

**Nigel Wheatley
Exploration Board
Imperial College
London
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27 October 2000

Huascarán 2000 Interim Report

Dear Nigel,

Please find enclosed a copy of the Interim Report for the successful Huascarán 2000 Expedition. It contains an overview of the different aspects of the expedition, including an interim financial statement.

The final report is fully underway, and it should be completed before the end of November. It will expand on the Interim Report by giving a more detailed account of the day-to-day experiences of the expedition along with further information on logistics and the difficulties overcome. During the next month, the outstanding expedition expenses will also be settled, and a full financial breakdown will accompany the final report.

Meanwhile, I hope that some members of the board might be able to attend our expedition presentation, "Top of the Tropics", which will be held at 7:00pm on Monday 30th October in the Clore Lecture Theatre.

Yours sincerely,



 Warwick Goodall, Nicholas Saunders,
James Smyth, Giles Taylor

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HUASCARÁN 2000

Interim Report

SUMMARY

On the 29th July 2000, the expedition reached the summit of Huascarán Sur, which at 6,768m (22,205ft) is Peru's highest mountain and the world's highest peak in the tropics.

The expedition also included extensive training and acclimatisation at altitude, including 100km of trekking in southern Peru and mountaineering practice to over 6,000m. The expedition also successfully climbed the mountains of Ishinca (5,530m) and Toqllaraju (6,032m).

This Interim Report presents the successes of the expedition and some of the challenges which were faced. A comprehensive expedition report will be published in November 2000.



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EXPEDITION OVERVIEW

The Huascarán 2000 Expedition lasted 37 days during July and August 2000. The aim of the expedition was to climb Huascarán Sur, Peru's highest mountain and the world's highest peak in the tropics.

The team arrived in Peru on the 1st July, and spent two weeks in southern Peru. High altitude trekking was important to ensure that the team gained sufficient acclimatisation before climbing in the High Andes. The 100km trek involved crossing the flank of Mount Salcantay at an altitude of 4,900m and later passing along the ancient Inca Trail. During the week of trekking, the team carried all their own equipment and provisions, which was good training for the long ascent of Huascarán.

Feeling better acclimatised, the team travelled to the Cordillera Blanca mountains in the north of Peru. A training base camp was established in the Ishinca valley for a week, and during this time the team gained further experience and high altitude acclimatisation, climbing Ishinca (5,530m) and Toqlaraju (6,032m). The ascent of Toqlaraju involved sleeping at 5,300m, which was also good preparation for the ascent of Huascarán.

The team spent a total of 8 days on Huascarán, reaching the summit after 6 days. Although the ascent took longer than originally expected due to the weather, the team had enough food to allow for such a contingency.

EXPEDITION TEAM



Warwick Goodall
Equipment and
Mountaineering

"Standing at the highest point in the tropics, with the Pacific Ocean to the left and Amazon basin to the right, I knew that we probably wouldn't have made it without all the planning and teamwork."



Nicholas Saunders
Catering and
Logistics

"Having never been to South America before, I was fascinated by the culture and way of life of the locals. The climbing element was fantastic, and being in a small team really helped us all to bond successfully, which was instrumental in our success."



James Smyth
Treasurer and
Mountaineering

"Wonderful experience at every step, marred only by the sweet aroma of Warwick and Nick's feet."



Giles Taylor
Medical Officer
and Logistics

"For Warwick and myself, an exciting end to four years at university... a good tale for Nick to tell at the start of his degree to impress the ladies!"

(Watch out girls: James and Nick are demons on the dance floor!)

PREPARATION

Expedition members had to undergo a number of medical training courses to prepare for the trip.

Medical training

The expedition medical officer attended a week-long intensive course in wilderness medical treatment. This covered aspects of first aid, but also more advanced techniques including injections, drips and suturing. Procedures for carrying out rescues from remote areas were studied. Moving casualties without inflicting further injuries was practised as part of this course.

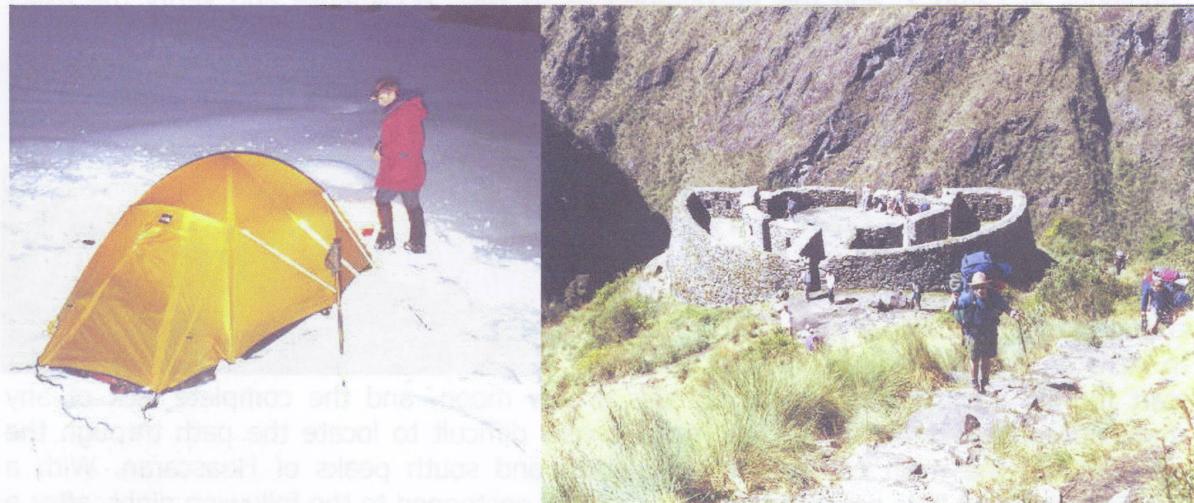
Training week

Three members of the expedition team spent 10 days in the Alps during Easter 2000. This enabled them to refresh their mountaineering skills and test the new equipment purchased for use in the expedition.

Trekking in Southern Peru

Upon arriving in Peru, the expedition spent the first two weeks training and acclimatising. Trekking through the mountains, the team walked over 100km around Mount Salcantay and along the ancient Inca Trail. The pass over the flank of Salcantay is at an altitude of 4,900m and this was higher than most of the team had ever been before.

The trekking was excellent training and none of the team experienced any problems when they arrived in the High Andes, unlike some less prudent mountaineers, some of whom had symptoms of mountain sickness.



MOUNTAINEERING SUCCESSES

After a period of trekking and acclimatisation at up to 4,900m in the south of Peru, the expedition focussed on its objectives in the Cordillera Blanca. To continue our programme of acclimatisation, we set our training base camp in the Ishinca Valley, from where we had access to the peaks of Ishinca (5,530m) and Toqllaraju (6,032m).

Saving a day on our planned schedule, we ascended Ishinca in a single day. Our route traversed the mountain, climbing the SW ridge and descending to the NW. Our early success on Ishinca was exhilarating and set an altitude record for us all. The altitude did make the climb quite exhausting, but the acclimatisation was important to prepare us for the higher peaks.

After a rest day back at base camp, we started our climb of Toqllaraju. This required us to spend a night at a plateau high on the mountain at 5,300m. We arrived at the camp just before a magnificent sunset and all slept well despite the altitude. The following morning we set off for the summit at 4 o'clock. The route involved some steep technical climbing above the glacier and on the NW summit ridge, and this was somewhat hampered by a couple of large guided groups. We arrived slightly belated on the summit of our first 6,000m peak. The route all the way down to base camp took a long time, and we arrived after dark and completely exhausted.

A couple of days of relaxation in the mountain town of Huaraz allowed us to prepare our equipment and provisions ready for the attempt on Huascaran Sur.

We spent a total of 8 days on Huascaran, which was slightly longer than expected. We actually spent two nights at each of camp 1 and camp 2, mainly due to some poor weather conditions. Descending climbers told many tales of high winds and very difficult conditions at camp 2, and this encouraged us to wait, acclimatise and verify the exact route to be taken.

The climb from camp 1 to camp 2 involved the ascent of the glacier on the right side, and this was guarded by seracs and a 15m ice wall at the top. This difficulty required climbing to a high standard (Scottish Grade IV-V) and given the altitude the team did well to climb up with the aid of a fixed rope. After spending a cramped night at camp 2 with all 4 in one tent to save on weight and keep warm, the early start for the summit was in vain. It was a new moon, and the complete lack of any illumination other than our torches made it very difficult to locate the path through the crevasses to the main col between the north and south peaks of Huascaran. With a freezing wind and little progress, the attempt was postponed to the following night, after a reconnaissance of the route during the day by two of the team. On the 29th July 2000, three members of the expedition reached the summit of Huascaran Sur, after the Medical Officer decided to remain at camp 2 due to illness.



LOGISTICS

Accommodation

Much of the expedition accommodation was under canvas, but on our brief stays in Lima, Cusco and Huaraz we stayed in cheap hostels. These cost typically £3 per person per night, except Lima where costs were about double. The accommodation was basic but cheerful, and was welcome after sleeping in tents for long periods.



Transport

All of the transport used by the expedition was excellent and buses, trains and planes were on time. It was worthwhile shopping around a lot, especially for air fares and taxis. Inside Peru we flew with Tans, which is a newer low-cost airline. It was significantly cheaper than the major airlines, although not reservable from outside Peru. One landing in particular was rather scary, and you had to put up with the toilet signage in Arabic.

Paying a little extra for a luxury long-distance bus well worthwhile for the security and comfort, and we used Cruz del Sur, one of the premier companies.

Baggage

We took all our baggage with us via KLM. Prior to departure we spent a great deal of time confirming our baggage allowance with the travel agent and KLM. Although our tickets were printed with '20kg' we had an electronic note attached to our booking confirming that we each had 2 pieces, each up to 32kg. This was absolutely necessary, and the total baggage at check in at Heathrow was about 150kg, including 20kg of mountain food for use on Huascarán.

Mules

The expedition made use of local pack animals to reach our base camps in the Ishinca valley and on Huascaran. These were definitely worth every sol to get our heavy food supplies into the mountains. It was not difficult to find these services, which were always available at trailhead villages.



Political

During our stay in Peru there was growing political tension following the recent presidential elections and the re-election of President Fujimori after the opposition leader, Toledo, withdrew claiming that the President was unfairly influencing the electorate. The President was sworn in on Peruvian Independence Day, and in the days before this there was growing unrest in the major cities. We saw a protest in Lima, and throughout our travels we received many different opinions on the political situation. The Peruvians were always happy to talk to Westerners, and there was never any danger to tourists.

EQUIPMENT

The equipment used by the expedition was composed of both individual items and specialist mountaineering equipment bought for the expedition. Avalanche transceivers were bought as a precautionary measure after a number of avalanches in the Andes in recent years, including one which killed 10 climbers on Huascaran.

The tents performed very well and made comfortable shelters, even in some of the most uncomfortable of conditions. The stoves, however, worked somewhat intermittently above 5,500m, which was probably due to using Peruvian petrol as a fuel, which was not as clean as it might have been. It would have been better to use more expensive kerosene.

MEDICAL

Despite the medical officer's repeated efforts to inject the team with as many drugs as possible. His attempts were marred by a distinct lack of any serious ailments or injuries. The worst condition was nothing to do with mountaineering: Nick managed to inflame his right eye, which was probably due to his contact lenses. The swelling subsided after a couple of days and no further treatment was required.



The medical officer showed mild symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) after two nights of rest at 6000m, they included a bad headache, and a chesty cough, he decided that it would not be wise to ascend further. At 2am, after a lengthy session of persuasion the rest of the team left for the summit.

Nick once again starred in the medical log when on his return from the ascent of Huascaran, he inflicted second degree sun/wind burns on his face. Flamazine was used to treat the affected skin and a swift recovery was made leaving no signs.

James took the prize for almost continuous diarrhoea while in Peru, Nick came second, and Warwick only succumbed once. However, Giles escaped despite eating and drinking copious amounts!

NUTRITION

All of the food consumed on the expedition was bought locally, with the exception of the 8 days on Huascaran, and a few Mars bars whilst in the Ishinca valley. Most of the 20kg of food brought out from the UK was very much appreciated, especially the Dairy Milk. The local food was generally of a fairly edible standard. Whenever in civilisation, we ate out most of the time due to the ease, cheap prices, and local delicacies, some of which were fantastic.

Despite differing ideas of what constituted a good and sensible diet at various stages of the expedition, compromise often resulted in a more varied diet at the expense of a few extra kilos. Thankfully, we will be able to look at super-noodles in a supermarket again without physically retching.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The financial situation as at 10th September 2000 is presented below, showing budgeted and actual (or currently estimated) expenditure for the expedition.

The expected and actual figures for expenditure are relatively close, however there was a £735 shortfall in fundraising and hence there is a deficit to be met by the expedition members.

Money was saved on internal flights, although internal transport was expensive, especially for access to the valleys. National Park Fees were recently increased and food and first aid equipment also cost more than expected.

	Budgeted /£	Actual /£
Expenditure		
International Flights	2,021.20	2,021.20
Internal Flights	400.00	333.60
Other Transport	160.00	277.06
Baggage	50.00	32.20
Mules	0.00	74.00
Maps and Books	100.00	80.27
Park Fees and Permits	100.00	158.40
Accommodation	200.00	204.66
Food	592.00	744.04
1st Aid	150.00	350.00 *
Photography + Report	75.00	290.00 *
Medical Courses	450.00	450.00
Group Equipment	1,700.00	1,439.89
Barryvox Transceiver	713.96	713.96
Contingency	671.22	85.92 *
	7,383.38	7,255.20
Income		
Personal Contributions	2,000.00	2,000.00
Sponsorship	5,383.38	4,520.00
	7,383.38	6,520.00
Deficit		-735.20

* *estimated*

A fully detailed financial statement will form part of the final report.



EXPEDITION SUPPORT

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Mammut, Switzerland

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