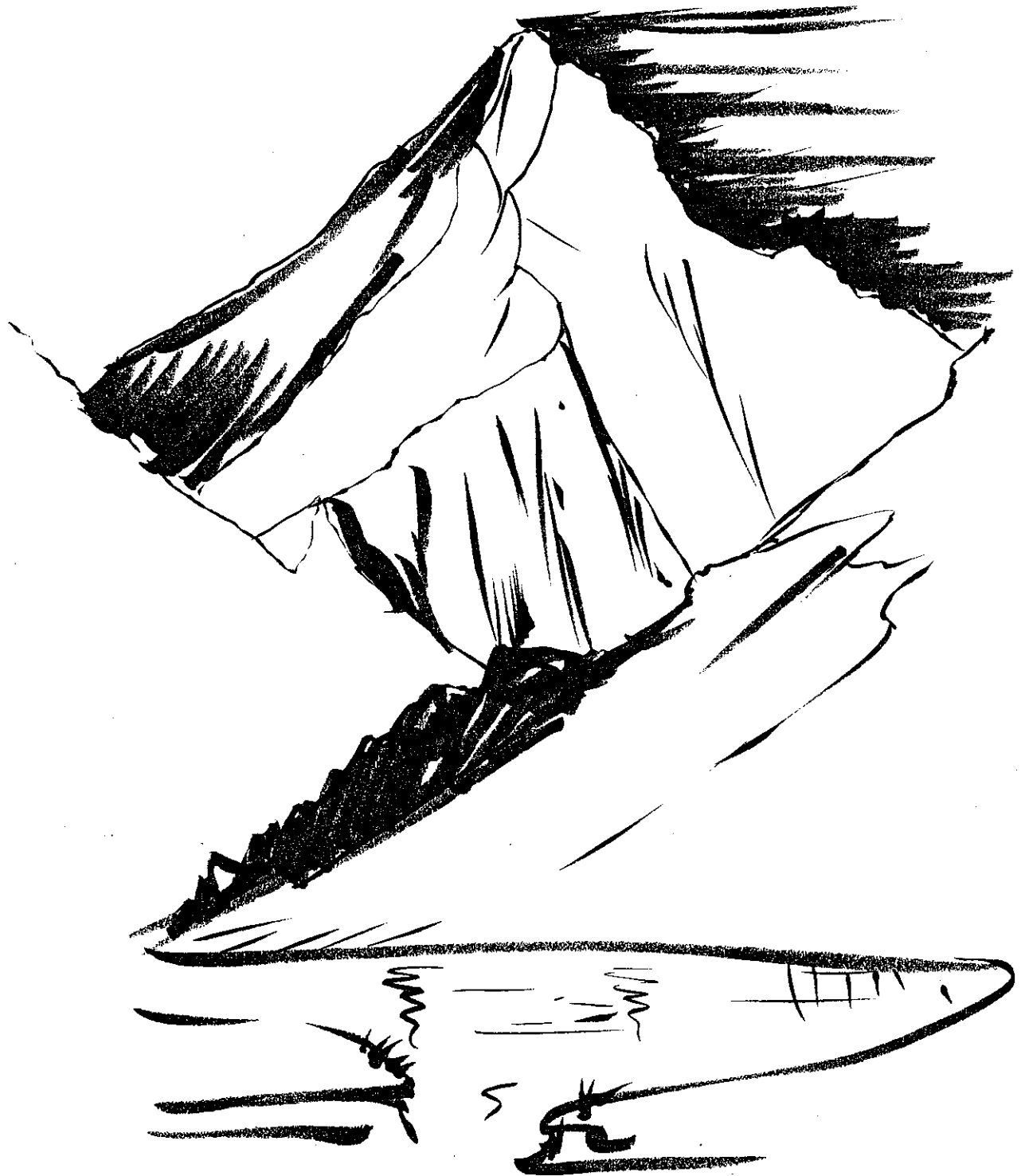


WELSH-SCOTTISH TIEN SHAN EXPEDITION 1993.

Supported by The Mount Everest Foundation,
The Mountaineering Council Of Scotland,
and The Foundation For Sport and the Arts.

Expedition Members:

Nick Lewis; Chris Cartwright; George McEwan; Paul Farmer.



WELSH-SCOTTISH TIEN SHAN
EXPEDITION 1993

REPORT

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We would like to acknowledge the help the following individuals gave in helping us collect information for the expedition:-
David Hopkins, Iain Peter, Allen Fyffe, Jonathon Stevens, Dave Yaffey, Tom Gilchrist, Stephen Reid, and to anyone else who's name we have omitted.

The Expedition.

Khan-Tengri (7010m) situated in the Tien Shan, Kirghizstan, is the most northerly 7000m peak in the world. Khan-Tengri and its close neighbour Pik Pobeda (7439m), are collectively known as the 'celestial summits'.

The objective of our expedition was an alpine-style ascent of the South Face of Khan-Tengri; and the ascent and exploration of other mountaineering routes in the South Inglychek Glacier area. The map (Appendix 1) shows the relative positions of the various peaks.

Our four man team was composed of Chris Cartwright (29), Paul Farmer (32), Nick Lewis (26), and George McEwan (29). All of the team had previous alpine experience, with Farmer, Lewis and McEwan having previous Himalayan experience.

Our arrival on the South Inglychek coincided with an initial period of bad weather which dumped over a metre of new snow. This snow cover hampered our progress over the glacier and made conditions on the mountain very dangerous. Frequent bad weather -strong winds, snow showers etc- ensured that conditions remained unpredictable for the rest of the trip. Due to the increased risk and the frequent avalanche activity on the South Face we switched our attentions to an ascent of the West Ridge of Khan Tengri.

A series of fatal accidents on the Semonovsky Glacier and a virulent stomach bug all contributed to McEwan, Cartwright and Lewis from going back onto the West ridge. Farmer, in the company of a Russian climber called Igor did successfully summit on Khan Tengri via the West Ridge on the 10th August. Lewis and McEwan made an attempt on the North Face of the Trident peak but were stopped by poor weather and conditions.

Despite the failure of our trip to climb the South Face we all enjoyed the hospitality and freindship of our Russian and Kirghiz hosts. On the few clear days we had the views of this beautiful and remote mountain area were unsurpassable.

Route Description.

South Face Khan Tengri

The south face of Khan Tengri is a superb challenge. We had previously thought the face to be unclimbed but discovered that it had in fact been ascended sometime in the 70's. However none of the Russian climbers could provide us with further information.

The initial approach is hazardous as the gully allowing access onto the face is swept by avalanches on a fairly regular basis. However once past this hurdle progress up the 50° slopes would be fairly fast and straightforward. A slabby rock-band at the summit would present an interesting technical problem. The whole face is exposed to the prevailing weather with retreat being problematic.

West Ridge Khan Tengri

The west ridge is a classic mountaineering route which is technically fairly straightforward. The ridge itself rises from the west col (5800m) which is best approached from the south via the Semonovsky Glacier. This approach whilst technically straightforward is very dangerous. Serac falls are common, and occur at any time day or night. Several sections are also threatened by avalanche activity.

Cont/-

West Ridge Khan Tengri cont.

Farmer on his ascent found the ridge straightforward with a few sections requiring care. However there were fixed ropes in place although they required care in their use as the state of the ropes and anchors was variable.

The Weather.

We found the weather to be generally unpredictable and poor during our stay on the South Inglychek. There was no regular pattern, although often there were clear periods during the middle of the day which was then replaced by more poor weather. Out of our four weeks in the Tien Shan we only had about four days of clear fair weather. None of which were consecutive.

When it was good and the sun was shining it was very hot. When it was not it could be bitterly cold and unpleasant. Strong winds at altitude were commonplace with a similar contrast in temperatures.

The key to success in the Tien Shan would appear to be able to move very fast between the spells of bad weather, and to be prepared to sit out(perhaps for days) very bad weather. Obviously on exposed technical routes this may prove to be a problem.

Travel.

We flew from London to Moscow on a British Airways flight. We had negotiated an excess baggage allowance of 10kg per person. In spite of this we were still over. Unfortunately the scales at the check-in desk we used did not work so we were unsure as to how over-weight our baggage was. The flight from Moscow to Bishkek was on an Aeroflot flight. Here we were stung for excess baggage. Future travellers should perhaps bear in mind that 'had-luggage' on the flights is a very flexible concept.

Transport from Bishkek to our helicopter departure point at Lake Karakol was by bus along a bumpy road for eighteen hours, through some beautiful scenery.

The helicopter flights were an adventure experience in their own right. We found them to be useful and well worth the money. The pilots fly them as if they were still flying combat missions in Angola or Afghanistan. However they are weather dependant which may cause problems i.e. with regard to departure times.

Fuel and Stoves.

We had originally planned to freight fuel into Kirghistan. For one reason or another it did not arrive. We were assured by the freighters Expedition Freight Ltd that it had been sent, and were equally assured by the authorities in Bishkek that it had'nt arrived. We ended up using refilled gas canisters which were unreliable and in short supply. Fuel for MSR stoves was very difficult to come by.

Base Camp and Advanced camps.

We used the International Mountaineering Centre Tien-Shan based in Kirghizstan. Our contact was Vladimir Komissarov (See Appendix 3).

The arrangements they had made for our travel into the Tien Shan and smoothing our way through the red-tape were very impressive.

Facilities at BC were basic but comfortable and included a sauna room. However the site on a moraine is a bit like camping on a slag heap, although all the camps are situated on a similar location.

The sites that are used as advance camps tend to be crowded and unsanitary. The area is a mecca for East European climbers with all the activity being concentrated around Khan Tengri. Care has to be taken with ensuring clean water and waste disposal.

Food.

We had brought our own 'hill rations' for when on the hill. Food at BC was plentiful, though at times monotonous. Yak and it's constituent parts figuring fairly highly on the menu. Fresh produce was scarce and depended on good weather to allow the choppers to freight it in.

Medical and First-Aid.

We carried a fairly comprehensive kit. Common problems were altitude and vodka/sauna party induced headaches. A stomach bug also proved troublesome for all in the team.

Environmental Considerations.

There appears to be a real problem caused by the sheer pressure of numbers of climbers. Rubbish not properly disposed of and improper and inadequate sanitary arrangements means that pollution of the snow-pack, and hence the water supply is a concern. We found conditions at the snow-cave at 5800m very crowded with a supply of clean snow for which to melt for water difficult to obtain. Careful disposal of human waste and bringing rubbish down of the hill would soon lead to an improvement in this situation. Our views on this were generally not seen as being relevant by some of the Russian climbers. Some did accept it was a problem.

Equipment.

We all used Buffalo clothing which we found to be very adaptable to the extremes in conditions we encountered in the Tien Shan. We did not feel that down-suits, boots etc were required. We all used standard plastic boots with inners without any problems, although if you plan to stay at altitude for an extended period warmer inners may prove useful. Other equipment was down to personal choice with everyone having their own preferences.

Sponsorship.

Without the support and generosity of the following organisations and individuals our expedition would never have become a reality. We gratefully acknowledge their support and efforts. Thank You.

The Mount Everest Foundation.

The Mountaineering Council of Scotland.

Foundation for Sport and the Arts.

Hamish Hamilton. BUFFALO clothing.

Ivan Carnall. KODAK.

Stephen Reid and staff. NEEDLE SPORTS, Keswick.

Ken Ledward. KLETS.

TRITECH. (Power bars).

RAB. (Sleeping bags).

Tom Redfern.

Steve Howe.

Karakoram Experience.

APPENDIX 2

ACCOUNTS

Income.

Mount Everest Foundation	_____	£600
Mountaineering Council of Scotland	_____	£600
Foundation for Sport and the Arts	_____	£600
Personal contributions	_____	£2400
	Total Income	£4200.

Expenditure.

Flights	_____	£1980
Food	_____	£144.59
Medical	_____	£23.84
Insurance	_____	£520
Base-Camp Arrangements	_____	£1348.99
Equipment	_____	£70
Misc. (Batteries etc)	_____	£120
	Total Expenditure	£4207.42.

APPENDIX 3

CONTACTS

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