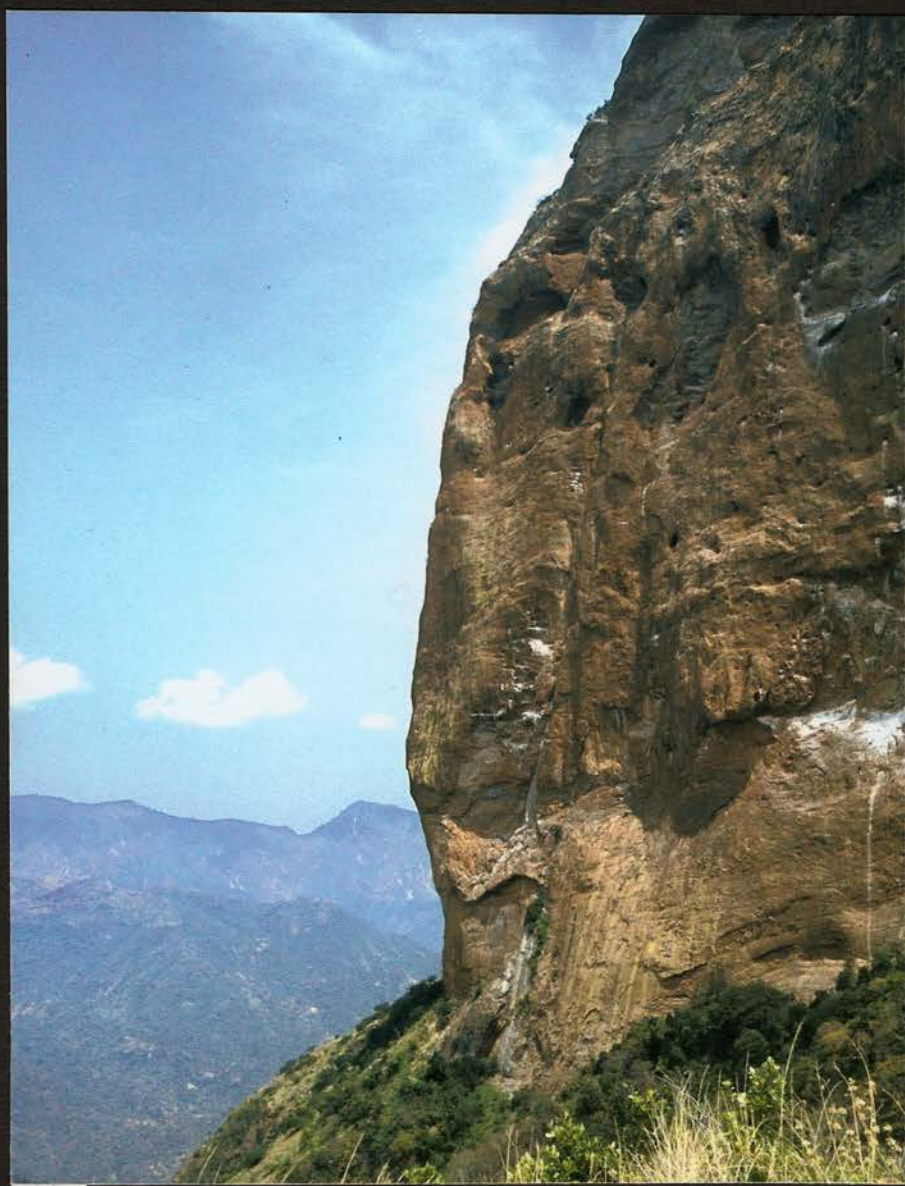


A Report on the Expedition to
Climb Mount Poi



in the Ndoto Mountains of
Northern Kenya

A Report on the Expedition to Climb Mount Poi In the Ndoto Mountains of Northern Kenya

Marnix Buonajuti

Introduction

The report is divided into two sections. The first section is essentially the full story of the expedition from an analysis of its humble and human beginnings, through to a factual and possibly boring description of daily events. The second section is a summary of the more technical information such as expedition expenses, weather, route description, and a small section on ethical issues.

Contents

Section 1-

- 2 Birth of the Idea**
- 2 Trip Preparation**
- 3 The Trip**
- 4 Organising the Ground Support**
- 5 Getting to Base Camp**
- 5 Base Camp**
- 6 The Climbing (By calendar dates)**
- 10 Ending Our Stay**
- 10 Trip Home**

Section 2-

- 11 Weather**
- 11 Food Costs**
- 11 Water Costs and Consumption**
- 12 Petrol Cost for Transport**
- 12 Porter Costs**
- 12 Camp Costs**
- 12 Total Expenses**
- 13 What Went Wrong and What Could be Done Differently**
- 13 Ethical Issues**
- 14 Route description**

Section 3-

- 16 Acknowledgements**

Section 1

The Birth of the Idea

Unfortunately the inspiration for this venture came by way of a slightly slanderous, beer driven, rant with my friend Felix Berg. Noble pioneering sentiments came much later. We were sitting in the mountain club of Kenya in early January on a Tuesday night when in sauntered a Slovenian climbing team freshly returned from mount Poi. They looked as most people do returning from a few weeks in such a place; proud, sunburned, chapped lipped and with sun bleached hair. The only difference (and a critical one at that) was that they were all wearing these black denim jackets covered in sponsorship logos. Felix and I laughed at these serious jackets. We asked ourselves "how can it be necessary to have two years of planning, seven heavy jackets and fifteen sponsors just to set up a sport route top down on Poi"? Our essentially jealous discussion led us to the conclusion that we should be able to do the same with much less fuss. From that moment the deal was on, "let us go to Poi and make our own climb".

Soon afterwards I returned to England to resume my studies and there I bumped into a fellow Kenyan by the name of Peter Horsey. Peter explained that he had been trying to get funding from the university expedition board go climbing new routes in Kenya in the summer. His applications had been turned down because what he was proposing was more of a climbing trip than an expedition. After a little conversation we decided that an expedition needs a precise and challenging objective. After that it did not take long to convince him that putting up a new route on the huge east face of Poi was a good objective.

Peter's partner in "crimb" is James Nutter. A five second conversation with him at the climbing wall and he became part of the project too.

Peter and James sent off another application to the expedition board and I began to plan equipment with Felix. The expedition board took a look at the proposal and gave us an interview on the condition that we revised the proposal. I looked at it and removed "not getting killed" from the list of objectives, added a few little paragraphs about food, water, and porters, and edited the equipment list. Felix started to train.

We arrived at the interview to find a table of twenty people staring at us, asking questions. It appeared that they liked the idea but they were not yet convinced with the planning and logistics. The question was asked "How do you propose to climb a big wall with only four litres of water per person per day? A person climbing would need seven or eight litres." I had reasoned that climbing a cliff in August (Kenyan winter time) that faced east and was in the shade all afternoon would not require more than four or so litres of water. However it did not seem that I would win this argument, so in conclusion another revised proposition was sent agreeing that we would need 7 litres of water each per day. Eventually our proposal was approved and we were given a grant of £1000. Each member of the team was expected to contribute an additional £500 on top of the boards grant.

Trip Preparation

The needs were long and the money was short so we had to find the cheapest source of equipment that we could. I discovered an Italian company called Repetto sport that did whole sale of climbing gear, and had prices that were easily half of those found in the UK's most competitive shops. After much debate with Felix I sent an order, which arrived two days before we were due to leave. The entire grant sum of £1000 plus and additional £800 of our personal money was invested in buying climbing gear. Summing up the weight of the equipment, food and people it seemed unreasonable to try to pack everything into my Land-Rover. I spoke to Peter and asked him if he could try to organise a second vehicle in Nairobi. Peter managed to get hold of his families rally car - a 1971 Peugeot 504 converted with much love and attention.

With bags seriously overrunning the airline weight restrictions we flew to Kenya. Once there we went to my Nairobi residence and began the final preparations. We spent a few days climbing on some of the cliffs near Nairobi and put up several new routes. We then did some enormous food shopping and bought all the things that we would not be able to find in the north.

We loaded both cars up with much food (namely rice, pasta, lentils, peanut butter, tomatoes and chillies), 120 extra litres of petrol and two shops worth of climbing gear. We had five hundred and

①
A few kilometers
after Laisamis the
road crosses many
dry river beds full of
sand. A 4x4 vehicle
is useful if one
wishes to avoid getting
stuck. Here we are
getting ready to tow
Peters car out of
the deep sand.



②
Coca Cola even
Laisamis



③
Desert Navigation



fifty meters of rope, Three sets of cams, four sets of nuts and hexes, fifty pitons, hundreds of karabiners, a dozen assorted pulleys and ascenders, bolts a 6 kg gasoline powered drill, hammers, spanners, blow tubes, three or four pairs of climbing shoes each, and Felix managed to build a medical kit that filled four bags (considering his previous experience of expeditions this was taken to be an ominous sign).

The Trip

On the day of our departure, we woke up at 6:00am but somehow did not manage to get out of Nairobi before about 11:30. What ensued was a day long enactment of the Tortoise and Hare story. Felix and I drove very slowly and steadily up toward Timau, while Peter and Kid whizzed around getting lost and somehow managing to check in at Rosslyn, Thika, Narumoru, Nyeri, Narumoru again, then Nanyuki and finally Timau. They managed 5 punctures and a broken shock absorber mounting on the way.

When we arrived in Timau with two hours of sunlight left we had to make the decision of whether to carry on or not. Ahead one comes to the town of Isiolo. This un-idilic town marks the border of the ungoverned part of Kenya with the totally ungoverned part of Kenya. Proceeding north would have put us in the situation of cooking, eating and sleeping in an area renowned for its bandits. Remaining the night in Timau would have meant less distance covered today and more to cover tomorrow. In Timau there were also friends with warm beds and large dinner tables..... It had to be Timau. We justified it to ourselves that we would leave early the next morning.

The next morning we regrouped in Isiolo. We topped up our fuel tanks, drank the last cold coke and left the tarmac road.

An eight hour drive along some very bumpy and very desolate roads took us further and further north and eventually brought us to Laisamis. Laisamis is a sandy little village, with sandy houses, located in a sandy pit, in a sandy desert all covered in rocks....and they still sell coca cola. It only costs twice the normal price (now 25 pence) so we drank the coke (*photo2*). At this point one takes a turn right, off the main Isiolo to Marsabit road onto a dirt track (you will see the camels in front of you *photo3*). This road is narrow and surrounded on all sides by thick bushes green from the subterranean water content. The road winds its way through numerous dry sandy river beds before finally arriving at the Milgis River. If you are lucky the Milgis is dry and with a little momentum (or 160kph for Pete *photo4*) you can cross its thick sands. If the river is wet you turn around, drive two hours back to Laisamis eight hours back to Isiolo and five hours back to Nairobi. The river was dry. We celebrated, ate a mango, did a few handstands (*photo5*) and proceeded onwards. After crossing the Milgis the road takes higher and drier ground and for the first time since Isiolo you drive on nice flat roads. At this point my Land-Rover (Melanie) managed to reach 70kph and Pete was still driving in his 160kph stints divided by "lets let the radiator cool down" pauses. The road gets more and more perfect until one is speeding past Baio on the left and you can see the Ndoto mountains (and more importantly Poi) ahead. At this point it is important to interject that Baio is a mountain that on one side has a slightly concaved cliff 500 meters tall and it has never been climbed.....

One chocolate bar and one machine-gun wielding pedestrian later, we arrived into the green little village of Ngurunit. Recessed into the northern edge of the mountain range, the village is a beautiful melange of tall green trees, birds, butterflies, camels and coca cola. It seems like there is not much traffic going through the town, so the arrival of a car caused a great stir with everyone coming out of their houses and all the children running toward us shouting excitedly. Within 30 seconds a bright young boy by the name of Amos was peering into my window asking me what I had come for. I told him that we had come to climb Poi. Jumping on Melanie's roof rack he exclaimed "I know how to get there, drive forwards". "Forwards" turned out to be over several medium sized trees, two tall ant hills, through two herds of camels, several more rivers, over a dozen or so boulders and as far up an African mountain range as you can possibly get with an enthusiastic child as a guide and some delusional optimists as drivers.

Just as we were parking our cars, both Peter and I ran out of petrol. It was a totally full tank of fuel each from Isiolo to this little village of Siangan, which was reassuring because it meant that with the extra jerry cans we had we could each refuel completely and keep forty litres spare for the return journey.

Within ten minutes of parking we were surrounded by curious Rendile tribe's people who seemed to pop out of the bush from nowhere. The women had shaved heads and they wore dark red tunics. The men were all clad in bright red robes, with huge bead necklaces and colourful earrings protruding out of the tops of their ears. Their hair was composed of braids dyed red and adorned with

4



Peter + James approaching the Milgis Crossing

5



6



Marnix drawing up a contract with the porters.
Camp 1

7



The team from left to right: Marnix Buonajuti,
Peter Horsey, James Nutter, and Felix Berg in the river
bed of Camp 1.

beads and colourful plastic flours. It is interesting that in many cultures of the world it is the women that dress up to look beautiful for the men. In this culture it appeared that the men dressed up for the women (or each other). They started to ask us questions in their native language. Not understanding a word they said, we used Amos as a translator. Just as the conversation was getting very confused Petro Lakeda stepped into our lives. He, and his eternal flow of letters will remain in my memory for a very long time. Petro is a short man, with a wiry body and a bony face. He introduced himself in good Kiswahili his gleaming white teeth contrasted by the large black pools of his eyes. He wore none of the elaborate costumes of the people around him, instead he was clad in style trousers and a tee shirt. With him he carried a large red book. He informed us that he was the head of village we were in, that he was pleased to meet us, and that if we wanted to stay the night in this camp then we would have to pay 50/- each. He then opened his book and asked if we were here to climb the mountain. The question was surprising but when we looked in the book the surprise was replaced with understanding. In the book were the names "Todd Skinner", Team Slovenia, and Stefan Glowacz (famous international climbers who had come to make attempts on the face). Petro informed us that everyone who came to stay here had to "follow the channel of the law" and sign in the red book. We had to do so, and so had the past groups of climbers who had been through there. We spent the rest of the evening talking. We discussed the unruly elephants that were marauding around the village at night. We talked about the impending droughts and the certain lack of goats milk in the next few months. We also talked about the other climbers who had been there. We discussed how they had organised their logistics and how their climbing had gone. The fates of Todd Skinner and The Slovenians we knew. They had bolted routes from the top down, climbed them, and then left the Rendile with much of their gear before going home. We had not heard of Stefan Glowacz's trip to Poi and this is surprising because in Germany and indeed much of the world he is a highly publicized climber. Petro informed us that he had come in February. He had tried to climb ground up, but he had found that the rock was too poor for his drill and so he had come down again. He then repeated the Slovenian route and went home. The bit about the rock being a bit too poor for the drill sounded discouraging, but we were there and so try we would.

Organising the Ground Support

Petro told us that he could be our man on the ground. He would take care of our cars, he could organise porters, the water supply, any food that we might need, and by the way would we like to buy one of his goats? Not right now thanks.

Too tired to talk we agreed to meet in the morning and discuss things again at that time.

In the morning Petro arrived at 6:30 sharp. I had breakfast and went over to start the discussions (*photo 6*). Felix started to back the bags, he coaxed Pete and Kid into helping. I shouted at them.

Three hours of discussion resulted in the following agreement. Petro would stay with the cars down in camp 1. He would take care of the cars and organise the porters. Petro would be paid 150/- a day for his services. He said that he would also require some presents from us at the end of the trip because all of the other visitors had done so. He tried to convince us that we should pay him to stay at camp 2 so that he might cook, clean and guard our equipment for us. Wishing to camp alone we declined. Besides there would be members of the team resting most days and they could cook, clean and guard things. We also organised to have some porters that would carry water two kilometres from the water hole to Petro in camp one (200/- for every twenty litres). Then from camp one some more porters would carry the water up the steep hill to camp two (400/- for every twenty litres). We would start by having 40 litres delivered and then we would see how much we needed each new day. Camp two was located on the ridge leading to the east face of Poi. It would be our main camp while we were climbing the face. The last thing that we organised was for some porters to help us carry the 300kg of climbing and camping gear for the 3 hour hike to camp 2. Each porter would carry a 20kg load and would be paid 500/- for this service. It is important to note that on mount Kenya where climbers are common and many porters are hired, the going rate for a full days walking (8hours) is 400/-. So each of these Samburu porters was very well paid (or over paid) indeed. We hired 12 luggage porters, two water porters (each carrying 20 litres) and each of us carried luggage as well. The porters complained about the weight, so we had to define 20kgs in terms of a full 20 litre jerry can of water. When they still complained we let them pick up our bags which were even heavier. At this point they stopped complaining and started walking (*photo 8*).

8



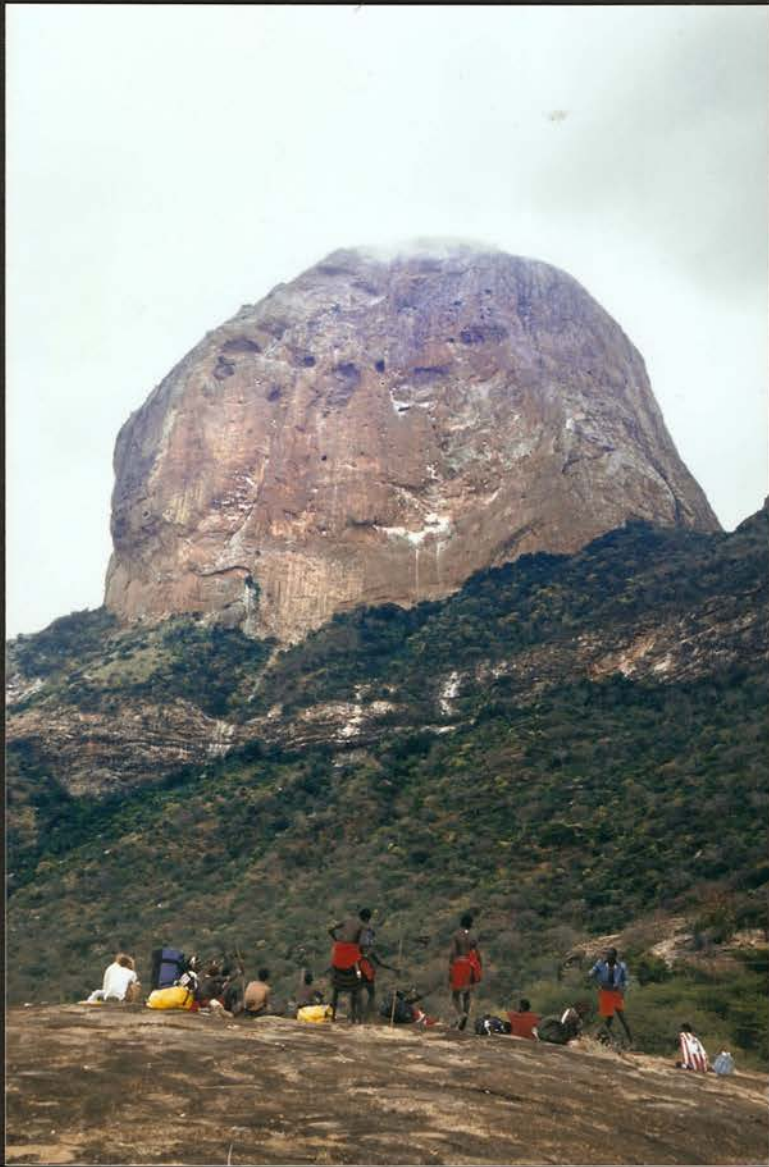
Leaving Siangan for the hard hike up the skyline ridge to Camp 2.

9



A rest break on the trail between Camp 1 and Camp 2. The men are all beautifully adorned with jewelry.

⑩



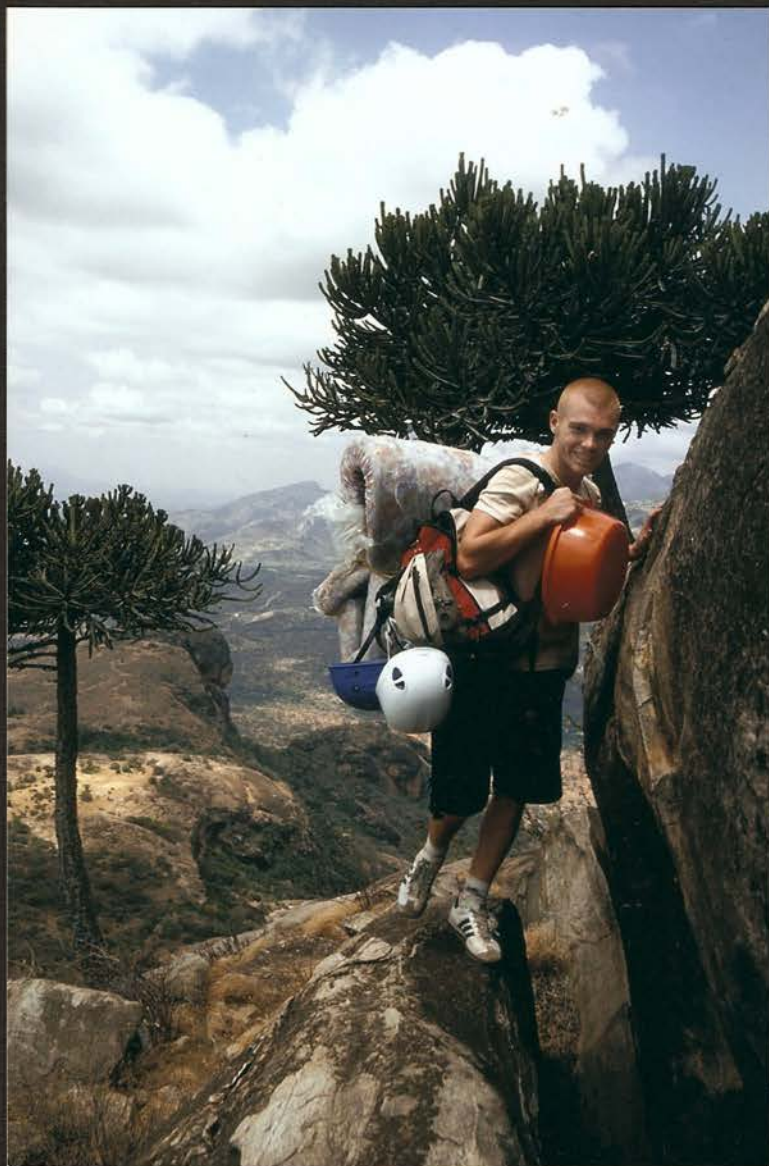
Hiking up the
easy slabs with
the East Face of Poi
ahead

⑪



The location of Camp 2 can be seen as a
narrow green field to the right of the Shark's tooth.

12



James Nutter tackling
the steep and dangerous
rock steep near Camp 2

13



Peter Horsey walking along the ridge near Camp 2.

14



Felix making the curry on Camp 2's elaborate fire place. The view is looking North East over the Korr (Kaisut) desert.

15



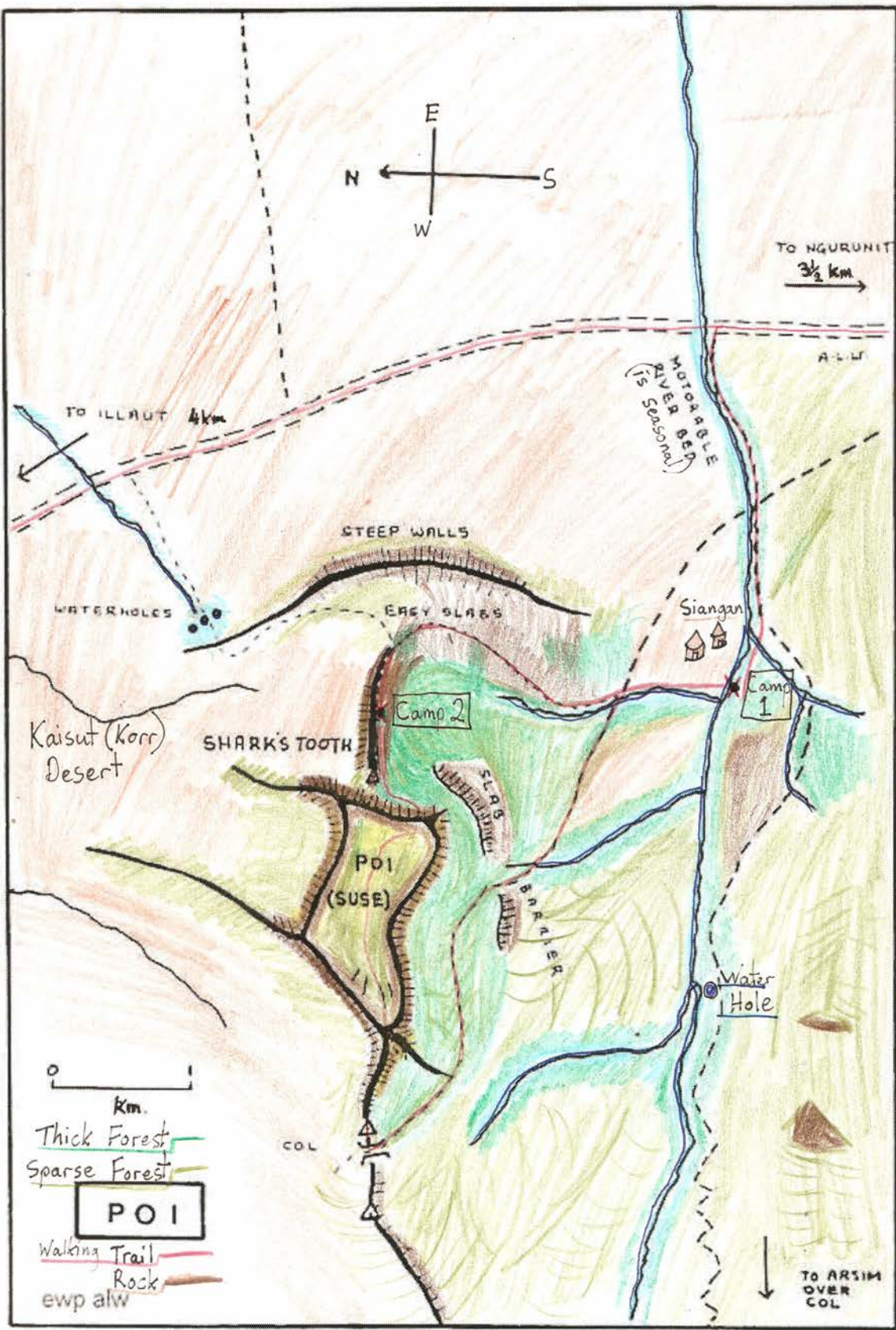
The view east from Camp 2. Mount Baio is the last mountain visible in the background. It has an unclimbed 500 meter face.



Water bearing women of Siangan



East Africa



Getting to Base Camp

The walk began at 11:00am. The first part was easy going over flat ground to the base of some dark gneiss slabs. These slabs then offered an easy (if not hot) path up an otherwise heavily wooded hill. At the top of the hill one reaches the eastern base of a ridge that runs westward to connect with the main face of Poi. Gaining the top of the ridge was rendered difficult by the numerous thorn trees which grabbed hold of every loose strap or garment. There were a number of animal trails that could be followed to make the walking easier. Once the top of the ridge was gained, we walked westward along it toward the cliff of Poi. Just shy of the campsite there is a steep rock step in the ridge (*photo 7*) that is tackled via a very exposed traverse on some loose, steep and soily ground. One must not slip here as death would be the most likely result. Once this difficulty is passed the camp site is gained in another 15 minutes of walking along the ridge (*photo 8*).

Base Camp

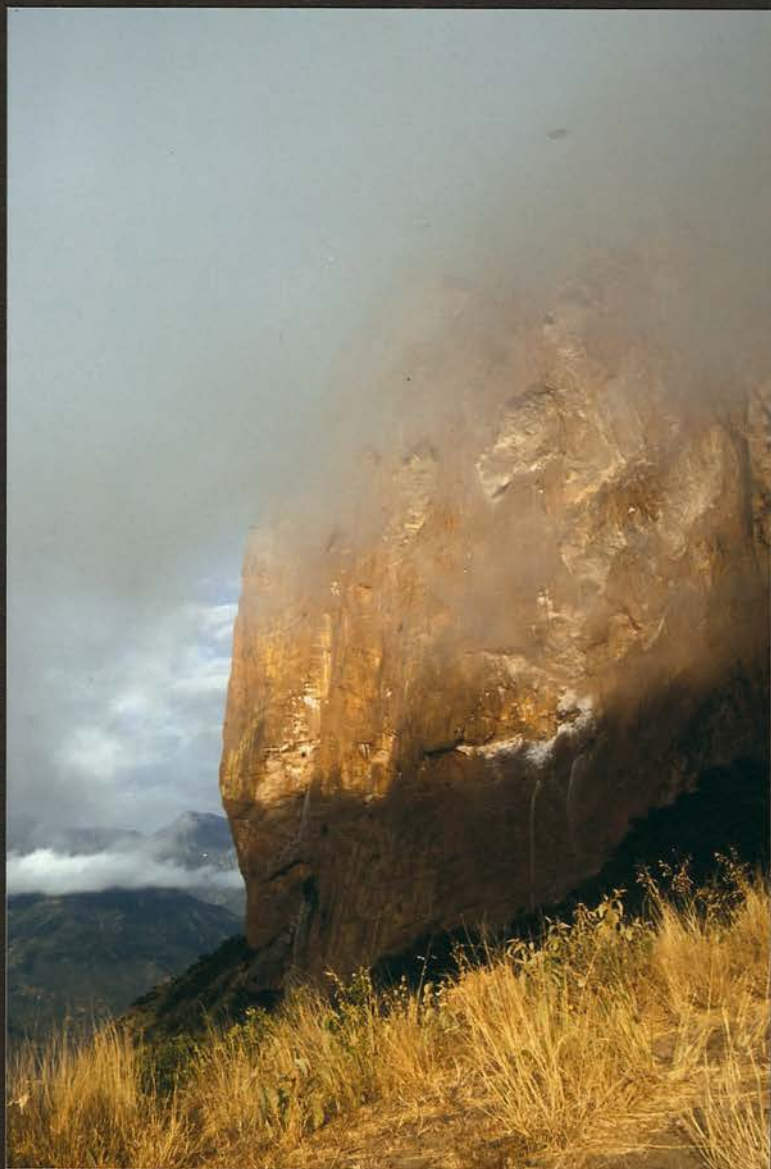
As camp sites go it is amazing and totally isolated. The livable space is a pleasant green field measuring approximately thirty by ten meters on the ridge top. On two sides the ridge steepens to form some cliffs (the edge of which work very well as toilets). On the other two sides the ridge continues for a long distance, effectively forming a large wall that divides the rest of the Ndoto Mountains from the desert. Camping on the very crest of this wall gives you the most fantastic views, with each side offering different scenery. To the north lie the white sands of the Korr Desert (*photo 10*), to the east one can see Baio, the Milgis River, and the mountain of Marsabit in the distance (*photo 5*), to the south lies the main body of the Ndotos and the village of Siangan (*photo 12*) and to the west lies the huge orange face of Poi (*photo 14*). All around the campsite the sky is filled with birds. There are hooded vultures, black crows, swallows, swifts, black shouldered kites and francolin. The ridge directs the wind in upward currents and as a result the birds fly back and forth along it all day long riding the lifting winds. Early in the morning the ridge is nice and cool. By mid day the sun feels very hot and the cooking fat melts in its tin, but by two the sun begins to go around the back of Poi and things cool off considerably. At night, the changing temperatures in the mountains and the desert result in some of the most astounding winds that I have ever experienced. Metal cooking pots placed on one edge of the ridge and not weighted down with stones would be found stuck in some bush on the other side the next morning. Any tent not securely pegged down and weighted would be collapsed. The wind even made it difficult to sleep at night with the way it rattled everything.

The moment we got up there it became clear that the camp had been used before. There was a circle of rocks and a pile of firewood marking out the fireplace. Unfortunately there was also a huge hole in the ground filled with garbage. There were many tin cans, glass bottles, broken glass, bones and bits of plastic. It was the most disappointing thing climbing all the way up there in this pristine landscape to find a garbage filled hole that had been created by fellow climbers. These are people you would hope and expect to have more respect for the environment than that. The trash from the hole was placed into bin bags and we carried it down with us when we left.

Soon after arriving at the camp we check that all the bags had arrived. We then paid each porter and asked them to sign by their names that they had received their salary. Each person was given a drink of water and then all the porters walked back down to Siangan. It was 2:00pm. It was the hardest walk that any of us had done in a while. We gently went about setting up camp. We put up three tents. One was the storage tent where we kept climbing gear and food, and the other two tents were used for sleeping (two people per tent). We collected some firewood and relaxed.

Later in the afternoon James and Peter headed off up the ridge to try and cut a path through the forest to the base of the cliff. Felix and I stayed in camp and stared for hours at the cliff with our binoculars. It was huge, and the possibility of which line to try and climb seemed endless. We decided we would have to wait for James and Peter to help make the decision. Looking for something to do Felix and I set off towards the cliff face. Within 40 meters of camp we had found a trail that led all the way to the base of the American and Slovenian routes. The walk took 30 minutes without luggage. The trail starts just west of the campsite and follows the ridge for about 50 meters. At this point it moves left (south) down a grassy slope and into the forest. It weaves up and down, left and right through the trees and rocks and then suddenly you arrive at the cliff. Your first look up is astounding. You really feel the enormity of this wall as you stare up at the endless meters of orange rock. From above comes the occasional squeak of a vulture chick. Felix and I started to walk back a little late and we had a several hour adventure trying to find our way back through dense forest at night. After many cuts, slips and

16



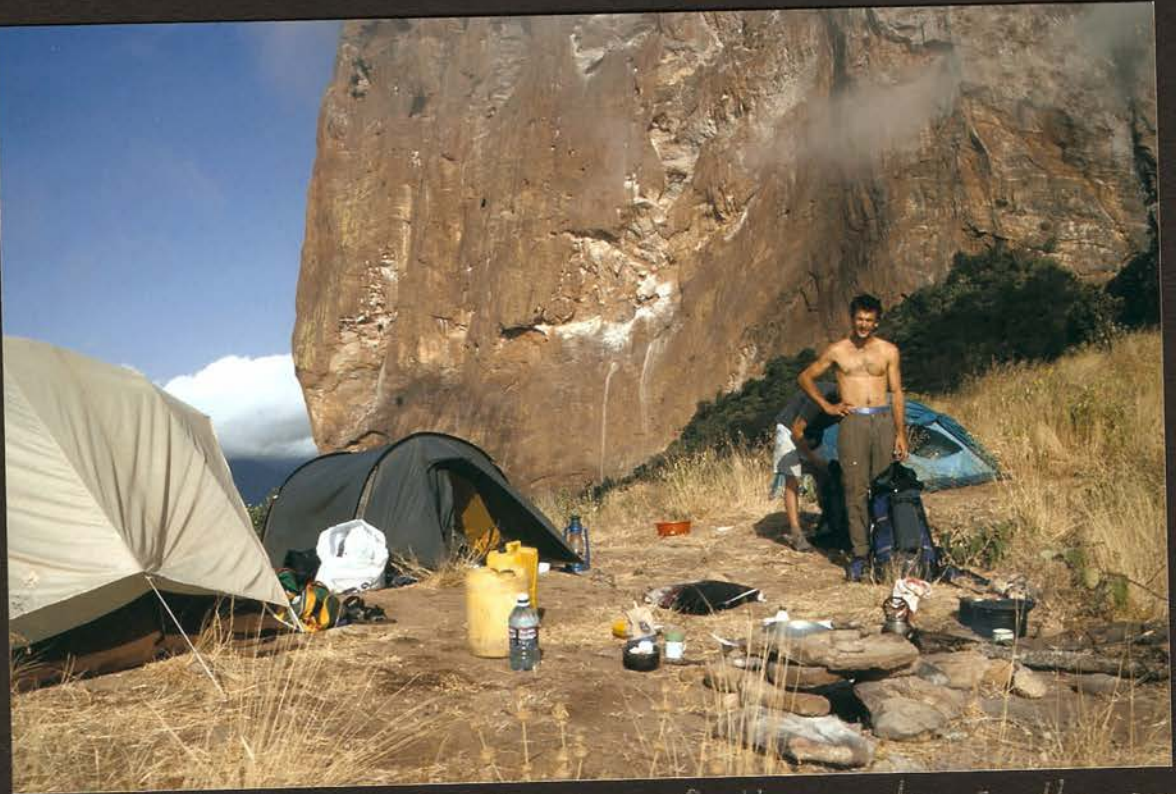
Looking West from
Camp 2, one sees the
huge east face of
Poi.

17



Looking South from Camp 2 over the Ndotos.
Siangan is located in the river bed at the base of the hills

18



Marnix in Camp 2. The line of the route is the groove on the left side of the cliff.

19



Sun Rise in Camp 2. Felix on tea duty.

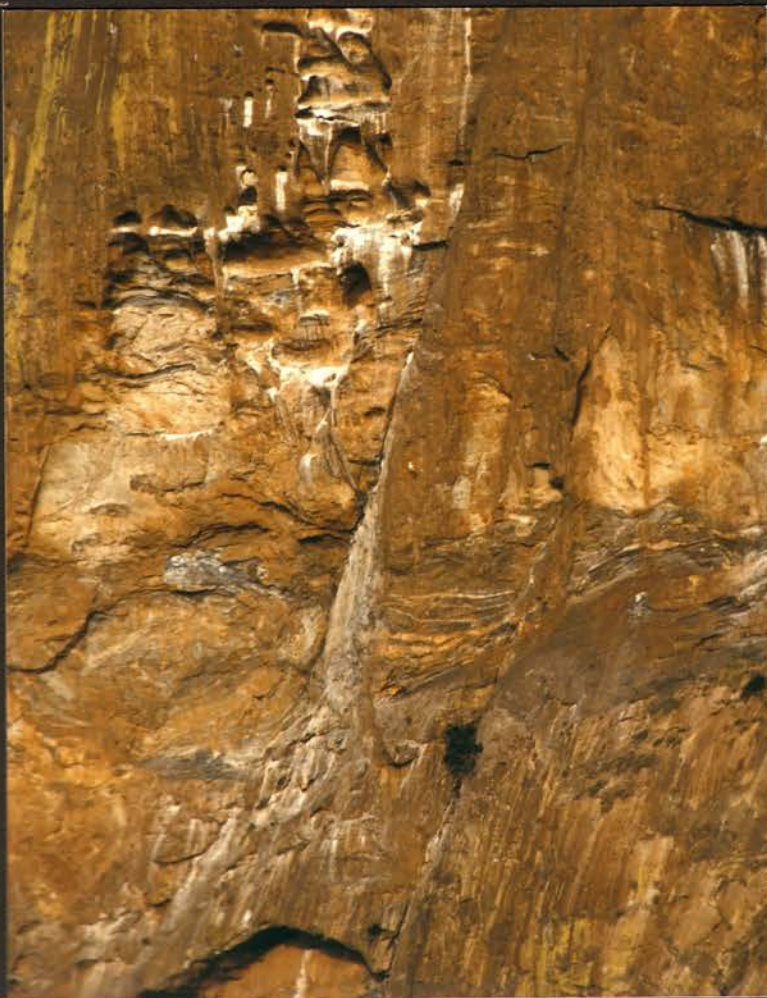
20



The East face of Poi.

Compare the two images to get an idea of the size of the cliff

21



A close up of our route from base camp. Peter can be seen as a white speck in the centre of the photo. Marnix is a red speck further down.

22



Peter Horsey on
Pitch 1.

23



some interesting down climbing off the shark's tooth we made it back to camp. Kid and Pete were there. We cooked and ate the first of many curry dinners and then went to bed.

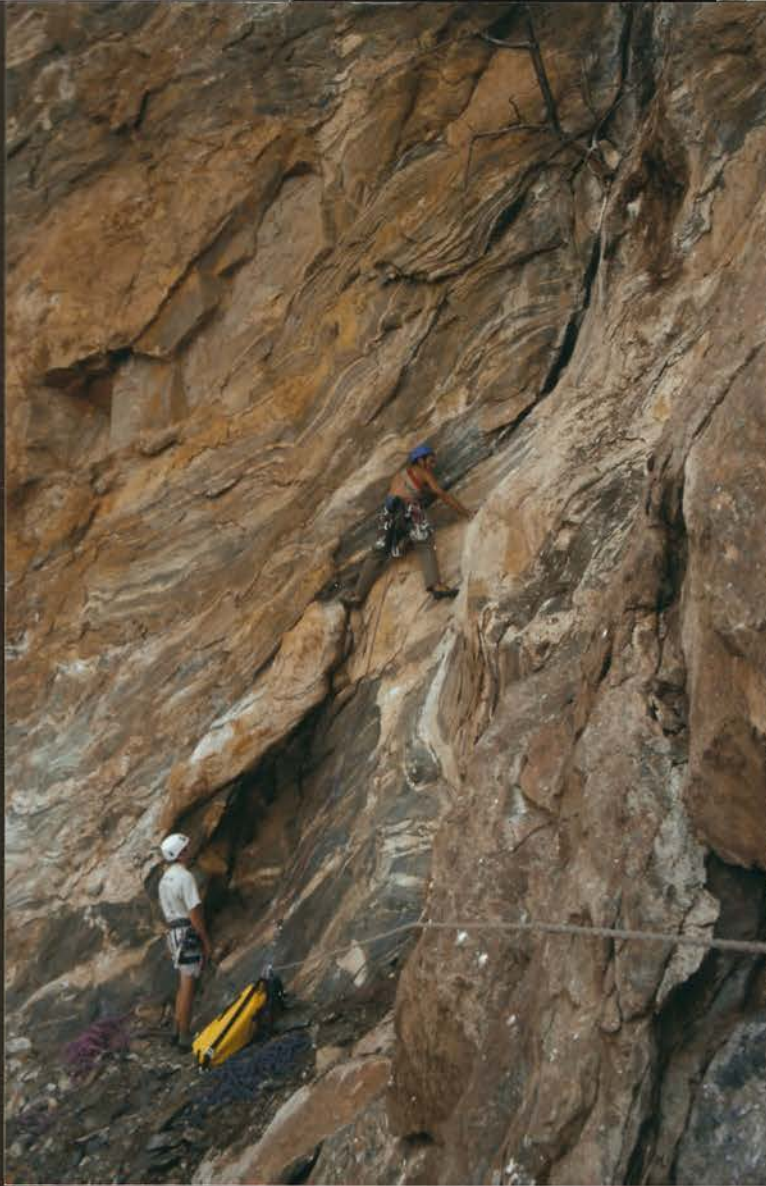
The Climbing

Monday 7th of July

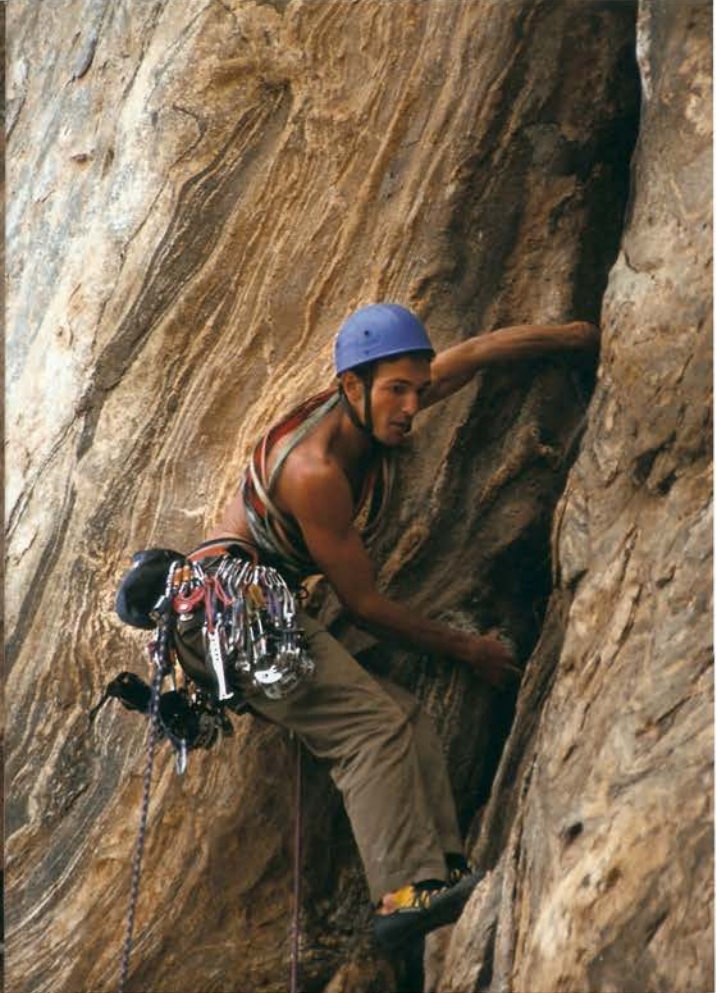
We woke up at 7:00 with the sun streaming through the tent fabric. We cooked a porridge breakfast, pulled out the binoculars and started to discuss route options. In the end we conclude that the corner system on the south most end of the east face looked like the best line to try. Decisions were made and the result was that Pete, James and Felix would go off and start the line, while I stay in camp, build an oven, organize the food stores, move the tents so that they would handle the nightly shaking from the wind a little better, and most importantly of all would I get to stare through the binoculars and communicate directions to the climbers with the walkie talkies. At first I was surprised by how long it actually takes to reach the base of the climb. From the time when one leaves camp (fully loaded with gear) to the point where one begins to climb, it is easily over an hour. The second thing that struck me was the sheer size of the cliff compared to the climbers (photo 21, compare the two photos. On the enlargement you can just see Peter as a white dot in the middle and me as a red dot with a yellow bag further down). Pete took the first pitch (photo 22), it looked like some hard slab climbing and I was surprised to see him make some considerable progress. He eventually disappeared behind the trees, fixed the rope and the second two jumared up to him. Felix took the next pitch. This one was considerably slower. I heard the drill go once and the hammer go twice (one bolt and one piton). After a long 50 meter pitch Felix stopped to belay, fix the line and the other two followed up. At this point they were on a large ledge system that slopes leftward about halfway to the base of the corner system. They moved along to the left hand edge of the ledge and I heard a belay being drilled. Felix and Pete each made an attempt to climb left toward the base of the groove but they were both stopped within two meters of the belay. Several rocks crash down towards earth. At this point I could see all three of them looking around. They eventually abseiled down and walk back to camp. By the time they got there their faithful camp husband has some tea ready and dinner on the go. I could not understand why they have dejected looks on their faces, and my questioning only brought forth sheepish grins. Eventually the story came out that when they started the route they found that Pete's bold first pitch was actually a 6c slab that had shiny new bolts in it. This pitch ends on a ledge that has a nice new bolted belay. Felix's pitch up the next bit of the slab is had also just been climbed, It also had a nice shiny bolt in it. (Felix placed his bolt at a point where the pitch was covered in water before he reached the level of the bolt placed by someone else). When Felix got to the top of his pitch he found another bolted belay. Looking up from that point they found that the line of bolts continued up a shallow and loose groove line on the right hand side. They realized that they had found the work of Stefan Glowacz. When they traversed left along the ledge they felt safe that they were on new ground. However looking further left toward the groove line they saw another bolt. They came back to camp just to tell me that Stefan Glowacz had already tried our line. We all felt very disappointed. We decided to keep trying the line up the groove. We had been told that Stefan Glowacz had not finished his climb, so we decided to try where he had failed (a vain hope indeed).

Tuesday 8th of July

The next day I set out with Peter and Felix. We jumared up the fixed ropes, to the belay located on the left hand side of the ledge. From there I looked at the traverse out left toward the base of the groove. It looked like grim going indeed. It was a gently overhang face covered with loose door sized flakes. It had very few holds, and the ones that were there were mostly guaranteed to rip off. The other option was to abseil down 20 meters to a system of ledges that should offer some easier climbing. We opted for this solution and when I had gotten down to the system of ledges I found that was a bolt there. It was not a shiny new Stefan bolt, but an old 8mm Allen headed bolt with an ancient piece of sling on it. Someone had obviously been this way in the early 1800's. I set up a belay and Peter abseiled over to me. I traversed the system of loose ledges to the left and after some scarily loose climbing I made the base of the corner system. What lay above was a overhanging corner crack with some loose looking rock at the top. When Pete came over I took the lead again (photo 24). The crack was strenuous and many of the foot holds were very loose. It had to be climbed gently to prevent your feet from suddenly skating out from beneath you (photo 25). Halfway up the crack I found signs of a previous attempt. There was an old wooden peg hammered into the crack and then a few meters higher up there was another one of those bolts. A rusty 8mm bolt with an Allen head and a geriatric piece of sling in it. I stopped here put in a second bolt to make a new belay. Pete joined me and refilled my



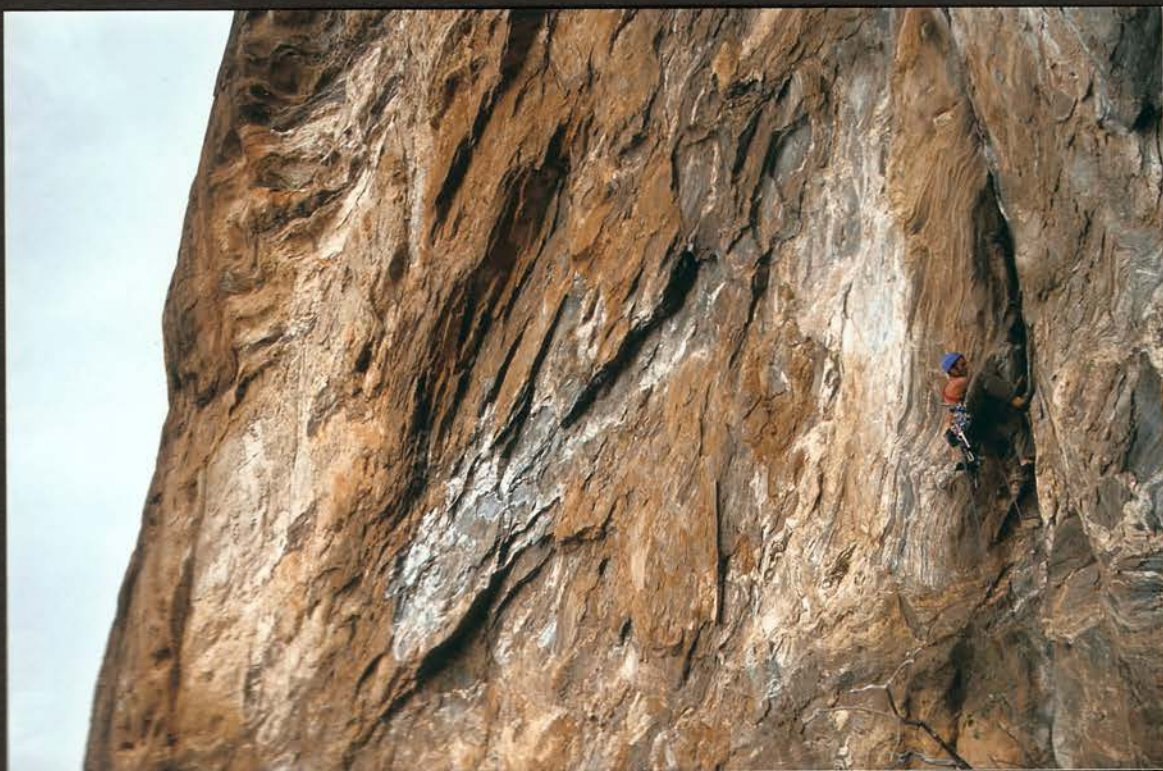
24



25

Marnix on Pitch 4.

26



27



Marnix jumaring up
the fixed rope on
Pitch 2.

28



James jumaring up
the fixed rope on
Pitch 8.

empty rack. I started up the crack again. After a few easy meters there were some hard crux moves where the crack closed to become a seam in a face. Above the crux the climbing remained hard and moved into some very large and very loose blocks. In the last 10 meters I placed very little protection for fear of starting a rock avalanche if I fell and weighted the protection. I eventually made the top of the pitch and drilled in a bolt belay at the base of a very loose and very overhanging off width crack. I could see no more signs of a previous attempt. The conclusion was that the previous party had gotten stuck on the crux section and decided on retreat, leaving behind two bolts as abseils. By this point it was late, I fixed the line and Peter and I descended feeling that the next pitch had Felix's name all over it.

Wednesday 9th of July

The next day I returned to the base of the off width with a barely convince Felix. A few minutes of trying to free climb resulted in several falls in quick succession. After this it became time to aid the loose thing. It took Felix 6 hours to cover 9 meters of ground. We only had one cam that would fit in a crack so wide. Often the loose rock would just spit the cam back out and cover us in a shower of rock and bat shit. Felix would put in the cam, clip the etriers to it, stand up, jam his body, raise the cam, stand in the etriers, the cam would pop out, Felix would fall and then it would start all over. Slowly He made it up and put three bolts in for protection. As soon as it was possible Felix move to the face right of the off width and dispatched with 35 meters of polished 7a slab climbing (another three bolts) to reach a ledge that became the belay.

The next pitch looked easier and with in the hour I had climbed up a short corner then 15 meters of face to arrive at another ledge at the base of a nice looking corner crack. On account of no other protection and some loose rock I place two bolts. At this point it became dark again and so we pulled out our head torches, abseiled down the ropes and walked the 40min through the forest and back to camp.

Thursday 10th of July

The next day Pete and I jumared up to the base of the corner system. I took the lead and climbed the corner as far as some loose blocks. At this point I placed one bolt. The blocks were climbed very gently and a few large rocks were thrown down. The pitch finished on a small ledge above which the crack disappeared from the groove and rock became very rotten indeed. A belay was bolted and Pete jumared up. I began attempting the next pitch too. A few attempts at climbing resulted in several falls in quick succession. This was due to the rotten rock that extended upward for 25 meters. Many of the holds would just crumble under the pressure of finger or foot. So I resorted to an unethical style of aid climbing. Sky hooks were used and the blankest sessions were passed by BAT hooking up. After many falls (both of rocks and climbers) and many hours later I reached some more solid rock. At this point I could resort to free climbing and the use of traditional gear. The pitch was finished on a thin ledge just past a small roof. At this point darkness descended and so did the two climbers.

Friday 11th of July

Peter and I took a rest day. We spent it baking bread and monitoring the progress of Felix and James on the cliff. Felix and James jumared up the 250 meters to the last belay bolted the day before (photo 28). James took the lead (photo 29), he climbed up twenty meters. In that distance he placed two bolts on the looser sections and he then descended back to the belay because he hit a patch of climbing that he did not feel comfortable with. Felix took over and finished the pitch bolting a belay behind a 10 meter diameter flake with a fig tree in it. Felix led the next pitch continuing up the corner system all on traditional gear. The next belay was bolted. By this time it was 6:00 pm. With 45min of light left, Felix started up the next Pitch. The first few meters of climbing tackle a stout overhang that Felix protected with a large amount of dubious traditional protection placed in the rotten rock. Toward the top of the overhang the gear placements disappeared and so he placed two bolts. At this point it became late and they descended back to the ground.

Saturday 12th of July

At this point in the expedition the fixed ropes extended more than 350 meters up the cliff. Jumaring up to the high point of the climb was starting to become a huge chore (photo 27). It was decided that it would be practical to start sleeping up on the cliff (photo 30).

Fresh from our rest day Peter, James and I jumared up the cliff with 15 litres of water, some noodles, porridge mix, dried fruit, hammocks and sleeping bags. The greater part of the day was spent gathering surplus gear from all the lower pitches and hauling it to the high point. Peter did much of the heavy hauling and managed to hurt one of his right hand finger flexor tendons in the process. In the

afternoon I continued up the pitch that Felix had started the day before. Another bolt was added at the lip of the overhang. Above the overhang the pitch continued past some easier face climbing and then it went back into the groove system. At this point the rock quality improved greatly, some really excellent climbing without any bolts, brought to a small hole that was used as a belay stance. As it was late I returned down to the base of the pitch where the corner was very deep and wide. It was a perfect place to set up the hammocks. Two bolts were already in place from the belay. Two more bolts were added as anchors for hanging the hammocks. The hammocks were strung up crossing the corner like two spider webs supporting their spiders 350 meters up in the void. In the corner was a crack into which our cooking stove jammed nicely. With our pot jammed securely into the cliff we cooked some noodles and ate some figs for desert. Tucked into a sleeping bag high up on the cliff, looking out over the moonlit Korr desert is one of the best memories I have of the trip and possibly my life. We were clipped into the fixed rope that was anchored to the pitch above. There was a brief midnight swing out on this rope to void our bodies and then a good swing back into the hammocks. I was hypnotised with the atmosphere of situation. After a wonderful nights sleep, I had totally forgotten where I was and waking up to see the world so far below me was the equivalent of a cold shower in the morning. Once I was able to convince Peter that he should leave the comfort of his sleeping bag (I really did not have any strong basis for my argument) we had another meal sitting in our webs up in the sky. Bellies full we once again jumared up to the high point of our climb. The next pitch looked like some thin face climbing leading into a large cave. Pete was dispatched. The first few moves of the pitch were a difficult passage up a smooth and steep wall leading to a ledge. Above the ledge I could not hear Pete except for the occasional mumblings about the quality of his latest sky hook placement. He slowly climbed the face and eventually made it up to the cave above. In the cave he found that our route met with the Slovenian route. I seconded that pitch and joined Peter in the cave. Finding that we had crossed the Slovenian route, two possibilities were open to us. Either we could use the rest of the Slovenian climb as the ending for ours, or we could make our own ending. We contacted Felix and James down in base camp to help us decide. We eventually decided to make our own finish. I climbed left out of the cave and traversed horizontally along some slabs (photo , James on the traverse). A belay was made where another corner system led up from the traverse slab. It was late by the time Peter had moved across the traverse and joined me at the belay. The corner pitch above looked far too nice to resist temptation. So with half an hour of light I set off to lead it. The rock turned out to be of excellent quality and very protect able. Within 15 minutes the 40 meter pitch was finished. A rope was fixed to a large boulder at the top. The water and climbing gear was left in the Slovenian cave and tired from two days of climbing Pete and I made the slow and dark journey back to the ground and camp. There we found a warm plate of Pasta.

Monday 14th of July

In the morning we realized that we did not have to far to go to reach the top. Felix and James left camp in the morning with their overnight gear packed and their brains determined to finish the route. After bidding them good bye Pete and I returned to bed to extend our rest day nap. A few minutes later the two water ladies arrived. They gave us 40 litres of water. I gave them 1200/- and returned to bed, they returned down towards Siangan Village. A few minutes later there was another noise outside. I emerged to find a Nairobi University educated Rendile by the name of Steven in the camp. He had come with two other people. One was a young Rendile warrior complete with face paint, hair braids, beads and knife. The second was a young bearded white man who shyly introduced himself as Jason. My surprise at seeing a white man on the ridge in the middle of Kenya was quite pronounced. He quietly told us that he had hitchhiked from Nairobi to the desert town of Korr. In Korr he helped with some missionary work. On one of his previous trips to the area he had seen Poi and had always wanted to climb on it. So he had come to Ngurunit to meet with some fellow New Yorkers to climb on Poi. When he arrived in Ngurunit he and his friends heard that there were some white people already on the mountain. His friends decided that this did not sound nice so they had backed out. He had decided to come up to the ridge to ask if he could climb with us. I did not know how long he wanted to stay, or how well he climbed but given his effort at getting to this place, he clearly wanted to climb and there is no way in the world we could have refused him. So once the shock was over we made a large pot of tea and a large pot of porridge. Our three guests ate with us. A while after breakfast Steven and the warrior left while Jason and I went and climbed a few pitches of the American route. The first pitch was a very nice 6c+ slab that I happily managed to onsite. The pitch was long at 53meters and I had to come down when I was halfway to pick up some quickdraws. Jason was not a very good climber. He made it up after a few falls. We only climbed that pitch and then went back to camp. On the way back we could hear the rocks that Felix and James were knocking off from high up the wall. First you would hear a gentle whistle and before long this would turn into a shrieking whirl followed by the

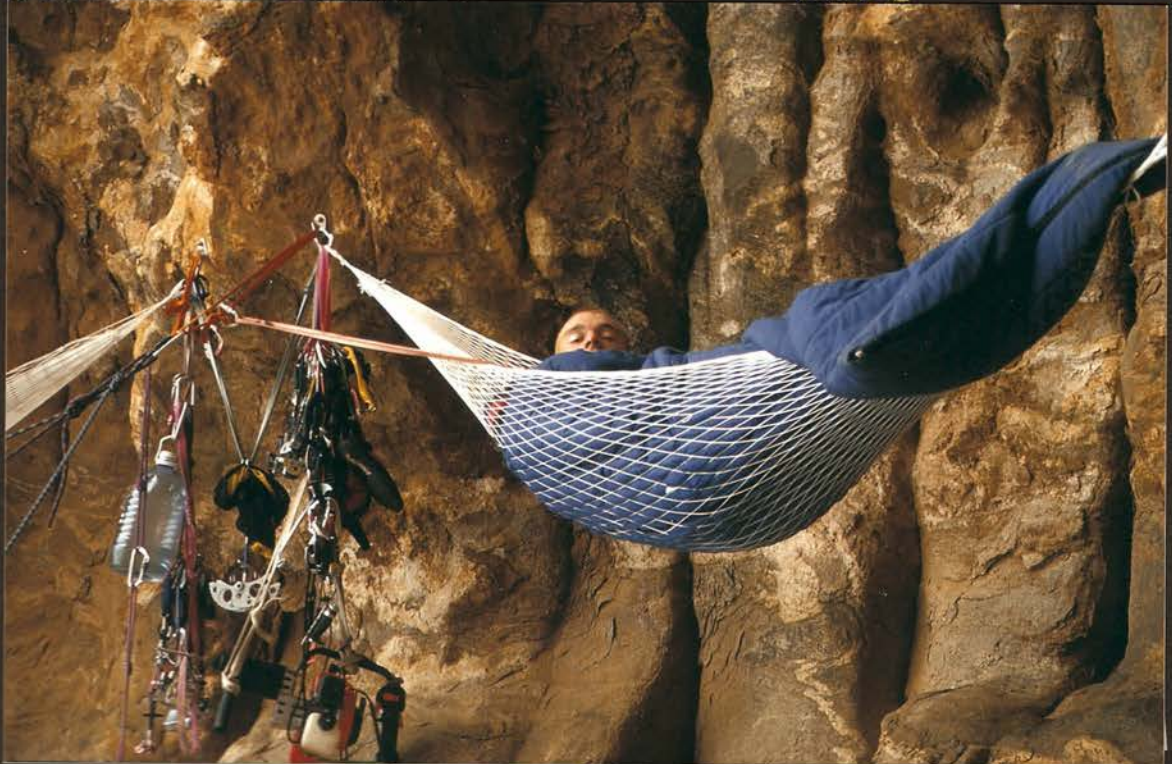
24



James Nutter on the first ascent of Pitch 10

30

James Nutter waking up on Pitch 12's belay



(31)



James Nutter
traversing the
fixed line on
Pitch II.

James Nutter jumaring the fixed rope between Pitches 2 → 5

(32)



crash and sound of splintering wood as the rock tore through the canopy of trees. We returned to camp and spent the rest of the day baking bread in our stone fire oven. We came up with a few good recipes. We radioed Felix and James who informed us that they had made the summit. The second to last pitch was a long traverse left out of a cave followed by some climbing up a steeper wall to a belay above the cave. It was not a very nice pitch so Felix abseiled off the belay and bolted a very difficult line straight out of the cave. He spent the afternoon top roping it and figuring out the sequence. He and James slept in the first cave. Jason pitched his tent and spent the night in camp.

Tuesday 15th of July

We were woken up early with the arrival of the water porter. We found that the ridge was totally enveloped in clouds. We could not even see Poi 300meters away. This clouds brought with them some light drizzle and temperatures cold enough to consider wearing a sweater. But by 10 am the weather had cleared. Jason, Pete and I had nothing to do except rest, so we spent the day baking bread and cookies. Up on the cliff we could see Felix moving up and down on the crux pitch. We knew he must be rehearsing the moves. We eventually got a radio call to inform us that Felix had finally climbed his pitch without a single fall. He and Kid then abseiled down to the ground, clearing some of the gear and ropes on their way. When they arrived back in camp Felix's eye was bright red because having been struck by bits of rock while he was drilling. We patched up his eye and that made him look like some science built monster.

Peter's father's 50th birthday was on the 18th of August, and Peter had to be with his family to celebrate it. So Peter and James had to make their way back down to the car and drive to be in Mombasa in time for the party. In the afternoon 3 porters climbed up to our camp to help James and Peter carry down their gear, and a huge bag of garbage that we had cleaned from the campsite dumps. Jason left with them.

That night Felix's eye remained in pain. I cooked a good peanut butter and lentil curry.

Wednesday 16th of July

We had decided that we should free climb the pitches that we had previously done only on aid. However Felix woke up tired and with his eye still shining like a ruby. He could not climb, so I jumared up the route in order to retrieve some of the gear that was fixed on the higher pitches. I jumared the five hundred meters to cave 1 and cleaned some loose flakes off the traverse out to the base of corner 2. I removed the fixed rope from the traverse pitch and from Pete's pitch (Doing it Horsey). I carried down 2 ropes, the bolting gear, and the leading rack. On the way down I cleaned some of the rock, replaced the badly drilled bolts and took out the unnecessary ones in preparation for our free climbing attempt. It was dark by the time I reached the ground and I managed to scare myself with thoughts on the nocturnal hunting habits of leopards to the point that I tripped over and hurt my right shin badly. A mental note was made of the importance of keeping cool and collected.

Thursday 17th of July

Having woken up early and taken a few silly pictures (photo⁹), Felix and I headed off down to the cliff. We climbed the first 6 pitches of the Slovenian route. We found some chipped holds on pitch 6 that are totally unnecessary because we managed to climb the pitch without using them. We came down after climbing the first six pitches of the route because my tight 5.10 climbing shoes were killing my feet and because I forgot my chalk bag. We walked over to our climb. I jumared up to the ledge that is pitch 3. I abseiled off this ledge inspect a pitch, that would offer a direct start to the climb through the roof (Project "take that G."). The climbing looked and felt very hard (like 8c). Felix and I abandoned the idea and returned to camp.

Friday 18th of July

After another early rise, Felix and I left the camp with the idea of free climbing all the pitches that we had not yet done. We succeed in doing this with all of them except for the off width on pitch 6. This short section of climbing still took hours of pain and torture to aid climb. On the abseil down we cleared all the gear except for the bottom four ropes.

That night we sat at dinner reflecting on our adventures and the options for the immediate future. We talked about the possibility of putting a second route up Poi, or perhaps climbing one of the other cliffs in the Ndoto Mountains. But in the end we decided that we had had enough of Spartan (read as dirty) living for the time being. We decided we would leave the Ndotos and head slowly back to civilization. In order to leave we needed to clean up and dismantle the camp as well as clear the bottom four pitches of the climb.

Ending Our Stay

Saturday 19th of July

We woke up and over breakfast we decided that Felix would take care of the camp and I would jumar up the first two pitches of the route to finish cleaning the ropes from the route. I came down with the ropes and was back in camp by about 12 o'clock. I found the porters already there and Felix in the last phases of packing up the camp. We walked down in the very hot sun. We reached the car by 13:20. We sorted out the money issues with Petro. He then handed us a long letter he had written pleading for extra money and presents. He also charged us fifty shillings each for the camping in Siangan river bed. All the other Rendile wanted presents too. I started wondering if they were normally this needy or if they had been spoilt by the previous expeditions. We left behind an old climbing rope which the Rendile assured us was very useful for tying up camels on heat. We also left three of our five litre water bottles, and a wash basin. At this point one of the warriors who had just carried down 20kg of luggage started to complain that he had chronic pain all over his body that prevented him from working and couldn't we give him some medication. Disgusted Felix and I got in the car. We quickly left and drove off toward Illaut. We stopped in Illaut and filled our water jerry can with water from a well. It tasted sandy but otherwise fine. We also bought a 2 litre bottle of coca cola for 200/- in a shop where a 15 year old Somali boy with sunglasses and a large American knife spoke perfect English with an American accent. Scared of getting shot, we drove to the Turkana-Maralal road and then kept going until dark. We then camped on a deviation marked "desert rose" somewhere near the turn off for "Tum". We parked and cooked where the road enters a depression. On the ground we found two mean looking wooden clubs. We burned them in a covered fire (to stop bandits from seeing the flames) and cooked some pasta with the heat they produced.

Trip Home

Sunday 20th of July

We woke at day break and drove off back towards Baragoi. We arrived in Baragoi by 7:15. We had tea and breakfast in a Somali run tea house. The proprietor was polite and dignified. His shop was clean, he served amazing masala tea (a sweet tea spiced with cloves, cinnamon and cardamoms), he cooked us an omelette each and we ate many mandazi (pan fried bread) for 10/- each. We drove on and on. Going up into Maralal the road became very poor until we actually reach the town of Maralal (which we did at 11:45 running on the vapours of a full tank with the safety of a jerry can in the boot). Our tank was filled when we arrived in Siangan, and it is closer from Maralal to Siangan than it is from Isiolo to Siangan, so we wondered whether some petrol was stolen from our parking in Siangan. In Maralal the road improved to Rumuruti, which we reached at 2:15. We stopped to take a few photos of the moment when Melanie finally got back onto the tarmac. We stopped in a local restaurant and had some nyama choma (barbecued meat) and sodas. We drove to Gilgil, bought some fruit, hit a rainstorm, and then the town of Naivasha at 7:00. We arrived to find "Fisherman's" camping site a very wet place. Much to our dismay the sky was still spitting water. Luckily "Mwezi" (a friend of mine who is involved in the management of the camp) was there and she lent Felix and I her caravan. We saved money, we saved getting wet and we got the nicest spot in Fisherman's camp. We also had a shower and for the first time in weeks we did not smell like

Monday 21st of July

We woke up to a blue sky, green grass and a lovely lake Naivasha spread out before us. We decided to go to the nearby Hells gate national park. The park is essentially a very deep gorge cut by a river. The sides of the gorge are vertical and make for some formidable climbing. We climbed the route Merlin. It is a beautiful four pitch climb following a crack through a smooth wall of volcanic rock. That evening we drove back to Nairobi and found my very happy father with a bottle of champagne and smoked sailfish. It was a very nice welcome home.

Section 2

Weather

For the most part the weather followed a reliable pattern. Sunrise was at 6:30 am (as it does every day of the year). Temperatures were comfortably cool until about 11 o'clock in the morning. If one was on the east face of Poi then by 12 o'clock you were in the shade and the temperature remained comfortable for the rest of the day. It could possibly get a little cold if the evening wind blew through a sweat soaked tee shirt. In camp the temperature would get hotter and hotter so that between 12:00 and 15:00 it was a good idea to find some shade (but not in a hot tent). By 16:00 the temperature would start to drop. Between 16:00 and 21:00 it would be a perfect temperature. After 21:00 the wind would pick up considerably and sweaters were needed. There were very few cloudy days. On the occasions that there were some clouds these would only be around for the early morning hours and would be gone by 9:00.

The planned dates of the trip were 1st to the 22nd of July. 22 days. The actual dates of the trip were from the 28th of June to the 20th of July.

Food Costs

In order to calculate the cost of food consumption per capita I have calculated the total number of people days by making an addition of how many days each person was away from Nairobi.

Felix- 16days

Marnix-16days

James- 13days

Peter – 13days

This comes to 58 people days. The total expenditure on food was 21075/- Kenya shillings. This is £176. This makes 3.05 pounds per person per day which is 0.95 pence below our calculation. At the end of the trip only about 5% of the food that we had taken with us was unconsumed.

Water Cost and Consumption

In order to calculate the consumption of water per capita I have calculated the total number of people days for the trip by making an addition of how many days each person was at Poi.

Felix – 14 days

Marnix -14 days

James -10 days

Peter – 10days

This comes to 48 people days. In this time 220 litres of water were used. This means that on average 4.5 litres of water were used per capita per day. Future expeditions might want to take into consideration that these calculations have been made without taking into consideration two facts: 1. that the maximal storage capacity of the carrier bottles used was 20liters and that these were never brought to us completely full. 2. We supplied a total of 40 guests (both porters and visitors) with a drink of water when they came to stay in our camp.

Water was the big concern in the meetings with the expedition board. Our initial proposition was that each day the team would need about 3-4 litres each per day. The recommendation of the board was that we would more realistically need 7-8 litres per person per day. In our revised proposal these changes were made. We calculated that it would take 18 porter trips @ 1200/- shillings per day to fulfil our water requirements. This gave an estimated cost of 21600/- or £180. In reality it took 12 trips @ 600/- per trip giving a total expense of 6800/- or £57.

Petrol for Transport

The trip from Nairobi to Poi is 800km one way. We travelled 1600 km with each car.

The fuel bill for the Land-Rover was 17710/- @ 58/- per litre this is 305 litres.

The fuel bill for the Peugeot was 12626/- @ 58/- per litre this is 217 litres.

Our total fuel expenditure was 30336/- Kenya shillings or £252.

Our total fuel consumption was 522 litres.

Our calculation of fuel consumption and costs per kilometre was accurate. But our calculation of total fuel cost was made with the blind assumption that we would be using only one car. We used two cars, so our original estimate of £120 for fuel cost was doubled to £252.

Porter Cost

The standard daily rate for a porter to carry 20kg for a day in Kenya is between 400-500/-. It must be kept in mind that these are the porter rates in touristy areas where the unemployment rate is high and there are many people competing with each other to be porters. In the area of Poi all the potential porters know one another and seem to work more on a union principle. They have one head who presents their claims. If you are not willing to agree to these then you will not get any porters. For this reason one is forced to accept a price that is above the norm, for a service that is below the norm.

Each baggage porter was paid 500/- for the round trip from Siangan, to camp 2 and back to Siangan. Each porter carried around about 20 kg.

Each water porter was paid 600/- to carry 20 litres of water from the well (which they would visit daily anyway to supply the need of their village) to camp 2. They would then walk back unloaded to Siangan.

Cost for car care taker in camp 1 / porter organizer 150/- per day.

Campsite Cost

Camp 1- 50/- each per night

Camp 2- free

Total Cost

The total cost of the trip was £2800. This is the cost of all the equipment, fuel, food, water, and staff needed for the four man team. It does **not** include the cost of air travel.

What Went Wrong and What Could be Done Differently in Future?

More careful consideration should be given to the weight and volume of the equipment for an expedition of this magnitude. A better estimate can then be made of transport requirements. This would make calculations for fuel costs accurate and would eliminate the risk of being stranded with the wrong car.

Another side effect of my carelessness with the volume and weight calculations was that we were left with insufficient bags for the porters to carry the equipment between the two camps. In the end we had to create makeshift bags and carry much gear by hand. We had some of our supplies ruined in transit. Porters are not so gentle with the luggage that they carry, so one must make sure that all food is packaged in spill proof containers and that you carry fragile items yourself.

The costs of porters will vary with the luck of the expedition, the mood of the potential porters, and the skill of the bargaining. It is hard to know how much you will end up paying.

As where the climbing is concerned things could have hardly gone better. We did underestimate the time that it would take to make a first ascent. The only side effect of this was that we did not manage to repeat any of the other routes in their entirety.

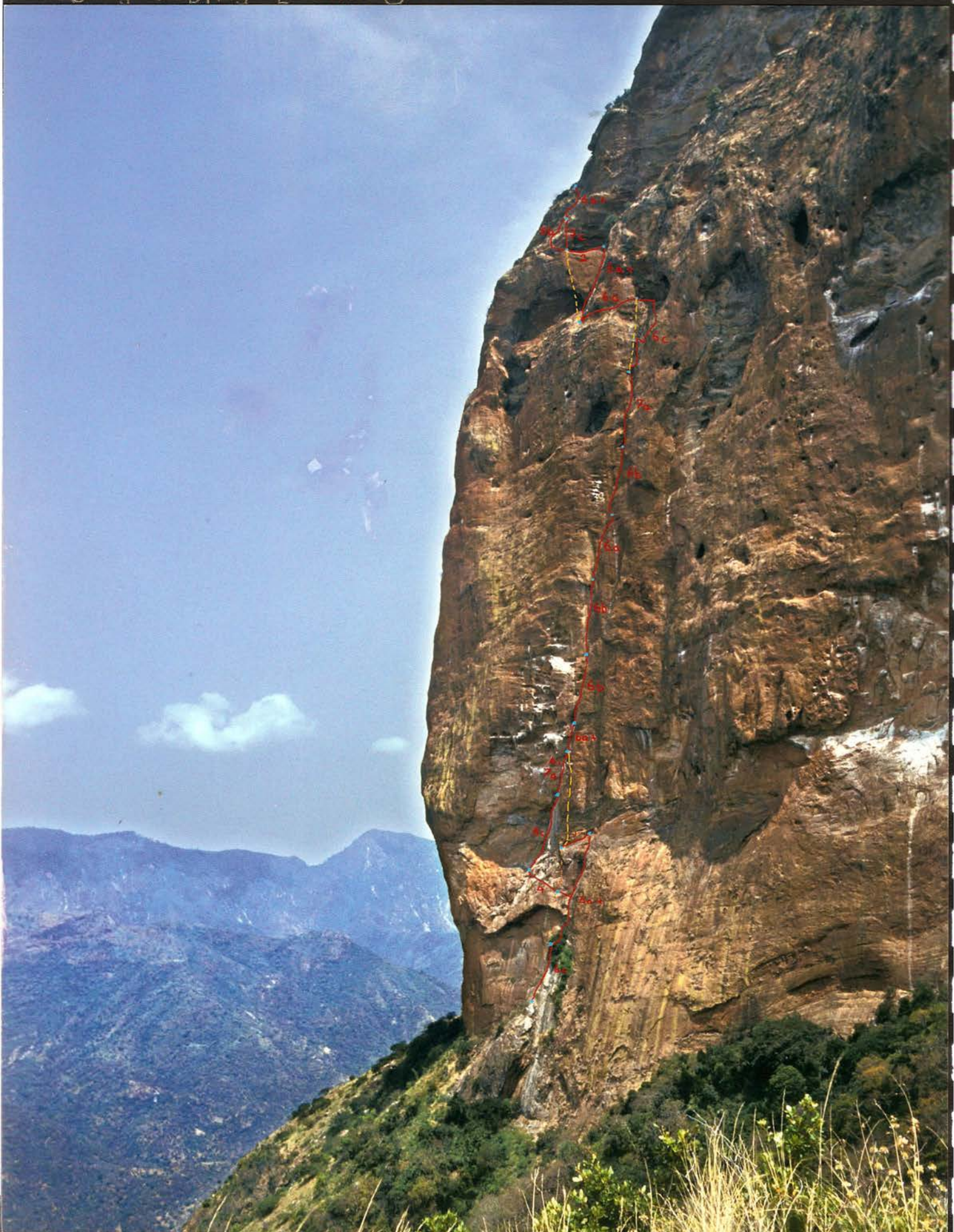
Ethical Issues

Where the climbing is concerned there is one controversy that must be dealt with. We used 43 bolts in over 600 meters of climbing on a ground up ascent. By some standards it is very good going, by some other standards the use of any bolts is unacceptable. I feel their use on the belays was justified because in the event of injury they make a rapid and safe descent possible. And in many places there would have been no belay without them. However their use on the sections of climbing between belays is harder to justify. Our frame of mind at the time of climbing was that we were very far away from help, both in terms of our distance from the ground, and our distance from any medical assistance. The large quantities of loose rock made falling a common occurrence and solid protection an infrequent bonus. I can say in retrospect that without the use of some of the bolts on the climb we would have had at least one serious injury. In that sense I am happy that they were used. However it does remain that perhaps some party in the future may have been able to climb the line without their use. In this way we have subtract from the adventure and experience of these possible future parties. If in the future some people do climb the route without using any of the bolts I would invite them to remove them. In the mean time there is a challenging new route on Poi that is accessible to people who like some adventure but are not in the absolute elite of dangerous climbing.

My other ethical concern with this expedition is its effect on indigenous people. In many parts of Kenya local tribes live as self sufficient and proud people, however the effects of multiple well funded climbing expeditions to the area is very likely taking its toll. The local tribes are exposed to people who wield relatively unconceivable wealth and technology, and use it to achieve what are regarded by them as useless and incomprehensible goals. I noticed that the people we encountered had a want of money and technology which I did not encounter on previous trips to the area. There has been a change in their life styles to fit in with their increasing material concerns. It is likely an unavoidable process as the world continues to globalize and mix, but it is none the less important to reflect on the effects of our presence an interaction in the lives of people who are still living in a very different style to us.



Doing a Dirty Eastern Groove



Photograph showing the final route in red, and the jumar and abseil routes in yellow. The dotted green line from the top of Pitch 1 shows the line of the Project (Bc) variation 1, Pitch 2.

A Route Description for the New Line up the East Face of Poi

Doing a Dirty Eastern Groove 7c crux, 7a obligatory

The route is 608 meters long. Protection is by the use of traditional gear. Take a large selection of camming devices (including a two huge friends), a complete set of nuts, a set of hexentrics (especially the larger sizes), and a small range of sky hooks. In-addition there are 43 bolts that protect otherwise un-protect able sections. All the belays are bolted but may require slings to equalize the two bolt anchors.

The east face of Poi has a very obvious groove line starting a quarter of the way up on its southern aspect. Below the groove is a roof band that stretches for fifty or so meters. Below the roof is a grey slab with a 30 meter pillar leaning on it. Scramble up the left side of the pillar to reach the base of the climb half way up the slab. The climb tackles this slab and then works its way leftward into the groove system which is followed until its end in a large cave. From the cave the route traverses left into another groove which is followed to a second cave. This second cave is exited on the left to gain the top of the climb.

Pitch 1. (6c+)

From the top of the pillar climb the slab past five widely spaced bolts to a belay on a mud ledge behind some bushy trees. 25m. 5bolts (bolted by *German Team* and first led on our expedition by *Peter Horsey*).

Pitch 2

variation 1. (project 8c?)

left from the belay along a line in the slab until a slight weakness in the roof leads to a very hard exit past two bolts. 30m. 2bolts. *unclimbed*

Variation 2. Left exit. (6a+)

from the belay continue up the crack system until and easy exit can be made on the left to a belay anchor on a large rock ledge. 35m. 2 bolts. *Marnix*

Variation 3. (6a+)

from the belay continue up the crack system past two bolts and a piton through a small fig tree until a you reach a belay on the right hand side of a large slopey ledge. 55m. 2 bolts.

Walk to the left end of the ledge and abseil down 20 meters to the belay of variation 2. *Felix*

Pitch 3. (4)

Traverse leftwards and up the system of ledges past one bolt and some scary loose rock to reach a belay on a rocky ledge at the base of the groove system. There is no definite line to follow here, you just have to make your way to the base of the groove. 30m. 1 bolt. *Marnix*

Pitch 4. (6c)

Do some hard moves on loose rock up the slab to gain the over hanging corner crack. Follow the crack through thick and thin, loose and solid, past a dead fig tree, two bolts, a wooden piton (the relic of an attempt made in a bygone era), and a live fig tree to gain the hanging belay at the base of a nasty, dirty overhanging off width crack. Climb this pitch gently and take care of the huge loose blocks lest you should kill your belayer 40m. 2 bolts. *Marnix*

Pitch 5. (assisted) (A1 7a)

The nasty dirty overhanging off width has only been climbed on aid past 3 bolts (loose rock and inadequate giant cams). After eight meters it relents enough to allow some tough climbing to lead to some water smoothed slabs on the right. These are climbed past three more bolts with difficulty 7a to a belay. 30m. 6 bolts. *Felix*

Pitch 6. (6a+)

Climb up the corner crack past one bolt. Then break out right and climb the slab past two bolts to reach a belay on a ledge. 17.53m. 3 bolts. *Marnix*

Pitch 7. (6b)

Jam up the corner crack past some loose rock and a bolt. Continue up to a small stance on the left. From here continue directly up on a large block jammed in the corner (protection placed behind this block may dislodge it in a fall). Make a harder move off the block and onto the belay. 30m. 1 bolt. *Marnix*

Pitch 8. (6b+)

A very shitty first half to the pitch with some very loose rock. Nicer climbing in the second half and good moves through the roof. This first half of this pitch was BAT hooked because it was unclimbable by the terrible rock. Once it was totally cleaned it was free climbed with many a hold still popping off. 30m. 4 bolts. *Marnix*

Pitch 9. (6a)

Climb up the wall above following the line of cracks and pockets to a belay behind a small fig tree and huge giant of a flake. 20m. No bolts. *Felix*

Pitch 10. (6b)

Climb up from the flake following the line past one bolt, to a huge belay station in a corner. 40m. 1 bolt. *James and Felix*. The huge belay station is a good bivy site and contains two extra bolts for stringing up hammocks, (a bluet gas stove fits very nicely in the crack).

Pitch 11 (7a+)

Some hard moves with abundant trashy gear in loose rock leads to some harder moves through the overhanging corner past three bolts. Above the overhang the rock becomes less steep and a system of pockets and cracks leads to a smooth corner that offers some more brilliant climbing. Climb to the belay in a small hole. 35m. 3 bolts. *Felix and Marnix*

Pitch 12 (6c+)

Climb right from the hole doing some hard moves past a bolt. Past the bulge to a ledge. Set a good sky hook and climb to the fig tree. Set a decent cam and traverse right ignoring the bolt above (it is possible to clip this and finish directly above but the climbing is on looser rock), Some hard moves right lead to another decent sky hook. Continue more easily up the red rock to a bolt and a rest. Climb with renewed difficulty past the last bolt, through the "aloe hedge" into the huge sandy cave. 40m. 4 bolts. *Peter*. The belay on the left of the cave offers the possibility of hanging hammocks and using this as a bivy site.

Pitch 13. (6a)

From the left hand cave belay traverse left out onto the face. Traverse horizontally left past 5 bolts and some more loose flakes to reach a belay on a nice marble ledge. 40m. 5 bolts. *Marnix*

Pitch 14 (6b)

Climb up the slab to the base of the new corner crack. Then follow this corner crack to a boulder belay in the cave above. An impeccable pitch with brilliant climbing, sound protection, and sound rock. 30m, no bolts. *Marnix*

Pitch 15. (2)

Traverse left across the cave. 20 meters. No bolts. *Felix*

Pitch 16.**Variation 1. (7c)**

Hard climbing up the overhang out of the cave. Amazing moves on sometimes fragile holds. 20m. 3 bolts. *Felix*

Variation 2. (6b)

Some loose climbing left out of the cave. When the wall above is no longer overhanging climb up it to the belay. 25m. no bolts. *Felix*

Pitch 17.(6a+)

Few like it... This pitch continues up the wall through the rotten crack, over a bulge to the belay. 30m. 2 bolts. *Felix*

Gaining the Summit.

Above the belay of pitch 17 one can scabble up through the bushes for a hundred and fifty meters to reach the summit of Poi.

Decent.

It is possible to descend by walking to the top of Poi, descending the western ridge and then skirting the base of the cliff back to camp, but this is very tough indeed.

The easiest option is to abseil down the route. The traverses can be tackled either by climbing them backwards or by abseiling past them from one pitch above. For example a 50m abseil from the top of pitch 5 will lead to the ledge of pitch 2 variation 2. These are indicated by the dashed yellow line on the topographical image.

Section 3

Acknowledgements

There is a long list of people to thank for making this trip a possibility.

First and foremost I would like to thank the Imperial College Expedition Board for assisting in the funding of the trip and for organizing the insurance. Without their support the expedition would have been much harder to organise.

Mr Chris Green for always being on top of our financial situation, and ever helpful with the payments of our equipment costs.

My parents in Nairobi for offering the family house as a base for the expedition.

The Rendile People of Siangan for their reliable transport of our luggage and water.

My climbing partners Felix, Peter and James for much hard work and endless patience.