

# **Scottish Bolivia 98**

An expedition to climb new routes and explore the Northern Cordillera Real & Cordillera Quimsa Cruz of Bolivia. June/July 1998.

## **ABSTRACT**

In June 1998 6 members of the Oban Mountaineering Club undertook a short expedition to Bolivia in South America. The aim of the expedition was 'to explore & climb new routes especially in the Northern Quimsa Cruz'.

The Northern Cordillera Real is well mapped, documented and frequently visited by mountaineers. However new route opportunities exist Illampu. The Cordillera Quimsa Cruz is not well mapped, documented and rarely visited by western mountaineers. An expedition by the German Alpine Club in 1987 had shown the potential for new rock climbs and first Scottish ascents of peaks.

Weather was generally good. Mountain snow and ice conditions were poor, supposedly the effects of El Niño, with many High peaks stripped of snow leaving blank rock hard ice and penitentes. An unseasonable heavy fall of snow also caused problems of its' own. Bus strikes, lost luggage, illness and minor transport problems caused some delays in the expedition program.

The information in this report is based on the experiences of the expedition and does not appear in the usual literature and guide books. The expedition reached 5000m+ within one week of leaving Scotland. Due to poor snow and ice conditions and deteriorating weather, no new routes were climbed in the Cordillera Real. However, four new rock routes from MVS to HVS were climbed in the Cordillera Quimsa Cruz, including the first Scottish ascent of some peaks.

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### Expedition Members

The expedition was composed of the following six members sponsored by the Mount Everest Foundation and the Mountaineering Council of Scotland.

Tony Barton, expedition leader, 6 June to 05 September.

Ken Marsden, expedition secretary, 6 June to 10 July.

Tony Hill, 6 June to 27 June.

Russell Weedon, 6 June to 27 June.

John Miller, 6 June to 17 June.

Tom Wiggans, 12 June to 13 July.

In addition a non sponsored member joined the expedition.

Dougie Bayne, 6 June to 26 June.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

During 1994 Tony Barton, the expedition leader, spent several months exploring and climbing in South America. Tony spotted several potential new snow/ice routes in the Northern Cordillera real of Bolivia. Tony also explored the little known Cordillera Quimsa Cruz. The potential for new rock climbs and first ascents of peaks of impeccable sun drenched granite was immense.

During the autumn of 1997 serious preparations for an expedition to Bolivia in June 1998 were begun. A handbook, included in appendix A, was written. Anyone expressing serious interest in joining the expedition was given a copy of the handbook which also included copies of maps, guidebook information and magazine articles. Several guidebooks and maps were purchased. Internet sites were also found to be valuable sources of up to the minute information, especially about natural disasters, civil/political unrest or anything else which may force a last minute change of plan.

By January 1998 the expedition consisted of 6 members. An application for a grant had been submitted to the Mount Everest Foundation, based specifically on an exploration of the two mountain areas. Dates were set and flights booked. A grant from the Mount Everest Foundation and the Mountaineering Council of Scotland was awarded in May 1998.

All members of the expedition were organised into pairs. This was based on who lived closest to whom. The idea was that each pair would be self sufficient in tents, climbing and cooking equipment etc. Due to problems of acclimatisation and experience on the expedition, these were not necessarily the climbing pairs, but at least there was plenty of equipment to go round.

The latest health information was obtained from MASTA (Medical Advisory Service for Travellers Abroad), Keppal Street London, WC1E 7HT, tel 0891 224100 and follow the instructions. The Information issued is very up to date and comprehensive giving details of necessary immunisations and the latest disease outbreaks. Good immunisation is essential,

but advice from GP's was confusing and varied. Persistence paid off in getting a straight answer and an injection.

The official language of Bolivia is Spanish. However, Aymara is widely spoken. This can lead to much confusion in the spelling and pronunciation of place and mountain names. Names may also become anglicised in maps and guide books. The names and spellings used in this report are generally the commonly used Spanish as found in books and local maps. Where grid references are given these refer to the grid on the map referred to in an appendix. Terminology used in mountain and route descriptions is the same as commonly found in British climbing guide books.

## **LA PAZ FOR MOUNTAINEERS**

Any expedition to Bolivia will certainly base itself in La Paz (~3600m), the capitol city. Flights from Europe or the USA will arrive at the international airport in El Alto. Bolivia's only other international airport is at Santa Cruz (437m). La Paz is the centre of the country's public transport network, within easy reach of the Cordillera Real and can provide all the necessary support services that an expedition requires. The language in La Paz is Spanish, do not expect anyone to understand any English. Aymara is also spoken. As with anywhere in the world, treat the locals with courtesy and respect, speak a little of their language and you will experience few problems. A map of La Paz is in appendix B

### **Arrival**

The worlds highest international airport at El Alto is at a height of 4100m. A European arriving at that altitude straight from sea level is bound to experience some physiological effects. Breathlessness and light headedness are the most common. Take it easy walking off the aircraft. There is an oxygen resuscitation room in the arrivals hall. Passports are stamped with a 30 day permit to stay on entry to Bolivia. Check that the stamp is clear with the entry

date clearly shown. This can save a lot of hassle when leaving the country. if you cannot prove date of entry you may be fined and delayed for overstaying your welcome. From the airport the quickest easiest way down to La Paz is by taxi. Fares are \$8-10. Agree a fare in advance and pay no more than that when you arrive at your destination. You may pay \$1 for loading of luggage. The taxi ride takes about 20 minutes.

## **Accommodation**

Prices for accommodation in La Paz range from \$3 to over \$200. The Scottish Bolivia 98 expedition based itself at the Hostel Austria, Yanacocha 531. For 30Bs per person per night in a shared room, this hostel was found to be clean, cheap, safe and very popular with western travellers. The hostel has a left luggage store, kitchen, TV, laundry service and is very centrally located a few hundred yards from the Prado. Advance bookings can be made for return to La Paz. Some staff speak enough English to make life easy.

## **Money**

Money can be obtained from several sources. All expedition members took a mixture of US\$ cash, US\$ travellers cheques, credit cards and cashpoint cards (Cirrus network). Stirling will get you nowhere. The local currency, the Boliviano (Bs) is now a freely traded currency and consequently there is no black market for hard currency. Despite this one expedition member was hassled by customs for taking 20Bs out of the country. Street trading is legal and you should get the same rate of exchange as in a cambio. At the time of writing the exchange rate was 5.45Bs to the US Dollar. The current rate of inflation in Bolivia is about 10% per Annum. The 2 most useful cambio offices were found to be on Avenida Camacho to change both cash and travellers cheques. Not all cambios would change travellers cheques. Offices close for lunch and at weekends so street changers who operate 24 hours a day 7 days a week can be useful. Check carefully the exchange rate and the notes you are given. Changers can be found on the junction of the Prado and Avenida Camacho and lower down the Prado at Plaza del Estudiante. Numerous cash machines in central La Paz will take cash cards using the Cirrus network.

For 100Bs expect your bank account to be debited by £13 including a £1.50 charge. Many retail outlets, restaurants, hotels etc will accept the usual credit cards. Local currency could not be obtained from cash machines with credit cards. The only way we found was to go to

the 'Mastercard' office on the 8th floor of The Bank of Santa Cruz on Avenida Camacho and see 'Franco'. Before leaving La Paz for the mountains make sure you have plenty of Bolivianos and Dollars. In general only 4 wheel drive and climbing equipment hire was paid for directly in US\$. All other transactions, food, accommodation, pack animals, transport were paid for in Bolivianos.

## **Eating Out**

La Paz has plenty of cafes and restaurants of all standards and prices. With the Scottish Bolivia 98 expedition the most popular were;

Confiteria Eli's, on the Prado, for breakfast, superb selection of cakes and evening meals at reasonable prices (~20Bs)

El Lobo's for evening meals. 1Kg of food for 25Bs

Cafe Ciudad, Plaza Estudiante, is open and serves a full menu 24Hrs per day. This is worth remembering.

Super Restaurant 10, Avenida Villazon, serves big salads and excellent steaks, a bit expensive, 50-60Bs for a big feed, but well worth it for a treat.

Several streets around the markets offer stalls serving fresh cooked food dirt cheap.

## Visas

If you plan to stay in Bolivia for more than 30 days then an extension of up to 90 days can be obtained from the 'Migracion' office on Avenida Camacho. The words to use are '*Sello de extension de estadia en Bolivia.*' It actually took several visits to the office to obtain the extension stamp. Excuses for not getting the stamp were given as, closing for lunch/the day, the only stamp in the country is in another city for the week, Mondays Wednesday and Fridays only, or just plain won't.

## Maps

The best source of maps in Bolivia is the Instituto Geografico Militar (IGM) on Avenida Bautista Saavedra, walk past the hospitals until you see military policemen. All mapping in Bolivia is done by the military. The IGM office is in a military compound and you must hand in your passport at the entrance gate. Daunting as this place may appear, the personnel are very approachable and helpful if treated with respect and courtesy. The desk at the IGM office has books with maps in it. Not all the maps in the book are in stock and not all the maps in stock are in the books! There is a real shortage of maps in Bolivia. Without fluent Spanish, or knowing exactly what you want in advance, finding the maps you require may be a hit and miss task. Most of the country is covered in a series of 1:50 000 maps, however, don't expect the same level of detail and accuracy as an OS map from the UK. Individual maps cover an area 26x18 Km. A colour original cost 40Bs while a B&W photocopy (of good quality) cost 30Bs. In many cases only a photocopy is available.

## Expedition Supplies

Despite Bolivia's third world status there is nothing you cannot buy in La Paz. The best markets for expedition supplies are found in the Cementario area of the city. The closer to the Prado the more expensive things get. Fresh fruit and vegetables were of good quality and cheap. All other provisions, biscuits, chocolate, tinned fish & meat, dried milk, breakfast cereals, rice, pasta, instant mash, powdered fruit drinks, tea, coffee etc can be brought. Do some window shopping first and get a feel for the price of things. Prices are fixed but not displayed so you have to ask. Haggling is not generally done but if you are buying 10 tins of

tuna, it may be worth trying for a bulk discount. The market area is vast with different streets devoted to fresh fruit & vegetables, fish, meat, hardware, biscuits, chocolate and sweets, electrical goods, clothing etc. It is worth spending time in the markets to find which streets sell what. Shops and street stalls around the Prado sell all manner of consumer goods at near British prices. Pharmacies seem to be well stocked with all the medications you would expect at home.

Fuel for stoves is best bought in La Paz, it may be unavailable in small mountain villages. Petrol is cheap, clean and in plentiful supply. The expedition used MSR XGK multifuel stoves. No clogging due to dirty fuel was experienced, but regular stripdown and cleaning of stoves was probably good practice. A 4 or 5 litre fuel can (old cooking oil plastic container) can easily be found in the markets for 1Bs.

## **Getting Around**

La Paz is a very easy city to get to know. If you get lost simply walk down hill until you get to the Prado. Everything a mountaineer needs is within walking distance so travel by foot is preferred and good for acclimatisation. Thousands of buses and mini buses serve destinations all over the city. The destinations are displayed in the windscreens and shouted out by conductors. This is a very cheap method of travel, 2Bs from the Prado to El Alto. They can however be full to overflowing and not a good way to travel with a rucksack. A taxi from the Prado to Cementario (buses to Sorata etc) cost 10Bs. Taxis to the airport are 35Bs. Buses out of La Paz to other parts of Bolivia leave from different parts of the city and El Alto, not necessarily the main bus station. Check a guide book for the latest details. Sometimes buses change the streets they operate from which can make them impossible to find. The tourist information office is unlikely to be able to help.

## **Crime**

Nobody on the Scottish Bolivia 98 expedition witnessed or experienced any form of criminal activity. Follow the few common sense rules in any of the guide books and you would be unlucky to be the victim of crime. Notice boards in hostels and hotels can be a useful source of information on the latest cons and scams that may not be in the guides. In reality La Paz is probably safer than any major town or city in Britain. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that crime is on the increase. Trekking is generally safe, but the Illampu circuit in particular is being targeted by armed thieves. Bolivian police are armed and do look intimidating but caused no problems regarding bribery, hassle for ID etc. You may be directed away from areas of civil protest or Government offices at certain times. Do as you are directed and there should be no problem. If you are a victim of crime, the police are probably of no use other than recording the matter as necessary for insurance claims.

## **Agencies**

Mountaineering support services can be found in any one of several agencies. Most agency offices are on Sagarnaga just off the Prado. They can provide 4 wheel drive transport, clothing, guiding, climbing and camping equipment. Payment is in US\$. Andes Expediciones, at Avenida Camacho 1377, run by Bernardo Guarachi is worth checking out, especially for transport to the Cordillera Quimsa Cruz

## **CONDORIRI BASE CAMP 10-12 JUNE 1998**

After two days in La Paz the expedition headed for Condoriri base camp. The aim of this short trip was to climb Pequeño Alpamayo (5400m) by the SW glacier and SW ridge, PD. It was hoped to achieve rapid acclimatisation and to assess general mountain conditions. Pre expedition research had revealed that due to El Niño the wet season in the Andes had been warmer than usual. This had caused rain to fall at higher altitudes than normal rather than snow. We had heard that many lower mountains had been stripped of existing snow or ice cover.

## **Getting There**

Transport to the road head at Estancia Tuni (4400m) was arranged through the Colibri agency on Sagarnage and cost \$120 for a 4 wheel drive Toyota Landcruiser. Travel to the road head took 1¾ hours. Half the journey is on metalled road and half on rough track.

Donkeys were hired as pack animals at Estancia Tuni, organised by the landcruiser driver. Three donkeys cost 180Bs for a return journey to the base camp. Each animal can carry 40Kg +, i.e. two rucsacs. Payment was made half on arrival at base camp and half on return to Estancia Tuni. A time and date to meet the donkeys and herder was arranged in advance. The donkeys arrived on the arranged day one hour early. Throughout the expedition it was found that when making advance arrangements with local people, we were never let down.

The walk-in to Condoriri base camp is very gentle on good track and path with no steep climbs. The height gain to base camp at Laguna Chiar Kota from the road head is ~300m. The walk-in takes 3-4 hours.

## **Base Camp**

The campsite at Laguna Chiar Kota has become increasingly popular in recent years. The site is very popular with trekking groups who may only stay one night. Due to this popularity latrines have been built and since our visit we have heard that a stand pipe has been erected for water. During our visit the only source of water was from the laguna which had to be boiled or purified before drinking. The site is very dry, dusty and windy. It is tempting to pitch tents in the shelter of the corrals at the site. Unfortunately these are regularly used to keep animals in at night so you may well end up re-pitching your tent. A guardian, of dubious legitimacy, operates at the campsite. Different groups paid different fees. We paid 10Bs per person for three nights. Personal and Passport details were also recorded by the guardian.

## **Food**

Food taken was very basic. Main meals were soup, pasta, and tuna. Snacks and mountain food were cheese, crackers, raisins, chocolate and biscuits. Vitamin pills bought in the UK (but certainly available in La Paz) were taken as well to supplement the diet.

## **Pequeño Alpamayo**

After one rest day the group set off on Thursday 11 June to attempt Pequeño Alpamayo (5330m) leaving the campsite at 3.20 am. The six members were arranged as two parties of three, Barton, Weedon and Miller; Hill, Marsden and Bayne. Access to the Glacier is by a well cairned path from the camp site, past some glacial lagunas and then grinds very steeply up a moraine on the right hand side of the glacier. The glacier is gained at ~4900m. John Miller started suffering the effects of altitude quite badly after a night of no sleep and decided to return to the campsite. In the lower part the glacier was dry and heavily crevassed but presented no major difficulties. From the coll the ridge was covered in penitents which were up to knee height. After 5 hours climbing the subsidiary summit of Tarija (5250m) was reached. The final 80m of the mountain were steep ice. This is clearly where El-Niño had cleared snow from the summit. Looking towards Condoriri (5648m) from the campsite it was obvious that most of the usual snow cover was missing. To the best of our knowledge there had been no recent ascents of the summit of Condoriri. Descent to the moraine took about 2½ hours and the walk back to the campsite another hour.

## **Health**

Since the expedition had only been in Bolivia for less than a week, all members experienced the effects of altitude, some nausea, headaches, breathlessness and lethargy. This was controlled to an acceptable level by drinking at least 3 litres of fluid per day and taking aspirin.

## **LA PAZ 12-17 JUNE 1998**

On return to La Paz a couple of rest days were planned before setting off for Ancohuma base camp.

Unfortunately Tom Wiggans arrived in Bolivia with no equipment (lost in transit). A couple of days were wasted trying to find out where it had gone and in getting kited out in hired equipment. Axes, crampons, boots, clothing, rucsac etc were hired from the Condoriri agency (on Sagarnage) at a cost of approx. \$120.

John Miller decided to leave the expedition and return to the UK.

Ken Marsden had bad diarrhoea for 5 days since leaving Condoriri base camp. A course of pepto bismol (Bismutol), purchased locally, seemed to clear this up.

Preparations involved the purchase of food, another day tramping the markets. The expedition divided into three pairs; Barton and Marsden; Hill and Bayne and Wiggans and Weedon. This enabled a sensible sharing of food, camping and climbing equipment with the intention that these pairs would operate as climbing partnerships on the mountain. As a security precaution, all equipment was packed inside rucsacs. Things strapped to the outside of sacks are prone to theft on public transport.

Ancohuma base camp is reached via the town of Sorata. Several buses leave daily, from 5:30am onwards, from *Bustillos* in the Cementerio (Cemetery) area of La Paz. Seats should be booked in advance, buses are always packed to capacity. Single tickets are 11Bs. The bus journey takes about 4 hours. The expedition was held up for one day by a strike of local bus drivers who blockaded all routes in and out of La Paz. The following day we took the first bus out of the city at 5:30 am, before blockades were set up again. A taxi from the Prado to Cementerio cost 8-10Bs.

## **ANCOHUMA BASE CAMP 17-24 JUNE 1998**

## **Getting There**

By getting the 5:30am bus from La Paz , the expedition arrived in Sorata at 9:30am. The bus stopped at a military check point at *Achacachi*. All non Bolivians must disembark, show passports and give personal details. On the return journey the bus didn't stop at the check point. Busses arrive and depart from the central square. The Hotel Sorata has an open air restaurant at the back for breakfast, burgers, drinks etc. There are shops, hotels cafes for food and accommodation and three guiding agencies in Sorata. The local guides co-operative is the cheapest agency.

Four wheel drive transport was arranged with the cafe owner in the square. A return trip to Cocoyo was 900Bs all payable in advance. The journey takes 4-5 hours on rough mountain tracks.

## **Cocoyo**

Cocoyo is a small village at 3600m. A small shop stocks basic food items but all food and fuel was brought from La Paz. Only Spanish and Aymara are spoken in Cocoyo. Pack animals (llamas) were organised with the villagers through the vehicle driver. We were directed to camp at the far end of the village football field. Due to the curiosity of locals, especially children, future expeditions may prefer to camp as far away from the village as possible.

## **Cocoyo To Base Camp**

Llamas arrived before the agreed time the following morning. It was found throughout the expedition that any advance arrangements made were kept very promptly. Mules or donkeys are not suitable for the rugged path from Cocoyo to Ancohuma base camp. The agreed load was 12Kg per llama at a price of 13Bs per animal. We found some animals were under loaded by several kilos. Also 12Kg loads were laid out on the ground only to have them split up into extra loads. A spring balance and close supervision of the loading process are necessary to ensure each llama is carrying the agreed load. If not it just costs more money. We subsequently met another expedition using the same llamas but carrying 14Kg's!

The path to Ancohuma base camp is generally good but difficult to follow in some places, especially if you cannot keep up with the llama herders. The vertical height gain is 1200m and takes 4-6 hours depending on fitness and acclimatisation level etc. It is worth sending the fittest member of the expedition with the llamas to supervise the arrival at base camp.

## **Ancohuma Base Camp**

The base camp is a small area of flat dusty ground at 4800m next to the small laguna below Laguna Leche Kota. The stream running from the laguna into the main stream provided a supply of drinking water that did not need purifying. The toilet area is in the rocks on the slope above the Laguna. This is becoming quite polluted and it may be that future expeditions will experience health problems because of this. On arrival at base camp we found another British group who had been there for ~5 days. Varying degrees of stomach upsets had meant that they had made no serious attempts on any of the mountains. Despite having spent a week in La Paz first, they also experienced some acclimatisation problems.

## **Food**

Food taken into Ancohuma base camp was as for Condoriri base camp with the addition of carrots, onions, garlic and oil. Rations were based on the following quantities per climbing pair per day:-

- 3 bars of chocolate
- 3 packets of biscuits
- one tin of tuna
- 2 packets of soup
- two packets powdered fruit drink
- 200g pasta
- onion
- two carrots
- cooking oil
- pilchards
- crackers
- two packets of instant noodles (mountain ration)

## **Health**

The health of the group at this point was generally good. Despite having only been in Bolivia for 6 days, Tom Wiggans managed the walk up to 4800m with nothing more than a headache. The rest of the expedition now in Bolivia for 12 days reached base camp with nothing more than mild headaches and breathlessness. Ken Marsden's dose of diarrhoea had cleared up.

## **Advance Base Camp**

After a rest day at base camp the expedition moved up to an advance base at 5100m to prepare for an attempt on Ancohuma. The path to advance base camp is good and marked by cairns. The camp itself is on a small piece of flat ground on the moraine between two glacial streams. Again the water is drinkable without purification though it is a bit silty. During the night Tom Wiggans fell ill with altitude sickness and decided not to attempt Ancohuma.

## **Jankhopiti (5875m)**

Barton and Wiggans decided to attempt Jankhopiti (5875m), with Weedon and Marsden, Hill and Bayne attempting Ancohuma. On gaining the glacier it quickly became apparent that it was heavily crevassed with very large penitentes up to 2m high. Tom Wiggans fell ill again and descended with Tony Barton. Bayne never gained the glacier. Hill, Marsden and Weedon decided to abandon Ancohuma in the light of the glacial conditions but to attempt Jankhopiti. The three established a high camp at ~5600m. at approx. 3pm.

Next morning the three set off at 3:30 am from the tent. It was evident at this point that the weather was deteriorating. Cloud rising from the valley the previous afternoon had led to claggy conditions. During the night it had cleared but had been snowing at lower altitudes. During the morning of the ascent there was a thin layer of cloud above 6500m and a lot of lower cloud below 4500m. The group stopped for 1½ hours on the ridge to wait for sunrise. The summit was reached at 7:30am. The ridge is graded alpine PD with no objective dangers.

## **CORDILLERA QUIMSA CRUZ 29 JUNE-7 JULY 1998**

The highlight of the expedition was a trip to the Cordillera Quimsa Cruz by Barton Wiggans and Marsden. This is a very area and receives few visits. A major expedition by a German group in 1987 is the only documented visit to date. Their expedition report (written in German) was on sale in La Paz for 80Bs.

### **Getting There**

Getting to the Quimsa Cruz is not easy. Busses to Viloco are supposed to leave from Calle Jorge Carrasco between Calle 4 and Calle 5 El Alto, parallel to the Oruro road, on Mondays, Wednesdays Thursdays and Saturdays at 7:00am. The journey takes about 10 hours at a cost of 15Bs. Unfortunately after trawling through El Alto we could find no evidence of the bus to Viloco. Subsequently we found out that the bus had changed its' departure point several times in the last year. Due to time pressures we were forced to hire a 4WD from Bernardo Guarachi (Av. Camacho 1377, La Paz) at a cost of \$250. The journey took 8 hours. The driver was unsure of the route so close attention to navigation was required. Don't rely on the navigation skills of Bolivians. To visit the area the expedition went to, it is necessary to go to *Viloco*. Agencies may try to take groups to Araca or Estancia Teneria. Don't let them! Estancia Teneria is 1300m below Viloco but a similar horizontal distance to the camp site. Insist on transport to Viloco. If a bus can't be found and 4WD is too expensive, an alternative is to take a bus to *Oruro* as far as the village of *Panduro* marked by a large check point, then wait for a truck to Viloco via *Caxata*. A 4WD should be able to get along the track several Km's beyond Viloco.

## **Viloco**

Viloco would kindly be described as depressing. It is a very poor mining village with a subsistence economy. There are some shops selling basic foodstuffs and supplies. It is best to bring everything required from La Paz and not to rely on getting anything in Viloco. The bus to La Paz leaves from the road below the barrier at the entrance to the village. The journey takes 10 hours and the bus leaves at 6:30 am. It is essential to book a few days in advance at the office by the bus stop. The frequency of the service is unknown, probably changes and will be no more than two or three days per week. The bus was packed to stifling over capacity and fortunately there was no room for the expedition. By asking around the village it is usually possible to find a truck at least going as far as the Oruro/La Paz Road. A truck to La Paz cost 15Bs and took 16 hours. Duvet jackets and sleeping bags are essential. There is no commercial accommodation in Viloco. A floor to sleep on was found in the building attached to the village hall, see appendix D. The owner is called Marill and charged 3Bs per person per night.

## **Base Camps**

The walk into the mountains takes about two hours to reach the lower campsite at 4300m. The route follows a level disused miners track. There are several rock falls across the track and one part where the track has subsided but it is still passable with ease.

The lower campsite (grid ref 576 392) is below and at the end of the miners track on an area of flat ground next to a stream. The upper campsite (grid ref 581 390) is above the end of the miners track where a path follows a stream upwards towards the Laguna Chillhua Kkota. A copy of the IGM map covering the area is in appendix E. Both campsites are sheltered on flat ground but due to the proximity and height of surrounding mountains the lower campsite only receives direct sunlight for 7 hours per day. The upper campsite was found to be much warmer. Future expeditions are recommended to base themselves there for the duration of their exploration 'Needle grass' at both campsites can penetrate tent ground sheets and bare skin. Water from streams at both sites is clean and potable without purification. Apart from cows grazing in the area there was no sign of any recent human activity or that the campsites had been used recently.

## **Mountain Conditions**

During our expedition weather conditions in the mountains were stable (warm & sunny with clear skies and cold nights) apart from one afternoon when there was a heavy snow shower. However, the poor weather during the previous week had left a shallow coating of fresh snow on many southern aspects and shaded areas. The expedition was unprepared for these unexpected conditions, (no boots, crampons or axes) so exploration of the area was restricted. While climbing in direct sunshine was very pleasant, requiring only light clothing, shaded areas became cold very quickly.

The mountains visited occupy a very small area. Passing from coll to coll or corrie to corrie, distances are very much on a Lake District/Scottish scale. Ground can be covered very quickly, especially by a well acclimatised party.

## **New Routes and Peaks climbed**

All routes attempted by the team can be reached within 1½ hours of the campsites. The rock is granite of impeccable quality. The 4 new routes were climbed on sight and free using removable protection. Many of the cracks are choked with soil and vegetation. All cracks were cleaned by the lead climber as necessary for the placement of protection. Full descriptions of the routes climbed appear in appendix F. The route lengths are the totals of pitched climbing.

### **Cerro Torrini (5100m) grid ref 587 420**

1998 1st July W Ridge A Barton, T Wiggans, solo

### **Cerro Taruca Umaña (4852m) Grid ref 572 403**

1998 2nd July E Ridge A Barton, T Wiggans alt leads, K Marsden  
second

**Pte 4905 grid ref 577 410**

1998 3rd July S Ridge A Barton, T Wiggans, K Marsden alt leads

**Pte 4685 grid ref 591 393**

1998 5th July E Face T Wiggans. A Barton, alt leads

**Große Mauer (5080m) grid ref 599 387**

1998 6th July E Ridge/N Face A Barton, T Wiggans, alt leads

**Pte 5060 grid ref 591 399**

1998 6th July NRidge K Marsden, solo

**HUAYNA POTOSI 11 JULY 1998**

After Ken Marsdens' departure, Wiggans and Barton decided on a quick attempt at Huayna Potosi by the normal PD route.

Huayna Potosi is very popular for three reasons. It is over 6000m high, it is technically one of the easiest 6000m peaks in the world and the roadhead is reached within 1½ hours from La Paz.

A 4WD costs \$40 from La Paz to the roadhead at Laguna Zongo. Cheap transport can be found with various trucks and micros leaving from El-Alto. It is not necessary to book return transport as this can easily be picked up back at the roadhead. Typically the trip back to La Paz costs 60Bs. There is a refuge at Laguna Zongo charging \$10 per person per night. Camping is possible at the top of the moraine at 5200m or on the glacier at 5500m at Camp Argentino.

After reaching an altitude of 5000m, Wiggans succumbed to a recurring stomach bug so both Wiggans and Barton returned to La Paz.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

For such a short expedition the achievements were many. It was clearly shown that average British mountaineers of limited high altitude experience can climb to altitudes of over 5800m within 3 weeks of leaving the UK. This puts serious high altitude mountaineering within a 'summer holiday' for British climbers who may otherwise go to the European Alps. Rapid acclimatisation is possible with no more ill effects than headaches and nausea. So long as warning signs are adhered to and the current medical advice followed, future parties need experience few problems.

Bolivia was found to be an extremely easy country to travel around in. The lack of mountaineering bureaucracy encountered, compared to the Himalayas, means that plans can be easily changed for whatever reason.

The reported effects of El-Niño were found to be correct with poor climbing conditions high on the mountains. This did not prevent the expedition reaching a high point of 5875m on Jankhopiti. As it turned out, to have continued with an attempt on Ancohuma, the expedition would have been caught out in bad weather for several days. New route potential still exists on Illampu and surrounding peaks

Despite only a short trip to the Cordillera Quimsa Cruz, the expedition has presented a lot of new information which will make this area easy to visit by future expeditions. There are many peaks still awaiting a first British ascent. The potential for new rock routes of all grades is immense. Four new routes were climbed by the expedition. The problem of getting to the Quimsa Cruz has been cracked, the campsites used can be reached within a day of La Paz. Cheap overnight accommodation in Viloco has even been found. 1:50 000 maps of the Quimsa Cruz are now in the UK for reference by future expeditions.

Bolivia is well worth a visit by mountaineers of all standards. The necessary support structures are in place to make getting to the mountains relatively trouble free. Despite this it is quite possible to find you have the mountains to yourself, a rapidly declining possibility these days.

# APPENDIX A - PRE EXPEDITION HANDBOOK

## South America

### Introduction

Bolivia is one of the safest countries in South America to visit and is also one of the cheapest. The weather is normally very settled during the months of June and July with cold clear days being the norm. From a climbing point of view there are 4 main mountain areas, the Cordilleras Real, Quimsa Cruz, Apolobamba and Occidental.

We will be concentrating mainly in the Cordilleras Real and Quimsa Cruz. There are five 6000m+ peaks in the real along with many peaks above 5300m. Being very accessible in its' Northern and southern parts, it is becoming fairly popular. The Quimsa Cruz on the other hand is not quite as easy to get to and is rarely visited. The Quimsa Cruz is glaciated in all but its' northern part, and it is this part that we will be visiting. It is an area of rock peaks reaching an altitude of 5300m.

The expedition will consist of 2 parts. The first is to the Cordillera Real where we will hopefully make several ascents in the Ancohuma/Illiampu region. This area contains peaks with routes of all standards of difficulty with Ancohuma being the highest summit at 6450m. A visit to the Cordillera Quimsa Cruz will form the second part of the expedition. New route possibilities abound on the rock peaks of the northern sector. Routes of all standards of difficulty and up to 500m in length should be possible.

It is worth noting that I have travelled extensively throughout Bolivia and have visited both the Cordilleras Real and Quimsa Cruz. Bolivia is a wonderful country with an awful lot to offer both the hardy traveller and the adventurous mountaineer!

### Health

You will require Typhoid, Hepatitis, Tetanus and Polio inoculations. In addition it may be wise to consider Rabies. A visit to your GP will confirm these requirements and may well recommend others!

Everyone should carry their own first aid kit. Below is a list of what you might want to take with you:-

An assortment of plasters	
A small bandage	
Elastoplast tape	
Antiseptic wipes	
Antiseptic cream	
Aspirin	high altitude pain killer
Paracetamol }	
Strepsils }	for cold and flu symptoms

Decongestant}	
Imodium	to combat diarrhoea
Fybogel or equivalent	to combat constipation
Dioralyte	to replace essential body salts
Blisteze cream	for cold sores etc.
Eurex cream	for insect bites etc.
Sun cream factor 30	for mountain
Sun cream factor 15	for low-level use
Lipsalve factor 30	for mountain
Multi vitamin pills	we will be away from civilisation for 10 days or more at a time with no access to fresh fruit, vegetables or meat

## Equipment

### Tent:

A 2 person lightweight 4 season tent between each pair is a must. It should be suitable for both base camp and high mountain use. In the past I have used a North Face Westwind but for this trip I will be taking a Bibler 1 tent.

### Bivi bag:

I will also be taking a Goretex bivibag for those short ultra lightweight trips and advise other expedition members to do likewise.

### Sleeping bag:

A four season down bag will be adequate. I use a Rab Premier 900 and have found it to be Ideal

### Stove:

I believe the best stove to be the MSR XGK II multifuel. A good filter is also essential as the fuel in South America can be very dirty.

### Ruc sac:

As we will be carrying up to 10 days food and will need to keep all equipment inside the sac it will need to have a capacity of around 60 - 65 litres. Something like the Karrimor Alpiniste 65 or the Macpac Ascent would be a good choice.

### Ice Axes:

You will need 2 axes whether its' a mountaineering axe and hammer or 2 technical tools that will be up to you.

### Crampons:

A good all round step-in crampon such as the Grivel 2F would be a god choice and anti balling plates are worth considering.

### Foot wear:

It can get very cold in the Andes so a good pair of boots is essential, especially if you are prone to cold feet. An expedition boot is the most obvious choice but the Scarpa Vega with standard inner has proven to be adequate. You may consider trying to buy a warmer inner boot for your existing plastics, however this can be expensive. Scarpa Vega high altitude inner is £120 and the Koflach equivalent £80. Frost bite can cost even more and will spoil your holiday!

You will also require a boot or shoe of some sort for the walk ins. Although a lightweight hiking boot/shoe is the best option it is possible to get away with training shoes for the most part. A pair of Tevos or equivalent is also a good choice for walking the streets etc.

### Clothing:

Everybody has their own preference but to give some idea this is what I will be wearing.

I start with a thermal base layer then fleece salopettes and fleece top. I used a Buffalo mountain shirt and carry Gortex salopettes and jacket for when it gets really cold (pre dawn starts) On the higher mountains it is worth taking a down jacket like the Rab Glacier. A full face balaclava in addition to your normal hat is a must. On the glove front, a thermal inner and a lined outer glove makes a good combination. A pair of good quality mitts should also be carried for when it gets really cold.

In addition to the above gear, Yeti gaiters might be a good idea, especially if you are not using an expedition boot. Something else worth considering is a vapour barrier sock. I have heard good reports but have not used them myself.

### Glasses:

A good quality pair of shades with full UV screening are essential. Also worth thinking about is a pair of ski goggles with UV lenses as a back up for those windy days.

### Climbing gear:

I think it is worth taking a full rack between each pair. However, your rack should include 8 ice screws, an assortment of rock pegs, 2 snow stakes and 10m of abseil tat. as glacier approaches are the norm, all the usual kit should be carried and don't forget your harness and helmet.

### Ski poles:

Last but not least. I personally think they are worth having especially if we encounter deep snow. They do help especially carrying a heavy ruc sac on moderate terrain.

All this and your baggage allowance is 20Kg!<sup>1</sup>

### Flight

we will be flying with Aerolineos, the Argentinean airline at a cost of £633, booked through Trailfinders. It is a direct flight from London, calling at Madrid and Sao Paulo and La Paz, the Bolivian capitol. We depart London Heathrow at 19:15hrs on Saturday the 6th of June. There is a 20Kg baggage allowance.

### Visas/Permits

A 30 day tourist visa is usually given on entry and this can be increased to 90 days free of charge at the local immigration office. At the moment no climbing/trekking permits are required in Bolivia.

### Insurance

Good insurance cover is absolutely vital in case of any accidents, on or off the mountains. I will be getting the British Mountaineering Council 'SunPeak' Worldwide policy. This gives cover for all climbing and mountaineering in glaciated areas worldwide. Premiums vary from £82 for 24 days to £205 for a year. It is worth noting that mountain rescue services in Bolivia are poor and best regarded as nil. If we have an accident we have to rescue ourselves

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<sup>1</sup>

## Money

How much money do I take? In answer to this question I think we should allow \$15 per day. This amount should be enough to ensure reasonable accommodation and food. Hopefully we will be spending most of our time in the mountains which will be cheaper than La Paz. A few extra dollars to cover transport costs and anything else that crops up should be budgeted for, \$150 should be enough.

I would suggest taking US Dollars cash (smaller denominations) or a mixture of US Dollar travellers cheques and US Dollars cash. It would also be very wise to take along a Visa card. It is worth noting that only clean good quality Dollar bills will be accepted in South America.

## To Sum Up

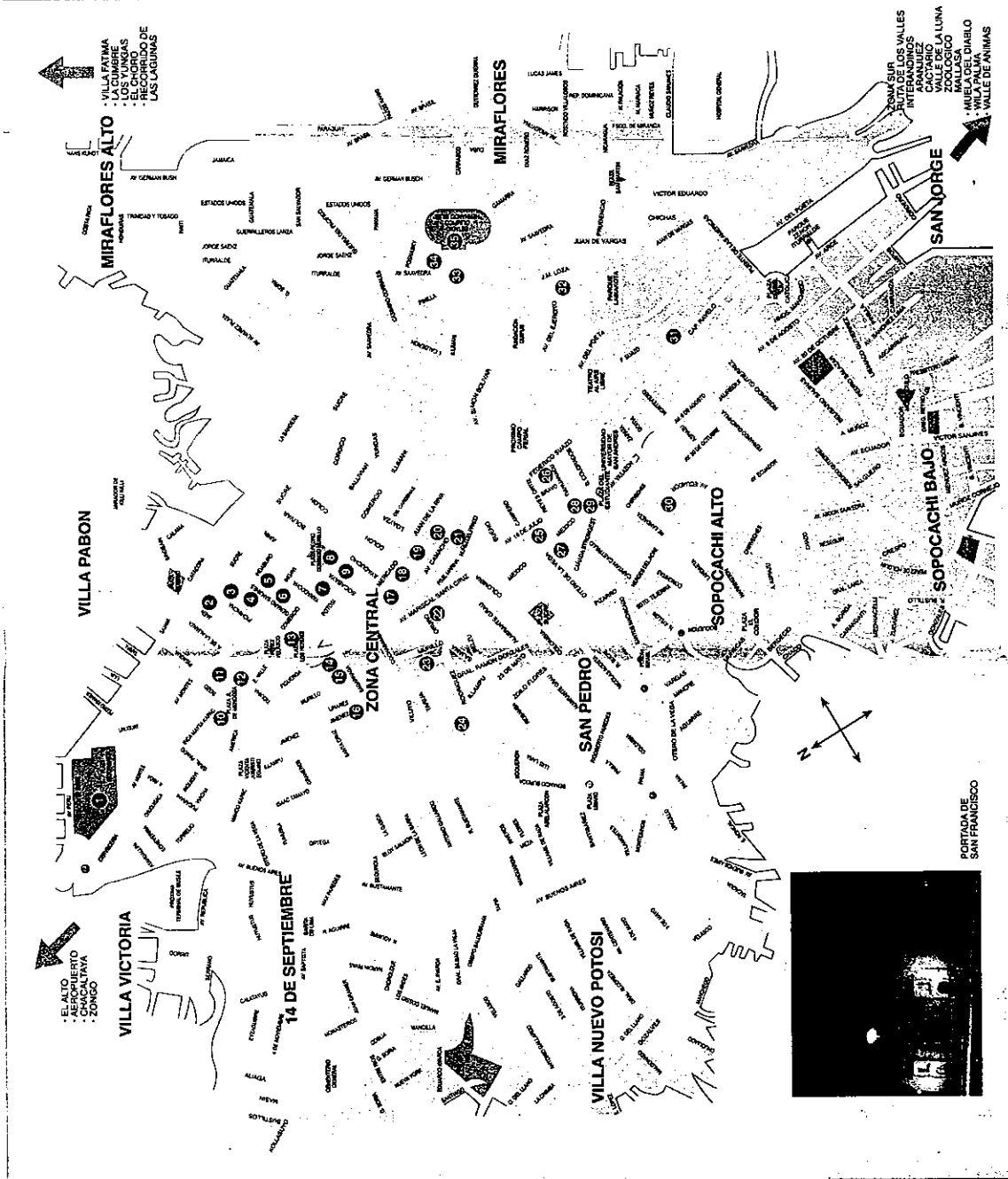
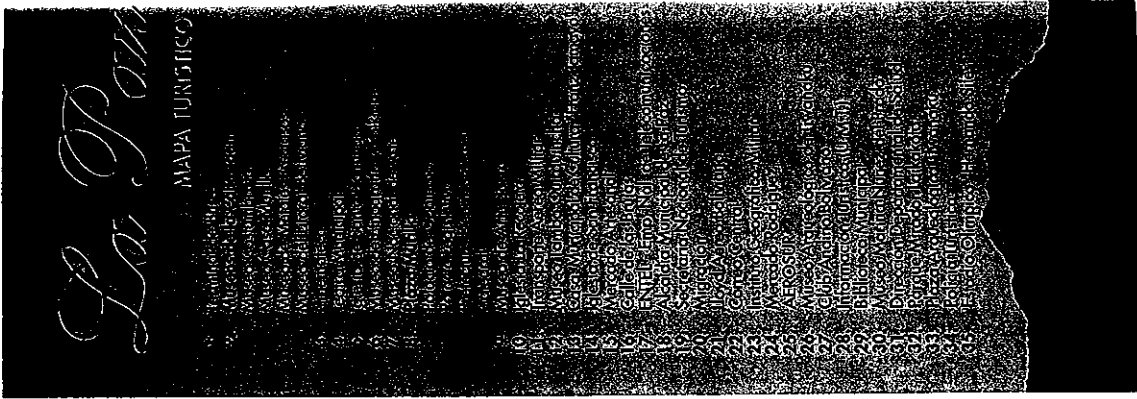
This info sheet is just to give you an idea of what our objectives are and what is required if you are thinking of joining this expedition. If you are considering coming along you are not expected to stick to our objectives and there is plenty of scope for mountaineers and walkers of all abilities. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Tony or Ken

## **APPENDIX B - STREET MAP OF LA PAZ**

## APPENDIX C - EXPEDITION DIARY

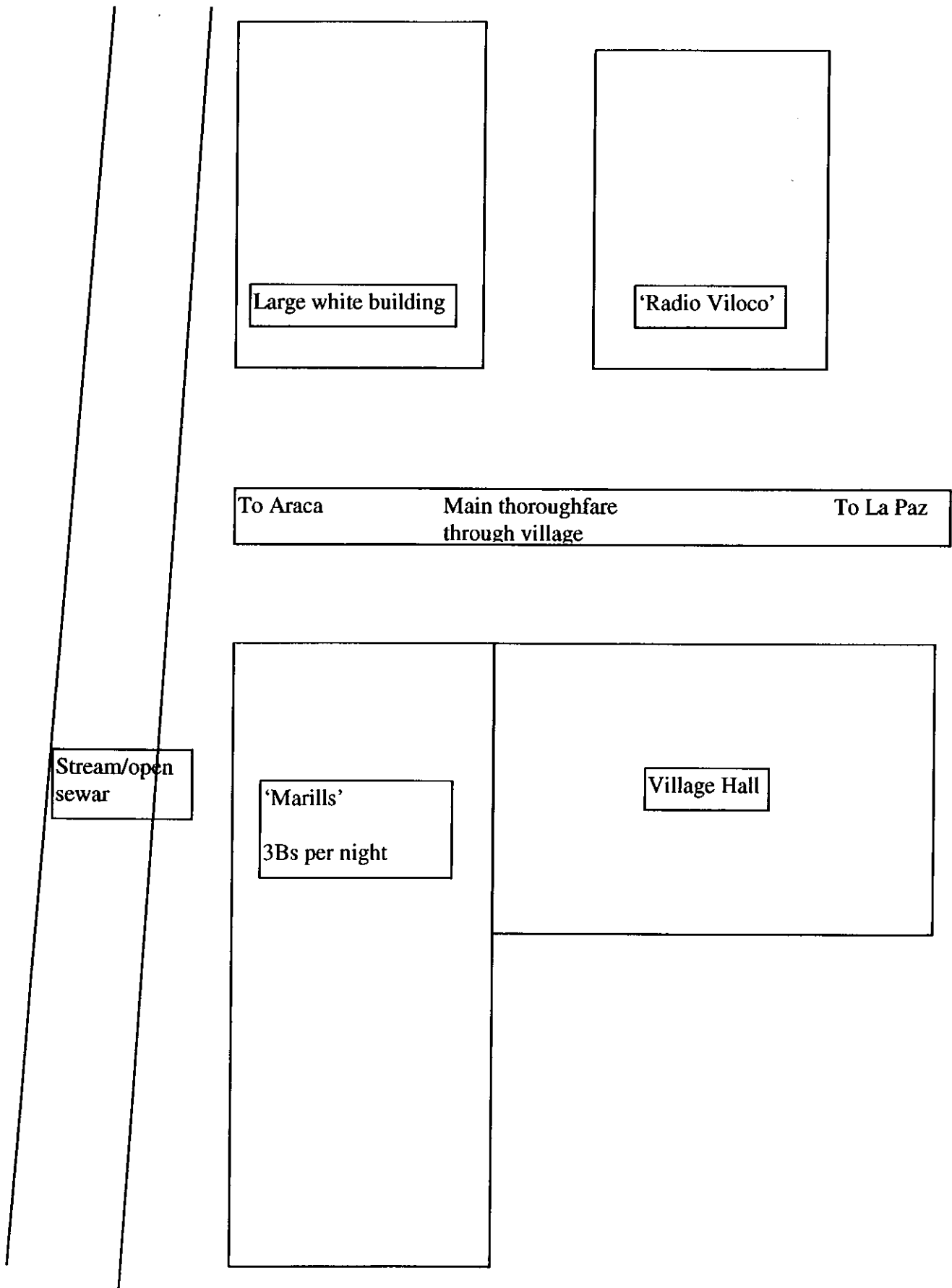
### Expedition Diary 1998

June 6	Miller & Bayne arrive La Paz.
June 7	Barton, Hill, Marsden & Weedon, arrive La Paz.
June 8	Rest day and preparation La Paz.
June 9	La Paz to Condoriri base camp.
June 10	Rest day, Condoriri base camp.
June 11	High point 5250m Pequeño Alpamayo reached by Barton, Hill, Marsden, Bayne & Weedon.
June 12	Condoriri base camp to La Paz
June 13	Rest day La Paz. Tom Wiggans arrives in Bolivia
June 14	Rest day La Paz
June 15	Preparation for Ancohuma, La Paz
June 16	Try to get bus from La Paz to Sorata. Bus strike blockades city. John Miller returns to UK
June 17	La Paz to Sorata to Cocoyo. Camp Cocoyo.
June 18	Cocoyo to Ancohuma base camp.
June 19	Ancohuma base camp rest day.
June 20	Base camp to advance bas camp
June 21	High camp 5600m, Hill, Marsden & Weedon. Barton Wiggans and Bayne return to base camp
June 22	Jankhopiti summit, Hill, Marsden & Weedon, return to base camp.
June 23	Base camp to Cocoyo, camp Cocoyo.
June 24	Cocoyo to Sorata to La Paz.
June 25	Rest day La Paz.
June 26	Hill, Weedon & Bayne return to UK.
June 27	Rest day La Paz.
June 28	Preparation for Quimsa Cruz, La Paz.
June 29	La Paz to Viloco to base camp, Quimsa Cruz.
June 30	Rest day.
July 1	Low level cragging. Cerro Torrini, Barton, Wiggans

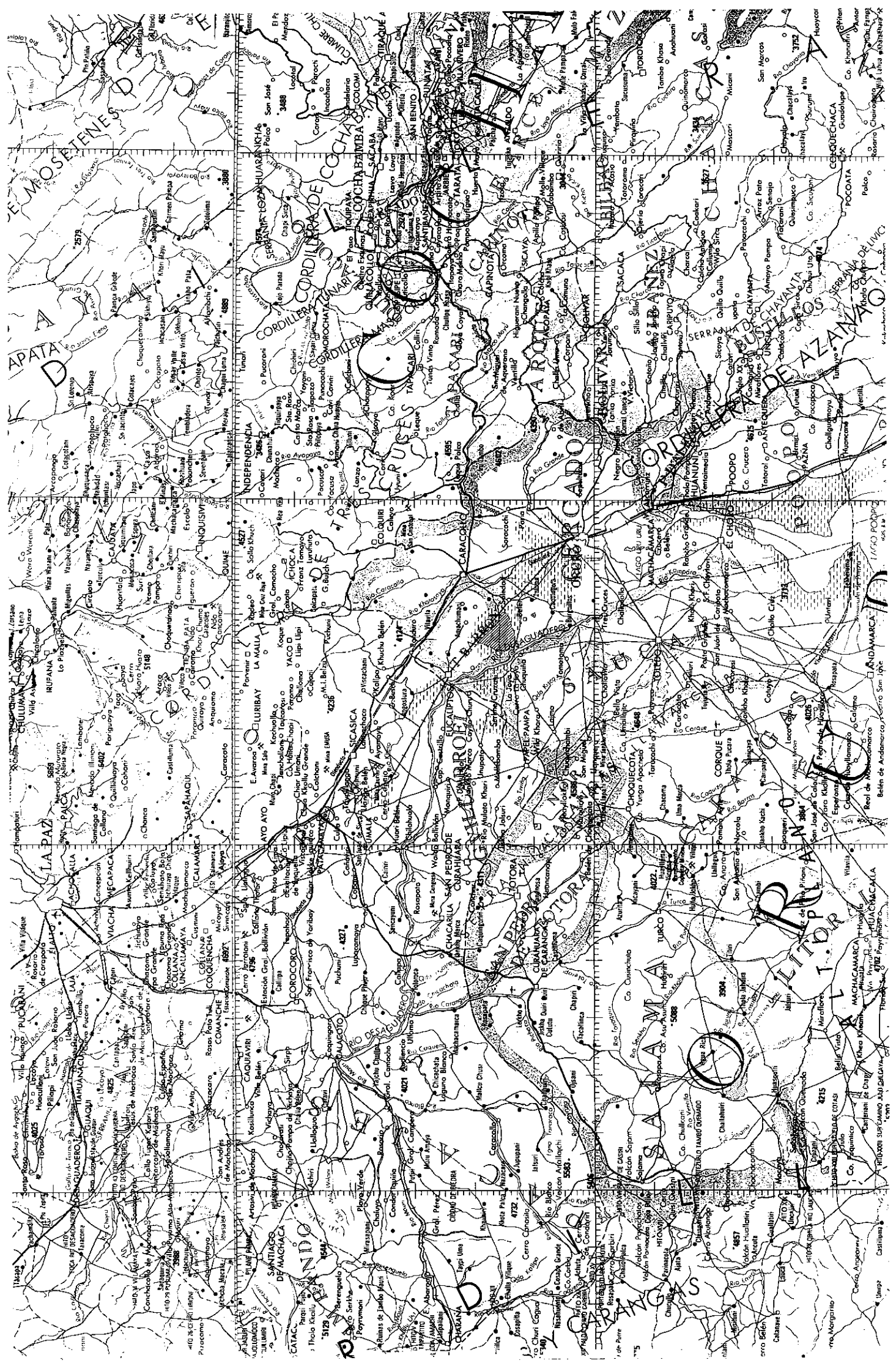


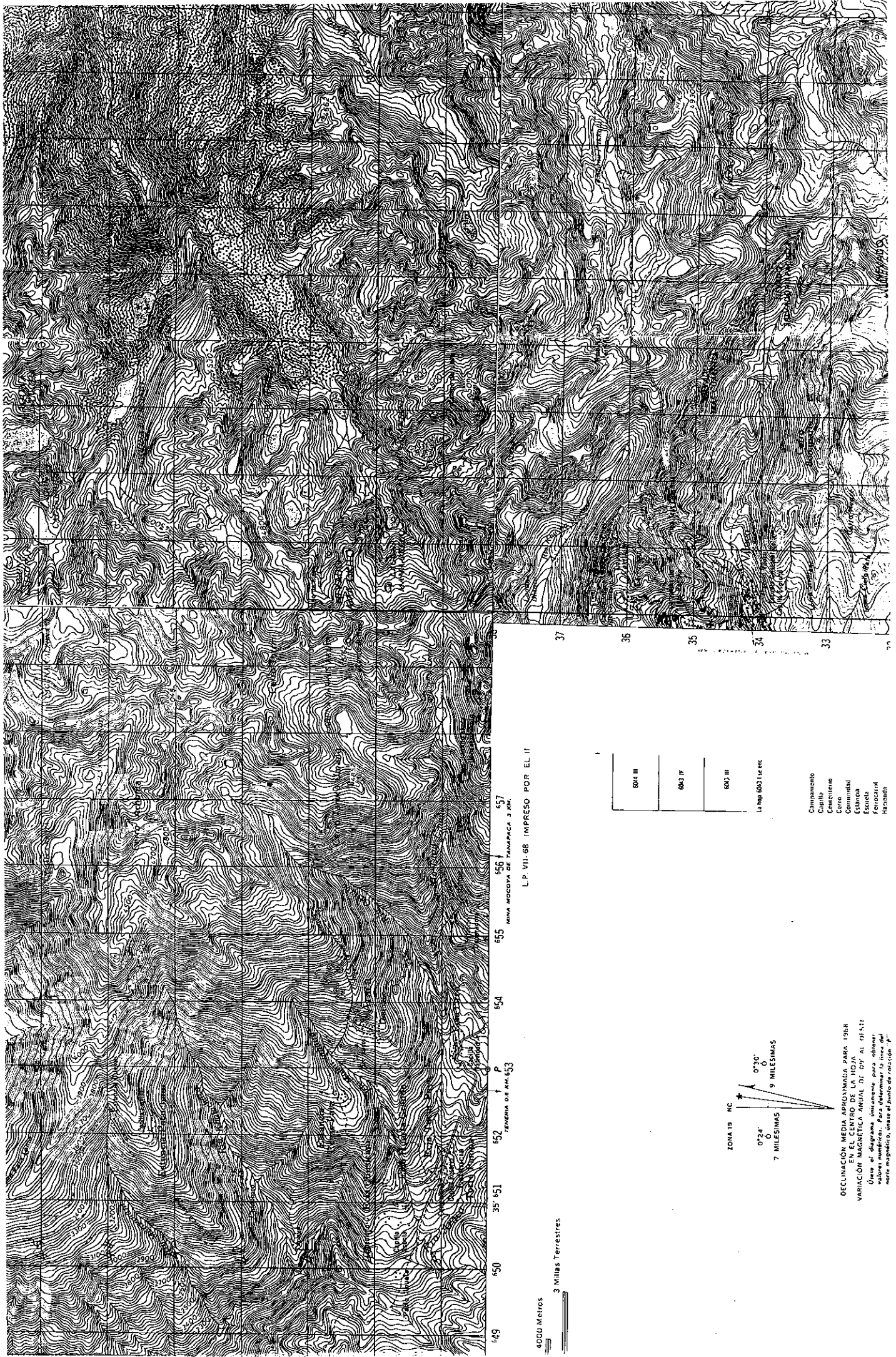
July 2	East Ridge of Cerro Taruca Umaña, Barton, Wiggans & Marsden.
July 3	South Ridge of Pte 4905, Barton, Wiggans & Marsden.
July 4	Move campsite to Laguna Chillhua Kkota
July 5	East Face of Pte 4685, Barton & Wiggans.
July 6	E Ridge/N Face of Große Mauer, Barton & Wiggans. N ridge Pte 5060, Marsden. Walk out to Viloco
July 7	Truck from Viloco to La Paz
July 8	Arrive La Paz, rest day
July 9	Rest day La Paz.
July 10	Marsden return to UK.
July 11	Barton and Wiggans to Huyana Potosi and return to La Paz
July 12	Rest day La Paz. World Cup Final
July 13	Wiggans return to UK.

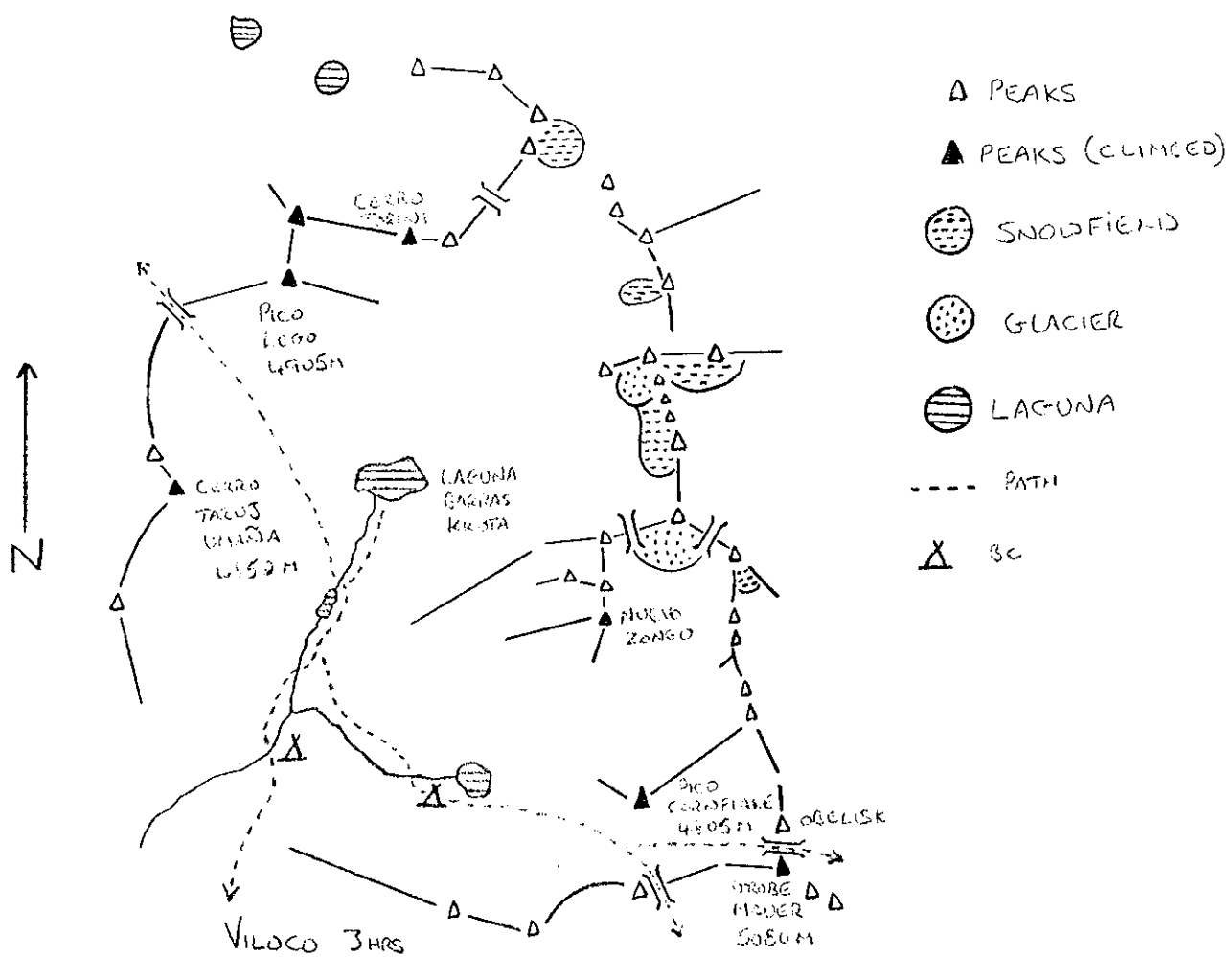
## APPENDIX D - MAP OF VILOCO



## **APPENDIX E - MAPS OF THE CORDILLERA QUIMSA CRUZ**







## APPENDIX F - NEW ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS

### CORDILLERA QUIMSA CRUZ

The descriptions given are for new routes climbed on sight and so far unrepeated. Only natural removable protection was used and all crack cleaning was done by the lead climber. Both an overall UIAA and British grade are given for each route, while individual pitch grades follow the usual British grading system. The terminology and abbreviations used are the same as found in British climbing guidebooks.

#### **F.1 East Ridge of Cerro Taruca Umaña (4852m). 200m UIAA V-/HVS 5a**

The route follows grooves on the right hand edge of the right most of the three pyramid shaped slabs. A faint white arrow pointing up the middle of the face was presumably painted on the rock by the BAE 1987 expedition. Start to the right of this at the lowest point.

1 36m 4b Follow grooves up to an obvious break at 25m. Tr R 2m. Follow groove to small ledge and belay in corner.

2 48m 4b Step R into a corner. Follow grooves to a ledge at 20m. Continue up grooves ~20m, Tr R 8m to belay on a glaxis.

3 40m 4a Go up glaxis and step R. onto a block. Or from the belay, step down and R onto a slabby ridge. Continue up grooves to a huge ledge beneath the final tower. Escape possible.

4.25m 4c/5a Climb to below a wide chimney and roof. Follow a R trending crack ~6m (crux). Cross back left to belay on a small sloping ledge beneath a wide vertical crack.

5 45m 4b. Climb the crack to a small ledge, step R onto the arete and follow easy ground to the top

From the top, abseil into the coll. Continue up the obvious grass/scree gully then left to the summit of Cerro Taruca Umaña. From the summit head north towards colls and pick up a vague path back into the corrie

## **F.2 South Ridge of Pte 4905 155m UIAA III+/MVS**

From the Laguna Barrus Kkota, looking NW there is a peak with two southern ridges separated by a very deep gully. The route ascends the right hand ridge. From the lowest point of the ridge a slabby face extends rightwards, split by a right trending gully. Follow this gully to gain a high terrace. Walk back left along the terrace, keeping as high as possible to reach the bottom of the ridge.

- 1 50m 4a Follow right trending grooves to a good belay below an obvious corner crack
- 2 40m 4b Climb crack to easy ground
- 3.15m Trend R on easy ground to a wide terrace below a pinnacle overlooking the lagoon.

From here many lines are possible up small pinnacles. Or, walk round and up on easy ground. Ascend a boulder field to below a large red/brown face.

- 4 25m 4b Gain the bottom of the left hand ridge and ascend this (loose) to a small ledge and good belays.

- 5 25m Tr L from belay on broken ground to a flat coll

Cross broken ground to the R to gain an easy gully, follow this and broken ground to the summit. From the summit an easy walk off leads to a path and back to the corrie.

## **F.3 East Face of Pte 4685 "The Cornflake" 195m UIAA IV/HVS5a**

Approach:

From Base Camp continue up the valley beyond the lake, and ascend obvious grassy terraces to the foot of the main face. A rightwards traverse around and up to a rock rib leads to a large terrace below the east face.

- 1 45m 5a From the left hand end of the terrace, climb a rightwards slanting corner crack to a chockstone, surmount this to gain a terrace. Belay below a steep crack a few metres to the left.

- 2 40m A1 Ascend the crack to gain a rightwards slanting ramp. Follow the ramp to easy ground. A further a further short blocky crack leads to a wide terrace.

- 3 45m 5a Climb a steep corner crack to gain a rightwards slanting corner crack which is followed to a narrow ledge below and left of the "cornflake".

- 4 30m 4b Follow the narrow ledge rightwards past a break to gain the north ridge below the cornflake.

5 15m Traverse rightwards below the cornflake to easy ground below the final summit tower.

620m 4a Ascend the slabby west face of the tower exposed.

Descent 2 Abseils down the summit tower and the north ridge lead to easy ground.

**F.4 E. Ridge/N. Face of Große Mauer (5080m) 240m UIAA V/MVS4b**

**Approach:**

Follow a good path from Base Camp to below the obvious col at the foot of the north ridge, via a the large scree slopes on the south side of the valley, and then finally through the boulder field just below the col.

1 45m 4b From a ledge above the col step right to gain a rightwards slanting ramp. Above this a series of cracks and short walls lead to a prominent left trending chimney groove. Follow this to a large ledge.

2 25m Follow the ledge leftwards to the edge of the ridge and then climb the obvious right trending ramp to gain a narrow terrace.

3 30m 4a From the terrace follow another right trending ramp until an obvious left trending crack leads to a large ledge and block belay ( Ab tat).

4 4b Climb directly from the block to broken ground, continue up and right to belay below an obvious chimney groove.

5 45m 4a Ascend chimney groove and easy ground above, then descend slightly to belay at the foot of a large slab.

6 25m 4b Follow the corner crack above the belay until a rightwards traverse can be made to the foot of a large detached block. Step right and climb its easy right edge to belay on top. (4B, 25m)

7 25m 4b Ascend obvious steep crack to gain leftwards trending groove which leads to the summit.

Descent 4 abseils back down the north ridge lead to the col.

East Ridge of Cerro Taruca Umaña (4852m)



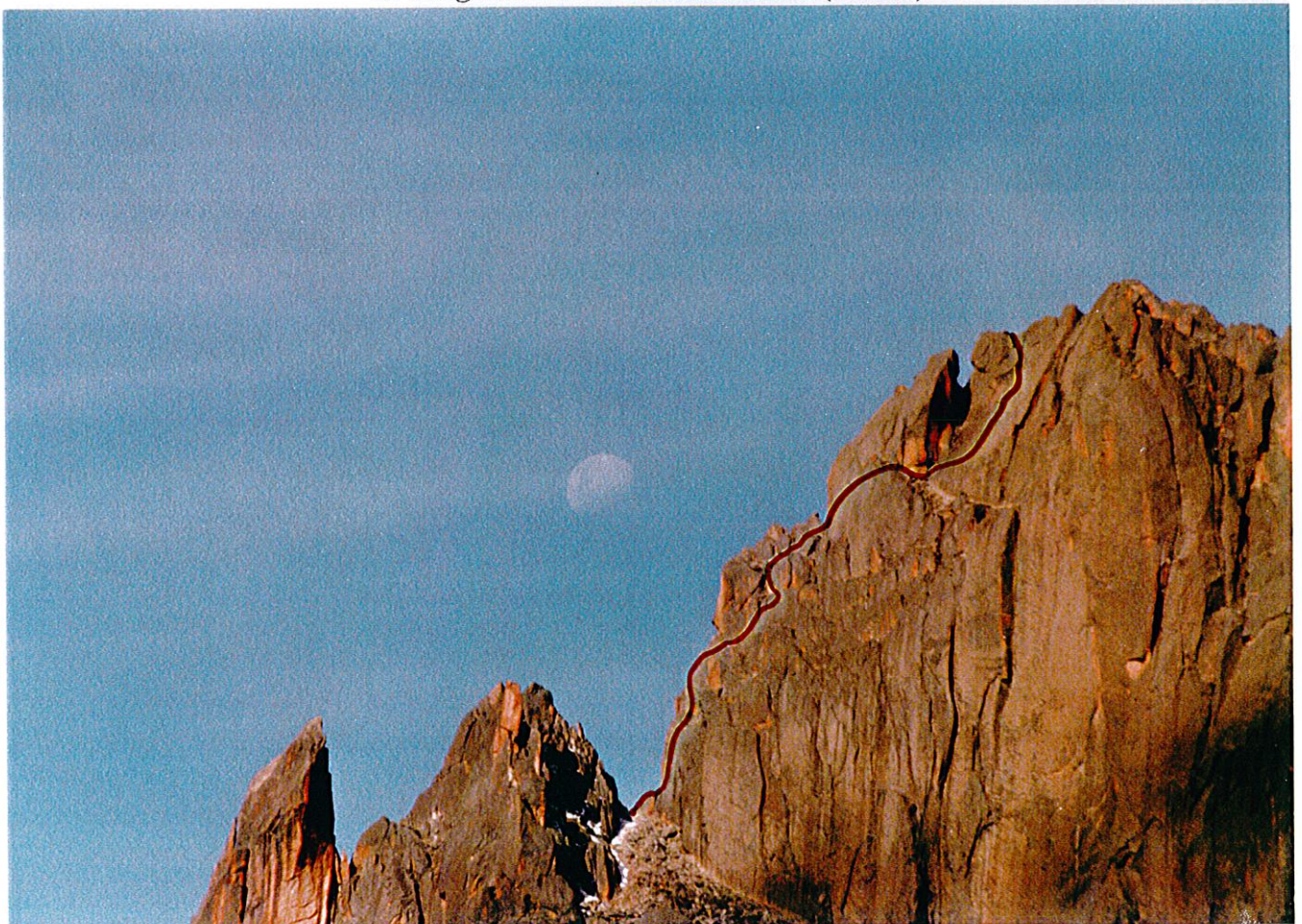
South Ridge of Pte 4905



East Face of Pte 4685 "The Cornflake"



E. Ridge/N. Face of Große Mauer (5080m)



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### Acknowledgements

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